The power of disagreement

UHASSELT

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

01
Prelude

??

Who plays/ has played an instrument?

Who plays/ has played in a group?

Do/ did you enjoy it?

Join at menti.com | use code 6933 8884

Mentimeter

ICEBREKAER

What are, according to you, the benefits of playing music together?

What pops up in your mind when hearing this?

How can students (learn to) deal with/ value other perspectives?

Benefits of playing music together

concentration, attention, memory, time management, critical thinking, discipline, adaptability…

emotional regulation, self-confidence, stress reduction, self-efficacy, resilience…

Cognitive

Emotional

Life skills

Social

managing complex tasks, delegating roles, leadership, cooperative problem solving…

social connection, empathy, communication skills: verbal and non-verbal communication, responsive communication skills…

Artistic

musicality, rhythm, harmony awareness, aesthetical appreciation…

(Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Gerry et al., 2012; Hallam, 2010; Rickard & McFerran, 2012;…)

Benefits of playing music together

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(Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Gerry et al., 2012; Hallam, 2010; Rickard & McFerran, 2012;…)

Playing in an orchestra is like experiencing democracy in action...
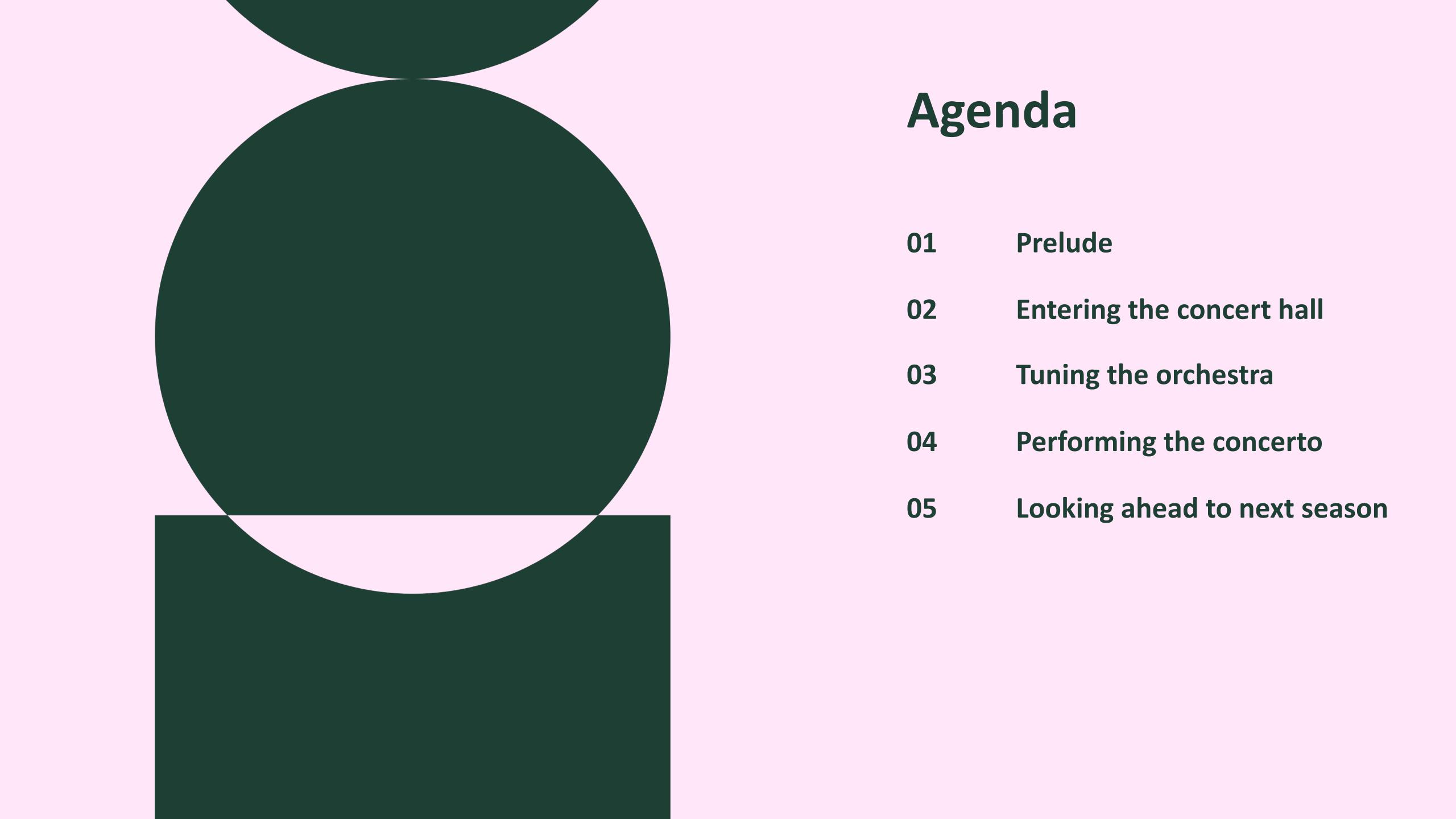
Agenda

O2
Entering the concert hall

Polarization: where we are?

Polarization

Europe's growing polarization spells trouble

BY JAMIL ANDERLINI ⏱ 10 MINS READ
MAY 4, 2024 10:00 AM CET

The Populist Wave and Polarization in Europe

Over the past decade, Europe has experienced a significant rise in populism, leading to increasing political polarization.

BY **DR. NOSHERWAN ADIL**   OCTOBER 6, 2024

"In Europe, there is no political polarisation, but rather 'pillarization': there are more than two groups with firm opinions"

Interview with Dr. Christin Scholz

3 October 2024

Polarisation and the news media in Europe

Polarisation and the news media in Europe
European Parliament

Dr Richard Fletcher
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Dr Joy Jenkins
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

A conjured-up polarisation endangers democracy

European societies are less polarised than in the United States—and than we are led to believe.

Johanna Lutz

8th March 2023

● Podcasts

Policy Voices |Overcoming polarisation: defence in the time of distrust

Co-funded by the European Union · debating europe · friends of europe

Jamie Shea
Senior Fellow for Peace, Security and Defence at Friends of Europe, and former Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Eugene Slavnyi
News Director at United24 Media Ukraine

Polarization
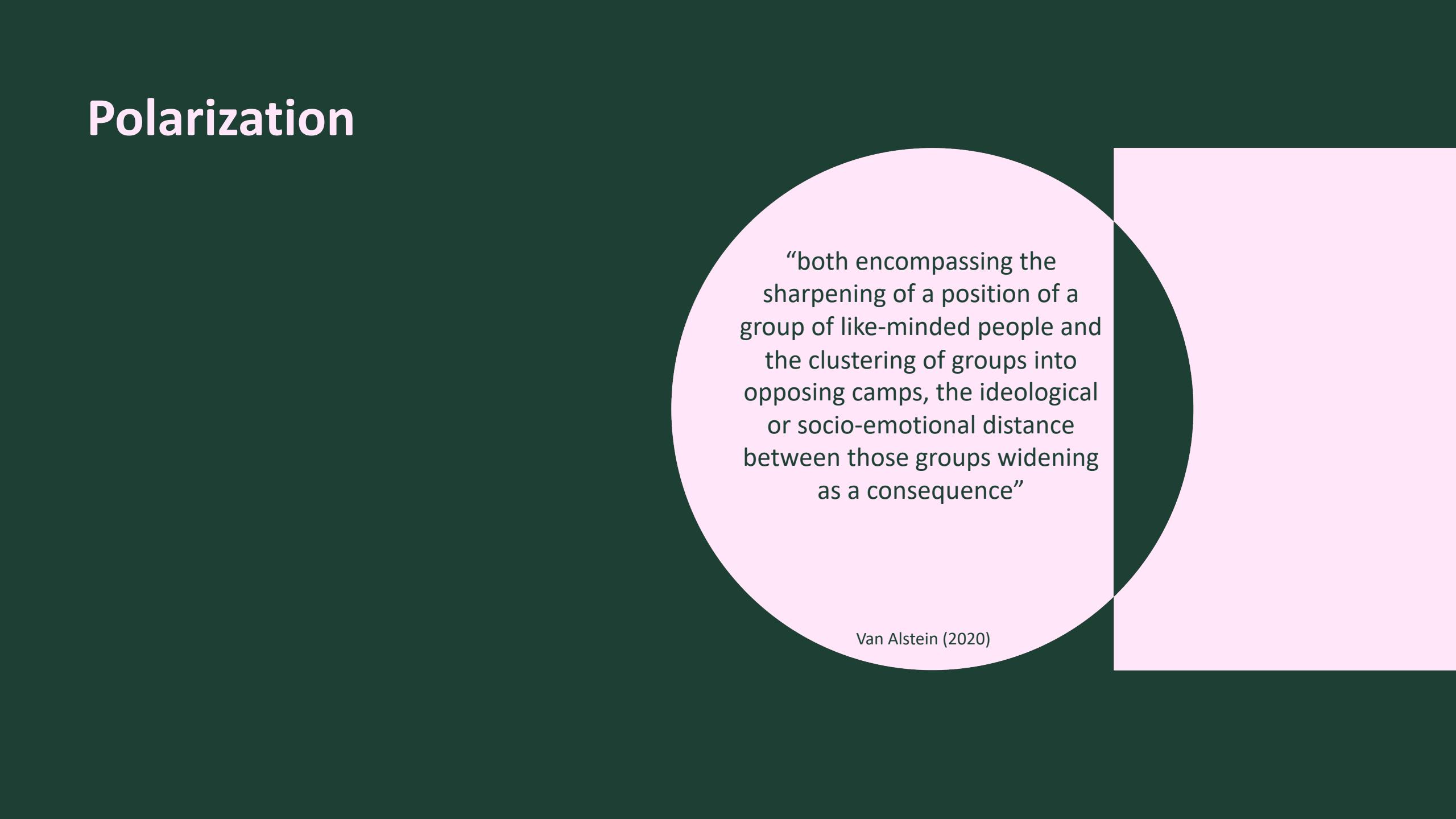
"both encompassing the sharpening of a position of a group of like-minded people and the clustering of groups into opposing camps, the ideological or socio-emotional distance between those groups widening as a consequence"

Van Alstein (2020)

# Polarization

Hostile political camps

1994

2024

(V-dem, 2025)
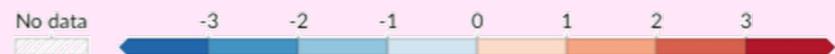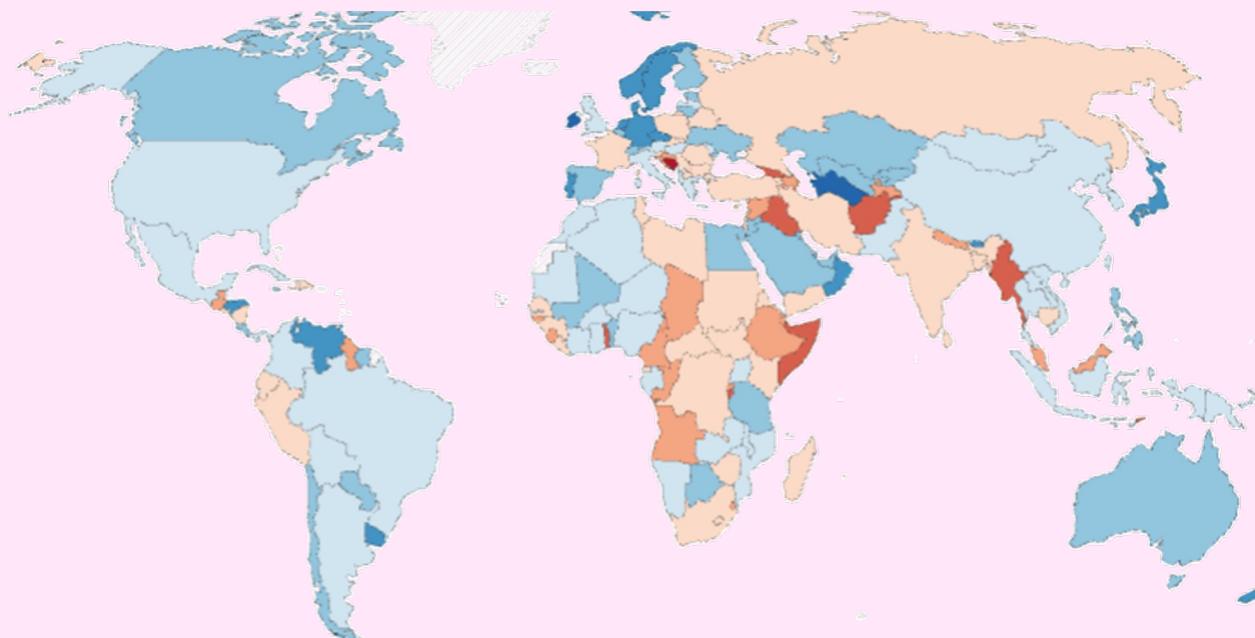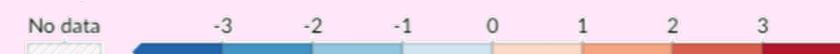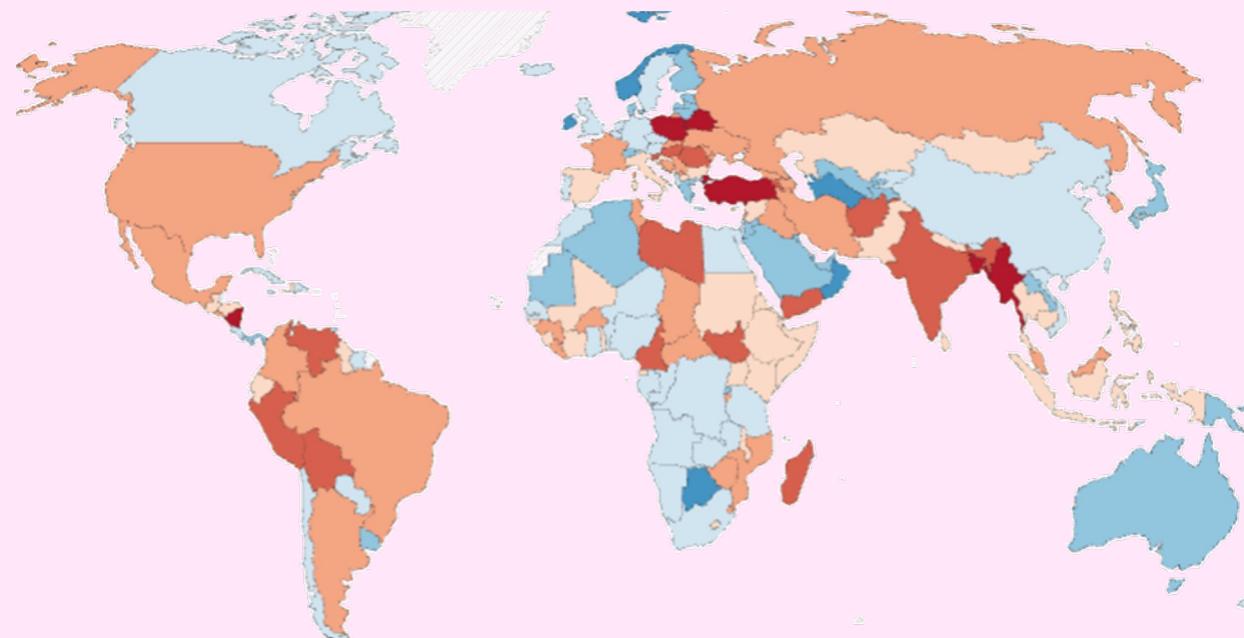
Polarization

Anti-political establishment votes

(Casal Bértoa, 2025)

Polarization

In-party and out-party trust

(Tyler et al., 2023)
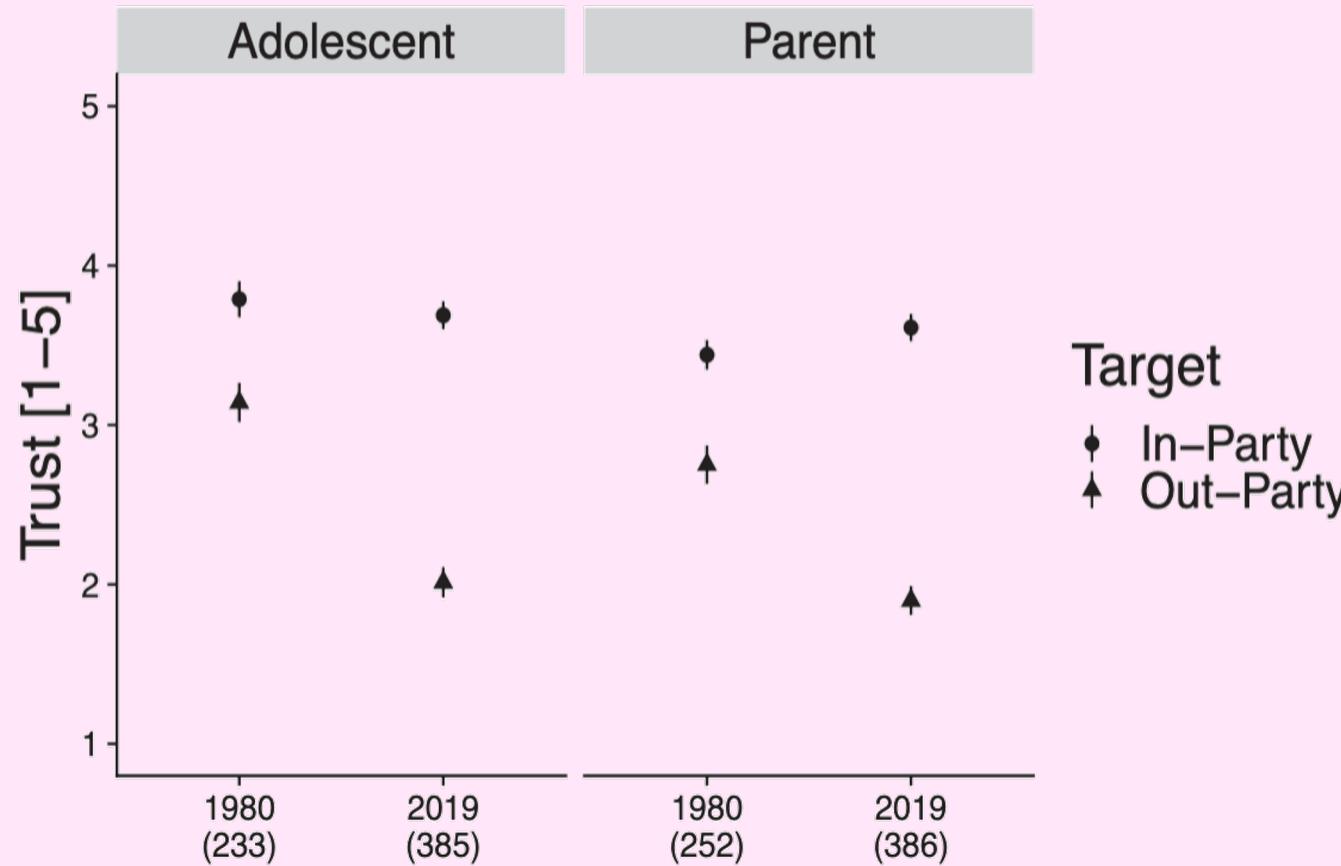
Polarization

Causes

Social division +

1. Alienation from political institutions

2. Populist discourses

3. Rejection of democratic institutions

Consequences

- Collective: growing distrust in politics & society

- Individual: disengagement/ radicalisation

Danger for democracy: security and stability

Role of the school?

(Abs, 2021; Arvanitakis, 2020; Heggart et al., 2019; Joris et al., 2022; Renström, 2020)

03
Tuning the orchestra

Disagreement: how do we sound?

Collaborative inquiry
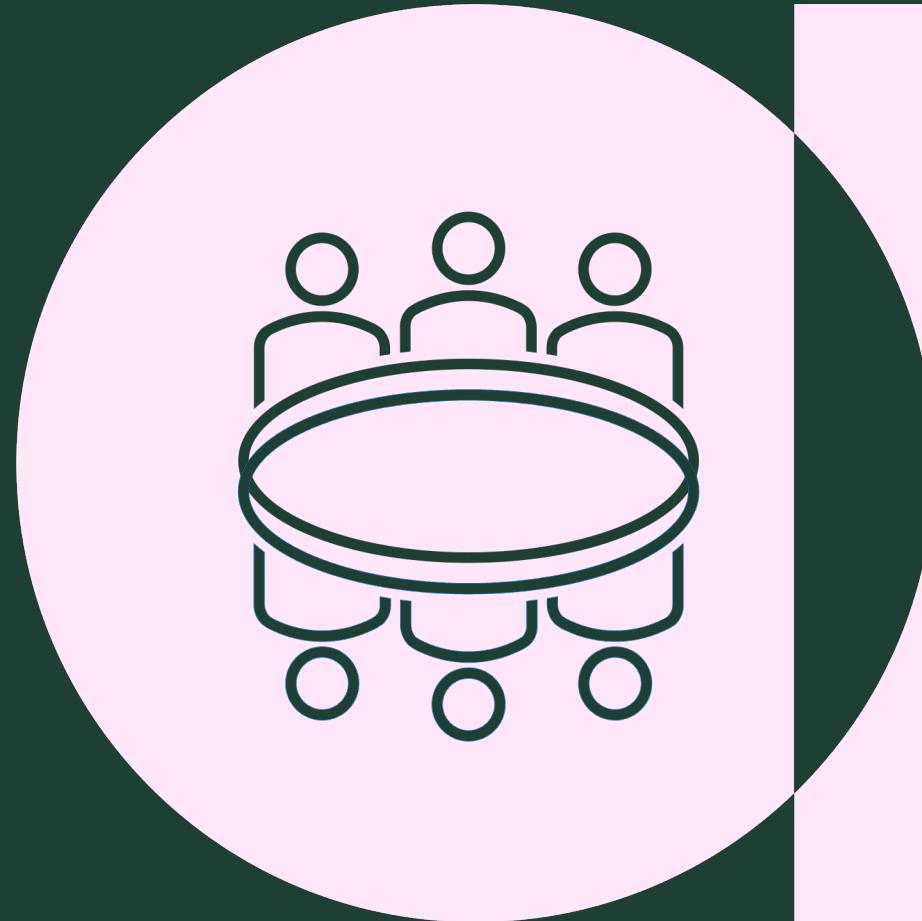
Collaborative inquiry
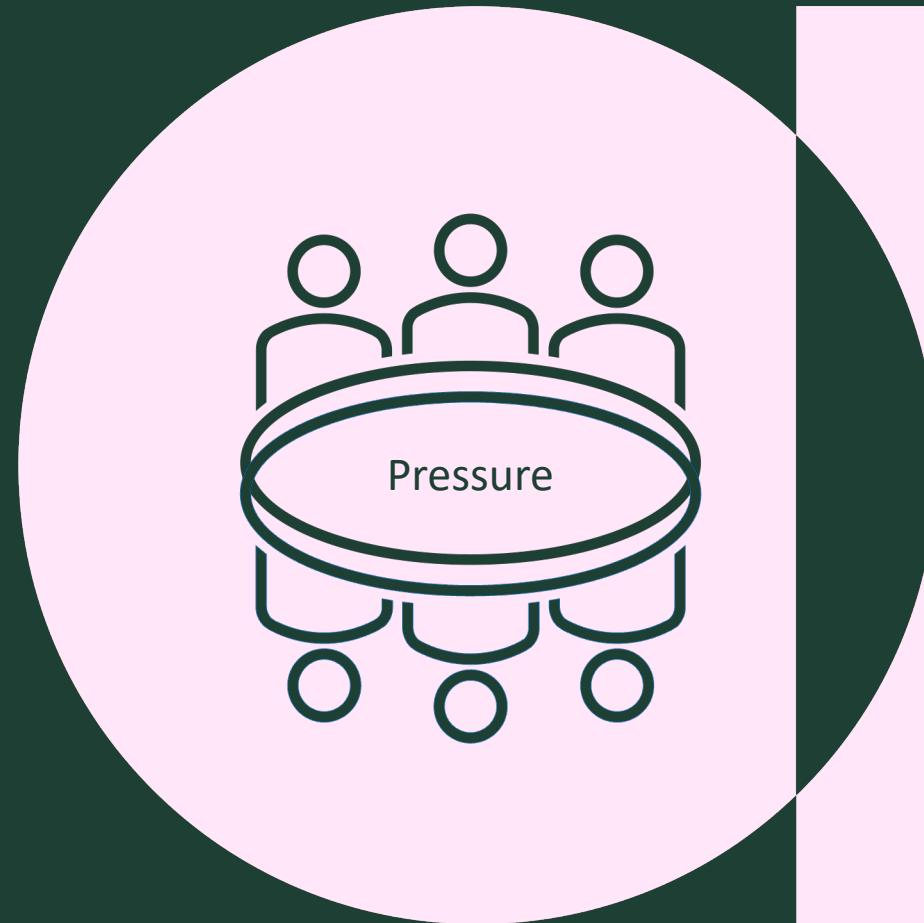
Collaborative inquiry

What happens around this table?

Pressure
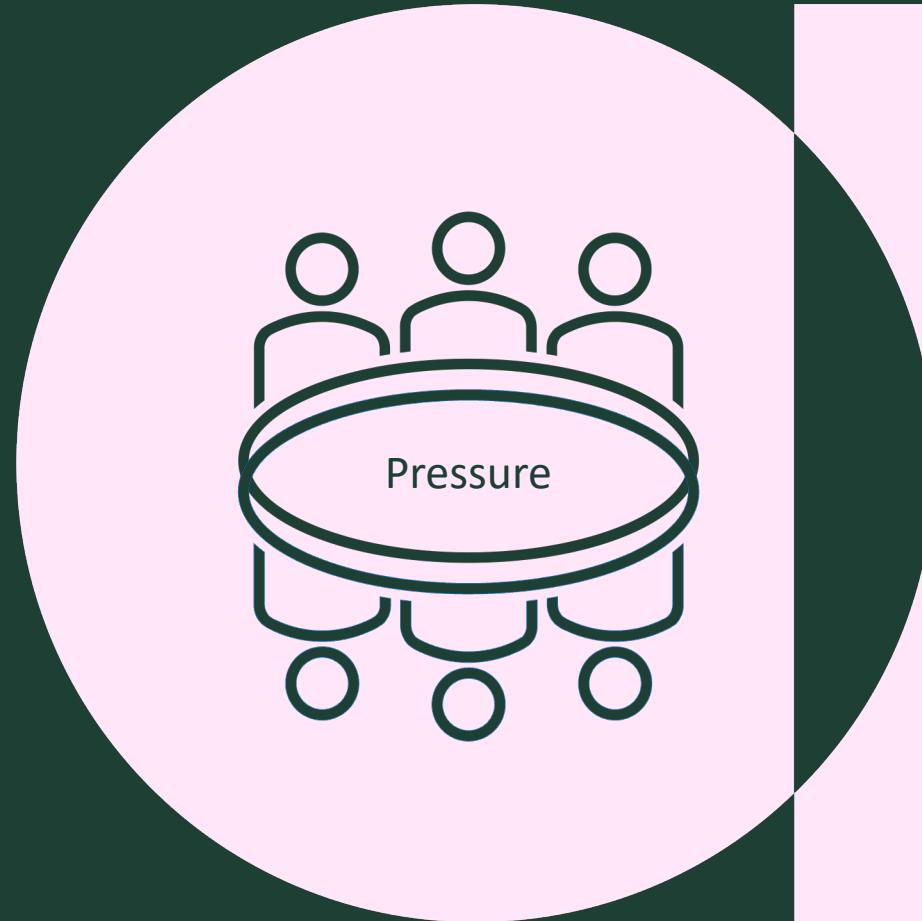
Deliberative communication

"The acts of mutually sharing diverse thoughts, perspectives, and arguments among participants and critically, but respectfully, arriving at mutually agreed upon decisions, which ultimately affect educational practice."

(Polletta & Gardner 2018, p. 90)

Deliberative communication

Research question

What communicative strategies are used in deliberative episodes among students and teachers?

Design

Multiple cases

Data collection

Observations of deliberative episodes

Analysis

Communicative functions

Argumentative features

Deliberative comunication

Four categories of argumentative strategies

Constructive strategies

(Agreement/ Objective, >50%T)

To reinforce the discourse / inviting atmosphere

giving an example or additional information, reasoning, formulating suggestions or repeating arguments

Confirmative strategies

(Agreement/ Subjective)

To persuade/ strengthen the relationship

expressing personal experiences, opinions, or emotions

Problematizing strategies

(Disagreement/ Objective, 20%T)

To articulate dissatisfaction/ create a turning point

formulating a problem, raising questions, presenting a counter example

Regulatory strategies

(Disagreement/ Subjective)

To affirm disagreement/ to justify

explaining what the discourse personally means, reprimanding

(Mundwiler & Kreuz, 2018)

Deliberative communication

Pattern of immediate consensus
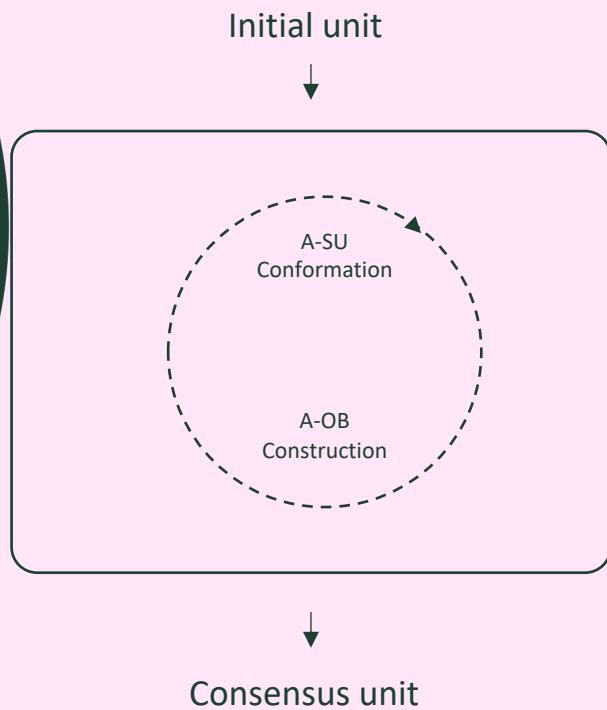
Pattern of consensus after disagrement
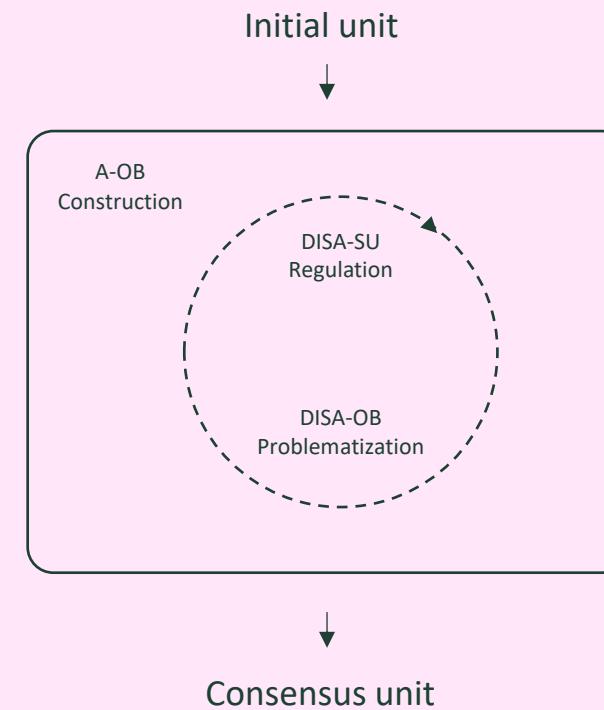
Pattern of consensus after elaboration

Initial unit

Initial unit

Initial unit

A-SU
Conformation

A-OB
Construction

A-OB
Construction

DISA-SU
Regulation

DISA-OB
Problematization

DISA-SU
Regulation

A-OB
Construction

DISA-OB
Problematization

A-SU
Conformation

Consensus unit

Consensus unit

Consensus unit

(Strijbos & Engels, 2023)
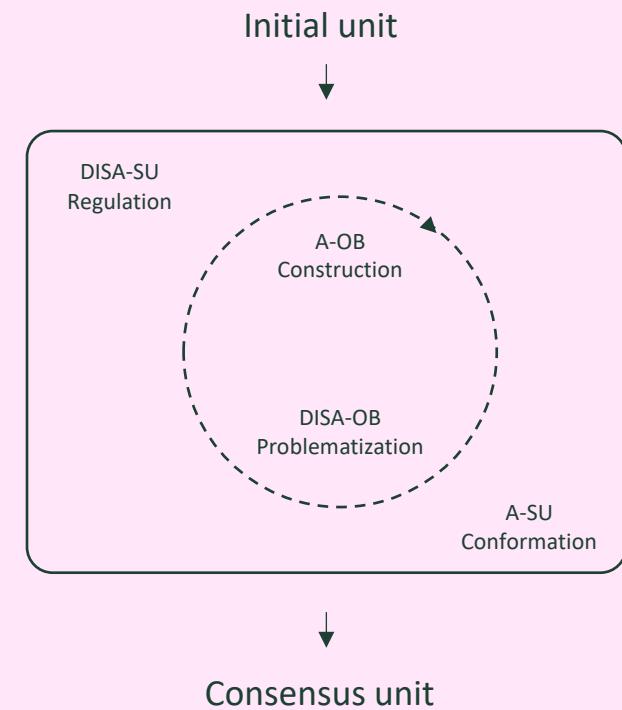
Deliberative communication

For us, as working vocational students, it's stressful. Monday school, Tuesday tasks, then work. The weekend is left for assignments, but teachers respond more slowly then.

That is true, but we also have weekends. But you won't get all tasks at once; you'll do part in class so there's less for home.

If that's possible, that's good.

Last time, there were many misunderstandings: tasks had different deadlines. Therefore, all teachers should follow the same rules, for example: everything due Sunday.

We try that, but there are downsides: some postpone everything until Sunday and then struggle. Then, we as teachers need to work in the weekend

(Strijbos & Engels, 2023)

Deliberative communication

AREAS OF CHANGE	Encouraging voice	Challenging power	Promoting agency
PHASES OF CHANGE			
Disrupting	Sharing perspectives Listening and dialoguing	Sharing power Collective decision-making	Collaborating towards common goals
Reflecting	Poly-perspectival awareness	Self-concept	Confidence
Repositioning	Mutual relationships	New, more equitable roles	Responsible action

(Strijbos & Vaesen, 2025)

O4 Performing the concerto

Dialogue in the classroom: can we enjoy?

Mentimeter

How can students (learn to) deal with/ value other perspectives?

| All responses to your question will be shown here | Each response can be up to 200 characters long | Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites |

Menti
Creative ideation w...

Choose a slide to present

What are, according to you, the benefits of playing music together?

What pops up in your mind when hearing this?

How can students (learn to) deal with/ value other perspectives?

Dialogue

Relational sources

| Quality relationship | Friendships |

Contextual sources

| Achievement goals | Identification school |

Individual source

| Self-regulation |

School connectedness

| Sense of respect | Sense of togeherness | Sense of success | Sense of pride | Sense of readiness for learning |
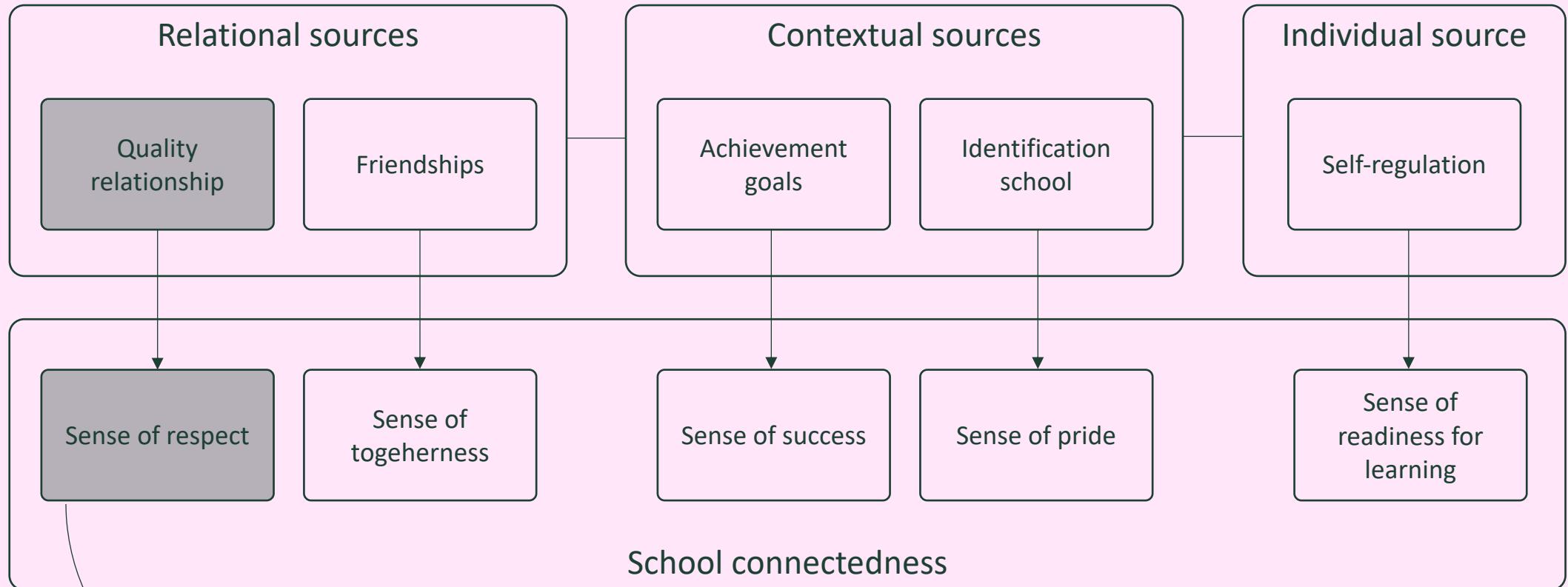
Quality relationships = emotionally safe relationships
- Primarily shaped by interactions with school staff
- Requires mutual effort, not just staff initiative

(Strijbos & Engels, 2024)

Dialogue

Positive stance

- Welcoming attitude from all staff

- Hostile approaches create negative experiences

Care without patronizing

- Students expect kindness, patience, and discretion

- Desire for freedom and responsibility, not over-control

Reciprocal conversations

- Genuine dialogue on norms and values

- Teachers sharing personal perspectives fosters trust

  including disagreement

(Strijbos & Engels, 2024)

This photo is called "Up is down." We took a picture of the hallway. We simply photographed it from above, but then we flipped it, and it looked as if we were walking on the ceiling. This photo also views the hallway from a special perspective—just like school does. School teaches you to **look at the world from different perspectives and viewpoints**. It gives you a very different view of society than what you learn at home. Some people grow up with **a politically influenced perspective** at home, shaping how they see the world. At school, you learn much more. We learn many different things: you learn about **the world**, things we otherwise would never have known. And that way, we can **restructure** everything—or rethink it—in our minds.

(Strijbos & Engels, 2024)

Dialogue

Country	2022		2016	2009	Difference (2022–2016)	Difference (2022–2009)	40	45	50	55	60
Bulgaria	48 (0.4) ▽		48 (0.3)	48 (0.4)	0.4 (0.5)	0.6 (0.7)					
Chinese Taipei	54 (0.4) ▲		52 (0.3)	50 (0.3)	**1.6** (0.5)	**3.3** (0.6)					
Colombia	51 (0.3) △		49 (0.3)	50 (0.2)	**2.0** (0.5)	**1.1** (0.6)					
Croatia[1]	51 (0.3) △		51 (0.3)	-	-0.1 (0.5)	-					
Cyprus	48 (0.3) ▽		-	51 (0.3)	-	**-2.2** (0.6)					
Estonia	48 (0.4) ▽		49 (0.3)	50 (0.3)	**-1.7** (0.5)	**-2.6** (0.6)					
France	48 (0.3) ▽		-	-	-	-					
Italy	55 (0.3) ▲		53 (0.3)	54 (0.3)	**1.4** (0.4)	0.4 (0.6)					
Latvia[1]	46 (0.4) ▼		49 (0.2)	51 (0.3)	**-3.2** (0.5)	**-4.8** (0.6)					
Lithuania	49 (0.3)		49 (0.3)	50 (0.3)	-0.3 (0.5)	-0.6 (0.6)					
Malta	50 (0.3)		49 (0.2)	46 (0.2)	0.3 (0.4)	**3.9** (0.6)					
Netherlands†	46 (0.4) ▼		47 (0.3)	-	**-1.7** (0.5)	-					
Norway (9)[1]	52 (0.3) △		52 (0.3)	53 (0.5)	-0.4 (0.4)	-0.9 (0.7)					
Poland	51 (0.3) △		-	51 (0.3)	-	0.3 (0.6)					
Romania	51 (0.3) △		-	-	-	-					
Serbia	48 (0.3) ▽		-	-	-	-					
Slovak Republic	48 (0.3) ▽		-	50 (0.3)	-	**-2.1** (0.6)					
Slovenia	46 (0.3) ▼		50 (0.3)	50 (0.3)	**-3.5** (0.5)	**-3.7** (0.6)					
Spain	50 (0.3) △		-	48 (0.2)	-	**2.3** (0.5)					
Sweden[1]	50 (0.3) △		52 (0.4)	51 (0.3)	-2.0 (0.6)	-0.5 (0.6)					
ICCS 2022 average	50 (0.1)		-	-	-	-					
ICCS 2016/2022 average	50 (0.1)		50 (0.1)	-	**-0.5** (0.1)	-					
ICCS 2009/2022 average	50 (0.1)		-	50 (0.1)	-	**-0.4** (0.2)					

National average scale score indicating students' perceptions of openness in classroom discussions

(ICCS, 2022)

Teachers matter

Communicative functions (Schuitema et al., 2018)	Students	Teachers	Teacher educators
Reason-giving (inviting/ questioning multiple perspectives)	**11**	**9**	**30**
Giving turn conditionally	3	4	20
Giving turn unconditionally	1	1	6
Ask for explanation	7	4	4
Consensus (seeking consensus or understanding differences)			
Structuring acts	*9*	*11*	*35*
Reconstructive recap	8	10	27
Breaking off	1	1	8
Establishing order	0	0	0
Substantiating acts	*80*	*80*	*35*
Transformative content contribution	74	74	28
Taking position	6	6	5

(Strijbos & Engels, 2023)

Guidance?

Teachers matter

- To structure and deepen **dialogue**

- Yet often hesitate to lead

Dialogue

When classrooms fall silent, democracy loses its training ground...

O5
**Looking ahead
to next season**

Future research: where will we go?

Pexels.com
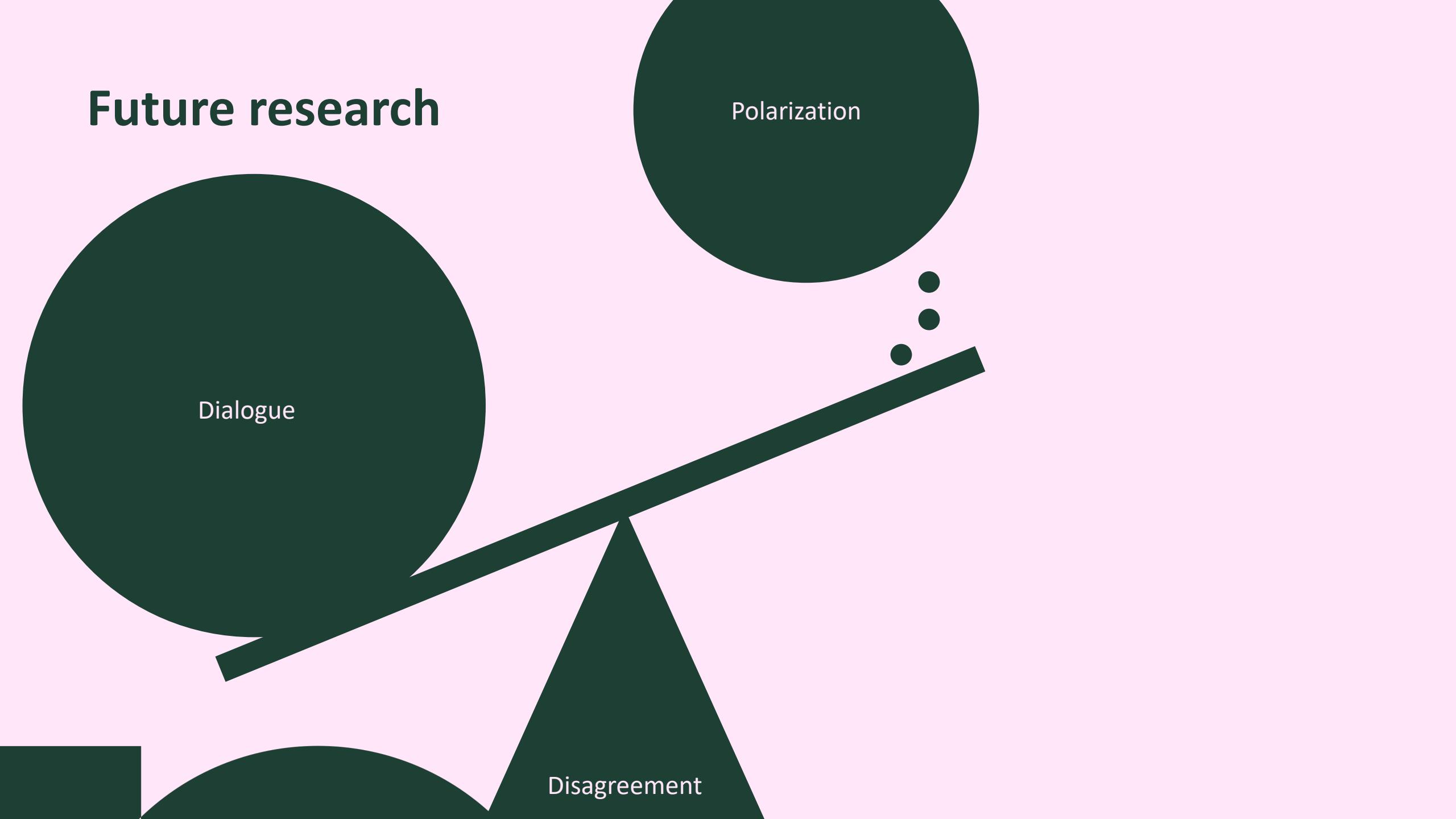
Quality of dialogue

Dialogue for reducing polarization

→ Under what conditions?

More and better insight in **qualities of dialogues and required dialogic competences**, moving beyond dialogic functions and argumentative strategies, to e.g.:

- Inclusivity & respectfulness

- Depth and emotional engagement in argumentation

AI for analysis of dialogues

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

|	
Stance Detection	identifies whether a text agrees, disagrees, or is neutral toward a topic
Sentiment Analysis	determines emotional tone (positive, negative, neutral)
Dialogue Analysis	examines conversational features (turn-taking, interruptions, question-asking)
Topic Modeling	groups text into topics
Interaction Patterns	maps engagement and participation

(Németh, 2023)

Participation through art

Participatory, arts-based methods to create safe spaces for expression

- Expressing experiences through art

  → Student voice

- Connecting to factual knowledge and others' perspectives

  → Multiperspectival awareness

- Reflecting, concluding, acting

  → Constructive friction

Examples

Artefacts for contested political figures
Photographs about connectedness
Mental maps on home learning environments

VER-BEELD-ING

EEN PRAKTIJKGIDS VOOR
ARTS-BASED LEARNING
IN DE KLAS

INFOFICHE — *ARTS-BASED LEARNING*

INFOFICHE — MULTI-PERSPECTIVISME

INFOFICHE — EEN STEM VOOR IEDEREEN

INFOFICHE — CONSTRUCTIEVE FRICTIE

STAPPENPLAN — *PHOTOVOICE*

STAPPENPLAN — *FUTURE HEADLINES*

STAPPENPLAN — *EDUCATIONAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING*

Guides

Information

Reflection

Ethics

Thank you for your attention!

The floor is now open for questions

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UHASSELT
KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

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