

# ***ELSEWHERE&them***

THE PILOT REPORT

MAY 2025



LEILA  
MODIRZADEH

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# LETTER FROM LEILA

Hi,

Thank you for being here.

Elsewhere&Them is my first attempt at launching a research project solo, and it means a lot to me. As a third culture kid, coming from a blend of cultures, rich with beliefs and traditions, I've navigated a world rife with misconceptions about "the other" half of me. Caught in between the not-so-subtle crossfire, I have been met with continuous cycles of misinformation, stereotyping, and judgement against both of my cultures, despite there being very obvious compatibilities between them. I mean, I would think that my brother and I, along with an estimated 230 million third culture kids in the world, would be proof that compatibility is possible.

Through the merging of my two families and the history that comes with it, I've been here, much like you, navigating the complexities of our global community. I've seen how misunderstanding and misrepresentation can deepen divides. However, I've also seen how honest dialogue can dismantle them.

Though I'm not British, I have been a resident here for 7 years. I was educated here, I've built a life here, paid taxes, volunteered my time, and formed connections here. While the rhetoric that currently stands is that migrants take and fail to give back, our vested interests are not separate to British common good and often go beyond the taxes that we pay. There is a labour of love, freely offered, inspired by the values of connection and community that we carry with us. It reflects the rich cultures we come from that centre community, resilience, and mutual support.

These are my insights both from the outside, as someone who's experienced, lived, and observed how different societies take shape and respond to difference, and from within, as someone who interacts with, relies on, and is depended upon by the community that surrounds me. I have a vested interest in how my neighbour feels, how safe women feel walking home, the medical care people in need should receive, and how comfortable people different from me are in the same environments I exist in.

This pilot project is grounded in the context I live in, with the hope that it can expand into multiple cultural and societal settings currently wrestling with the trope of living in a "divided society." One that, with time and the right frame of mind, we can bring back together. The only thing that separates us, most times, is circumstance and fear.

Much of this report will be conversational, perhaps a little different to what you're used to. This project has been built on the foundational belief that understanding builds community, and a huge part of that is ensuring that the conversation around it is accessible to everyone as well.

I'd encourage you to gently set aside any fears you may have of the unknown and replace them with the courage to explore and understand more.

Warmly,

Leila Modirzadeh



# ABOUT ELSEWHERE &THEM

In a world that often seeks to divide us, creating opportunities to build bridges is more important than ever. Elsewhere&Them is rooted in the belief that connection begins with conversation — that by sharing our lived experiences, beliefs, and ideas, we spark understanding and openness. In doing so, we start to question what it truly means to belong, no matter where we come from or where we are going. And who knows? We may discover we're more similar than we think.

Using public opinion research and segmentation to run temperature checks on what people are feeling, who is saying what, and why, the challenge — and the objective — is to find the 'value overlap' between you and someone different from you. By using data and asking questions that give people a say on their attitudes, values, and perceptions, we create common ground to build community, guiding forward conversations.

Elsewhere&Them is designed to support strategic communication campaigns for anyone who sees the value in proactively building community with evidence — whether you're an organisation, government office, local council, working on the ground at grassroots level, or simply someone curious about the power of connection.

It aims to become a tool for reframing campaigns and narratives that shape how we see one another, laying the groundwork for stronger, more inclusive communities.

Gut feelings are great, and this project essentially sets the foundation for the important work currently underway to re-establish community bonds — but with a bit more focus and clarity.

It also hopes to be a tool to counter misconceptions and apprehensions founded on disinformation or perceived threats to internal and external security.

By reframing the rhetoric, Elsewhere&Them seeks to lead and build community into our everyday lives, reflecting the society we live in and the society we need moving forward.

At its heart, Elsewhere&Them is a litmus test of community in the UK today — how it's felt, viewed, and practised. How connected are we, really? By exploring questions of shared values, cultural exchange, and the experience of simply being, this project aims to reflect how connected the UK truly feels — and to explore how we might amplify that sense of connection in all aspects of our lives.

At the moment, Elsewhere&Them is a one-person project, but it aims to grow into something much bigger, expanding the reach and impact of this work to support stronger, more connected communities across the UK and beyond.

# WHY NOW?

## Well, Why not?

We seem to feel, and we're told - even at the highest levels - that community in the UK is dying.

But I wanted to put that to the test.

We're living in a world that increasingly seeks to undermine existing unity within our respective environments, and the power of community in times of strife.

Media sources reinforce and sensationalise our biggest fears, as do algorithms, pushing narratives that fail to represent the realities of who we are, and the need for our differences to prosper together.

The 2024 riots that erupted following the Southport stabbings were a textbook example of both how quickly hostility can flare into violence, but also the strength of community, as thousands of counter-protestors took to the streets\* across the UK, standing firmly against the invitation of hatred and in defence of their fellow community members.

When key leaders draw on these sensationalised fears — like Keir Starmer's recent remarks warning that "Great Britain risks becoming an island of strangers"\* — it undermines both the existence and expression of British core values, disproportionately placing the burden on ethnically diverse communities to prove their belonging. It reinforces the idea that community

building is the responsibility of those who are 'different.' This framing feeds into the sentiment that some people don't belong 'well enough,' while ignoring that genuine community requires openness and effort from all sides. This dynamic fuels division and will continue to do so until something changes.

Having lived in various environments and being living proof that we are more similar and compatible than we think we are, I'd like to think an alternative to this pathway can pave the way to a different, more resilient direction.

After all, humans evolved as a result of their need for socialisation, and losing community or failing to prioritise it goes against our own hierarchy of needs.

Right now, we stand on a knife's edge. A sharp decline in engagement could pose significant risks for community building and internal security, and various calls to action need to be implemented soon to u-turn the rhetoric that continues to fragment the connections we need to move forward.

\*Sky News, 7 August 2024 | [Thousands of counter-protesters take to UK streets as far-right unrest fails to materialise](#)

\*Keir Starmer, May 2025 | [UK Risks becoming 'island of strangers'](#)

# HOW WE ASKED\*: THE FRAMEWORK

## PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT USEFUL?

Public opinion means just that — the opinions of citizens, just like you and me. These views are gathered through online surveys, face-to-face interviews, or even by telephone, offering a window into how people feel, think, and navigate everyday life.

Organisations use public opinion research to understand how the public responds to issues that matter, from the food we eat or the Netflix shows we watch, to what we think of the current government, how much we pay for electricity, or how optimistic we feel about the future. It's a platform for the everyday person to express the realities of their experiences in actual terms.

In this context, conducting a survey through a nationally representative omnibus allowed me to ask key questions about how people across the UK experience and perceive community today.

While gut instinct is powerful, it's often shaped by personal biases. So it's best not to rely on it alone when trying to understand the public — especially if you're designing programmes, shaping policies, or attempting to shift social norms.

Instead, public opinion research offers a litmus test — a pulse of what people are really thinking and experiencing. It helps us evaluate whether theoretical goals are playing out in practice. It shows us how public attitudes are shaped by policy, culture, media, and events — and where there's still work to do.

When used well, it becomes a necessary tool to design strategies and campaigns that are rooted in reality, and that deliver measurable impact.

## HOW TOPICS WERE CHOSEN

The topics and questions were carefully selected based on a combination of previous research, current social and political conversations, and the core goals of this project: to understand where people are currently at in terms of values, how often and how importantly community plays a part in their day-to-day lives, whether people's experiences reflect the dominant narratives we see, and how we can frame questions more proactively to understand who is saying what, and what we can take from that to build more inclusive and connected communities.

The approach intentionally moves away from the typical academic style to make the survey more accessible and inclusive. As a pilot, this survey serves as a foundational base for more exhaustive research that can continue to explore these important topics in a more holistic and comprehensive way.

# FW

Fieldwork was conducted between April 28<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 by **Yonder Data Solutions**

# 2075

People in the UK took part in the survey (a sample size that's **nationally representative**)

# 12

Core questions around values, cross-cultural connections, comfort and perceived similarity were asked.

# 25

Demographic questions captured respondents' background, identity and lived context proportionate to the UK population (e.g. age, ethnicity, religion, migration history, region, etc.)



For access to sources or references in this report, please contact me directly. Detailed graphs will be shared in a separate report.

# KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

So, is community dying in the UK? Here's what the data tells us - a snapshot of some key findings that reveal encouraging signs and highlight areas to build on, while there's still loads more being explored behind the scenes:

**72% SAY THEIR CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS ARE POSITIVE.**

**PEOPLE CHOSE FAMILY, HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND FRIENDSHIPS OVER FINANCIAL GAIN AND SUCCESS.**

**PEOPLE FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE WHEN THEY ARE WITH LOVED ONES AND IN FAMILIAR SPACES: CAFES, PARKS, LOCAL SHOPS**

**3 IN 5 PEOPLE HAVE FELT OUT OF PLACE - YOUNG ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE MOST LIKELY TO FEEL THIS WAY**

**A HEALTHY MAJORITY OF ETHNICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE FEEL INTEGRATED AND FIND IT EASY TO NAVIGATE LOCAL SYSTEMS**

**KEY DIFFERENCES EMERGE BETWEEN FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION MIGRANTS IN THE UK**

**SHARED VALUES, LIFESTYLES AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS SHAPE HOW SIMILAR PEOPLE FEEL TO OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD**

**DESPITE BREXIT, BRITONS STILL FEEL STRONG CULTURAL PROXIMITY TO EUROPE.**

## 1. CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

While just under 30% of the UK population interact with people from different backgrounds\* on a daily basis, 72% say that their cross-cultural interactions are **positive**.

This suggests a quiet openness to difference in everyday and thus a willingness to connect. Of the remaining 28%, most were simply neutral, pointing more to passive tolerance than active discomfort. Even more reassuring, only around 1-4% said their experiences were negative – statistically minor, but still a reminder that there's still work to be done.

Looking at specific attributes, interactions with people who had different hobbies or interests were viewed most positively, with 77% describing them as positive, followed closely by interactions across ethnic difference at 73% (that's nearly 3 in 4 people).

A small portion, around 4 in 25 people, seemed less conscious of how often they interact with others of different religions, sexualities and economic backgrounds.

More broadly, 69% of people engage with those who are different from them at least once a month. Interactions were least common with people who speak a different language (59%) and those of different sexualities (61%) – though the latter may reflect uncertainty, as these identities aren't always visible or openly shared. Following from this, interactions with people who spoke a different

language were the least likely to be described as positive, but still, 66% viewed them positively. This suggests that while language can be a barrier, it isn't necessarily a blocker to meaningful connection.

Diving a little deeper, women were consistently more positive and open in their cross-cultural interactions than men, despite interacting with different groups nearly just as often. Whether the difference was in religion, culture, language or lifestyle, women reported higher levels of comfort and receptiveness across the board. In some cases, this gap in positivity was more than 10 percentage points.

Across the board, young adults (aged 18-34) were the most likely to interact with people from different backgrounds, and the most likely to describe those interactions positively. This is to be expected given this demographic's exposure to diversity in workplaces, education and online communities.

**There is much more to explore in the relationships between the frequency and quality of these interactions, especially their influence on values, comfort, and connection. This is just a quick snapshot of what the data shows, and there's much more currently being explored behind the scenes. But overall, these results show promise and openness, challenging some of the negative narratives we see today, and provide a solid foundation to build on.**

\*Different backgrounds include people with varying religions, ethnicities, cultures, hobbies or interests, income levels, sexualities, and languages to the person answering the survey.

# KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

## 2. VALUES

Contrary to common assumptions, people in the UK place greater importance on emotional and relational well-being than financial or material success. When asked to select their most important values, respondents overwhelmingly chose **family, health, happiness, and friendship**.

**Family** came out on top, chosen by 68% of people. Women were 9% more likely than men to prioritise close ties with loved ones (72% vs 63%), and there was little variation across age groups. With the rise in multi-generational living due to cost-of-living pressures, this emphasis on family may reflect growing interdependence within households\*.

**Health** was prioritised by over half of respondents, especially those aged 65+, people in relationships, and those responsible for grocery shopping. It was also more common among readers of print publications like the Daily Mail and Stylist, where health is a recurring theme.

**Happiness**, defined as feeling joy or contentment in daily life, was selected by 28%, and most commonly by 18–34 year olds.

People who had felt out of place were also slightly more likely to prioritise happiness (30% vs 24%).

**Friendship** ranked fourth, most valued by 18–24 year olds (39%) and single people (33%).

Just 18% of people chose **financial stability** — understood as being able to afford what you need without stress — as a top value. It was slightly higher among people who have moved to the UK (23%) and those in professional or supervisory roles (21%). A notable share of pensioners also prioritised it, possibly reflecting concerns following Labour's winter fuel payment cuts in late 2024. While there are ongoing discussions of a potential U-turn, the issue remains unsettled and worrisome nonetheless\*.

**Taken together, these findings point to a collective leaning toward and prioritisation of connection and wellbeing, challenging dominant narratives that centre individualism or material achievement as the ultimate measure of success.**

## 3. COMFORT

According to the data, Britons feel most comfortable through connection — both with others and with familiar spaces.

Three in four people said they feel most at ease when they're with **family or loved ones**. Women were 11% more likely than men to say this, echoing themes explored earlier.

Just over one-third said they feel most comfortable in **familiar places — such as cafés, parks, or local shops**. This was particularly true for women (39%), 18–24-year-olds (38%), 25–34s (37%), and those aged 55+ (40%).

**Feeling safe and accepted** in their surroundings was also key to comfort for nearly 1 in 3 people. This mattered most to those in the South East (41%), South West (40%), Yorkshire and the Humber (39%)

and Northern Ireland (39%) — possibly reflecting regional concerns around economic divides, cultural visibility, or even accent-based bias, all of which can shape how welcome people feel in public spaces.

Over 1 in 5 people (22%) said they feel most comfortable when **free from judgement about how they look, speak, or dress**. This was especially true for younger people (26%), the DE social grade (25%), Londoners (28%), first-generation migrants (30%), people of mixed ethnic backgrounds (30%), and disabled respondents (34%).

**These findings suggest that unspoken stigmatisation, from classism to ableism, continues to affect how people navigate public and social spaces, often shaping comfort levels through subtle forms of exclusion rather than overt hostility.**

\*Burgess, G. and Muir, K. (2019) | [‘The Increase in Multigenerational Households in the UK: The Motivations for and Experiences of Multigenerational Living’](#)

\*The Guardian, 2025 | [‘Labour could review other benefit cuts after winter fuel U-turn, sources say’](#)

# KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

## 4. BELONGING

Nearly **3 in 5 people have felt out of place** in a social situation or environment. While this may seem to contrast with the generally warmer sentiments seen in earlier questions, it invites deeper reflection on what causes these feelings and how we can address them.

Young people (18–24-year-olds) and people with disabilities were the most likely to report feeling out of place across all demographics. Women were also more likely to have experienced this (64% versus 56% of men). Jobseekers (70%), single people (70%), and those who moved to the UK (68%) reported these feelings more frequently compared to just 44% of third-generation migrants. Notably, 81% of people with a mental disability said they had felt this way, echoing qualitative findings.

When asked what contributed to these feelings, many cited social anxiety and fear of being judged, often by people they perceived as different in terms of ethnicity, culture, or economic class. These fears are compounded by systemic issues such as a lack of inclusivity and awareness around supporting people with disabilities, as well as classism in the education system, which can influence social interactions and perceptions of social desirability. Despite this, differences between social grades were not stark, ranging from 55% of people in the C2 social grade to 61% in the C1 grade reporting feeling out of place.

“My disability puts me at a distinct disadvantage ...people dont always realise. - Quite often, i am ignored or talked over”

Respondent

“Being at university and having people from boarding/private schools asking where you went to school before asking your name”

Respondent

## 5. LIVING IN THE UK FOR ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Living in the UK as someone from an ethnically diverse background reveals two equally important truths:

**69% of people say they feel integrated into British society and can navigate systems like work, healthcare and education — yet 62% have experienced racism or discrimination.**

These realities sit side by side, reminding us that being part of the system doesn't always mean being embraced by it. Men were more likely to say they feel integrated than women (78% vs 61%), and those in work (73%) were also more likely to feel this way. People said they mostly connect with others through hobbies (84%) and religious or spiritual spaces (77%) — two areas that may offer a stronger sense of belonging.

Other findings show a layered experience:

- 64% feel connected to British culture
- 61% feel accepted by some UK communities
- 58% feel comfortable talking about personal issues
- 55% feel their experience here is different from their family's

But there's also hesitation:

- Nearly half said their cultural traditions are respected, while 41% were unsure
- 37% have felt pressure to hide or compromise aspects of their culture or religion, while 36% haven't
- 39% said they've had to adapt their appearance to fit in, compared to 35% who said they haven't
- 38% said they've found it hard to adapt to UK customs or ways of life

**These findings highlight the nuanced and sometimes contradictory experience of belonging for ethnically diverse communities in the UK. So much more is to be built on these findings, especially across the nuances between different ethnicities, but they ultimately remind us that asking people to adapt is not the same as creating a society where they feel at home.**

# KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

## 6. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATION MIGRANTS IN THE UK

Too often, research in the UK relies on broad ethnic categories to understand people's experiences, but that can overlook the significance of when someone or their family first came to the UK. Whether someone is the first in their family to move here, was born to migrant parents, or comes from a family that's been settled for generations — these distinctions matter.

They shape how people feel about belonging, how connected they are to British culture, and how others respond to them. This pilot begins to explore those differences, encouraging future research to take a more nuanced approach that recognises these layers and their impact.

In our sample:

- 38% were second-generation migrants
- 31% first-generation
- 28% third-generation

Some key patterns emerged:

- First-generation migrants were the least likely to feel integrated (63%), compared to 77% of third-generation migrants
- Only 55% of first-generation respondents felt connected to the UK, rising to 65% for second-gen and 80% for third-gen
- Experiences of racism or discrimination were slightly higher among first (64%) and second-gen (63%) respondents than third-gen (60%)

Feelings of being out of place followed a similar pattern:

- 36% first-gen
- 35% second-gen
- 25% third-gen

When it came to housing:

- 47% of first-gen migrants were renters, while 41% of second-gen were homeowners

Values also shifted with generational distance:

- First-gen migrants prioritised financial stability (42%)
- While second-generation (52%) and third-generation (28%) participants were more likely to choose friendship.

Regionally, most second-generation respondents lived in Scotland (49%) and London (47%), hinting at the pull of education, job opportunities, and more multicultural environments.

**Understanding how these differences affect people day to day can also help challenge the assumptions and biases that work against them, while better meeting the specific needs that emerge across generations.**

## 7. BEYOND UK BORDERS

Part of exploring connection and community building also means exploring how we interact with and perceive people beyond UK borders.

For Britons, **shared values, lifestyles and cultural traditions shape how similar people feel to others around the world.**

While Brexit altered the trajectory of EU-UK relations, the sense of closeness hasn't entirely disappeared: 51% of people said they feel most similar to those in Western Europe, and 2 in 5 chose Southern Europe. The UK and the US may act like distant cousins on the global stage — connected, but different. 39% of respondents said they feel a sense of similarity with people in the US, a figure

that matched those who felt most similar to people from the Nordic countries.

Following this, just over a third related to people from Eastern Europe (35%), with the figure dropping to 21% for those from the Oceanic region. People felt least similar to those from Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, with just 11% and 10% respectively choosing them as similar.

Interestingly, shared cultural traditions or customs were a stronger factor for men than women (43% vs 32%), while for women, similar lifestyles or ways of living mattered more (43% vs 37%).

# WHAT THIS TELLS US

While there's still a lot of work to be done, at least we're not starting from scratch – and the foundations are strong enough to build on.

Ultimately, the data shows promise. It suggests that the hostilities we're often told are widespread and irredeemable are, in reality, confined to a small minority – not significant enough to define the bigger picture.

We are far from perfect, but the framework to challenge the forces that instil barriers to our collective belonging is developing.

Our approaches to campaigning and community engagement will naturally need to vary across different segments of society. Yet the grounds we're starting from already indicate communal openness and receptiveness rather than resistance or reluctance.

So maybe the problem isn't that we are different. It's that we haven't yet learned to challenge the forces that keep insisting we are. It's the narrative of a few that shapes how we see each other, twisting 'tolerance', a core British value, into fear and apprehension.

The data reflects this complexity. While just under 30% of people interact daily with those from different backgrounds, over 70% describe these interactions as positive. Even among those less engaged, many are neutral rather than negative, suggesting passive tolerance rather than active discomfort. But nearly three in five have felt out of place socially, with women, younger people, and disabled individuals feeling it most. This points to barriers beyond cultural difference, including fear of judgment and systemic issues like classism and ableism.

Yet, despite these challenges, over two-thirds of ethnically diverse communities report feeling integrated into British society, with many engaging through work, hobbies, and spiritual spaces. Even so, 62% have experienced racism or discrimination, a stark reminder that this integration is far from seamless.

Understanding how these differences impact people daily helps counteract biases and better meet the needs that arise. For example, first-generation migrants report lower feelings of connection and higher experiences of discrimination compared to third-generation migrants, highlighting how migration history shapes lived realities.

What's more, on the global stage, people feel connected yet different. Many feel closest to Western and Southern Europeans, with a notable sense of similarity to the US and Nordic countries, while ties to regions like Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia are less felt, underscoring how exposure to different cultures can play into belonging.

What this all pleads for is more 'third spaces' – spaces where open dialogue and genuine connection can thrive. Cookie-cutter approaches to community building have failed because they often emphasise difference, which only wedges us further apart.

If we reshape existing campaigns to focus on what unites us – shared values, common aspirations, and collective resilience – we can build greater trust in ourselves, our institutions, and each other. This trust will encourage active participation in society and foster a resilience that counters the vulnerabilities we face.

While the data is promising, some fractures show which highlight some of the concerns we've seen being expressed or addressed on the news or on social media. There is still a lot to be done to firstly support people who feel like they lack belonging, are discriminated against, or judged, and create frameworks to reinforce positive messaging, which has been known to subliminally impact perceptions positively.

# POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FORWARD

The data offers optimism, but it also calls for focused, future-facing and empathy-centred action. To meaningfully respond, we can begin by exploring how four key areas can play significant roles in embodying this approach – and build community through understanding.

## DEEP DIVES INTO VALUE OVERLAPS

While this pilot has covered a lot of ground, we need to keep digging. With just 12 questions, the goal was to create a litmus test that could be feasibly run by someone starting out independently. Yet even at this early stage, the story the data tells runs deep and its applications span nearly every aspect of our lives and communities.

From differences across age groups and content engagement patterns to how voting behaviour intersects with people's values, there's so much more to uncover. These insights can meaningfully shape everything from community engagement to internal security strategies.

Importantly, the point of this work isn't to commodify information, but to build stronger communities through evidence. And with more segmented insights still to come, this is just the beginning of what deeper, values-based understanding can offer.

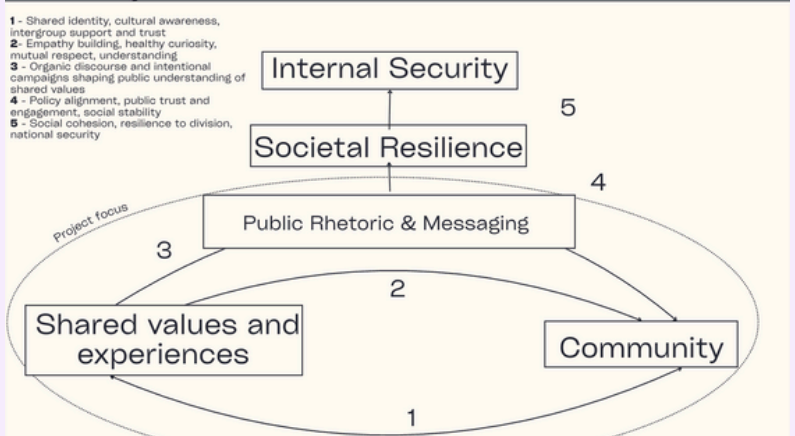
## PUBLIC RHETORIC & MESSAGING REFOCUS

As explored earlier, public discourse is often saturated with sharp, divisive sentiments that, both subtly and overtly, erode trust and stifle the potential for building genuine community. But research shows that shifting narratives, even subliminally, can positively influence how we perceive one another.

In particular, the relationship between shared values and social cohesion has been found to enhance not only collective belonging but also mental wellbeing (Nowack, 2020)\*. Drawing from these insights, Figure 1 presents an interpretive framework built on this principle, illustrating how values-based messaging, when embedded thoughtfully into campaigns or communications, can shape perceptions and reinforce a sense of collective identity.

This reframing is merely about amplifying narratives that reinforce community. Essentially, re-angling the value that community holds at every level, supporting internal security, encouraging open dialogue and making use of differences that act as catalysts for collective growth\*.

Figure 1. Effects of campaigning similar values to build community



Source: Author

\*Nowack & Schoderer, 2020 | [The role of values for social cohesion: Theoretical explication and empirical exploration](#)

\*Jang et al, 2025 | [Do Perceived Message Effectiveness Ratings Change in Response to Repeated Message Exposures?](#)

# POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FORWARD

## INTERNAL SECURITY

With misinformation campaigns and social media algorithms driving division - and at times even inciting violent behaviours - to serve ulterior motives or inflict malign threats, understanding societal vulnerabilities is an increasingly vital aspect of protecting national security.

For instance, disinformation has already been deployed in Scotland via culturally targeted narratives, such as the recent Russian campaign using a Gaelic-language website to distort public opinion\*.

A practical application of Elsewhere&Them could involve identifying which public segments may be more vulnerable to targeted attempts, based on lived experience social exclusion, or distrust in institutions, and designing tailored communication strategies that counter disinformation before it's effects take hold.

Not only would this strengthen overall community building, creating broader positive impacts for the population, but access to continuous, reliable data would also allow us to adapt strategies in real-time, building greater public resilience against manipulation and fostering cohesion in the face of polarisation.

## URBAN PLANNING & REAL ESTATE: BUILDING FOR BELONGING

With over one in three people saying they feel most comfortable in familiar spaces, such as cafés, parks, and local shops, the data highlights the crucial role that urban design and real estate developers play in shaping how we connect with one another.

If anything, the data suggests that community is transient and not solely defined by human relationships. Instead, the places we inhabit can either make us feel at home or isolated. This underscores a strong case for creating more third spaces: places centred around community and designed to feel familiar and welcoming.

Looking more broadly at regeneration efforts, engaging with local residents to understand what makes them feel most comfortable — and how best to accommodate those needs — can help preserve the social fabric that might otherwise be lost during development. Such an approach would generate value not only socially but also monetarily, by fostering sustainable and inclusive communities.

\*Times, 2025 | [How Russia is using Gaelic and AI to peddle disinformation in Scotland](#)

# A PROJECT ABOUT HOW PEOPLE IN THE UK EXPERIENCE DIFFERENCE –

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While this report was put together by a one-person team, it wouldn't have been possible without the very generous support from Yonder Data Solutions.

I hope that while reading this report, it sparked some interesting ideas, and I'd be keen to hear more about them! Feel free to reach out [here](#)

# AND HOW WE BUILD BELONGING AND COMMUNITY ANYWAY.

