

Leading with Facts & Values – Strategic Communications to Counter Disinformation & Reframe the Migration Debate

EDMO Training Series on Identity-Based Disinformation Module 1:

Identity-based disinformation about minorities and migrants

May 13, 2026

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International Centre for Policy Advocacy

www.icpolicyadvocacy.org

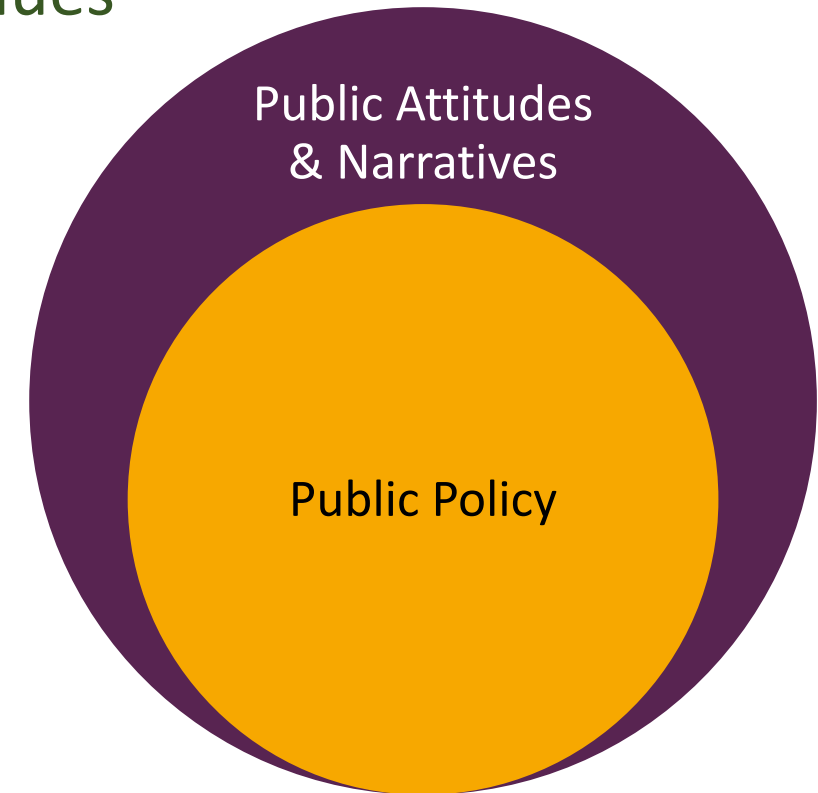
young@icpolicyadvocacy.org

Develop & support effective advocacy initiatives to promote & safeguard democratic principles & open society values


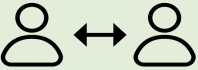

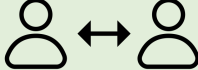
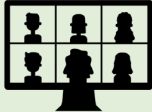





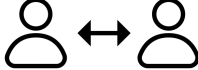

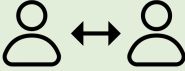




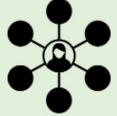
- Policy research & advocacy support organisation
- Peer learning towards community of practice
- Evidence & testing
- Piloting & Scaling what works
- Narrative work in Migration & Civic Space

Evolution

1. Policy Training Team within Open Society Institute – 2002 to 2011
2. Non-profit company (gGmbH) Registered in Berlin – 2012 to 2024
3. Consultancy registered in Ireland – Jan 2025



New Narratives Lab

	Jan to June	July to December
2021	  <p><i>Focus:</i> Building a strategy to engage the middle <i>Methods:</i> Online workshop (5 x 3 hr sessions)/Mentoring/WG doing development work</p>	   <p><i>Focus:</i> Build draft pitch & materials & test <i>Methods:</i> in-person workshop (2.5 days) /Mentoring/WG doing development work/Online focus groups</p>
2022	    <p><i>Focus:</i> Storytelling for Social Media Campaigns <i>Methods:</i> Workshops/WG work/Interviews with protagonists/ National survey</p>	   <p><i>Focus:</i> Build Social Media Campaign – video content, copywriting, audience profile for Facebook ads <i>Methods:</i> Workshops/Mentoring/WG work including videoshoot with main protagonist</p>
2023	   <p><i>Focus:</i> Finalise & rollout pilot social media campaign <i>Methods:</i> WG work/campaigning/testing & evaluating</p>	   <p><i>Focus:</i> Compiling evaluation of pilot, drawing lessons & designing toolbox on pilot for wider use in CLAIM network <i>Methods:</i> Workshop/Mentoring/Certification of WG</p>



Funded by as part of the federal programme



Session - Aim & approach

The aim of the session is to provide insight into what ICPA has learned from practice about **the balance of fact & value led approaches in strategic communications initiatives to counter disinformation & reframe the migration debate**

1. The Challenge & **Power of Frames** – Hooks & Conduits for Mis/Dis info
2. Public Attitude Segmentation & **Targeting the Middle**
3. **Facts & Debunking** as Pillars of a Comms Campaign
4. **Sequencing Values to Facts** - Campaign Case: #KommMit – CLAIM Allianz
5. Message **Testing & Partnering** in the Big Challenge

1. The Challenge & Power of Frames - Hooks & Conduits for Mis/Dis info

Challenges Word cloud

Share your experience:

- Challenges you face in engaging the public on migration issues
- Menti meter poll – 2 or 3 words to describe

Challenges you face in engaging the public on migration issues (2-3 words)



Challenges – pushing back the mainstreaming

- Polarisation in the debate
- Real danger has happened: mainstreaming of populist narratives in Europe
- Populists setting the agenda and progressives in reactive mode – stuck in countering negative narratives
- Facts and rights only approaches not working in highly emotional debate



Central Elements of a Frame



- Problem & Causes
- Good & Bad Guys
- Solutions & Values

Frames as identity stories & agenda setters

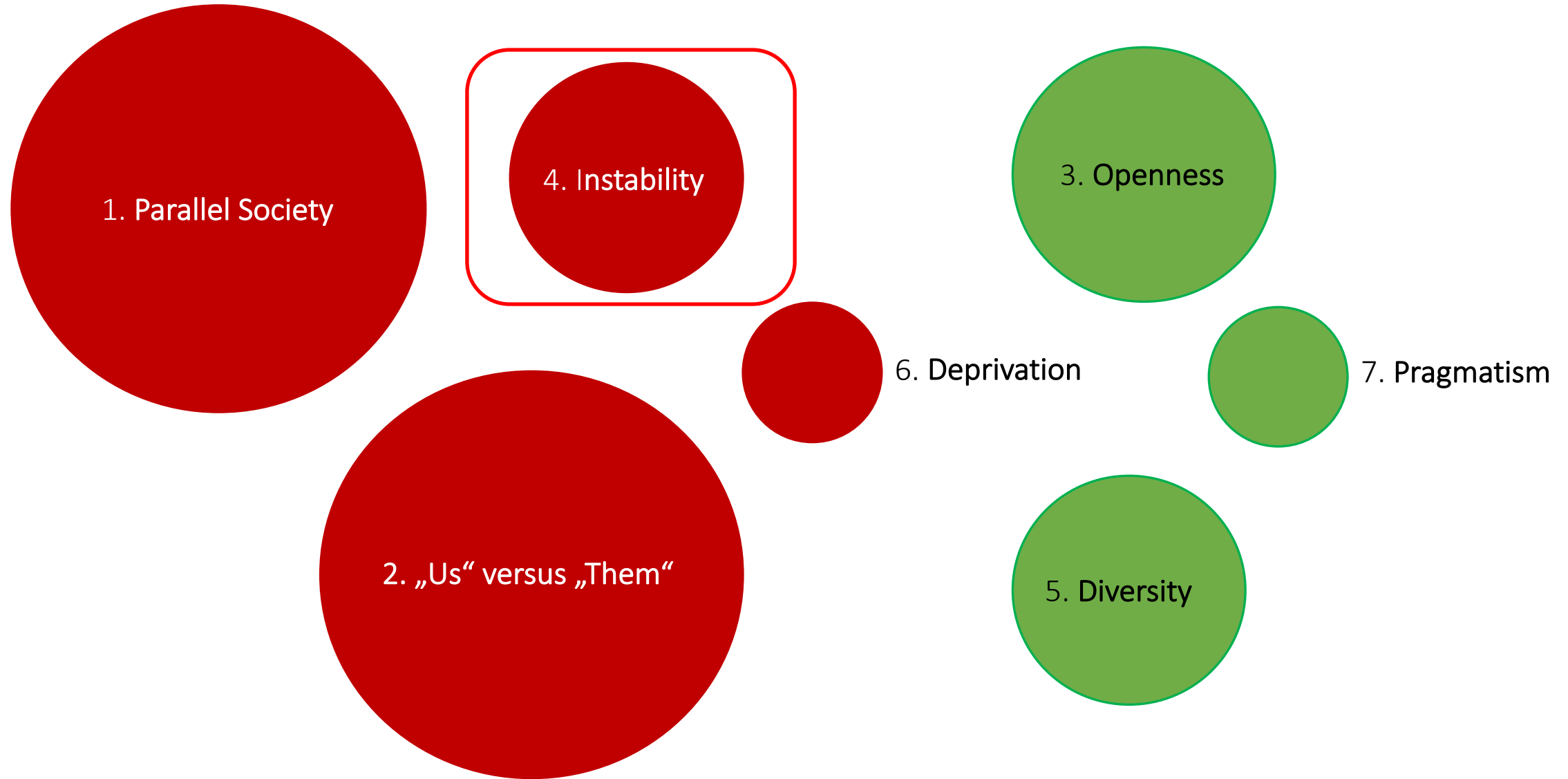
- Stories we tell ourselves to explain the complicated world, but also socialised stories
- Not a blank slate – seeking patterns that reassure us, as we “cannot endure an absence of meaning”
- People are frame-driven - Strong attempts to change can sometimes ‘backfire’
- Dominant media frames/narratives are the space to make good (“acceptable”) policy
- Triggering as ‘cultural acupuncture’

David Cameron – On the Calais camp

Asked about the Calais crisis, he spoke of "a **swarm** of people coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain". *(BBC 2015)*



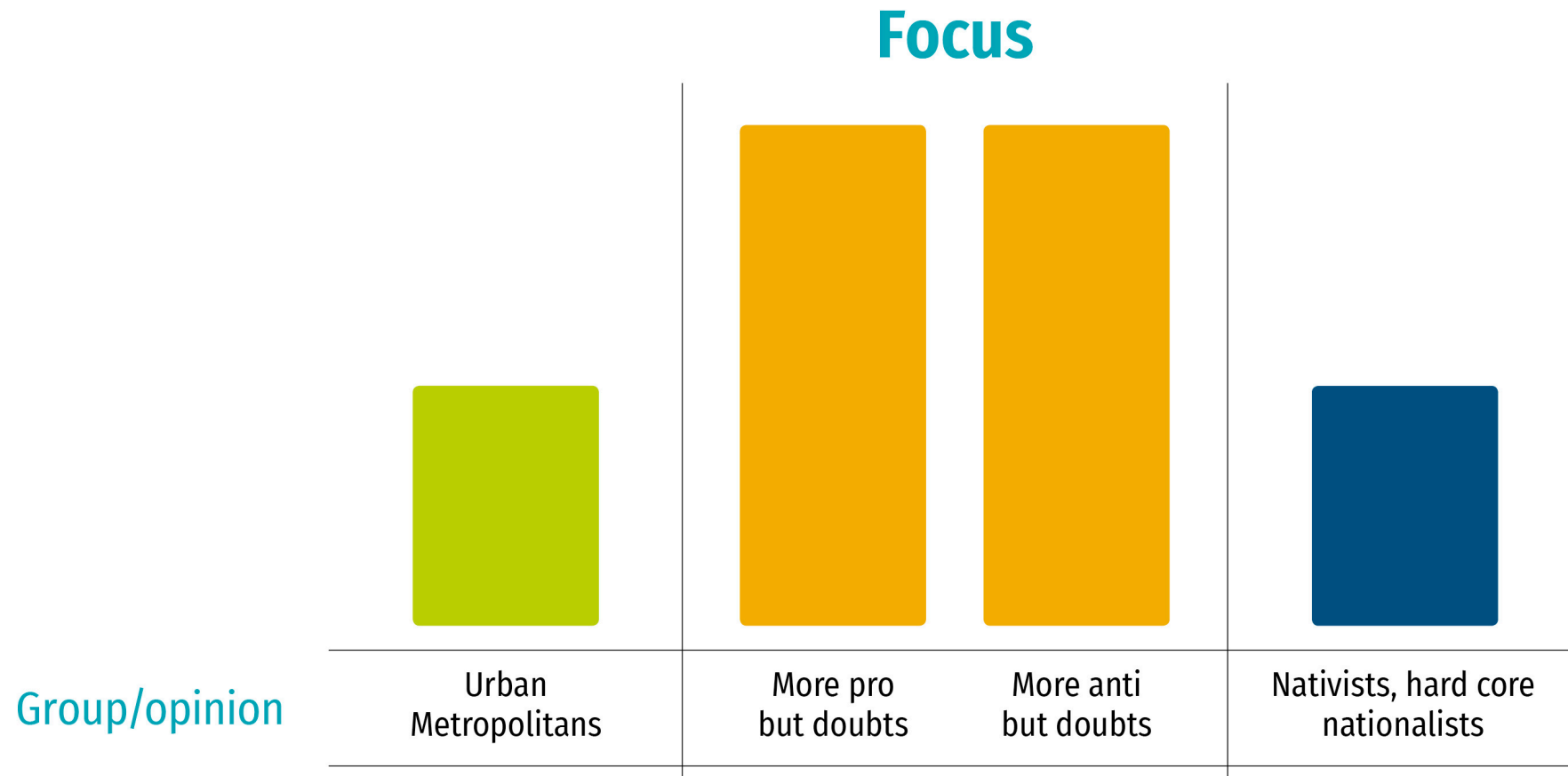
Frame map of the social media debate 2020



2. Public Attitude Segmentation & Targeting the Middle

Targeting the middle

Common Population Segments in the Migration Debate



What are the middle like?

Defining characteristics of the middle:

Not so informed, engaged – holding ideas that often don't follow

- Mushy, Balancers

You can change their minds

- Movable, Balancers

Are emotional, influenced and tired by ongoing debates

- Conflicted/Anxious/Frustrated/Exhausted

#KommMit Pilot Coalition (2023)



Core working Group



Partner im
**Kompetenznetzwerk
Islam- und Muslimfeindlichkeit**



MOSAIK e.V.



Multikulturelles
Forum e.V.

Members of



Allianz

Support Organisations



Gefördert vom



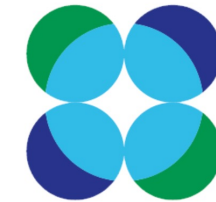
Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend

im Rahmen des Bundesprogramms

Demokratie *leben!*

Target Audience/Segment

Germany's six segments

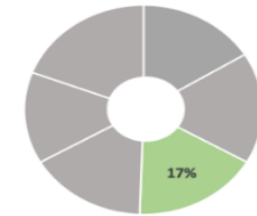


**More in
Common**

3) The Established

Quite pro-migration, pro-democracy, rule-following, Centrist, oldest

Top issues: Provision for the elderly/pensions; affordable homes; combatting criminality/violence



Migration attitudes		Anxieties & demographics	
Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree migration is good for the economy Majority agree it has benefits for employers But divided over whether it will strengthen the social system Think it will lead housing market competition Agree 2nd & 3rd generation migrants contribute equally 	Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree migration is good for cultural life Disagree it will lead to a loss of "German-ness" Don't feel like a foreigner in Germany On balance, agree people with different background & beliefs live well together 	Trust & anxieties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel valued Don't feel like second-class citizens But tend to feel economically marginalized Tend to think the world is changing too fast & becoming more dangerous Feel in control of their future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority satisfied with democracy Trust politicians – especially local ones But frustrated with political correctness Rule-followers Worried about right-wing extremism
Islam/Muslims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure if Islam & Germany society are compatible On balance, agree Muslims are part of the community On balance, disagree Muslims hold similar values to them Some worry about the rejection of Muslims in society 	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree migrants try to integrate Agree well-integrated guest workers can stay Strongly think refugees deserve asylum 	Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oldest (50% 60+) Slightly more male (55%) Urban More protestant Union & SPD voters, some Green Average education & income 	

3. Facts & Debunking as pillars of a comms campaign

Fact checking

1. Policy work
2. Political debate & media/civic oversight
3. Counter normalisation of misinformation
4. For the record

Facts in a strategic comms plan

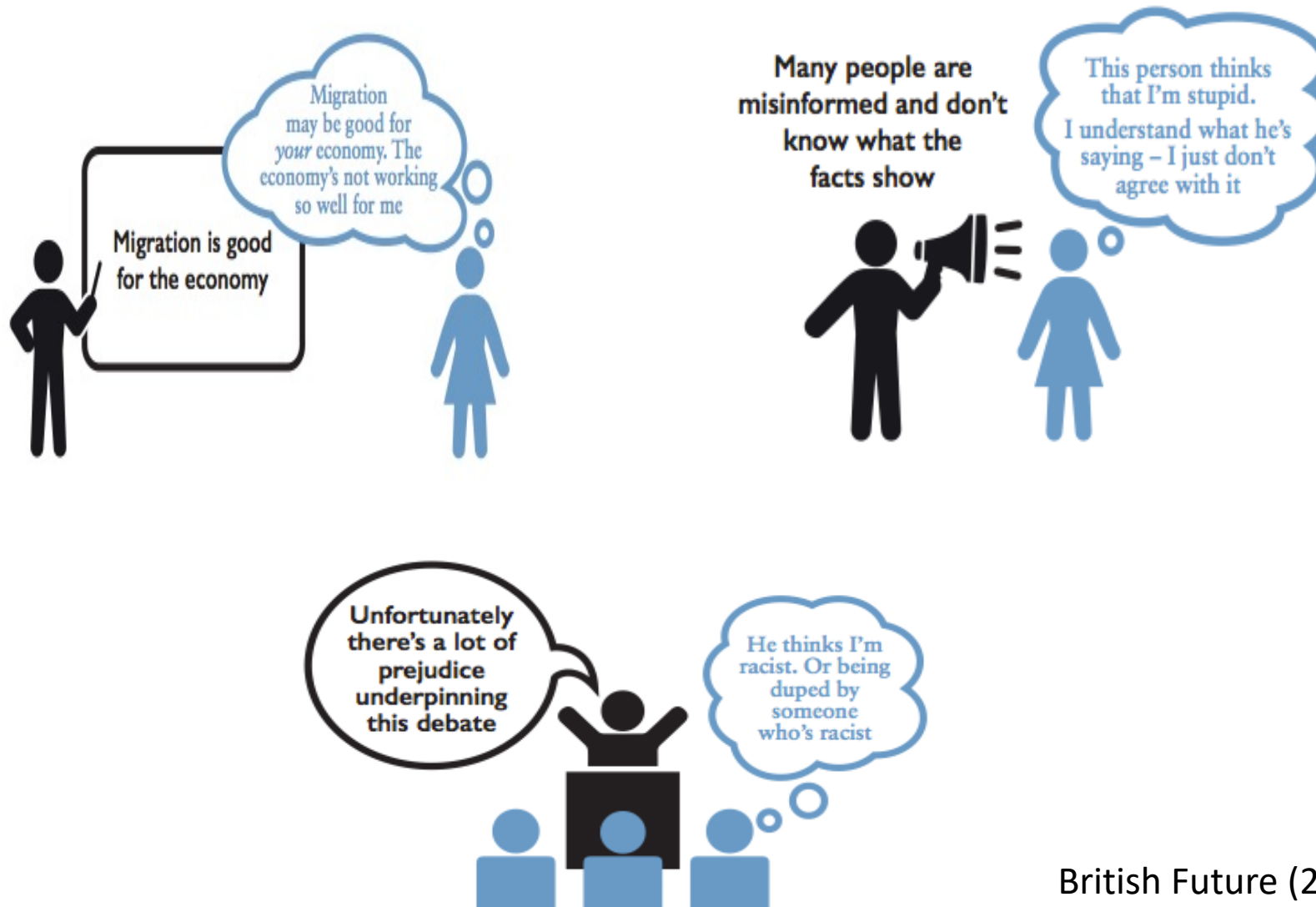
Theory/Research on Debunking

- Strength of the ‘backfiring’ argument was not borne out
- But identity-focused attachment to narratives triggering strong emotional responses remain very powerful

Practice

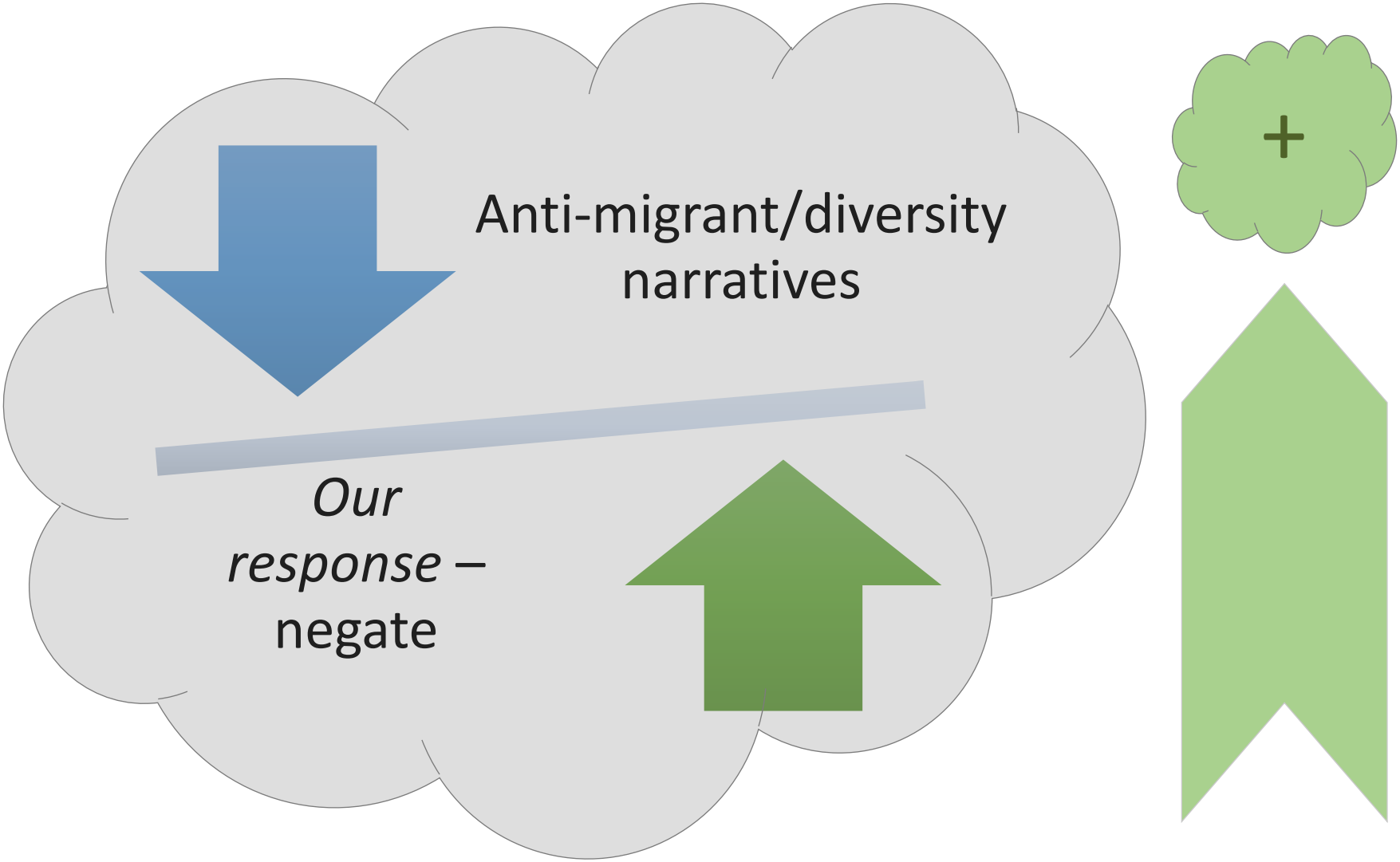
1. Not just the what, but how facts are often presented
2. Opponents set the agenda, so also “change the weather”
3. Both/and, not either/or – facts and values
4. Value based sequencing of values to issues & facts

More a lecture than a conversation

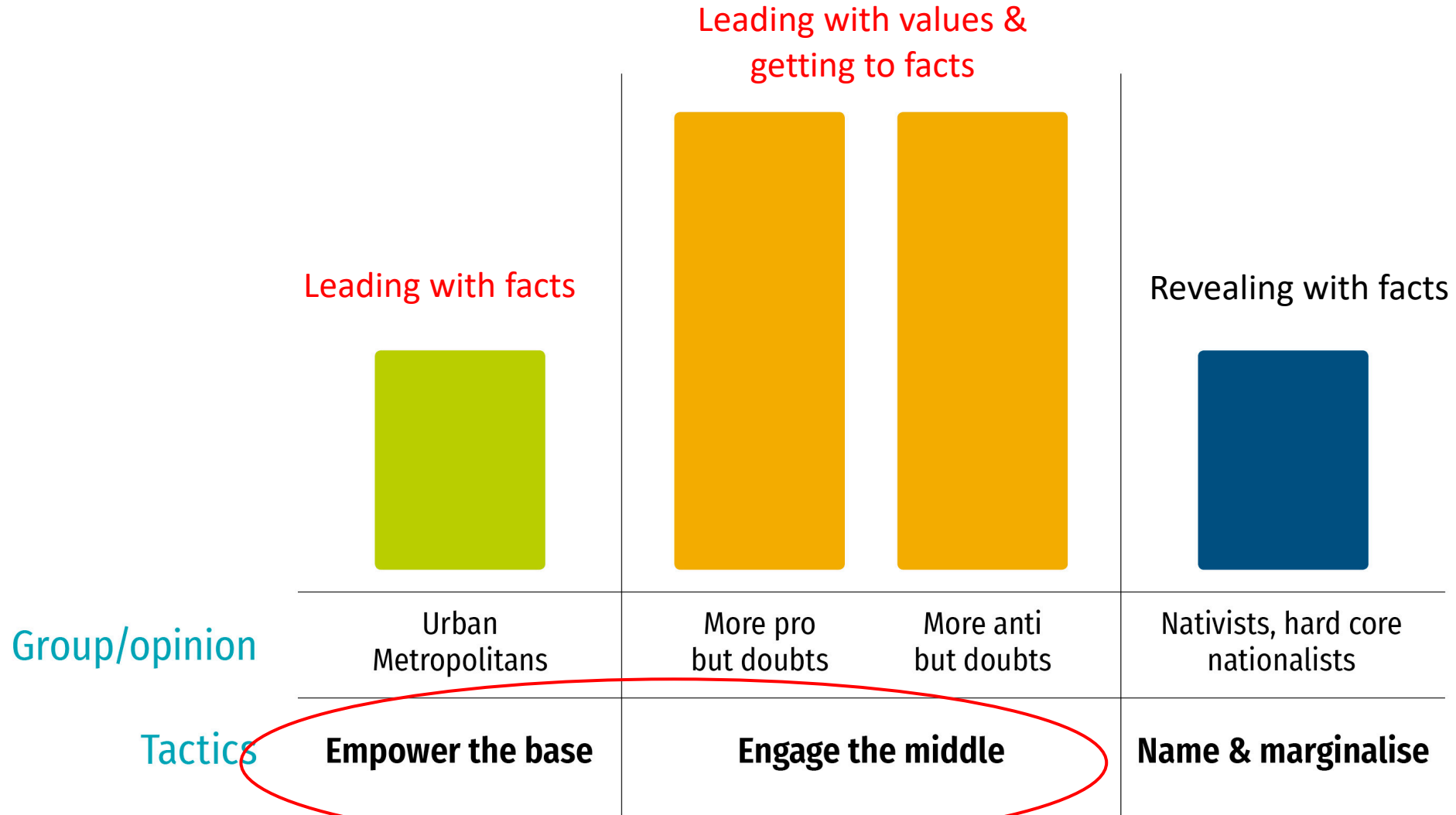


British Future (2014),
*How to talk about
Immigration*

Opponents set the agenda, so “change the weather”



Both/And, Not Either/Or



Value-based narrative change



Lead with **Values** through **Stories** to get to **Issues**

4. Sequencing values to facts

Campaign
Case – Come
join us!/
CLAIM Allianz
members

Komm Mit

Wie sieht der Alltag muslimischer Menschen aus?

Genau diese Einblicke fehlen uns oft. Einblicke in den Alltag muslimischer Menschen.

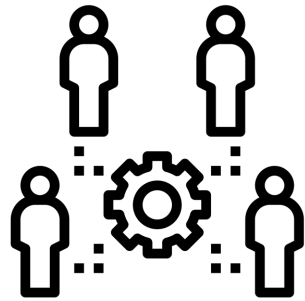
Sie alle prägen unsere Gesellschaft: als Kollegen, Nachbarinnen und Freunde – durch Höhen und Tiefen.

Um eine bessere Zukunft für uns alle zu gestalten, stehen wir als Gemeinschaft füreinander ein.

#KommMit und erlebe die Energie der Gemeinschaft.



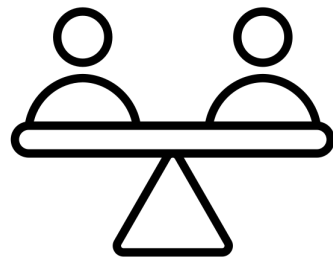
#KommMit Value Appeals



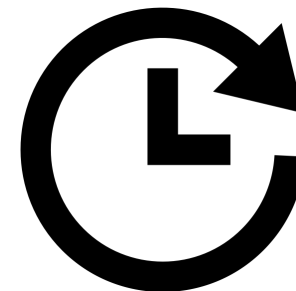
Togetherness/
Interdependence/
Solidarity



Responsibility/
contribution/
Participation



Justice/
Stability/
Security



Intergenerational
Future

3 x Tradespeople Protagonists

1. **Ayoub** - Baker



2. **Murat** – Carpenter



3. **Yusuf** - Butcher

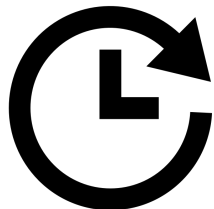


Value-based narrative change



Lead with **Values** through **Stories** to get to **Issues**

#KommMit – Sequence Values to issues/facts



1. Values & Story

Im Gespräch mit Ayoub

Wie ist es, bei Bäckerei Kanne zu arbeiten?

Wie sieht dein Alltag aus?

Wie hast Du Dein Handwerk erlernt?

Was sind deine Aufgaben in der Bäckerei Kanne?

Was magst Du am liebsten an Deiner Arbeit?

Was machst Du zum Vergnügen?

Wie ist es, bei Bäckerei Kanne zu arbeiten?



”

Ich liebe meine Arbeit und habe gute Erfahrungen gemacht mit Familie Kanne. Qualität ist immer wichtig und muss immer gut sein. Das gefällt mir. Und Kanne hat gutes Brot und guten Kuchen.

Wir strengen uns immer an. Denn wenn man einmal zu Kanne geht und einen Kuchen kauft, der nicht gut schmeckt, dann kommt man beim zweiten Mal nicht wieder. Und dann haben wir keine Arbeit, keine Firma, keine Bäckerei.

Kanne ist seit über hundert Jahren in der Familie. Und wenn man in Lünen sagt „Ich arbeite bei Kanne“, weiß jeder, wo man arbeitet. Und jeder kennt die Qualität bei Kanne und den „Ährenkodex“, wie Biomehl und das Backen von Brötchen ohne Backmittel.

Es ist schwierig, Brötchen ohne Backmittel zu machen. Sie müssen dann auch länger ruhen. Aber dafür sind sie gesünder als Brötchen mit Backmittel. Und sie schmecken immer besser.

“

Wie sieht dein Alltag aus?

”

2. Full Story of Ayoub & Others

What does the everyday life of Muslim people look like?

It is precisely these insights that we often lack. Insights into the everyday lives of Muslim people.


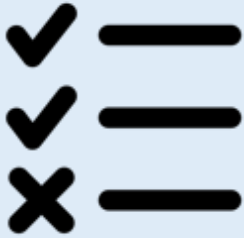
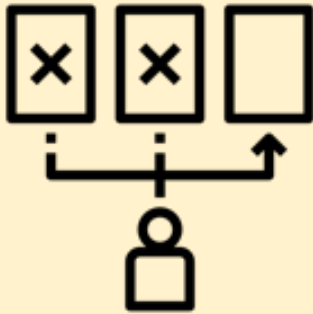

They all shape our society: as colleagues, neighbours and friends - through ups and downs.

To shape a better future for us all, we stand up for each other as a community.

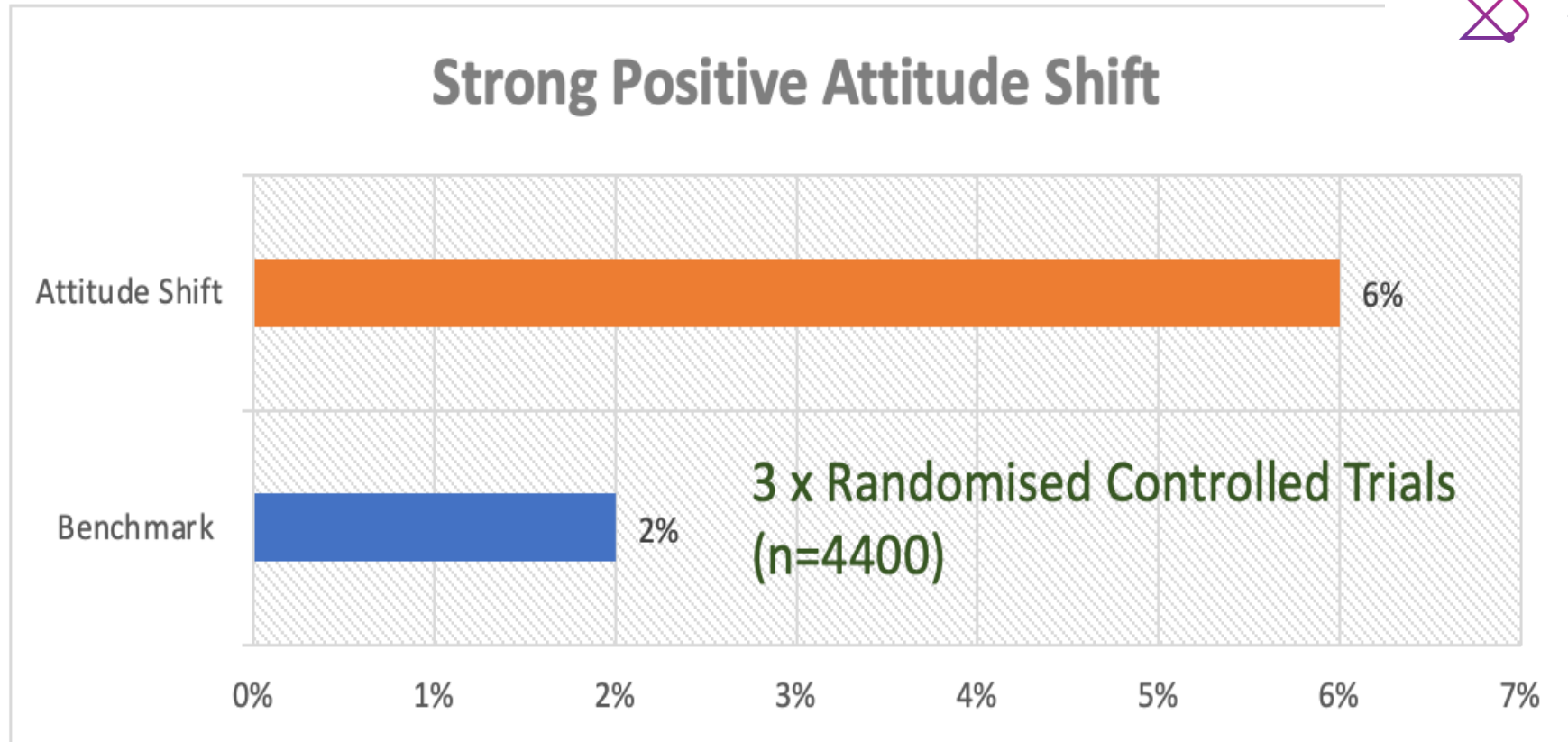
#ComeWith and experience the energy of community.

3. Issue in the Pitch

Testing Methods used in #KommMit

Testing the campaign concept		Testing & Evaluating the campaign content	
1. Focus groups	2. Opinion polling	3. Test & learn with ads	4. Randomised Controlled Trials
			

Key Response Result 1



- Trails on videos and storyboards for 3 protagonists
- Swayable for videos + Fast Facts for Storyboards
- Big investment for the pilot

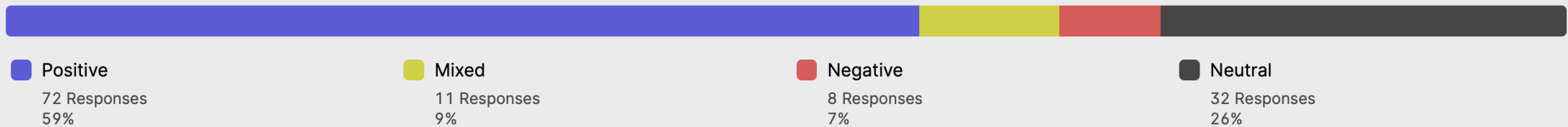


Key Response Result 2

Summary for Brotgenuss aus der Familienbäckerei #KommMit

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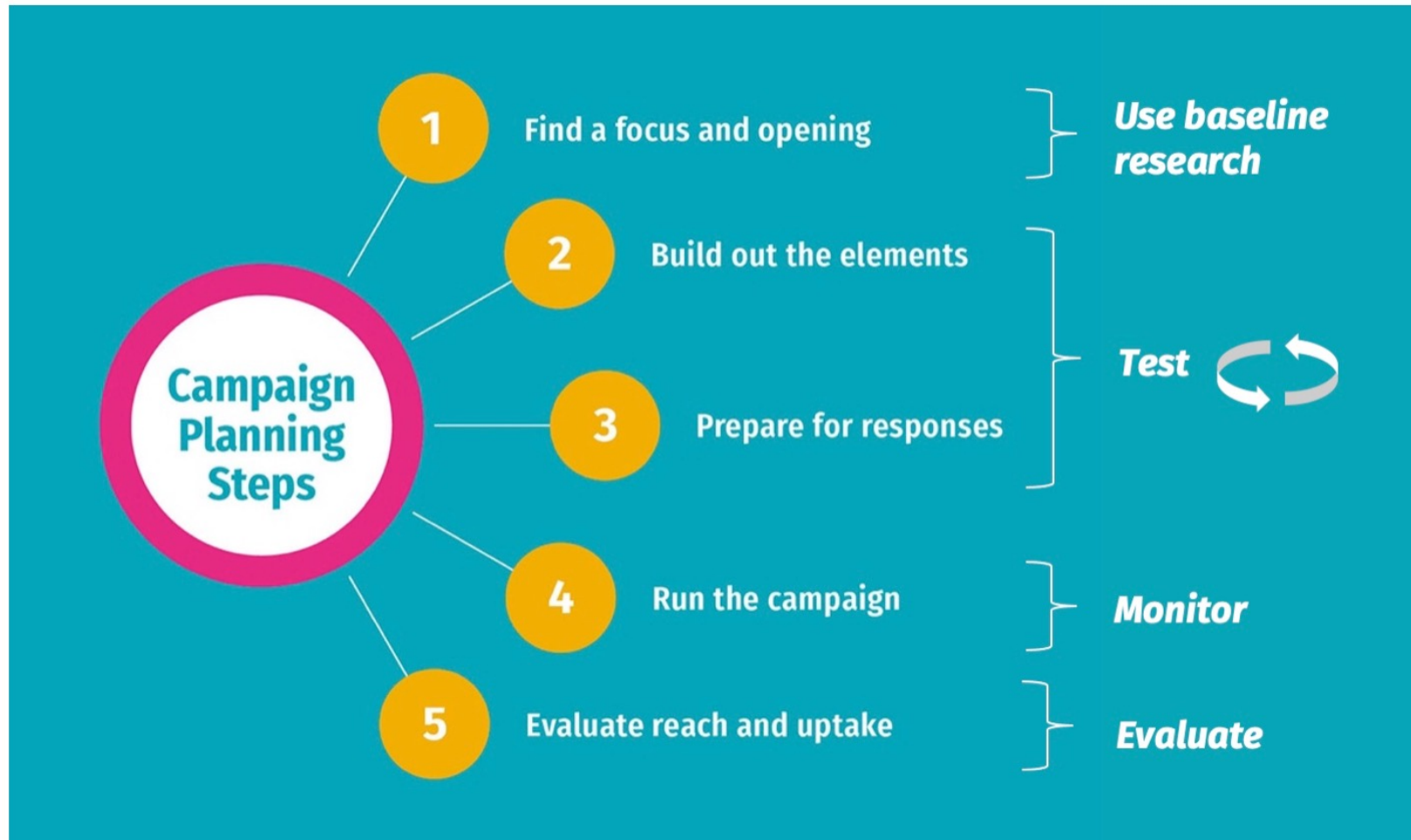
Relevant Responses



1. 80% positive or neutral & 20% negative or mixed
2. Only 1% strongly negative responses or hate speech

5. Message testing & partnering in the big challenge

Empirically-driven Narrative Change



Key Resource (in SC Knowledge Base)

Message Testing Methods for Narrative Change



Testing Method 1 - **Focus groups**
to get rich emotive group responses

+



Testing Method 2 - **Opinion polling on messages**
to robustly test messages & triangulate results

+



Testing Method 3 - **Randomised Controlled Trails (RCT)**
to measure attitude change with confidence

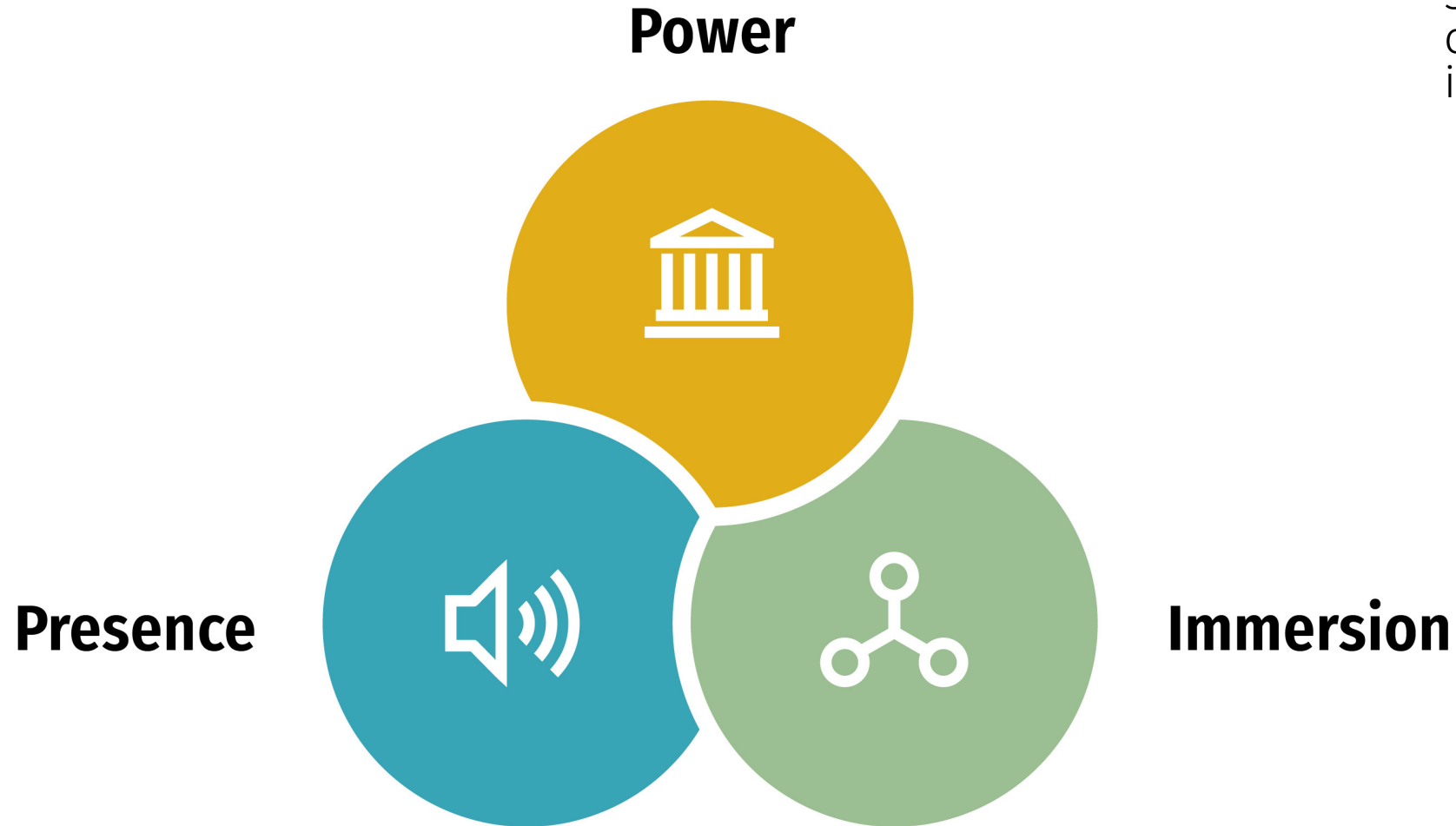
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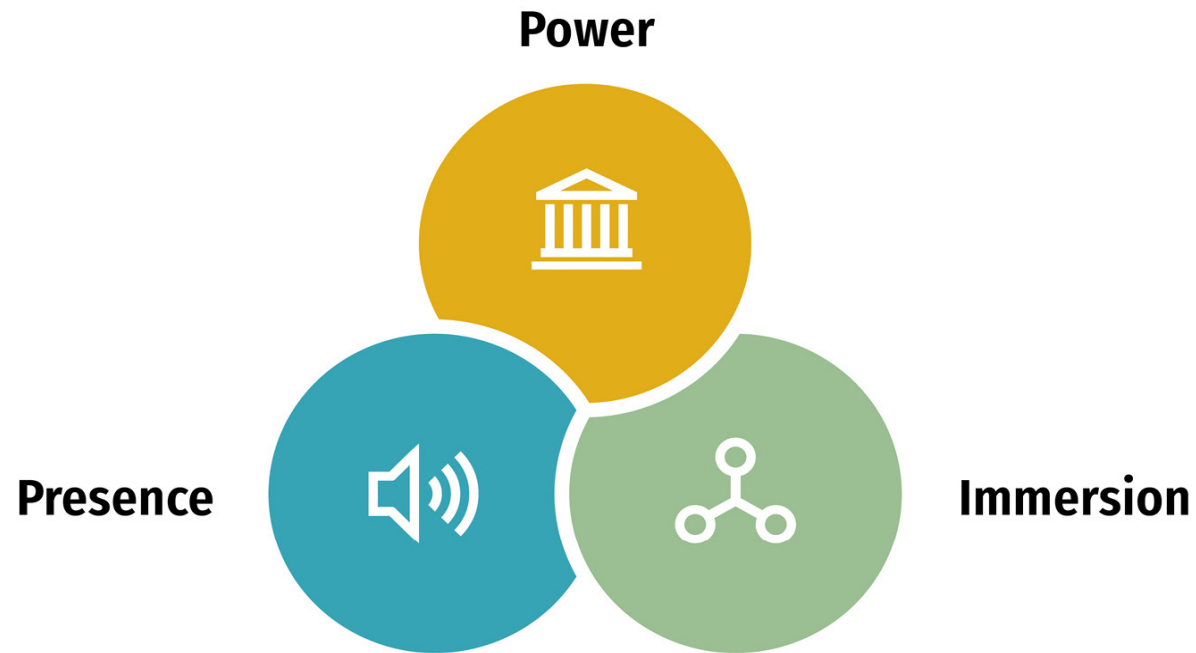


Testing Method 4 - **A/B testing on Social media**
to pick options that work better with your audience

+

Strategic Comms as a Theory of Change





Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → build consistent voice and visibility in media spaces → getting the message “out”/“known” → Dissemination → building surround sound, volume and velocity
Immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → design engaging interventions to socialise narratives in interactions, relationships and everyday practice → getting the message “in”/“owned” → chances to discover/engage with the narrative → Shifting norms/behavioural expectations
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → making the political space or building the support to make change → changing the rules of policy/law

Key resources from presentation

1. [#KommMit Toolbox/Building a narrative strategy using framemaps and segmentation research](#)
2. [Message Testing Methods for Narrative Change](#)
3. [#KommMit toolbox](#) – broad overview of the case I presented & the process of development
4. [Strategic Communications Knowledge Base](#) – All of our toolkits and insights into narrative change in Migration and Civic Space

Thank you! 👍