The Big Conversation – Climate Change
Final Report

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Contents

Introduction

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the United Kingdom and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. It aims to foster cross-national dialogue, understanding and cooperation, through creating opportunities for intercultural exchange. Last year marked the start of a 5-year strategy for the British Council to strengthen its position as a leader in the fields of Arts and Culture, Education, and English. An integral aspect of this strategy is to engage in research and shape its work around evidence-based solutions.

In this context, the British Council established a new research programme, The Big Conversation, which looks at shared values in cultural relations and international cooperation. It seeks to explore how cultural relations' 'meta-values' (equality, diversity, inclusion, mutuality, respect, tolerance and openness) can be embedded in programmes and reinforced in the British Council's ways of working and organisational culture, in order to foster better dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders, partners and programme users.

The pilot phase of The Big Conversation (hereafter referred to as "the Pilot") was completed in March 2021 by a research team from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), who worked with the British Council teams in Malaysia, South Africa and the United Kingdom to develop useful new knowledge and research tools on values for applied use in strategy, programming, practice, as well as academic research. The Pilot focussed on the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic as a topic to investigate the role that values play in cooperation.

Building on the research model developed by the LSE team in the Pilot, this Extension focuses on understanding more about the role that values play in creating the conditions for international cooperation on shared global challenges and, more specifically, on environmental issues and climate change. In order to do so, the LSE team conducted quantitative research in four countries (China, India, Japan and Mexico) and qualitative research engaging participants from seven countries (Brazil, China, India, Japan, Morocco, UAE and Venezuela).

Executive Summary

- When put in competition against other core values, sustainability is typically not at the heart of citizens' priorities, except in China, where it features in a prominent priority position.

- However, when proactively prompted, citizens in India, China, and Mexico tend to support significant sacrifices in order to protect the environment. In different countries, this may notably involve restrictions to individual freedoms or disallowing the operation of businesses that do not meet high environmental standards. This is not, however, the case in Japan, where the public is more resistant to such sacrifices.

- On balance, citizens tend to prioritise international and science-led approaches to tackling environmental problems.

- In the countries included in the Extension, respondents are also more sensitive to arguments framing the need to protect the environment in terms of our collective responsibility towards "nature" than towards sustainable human health and life.

- Cross-sectional differences revealed little – and sometimes counterintuitive – differences between young and middle-aged generations. Gender differences are small and vary across country, and the only regular finding is that those with more international exposure are typically more willing to support sacrifices aimed at improving environmental intervention.

- The qualitative fieldwork shows interesting links being drawn by focus group participants between the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the fight to mitigate the impact of climate change, including the need to perceive all humanity as interlinked and impacted by global challenges, the importance of, and capability for, adapting human behaviour to act in less consumptive and damaging ways, and the importance of establishing networks for sharing knowledge, resources and fostering dialogue around shared global challenges

- The qualitative fieldwork highlighted the importance of values for climate cooperation, but emphasised sharing values that accept, respect, and celebrate difference. Commonality is important for enabling shared dialogue to take place, but difference is also crucial for acknowledging local, regional and cultural ways of contextualizing and implementing shared goals.

- The idea of value leadership in tackling climate change was identified in the qualitative research, where organisations such as the British Council can function as a less politicized actor that provides opportunities for dialogue and exchange between different levels of actors (communities and states) as well as across different national borders.

- The deliberative analysis found similar patterns to The Big Conversation pilot study, with a key difference emerging mainly in relation to the presence of reasoned opinion expression, which was significantly higher in this Extension. This suggests that anchoring group discussions around concrete issues (such as climate change) can help individuals to more clearly articulate, and elaborate, their opinions, which ultimately can lead to better deliberation.

1.   Literature Review

The literature review conducted for this study focused on the role of values in enabling international cooperation on environmental issues, namely climate change.[1] Before presenting the academic research in the field, it is worth noting that there are very few explicit links between values and international cooperation in the literature. These two elements are recognised as fundamental in the field of climate change research, but they are mostly studied separately and concerning different levels.

On the one hand, the literature dealing with climate change and international cooperation tends to focus on structural, top-down aspects of cooperation. As an example, Cao et al. (2016) propose to put climate justice at the centre of international cooperation addressing climate change by underpinning it with three principles: human rights protection, common but differentiated responsibilities, and the "no-harm principle" (p. 257).

It is also telling that, according to Brechin and Bhandari (2011), questions on international cooperation and climate change are rarely asked in public opinion surveys, compared to questions referring to the willingness to pay to address climate change or the extent to which the public considers climate change a serious threat. When international cooperation questions are asked, they tend to be very country-oriented and do not explore the role of international organisations or the conditions for international cooperation to address climate change. This gap justifies the existence of pioneering surveys like the one presented in this study, which includes questions on the UN and the need for international cooperation.

On the other hand, the literature that considers values and climate change does so mostly at the individual level, focusing on the link between values, beliefs, norms and individual behaviour. Steg et al. (2014) present the dilemma posed by pro-environmental behaviour as a conflict between hedonic and gain goals on the one hand (that is, acting because it is enjoyable or because it saves money, respectively), and normative goals on the other hand (acting because it is the right thing to do). Being environmentally friendly is usually perceived to be less enjoyable, more expensive and more time-consuming than having a non-pro-environmental behaviour, even though many perceive it as the morally correct behaviour. The authors of the paper propose a novel approach to tackle this problem that relies on strengthening the normative goals (rather than directly weakening hedonic or gain goals). They argue that self-transcendent values, and more specifically *biospheric* values – values that "reflect a key concern with nature and the environment for its own sake" (Steg et al. 2014:107) -, and which are strongly endorsed on average across the world, will strengthen the salience of pro-environmental normative goals in one's behaviour. However, biospheric values are not enough, as they need to be activated and supported by the context in which choices are made. In other words, "normative goals will be stronger and more likely to affect behaviour when (biospheric) values are strongly endorsed, and when these values are activated in a particular situation" (Steg et al. 2014:109).

Similar conclusions are reached by researchers engaging directly with the Values-Beliefs-Norms (VBN) theory – which establishes a link between values, which shape beliefs which, in turn, influence norms that guide individual behaviour - combined with other influences on environmental behaviour. Chung et al. (2019) find that biospheric altruism – very similar to biospheric values above, in this case defined as "Respecting the earth, harmony with other species", "Protecting the environment, preserving nature" and "Unity with nature, fitting into nature" – is "a strong predictor of pro-environmental behaviour" (Chung et al. 2019:382). Nonetheless, as mentioned above, these values are mediated by beliefs that more directly regulate action, such as the willingness to sacrifice.

A practical case study of the theories outlined above can be found in Hedlund's (2011) research around the pro-environmental behaviour of tourists. In line with the abovementioned literature, she finds a statistically

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[1] For a detailed explanation of how the literature review was conducted, please see Annex II. Literature Review Methodology.

significant correlation between universalist values – an overarching label that includes "altruism towards all people and nature" (Heldlund 2011:284) -, concerns for the environment, willingness to make economic sacrifices to protect the environment and tourists' intentions to opt for ecologically sustainable tourism alternatives.

Beyond the individual level, there have been some attempts to study the role of values in shaping pro-environmental behaviour at the organisational level. Nilsson et al. (2004), for instance, cautiously showed that the VBN theory holds for public organisations, as individuals working in the public sector presented the same patterns of self-transcendent values influencing beliefs to engage in pro-environmental behaviour. Interestingly (and somewhat inconclusively), this was not the case for people working in the private sector, who appeared to be influenced by different values – namely, self-enhancement values, that is, values that emphasize personal success and "dominance over others" (Nilsson et al. 2004:269).

Despite the lack of research explicitly addressing the role of values in international cooperation to tackle environmental challenges, we have identified many implicit links. Trust is one of the most salient values in the research around climate change. Zakaria (2015) studies the importance of trust towards the institutions that position themselves as leaders of the cause. Similarly, the World Public Opinion Organization (2009) asked a question about the countries most trusted to lead the fight against climate change. The results showed that respondents considered their own country the most trustworthy to deal with climate change.

This is in line with other studies that indicate that people tend to trust and cooperate more with ingroup members compared with outgroup members and unknown others (Romano et al. 2017). To counter this, Rompke et al. (2018) consider that identifying with a global ingroup should make us perceive global problems as 'our' problems. This could be achieved by increasing intergroup contact, which fosters positive outgroup attitudes and, in turn, facilitates better cooperation (Sally 2001). Moreover, when a challenge is perceived as common and potentially solvable on the level of a superordinate group (e.g., humanity), intergroup contact should enhance collective action at that same level.

Rompke et al. (2018) also found that solidarity is greatly affected by international contact and it can act as a vehicle for individuals to identify with humanity. This finding is very relevant for the fight against climate change because Jennings (2018) identified solidarity as a key value for creating relational practices to mitigate climate change. The British Council and other cultural organisations are well placed to generate collaborative contexts (like The Big Conversation) in which international, intergroup contact takes place and, as a result, solidarity is enhanced.

Trust in science is yet another aspect of this value studied in the literature. According to Klenert et al. (2020), the way in which educational institutions and the media communicate scientific findings may lead to public uncertainty and mistrust in scientific evidence and expertise, because "science is often presented as a set of irrevocable facts rather than a method of rigorous evidence-gathering to confirm or reject hypotheses in a setting of inherent uncertainty".

A similar case of ambivalence towards science, which in some cases can evolve into conspiracy theories, was the public reaction towards the measures adopted by governments around the world to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a global phenomenon that threatened the world's health systems and economies, the pandemic has many parallels with climate change. Hence, the analysis of international cooperation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic provides useful insights that can be applied to climate change.

This is the case of Klenert et al. (2020), who, drawing on the example of international cooperation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, outline four phases through which international collaboration developed and grew. These include (1) denialism, (2) isolationist action, (3) knowledge and resource sharing, and, finally, (4) full global cooperation. If we apply the same phases to climate change, we see that denialism was a predominant attitude in much of the early 2000s (and even today for some nations). Nowadays, we find ourselves mostly in

phase 2, climate isolationism, as states act on initiatives "when domestic non-climate benefits are captured" (p. 763). Some actors like the EU are transitioning to stage 3 by enhancing collaboration between their member states. The role of non-political entities (like the British Council) is key to move from isolationist action to knowledge and resource sharing by providing the bridges between actors. The fourth and last stage is aspirational for the fight of climate change, according to the authors.

Nonetheless, there is research that suggests that there are processes already underway bringing the world closer to stage 4 above. Chen et al. (2020, p. 8551) show that higher levels of political globalization, as defined by the KOF Globalisation Index (Dreher 2006 and Gygli et al. 2019)[2], are an indicator of higher levels of cooperation and are correlated with a reduction of CO_2 emissions growth. This finding supports the efforts to promote greater collaboration between countries as a route to combat climate change and indicates that a way of doing so is by enhancing political globalization.

Finally, we observe that several divides play a role in the approaches that international and national actors have to climate change. The literature highlights the divisiveness that debates around equity, fairness and accountability generate in the international community. An especially contentious issue is "burden sharing" and the equity around it (Stern 2015). On the one hand, poor regions of the world are faced with a tragedy exposed very clearly by Faiyetole and Adesina (2017): "Africa is the lowest emitter of CO_2" while at the same time being one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the effects of climate change. On the other hand, "ongoing inaction from the biggest polluters including China, the United States and India (Ritchie and Roser 2019) will increase total damages, increase recovery uncertainty, and decrease accountability for other nations to set aspirational domestic targets" (Klenert et al. 2020, p. 762). This has been framed in social science research as both a prisoner's dilemma and a tragedy of the commons, because carrying out mitigation measures to combat climate change is costly for each state but only produces global and non-excludable benefits, meaning that action is not in the states' self-interest (Stern 2015).

Perhaps the perceived unfairness of this situation in poorer, smaller countries generally in the Global South is what drives results like those obtained by Faiyetole and Adesina (2017). They show that experts across Africa agree that the most effective scope for strategies responding to climate change is a regional one (i.e., groups of countries facing similar challenges due to similar geographies or sub-regional economic blocs), an approach that enjoys double the support than that for international cooperation approaches.

The research thus suggests that a viable approach to circumvent the problem is to think about cooperation at the country and regional level by focusing on the benefits of moving to net-zero economies for the country or region, rather than insisting on global approaches. Then, international cooperation becomes international coordination, centred around sharing best practices and lessons, and supporting the transition of developing countries (Stern 2015).

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[2] As per Chen et al. (2020), political globalization includes *de facto* political globalization and *de jure* political globalization. The former is calculated based on (1) the number of embassies in a country, (2) the number of personnel contributed to United Nations Security Council Missions, (3) the number of internationally oriented nongovernmental organizations (NGO) operating in a country. The latter consists of (1) the number of memberships of international inter-governmental organizations, (2) international treaties signed between two or more states, (3) the number of distinct treaty partners of a country with bilateral investment treaties (BITs).

2. Methodology

2.1 Survey

The aim of extending The Big Conversation to new geographical regions was to explore the role of values in these new contexts and highlight potential issues that could help facilitate cooperation on shared global challenges such as climate change. We were cognisant that the research design and methodology should be conceived in a way which complements the findings from the Pilot stage. This would in turn strengthen the external validation of the new research model developed in the Pilot.

The survey was fielded in China, India, Japan, and Mexico. It was conducted online using samples of approximately 1000 respondents (see Table 1 for samples). Similar to the first edition of the survey, the questions included both explicit and implicit questions; differentiating values associated with politics, culture, science, and language; unifying or polarising values, arbitrations between opposed values, and how values interact with perceptions, as well as tension scales.

We included four questions from the Pilot survey to enable comparison across all countries on the fundamentals of values, as well as to create a statistical instrument that could be used across additional project modules on new themes and values questions as The Big Conversation keeps developing. Beyond that, the questions aimed to understand citizens' values in each country, notably which values are more central to people's ethos, which are most unanimous and divisive, which of them the British Council would have high value ownership of, and which would be most useful to support mutual understanding and collaboration in the international context. This version of the survey included a focus on key global challenges that require international cooperation such as environmental concerns and sustainability.

The questions we used captured a range of different conceptions, expressions, and contextualisation of values, which would enable us to measure both individual-level and comparative differences. Below, we provide further detail of the structure of the survey, which includes nine modules:

1. Personality: a question designed by the LSE team based on assessing discrete personality traits.

2. Values: a hierarchical "signature" value question (three variables, hierarchical) based on our pre-existing research that included the British Council meta-values in the list of responses, amongst other relevant and important values, as well as a question based on the concept of value ownership to assess how respondents ascribe value priorities to the British Council.

3. Conflicting priorities: a question based on the idea of what the government or international organisations should prioritise in various scenarios related to climate change and environmental sustainability.

4. Sacrifices: a question set in a time of crisis (for example a major environmental disaster that disrupts entire regions or cities) asks citizens what type of sacrifices they are willing to make.

5. Priority interests: this question aims to understand what issues citizens would like to be prioritised when designing environmental policies.

6. Implicit value measures are based on three comparisons of pairs of photographs that represent protection of the environment in different guises.

7. Proposed measures: this question asks citizens which measures they would support the government on.

8. Cooperation: this question is based on what citizens believe is needed to improve cultural understanding and collaboration across nations.

9. Several control variables (including basic demographics) enabling us to compare value sets across categories of citizens, including across religions, ethnicity, social groups, age groups, gender, etc in each of the country.

Table 1. Survey sample per country

COUNTRY	SAMPLE*
CHINA	1005
INDIA	1007
JAPAN	1005
MEXICO	1005

Notes: sample weighted to representative criteria. Survey fieldwork for all countries conducted 8-12th March 2021.

2.2 Focus Groups

Two multinational focus groups were conducted online with participants (N =13) from the education and cultural relations sector, recruited for the study by the British Council from seven countries: China, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and India (Focus Group 1), and Venezuela, Morocco and Brazil (Focus Group 2). The international composition of the focus groups was a new element of the research compared to the Pilot.

The topic guide for the focus groups was developed after half of the literature had been read for the literature review. The topic guide focused on examining three blocks of questions:

1) Questions on the role of the educational and cultural sector in times of crisis (drawing links with the pandemic and lessons learned).
2) Questions on the role of values for climate cooperation.
3) Questions on cooperation and trust.

Participants were asked to first fill in a pre-focus group survey (with questions that overlapped partially with the questions used in the Pilot as well as new questions used in the Extension survey). After the focus group, participants were again invited to fill in a post-focus group survey (with overlapping questions from the pre-focus group survey; the Pilot study and the new Extension survey).

3. Analysis

3.1 Quantitative Findings

First, in order to compare findings on value priorities in China, India, Japan, and Mexico with those in the three countries that were part of the Pilot (Malaysia, South Africa and the United Kingdom), we use one of the two core questions which focuses on the values which they wish to see predominantly defended by the British Council. The results are presented in Table 2.

In terms of the values that people want the British Council to be associated with, the results were consistent with the findings from the Pilot, with respect featuring strongly across three of the four countries studied here. It is ranked highest in Mexico (47%) and is the top choice in China (29%) and India (27%). Interestingly, however, respect (13%) is side-lined by peace as the top choice in Japan. It is the only one of the seven countries surveyed so far which does not feature respect as the most desired British Council value.

Conversely, China is the only one of the seven countries included in our first two studies which features sustainability as one of the top five (and in this case top two) values people desire to see at the heart of the British Council's action. Apart from sustainability, China and India have very similar preferences in terms of the top five values that they associate with the British Council. Care features prominently in Japan (32%), whilst it is much lower down in the associations for the other three countries (9% for China, 12% for India, and 8% for Mexico). Chinese respondents associate sustainability (25%) as a key value for the British Council, whereas values such as gender equality and prosperity (20%) are listed equally important for respondents in Mexico.

Table 2. Values that should be emphasised by the British Council.

CHINA		INDIA		JAPAN		MEXICO	
VALUE	**%**	**VALUE**	**%**	**VALUE**	**%**	**VALUE**	**%**
Respect	**29**	**Respect**	**27**	**Peace**	**48**	**Respect**	**47**
Sustainability	**25**	**Equality**	**27**	**Safety**	**36**	**Safety**	**34**
Equality	**25**	**Peace**	**27**	**Care**	**32**	**Peace**	**23**
Peace	**22**	**Freedom**	**27**	**Freedom**	**30**	**Freedom**	**23**
Freedom	**21**	**Safety**	**22**	**Equality**	**28**	**Gender equality**	**20**
Inclusion	19	Open-mindedness	18	Open-mindedness	17	**Prosperity**	**20**
Mutuality	19	Strength	18	Respect	13	Solidarity	19
Safety	18	Sustainability	14	Tradition	12	Equality	18
Solidarity	18	Diversity	14	Diversity	11	Tolerance	17
Diversity	16	Gender equality	14	Gender equality	11	Inclusion	13
Tolerance	15	Care	12	Tolerance	10	Sustainability	11
Open-mindedness	14	Prosperity	12	Sustainability	7	Diversity	11
Strength	12	Tradition	12	Mutuality	6	Open-mindedness	11

Gender equality	11	Tolerance	11	Prosperity	6	Tradition	10
Care	9	Religion	10	Solidarity	5	Care	8
Prosperity	8	Mutuality	9	Inclusion	2	Strength	5
Tradition	7	Solidarity	9	Strength	2	Religion	3
Religion	3	Inclusion	8	Religion	1	Mutuality	2

Notes: Q3. The British Council is an institution which builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education (including science) and the English language. Looking at the following list, in your view, what are the THREE ideals which you would like to see the British Council emphasise most as part of their action in COUNTRY?

We summarise the comparative insights on core values in Figure 1, which compares the top two values prioritised in each of the seven countries in which we have asked that question so far. It shows that all countries, except Japan, include respect as one of their top two priority values, but associate it with a variety of secondary values: equality (India, South Africa, United Kingdom), peace (Malaysia), safety (Mexico), and sustainability (China). By contrast, Japan does not include respect as one of the two top core values but shares priorities for peace with Malaysia and for safety with Mexico. We also note that with regards to the specific topic of this report, sustainability is only a key value in China.

Figure 1. Comparing key priority value sets across 7 countries
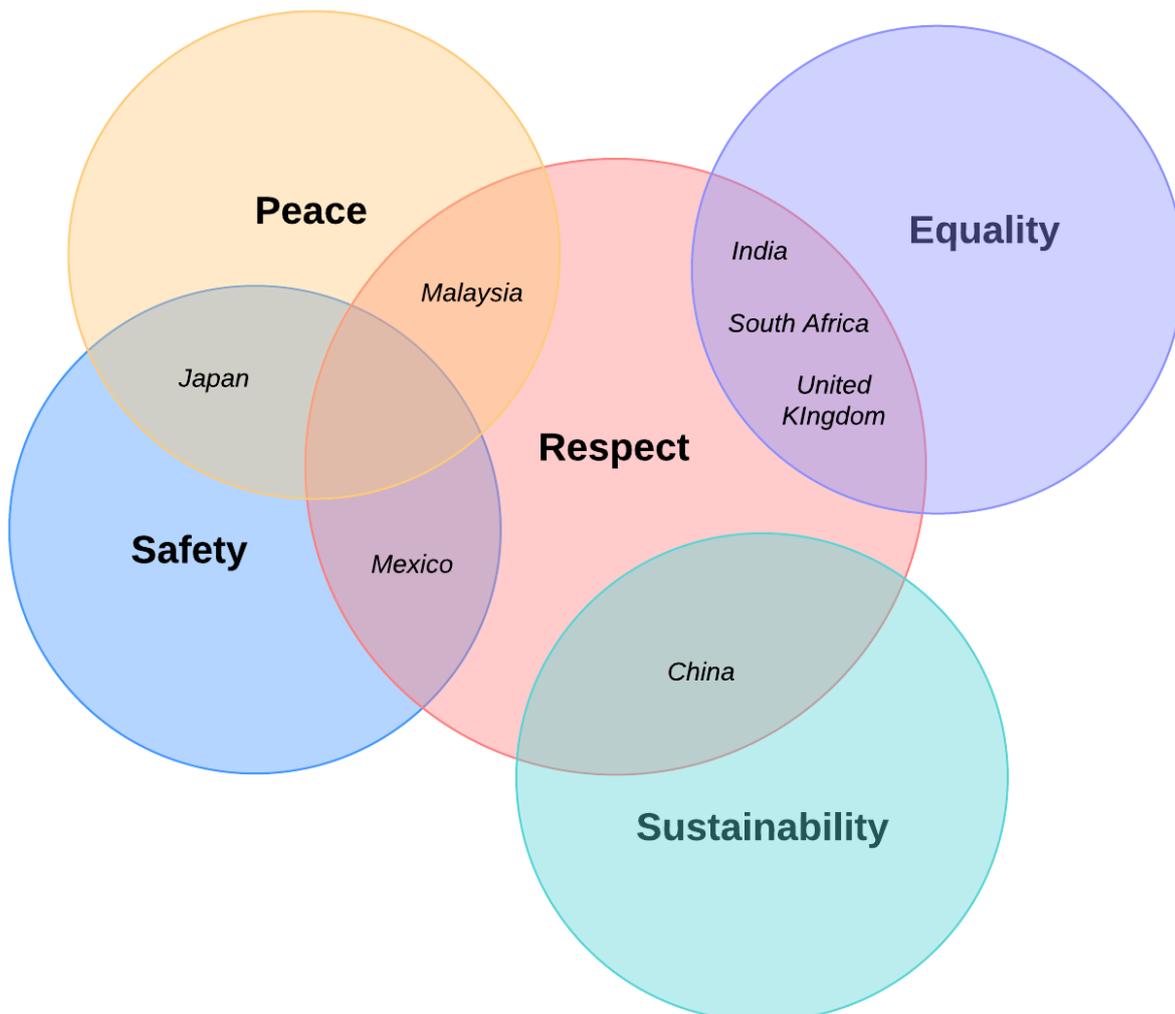
3.1.1 Implicit value preferences

As we have discussed previously, values are largely subconscious, and verbalisation can often hide those subconscious realities. In order to better capture them, we therefore used a series of implicit questions in order to capture the subconsious elements of value preferences. As this reiteration of the survey includes a focus on environmental concerns and sustainabilty, we asked respondents to choose between images representing alternative values. In this respect, we chose three pairs of photographs representing contrasting elements of envirnomental concern. The first pair featured an image of a man-made scuptured garden contrasted to a photograph depicting a scene of natural wild landscape. The second pair contrasted a photograph of a pet with a wild animal. Finally, the final pair featured two placards, one with a slogan of saving the planet and the other prioritising human heatlh. In Table 3, we look at how citizens chose between three pairs of images across the three countries.

The distributions reveal two important findings. The first set of findings is about prioritisation. We find that when reacting to implicit prompts and having to choose one of two competing values, overwhelmingly over 4 in 5 choose the wild nature over the manicured garden in India, Japan, and Mexico with Chinese respondents reacting a bit less enthusiastically at 64%. In significantly more balanced ways, just over half of respondents priortise the image of a pet over wildlife, with the exception being India, which favours the wildlife picture instead (59%). With regards to the final pair of images (featuring the same placard but with different slogans), all respondents across the four countries favoured the one emphasising saving the planet rather than human health. However, the distribution was closer to an even split in Japan (51% vs 49%) and China (56% vs 44%), whereas in India and Mexico, the division between the two was more pronounced (74% vs 26%) and (71% vs 29%) respectively.

Interestingly, similar to the findings drawn from the Pilot in Malaysia, South Africa, and the UK, there is little difference between the four countries studied here. This again reemphasises that whilst pictorial representations of value alternatives can be more culturally loaded in some contexts, the instinctive preferences of citizens regarding the implicit representation of contrasting values are virtually undifferentiated.

Table 3. Implicit value preferences.

TENSION	VALUE	CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN	MEXICO
Human vs wild	Human	36	19	14	13
	Wild	**64**	**81**	**86**	**87**
Pet vs wildlife	Pet	**51**	41	**54**	**62**
	Wildlife	49	**59**	46	38
Planet vs human health	Planet	**56**	**74**	**51**	**71**
	Human health	44	26	49	29

3.1.2 Consenting sacrifices to protect the environment

A natural follow up to those implicit preferences in terms of what environmental values entail for citizens is the question of what they are willing to sacrifice in order to protect the environment and support sustainability. Table 4 highlights some fascinating insights into how citizens believe that their national governments should prioritise the fight against climate change in practice and the sacrifices they are willing to bear to make that happen.

On balance, countries are surprisingly monolithic in their answers, meaning that when they are willing to sacrifice something to protect the environment, they are typically willing to sacrifice everything and prioritise

sustainability at all costs. Perhaps even more crucially, such environmental prioritisation is overwhelmingly found in every country included in the study except in Japan, where the population is globally reluctant to concede sacrifices in the name of the environment.

Table 4. Prioritisation of environment concerns over other sacrifices

	CHINA		INDIA		JAPAN		MEXICO	
	Prioritised	**Not prioritised**	**Prioritised**	**Not prioritised**	**Prioritised**	**Not prioritised**	**Prioritised**	**Not prioritised**
Significant increase in taxes	**62**	38	**66**	43	29	**71**	**53**	47
Closure of business if environmental standards not met	**67**	33	**77**	33	46	**54**	**74**	26
Individual freedoms curbed (transportation or food)	**72**	28	**75**	25	49	**51**	**63**	27
Unemployment in industry	**64**	36	**67**	33	34	**66**	**59**	41
Greater inequality between regions or territories	**64**	36	**64**	36	34	**66**	**56**	44
Significant increase in cost of living	**67**	33	**70**	30	32	**68**	**63**	37
International tension between countries that disagree on best climate policy	**70**	30	**74**	26	48	**52**	**69**	31

Notes: Q7 respondents were asked: 'To what extent do you feel that national governments should prioritise the fight against climate change if it results in the following possible costs. Should the fight against climate always be prioritised if, as a result…?

In terms of specific sacrifices, Chinese respondents are primarily willing to sacrifice individual freedoms, whilst Indian and Mexican ones would more eagerly close businesses not respecting environmental standards. Sacrificing individual freedom is also the closest proposal to obtaining majority support in Japan.

When analysed together with the insights derived from the implicit value questions, these results seem to echo elements discussed in the literature review (see Section 1). In particular, they resonate with the conclusions

of authors such as Chung et al. (2019) that find that biospheric altruism, such as respect for the planet and living in harmony with nature is "a strong predictor of pro-environmental behaviour" (Chun et al. 2019:382). These findings also appear to be in line with Hedlund's (2011) research concerning the link between universalist values, concerns for the environment, and a willingness to make economic sacrifices to protect the environment.

3.1.3 Arbitrating between competing values

Like implicit questions (albeit in a rather different way in methodological terms), the tension scale questions enable us to assess respondents' priorities in terms of environmental values when they are forced to order several competing positively connoted values and options. We used them to arbitrate between three tension scales:

- The first (not asked in China) pertains to the arbitration between civil liberties and public order in terms of climate demonstrations.
- The second aims to assess arbitration between the prioritisation of national interest and engaging in global cooperation for a greater positive outcome overall.
- The third is concerned with the balance between scientific expert assessments and democratic preferences when those contradict one another.

The results are presented in Table 5. In terms of the arbitration between scientific experts and democratic preferences, the former get majority support in all four countries, but those majorities are very restricted in China and Japan whilst they are a lot broader in India (66% vs 29%) and even more so in Mexico (75% vs 20%).

By contrast, the other two tension scales lead to more contrasted results. In terms of making national sacrifices in favour of international cooperation, there is overwhelming support for it in China, India, and Mexico. Finally, the arbitration between civil liberties and public order leads to an interesting contrast with a majority prioritising public order in Japan (59% vs 26%), a virtual tie in India (49% for civil liberties, 48% for public order) and a clear majority for civil liberties in Mexico (56% vs 40%).

Table 5. Tension scales.

	CHINA		INDIA		JAPAN		MEXICO	
	Freedom	Order	Freedom	Order	Freedom	Order	Freedom	Order
Freedom of demonstration vs public order	-	-	49	48	26	59	56	40
	International	National	International	National	International	National	International	National
International benefits vs national benefits[3]	76	22	78	19	-	-	84	13
	Experts	Democratic	Experts	Democratic	Experts	Democratic	Experts	Democratic
Scientific experts vs democratic preference	50	42	66	29	42	37	75	20

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[3] Due to a translation error, this question was invalidated in Japan.

3.1.4 Cross-sectional differences

Table 6. Cross-sectional differences: The arbitration national governments need to make between the fight against climate change and bearing economical sacrifices (% chose prioritise climate protection over significant increases in taxes)

		CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN	MEXICO
Gender	Women	**65**	**69**	27	**54**
	Men	59	64	**32**	52
Age groups	18-34	**65**	**68**	**37**	**56**
	35-54	63	65	28	**56**
	55+	49	66	27	42
Experience of International travel	Never	62	56	25	49
	Every few years	**64**	67	31	**55**
	Sev times a year	**64**	**77**	**43**	**55**

Notes: survey Q7. To what extent do you feel that national governments should prioritise the fight against climate change if it results in the following possible costs. Should the fight against climate always be prioritised if, as a result…? Q7.A.1. … there is a significant increase in taxes.

Starting with the cross-sectional differences regarding the economic sacrifices that should be made when prioritising climate change, whilst the differences are slight, women in all countries except Japan are more favourable to prioritising the fight against climate change even if it is accompanied by significant increases in taxes.

In all four countries, the youngest generation do not seem to be fazed by higher taxes if it means national government will protect the environment, whereas the older generations seem to be a bit more cautious when it comes to bearing the cost of increased taxes. Overall, in contrast to Japan, there is very little difference between the older and younger generations in India, suggesting that the general public are more likely and more willing to accept economic burden in prioritising the fight against climate change.

The final cross-sectional variable we are looking at is experience of international travel, which can, in part, serve as a proxy for cross-cultural exposure. Note, however, that this variable encompasses at once differences in education, income, and multicultural exposure so that the differences highlighted here may stem from a number of competing mechanisms.

In this context, the experience of travel has an impact on the willingness to accept tax increases. Whether it is the opportunity to travel several times a year or just every few years, the experience of foreign travel tends to make citizens more favourable to prioritising the fight against climate change even when it comes with the cost of higher taxes. Whilst differences are smaller in China and Mexico between those who have never travelled abroad and those who travel frequently, the difference in India and Japan is nearly 20%.

Table 7. Cross-sectional differences: The arbitration national governments need to make between the fight against climate change and imposing limits on individual freedoms (% chose prioritise climate protection over curbs to individual freedoms)

		CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN	MEXICO
Gender	Women	**75**	73	46	62
	Men	70	**77**	**51**	**64**
Age groups	18-34	**75**	**78**	**57**	**69**
	35-54	74	77	48	65
	55+	56	67	46	49
Experience of International travel	Never	**73**	66	50	**63**
	Every few years	**77**	77	41	56
	Sev times a year	**72**	**87**	**63**	**63**

Notes: survey Q7. To what extent do you feel that national governments should prioritise the fight against climate change if it results in the following possible costs. Should the fight against climate always be prioritised if, as a result,…? Q7.A.3. … individual freedoms being curbed in terms of people's choice of transportation they use or food that they eat

We now turn our attention to another aspect of the arbitration between climate change and the potential sacrifices citizens are willing to accept as a result. The differences between genders are relatively small again. This time, we can see from Table 7 that men are more willing to favour prioritisation of the climate change agenda than women in Japan, and to a lesser extent in Mexico and India. In China, women tend to be more favourable to accepting curbs on individual freedoms to protect the environment. As before, we see the youngest age groups 18–34-year-olds leading the way across the four countries in their acceptance of personal sacrifices. Frequent experience of international travel seems to have an impact in India and Japan, but not in China.

We now look at two of the environment-specific questions that use tension scales to evaluate citizens' prioritisation, first between national self-interest and global collaboration, and secondly between science-led and democracy-led approaches.

The question relating to national self-interest and global cooperation emulates traditional scenarios in the field, whereby we ask respondents to decide on participation in a UN-led scheme that would lead to shared global benefits. By participating, the country loses some of the direct benefits of environmental measures, but the global benefits become largely greater overall, whilst refusing to be part of the UN scheme leads to higher direct benefits for the nation but sacrifices everyone else. We have already noted differences in answers across countries but let us now look at cross-sectional differences (Table 8). In terms of gender, differences are very low, with slightly higher proportions of men favouring global cooperation in India and China, and of women in Mexico. In terms of age differences, young people also tend to be significantly more favourable towards global collaboration except in India where the young are in fact more attached to defending the national interest even if it comes at the expense of others. Finally, we looked at the impact of international exposure through regular travel, and here again, we find that people who travel more frequently are far more likely to favour global collaboration.

Table 8. Cross-sectional differences: Tension scale – national vs global (% chose global).

		CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN[4]	MEXICO
Gender	Women	75	76	-	86
	Men	77	79		82
Age groups	18-34	79	76	-	86
	35-54	75	79		82
	55+	71	80		81
Experience of International travel	Never	77	74	-	82
	Every few years	62	78		86
	Several times a year	88	84		86

The next tension scale asked respondents to arbitrate between environmental responses supported by scientific experts but largely rejected by public opinion, or on the contrary following the will of public opinion at the expense of scientific advice. In gender terms, Japan is once again the only country where significant differences are to be found, with men more likely to favour scientific leadership over a democratic one. Elsewhere, differences are marginal or not statistically significant at all.

Age differences are the most interesting. They are wholly absent in Japan where there is nearly no difference across generations. In China, younger generations are far more likely to favour scientific advice over the democratic preference of the people, but in India and Mexico, it is the other way round and despite popular belief, older generations are far more likely to side with experts.

Finally, we assessed the impact of international exposure, and this time, China is the outlier – with those travelling less also being more likely to support science-led governance, whilst in other countries, it is those who travel more who are more likely to support an emphasis on science (albeit with all the interpretational limitations already discussed earlier).

Table 9. Cross-sectional differences: Tension scale – experts vs democracy (% chose experts)

		CHINA	INDIA	JAPAN	MEXICO
Gender	Women	51	65	40	76
	Men	49	67	46	75
Age groups	18-34	55	62	42	73
	35-54	49	67	43	75
	55+	42	75	42	81
Experience of International travel	Never	57	64	34	70
	Every few years	41	64	51	81
	Sev. times a year	40	72	54	79

In conclusion, overall, we find that younger generations often – but not always – tend to favour greater environmental intervention. A key exception pertains to younger citizens tending to trust experts less than older adults in India and Mexico, and age making relatively little difference to support for economic and social sacrifices in order to defend the environment in India.

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[4] *Due to a translation error, this question was invalidated in Japan.*

Gender has mixed effects that tend to differ across countries. Women are typically more supportive of pro-environmental sacrifices in China, but the opposite is true in Mexico, and women are also less likely than men to prioritise environmental intervention in Japan.

Finally, whilst international exposure through travel typically and predictably results in greater prioritisation of environmental issues, there are again significant exceptions, particularly in the case of China, where international travel typically makes little difference and is even associated with lesser prioritisation of expert governance. It should be noticed that the alternative – a greater emphasis on democratic governance – has a unique meaning in China compared to the other three countries included in the study.

3.2 Qualitative Findings

3.2.1 Overview of Data

Two focus groups were conducted online with participants from the education and cultural relations sector, recruited for the research by the British Council. A total of 13 individuals (6 women and 7 men) participated from the following countries participated: Session 1 (S1) - China, India, Japan and United Arab Emirates; Session 2 (S2) – Brazil, Morocco and Venezuela.

The Findings section for the qualitative fieldwork is divided into two segments: 1) the thematic content analysis of the data and 2) an analysis of the deliberative processes of the focus groups.

3.2.2 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of the two focus groups was conducted with the aim of exploring how values linked to international cooperation were discussed and given meaning in new regional contexts, and of focusing on a new issue (climate change). Firstly, we consider two themes that provide relevant complementarity with the Pilot findings: namely, the importance of balancing sameness and valuing difference, as well as the broader impact of the pandemic on the future of international cooperation. An additional two themes focused more on the demands and challenges of international cooperation, and on what changes were needed, both locally and globally.

3.2.2.1. Values: The delicate balance between 'sameness' and difference

In a similar way to the Pilot, there were several values that were discussed within the focus groups that were perceived as important for international cooperation. These included respect (towards others and towards difference), valuing inclusion and equality, valuing solidarity (see Section 3.2.2.2 below), valuing open-mindedness and valuing difference. Crucial to the context of the discussion on climate change, the focus group participants were asked to reflect on whether values should be the same to enable cooperation. While there was a general sense that commonality was important, it was not so much in relation to specific values, but more in relation to a shared approach.

We have to be in the same, in the same line, let's say we have to, you know, save the world. So we have to... everybody have to be lined up in the same way. In terms of Okay, what are we doing with the green? What are we doing with the water? What it's like, Yes, we have to have some things in common. (S2-W)

Other participants also highlighted how we need commonality to enable engagement:

Okay, so I think, of course, we need to have some common values, otherwise, we cannot talk to each other as friends, or we don't have anything in common, how can we cooperate? (S1– M)

The broader point reflected here is the emphasis on commonality in order to develop shared goals as humans, and that a key shared value should be valuing difference and respecting diversity.

> *So some common values, we have to share them. And that will be just like, respect of differences, solidarity, communicate more, and resp... I said, the respect. And even when I say, between countries, it's an issue that concerns everybody. So the countries we are we don't have the third world and the others and all this, we have also to change this conception of the world. Not that there are some who decide for others. So if it's it, if it was like this, everyone will act locally. And we will speak about this climate change? No, nobody would. So I think every country has a voice, has something to say, dialogue, exchange about these values and the way to fulfil this issue, to address this issue (S2-W)*

Similarly to the Pilot, we found a crucial emphasis placed on accepting and respecting difference. For example, in how a shared goal could be approached differently. This extended to cooperation as well, where differences in opinion should be engaged to enable innovation and to create debate that is inclusive and engaging to all.

> *But we need to start to train ourselves and to discuss more that diversity is important everywhere. We already agree that as biodiversity as a matter that it works with biodiversity everybody knows it is very important. We say that in society, diversity is important. But when it comes to opinion, I don't want to listen to opinions that are different from mine. So I prefer to stay with the in group. So we need to work better that diversity of opinions or what we can say, discussions or disagreements, it's an opportunity, the opportunity to build something different, instead of to be talking with my in group and agreeing seems that everything's okay because we agree when when we look for the full words. No, I mean, the diversity is there. And we need to address that. (S2-M)*

Ultimately, this theme echoes findings from the Pilot, illustrating how shared values can be those that emphasise and celebrate difference, and highlight acceptance and tolerance towards different local and cultural practices. This approach would allow these differences to inform and develop debates about how to face shared challenges through cooperation. This could be akin to the psychological perspectives on how to create a common ingroup identity using the metaphor of a team, where there is a shared goal, but where difference is highlighted in the contributions of different team members, and how these together enable the achievement of a common goal that extends beyond the individual country (Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Action, SIMPEA; Fritsche et al., 2017). In order to foster this sense of shared social identity (as humans) with a shared common fate, intergroup contact becomes important (Rompke et al., 2019) between diverse groups and populations, and the context within which they meet needs to facilitate cooperative rather than competitive behaviour. As such, there is a space for the British Council to both facilitate that context and enable positive contact.

3.2.2.2. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for tackling Climate Change

As with the Pilot, the broader context of data collection was salient. The pandemic and its ongoing impact was discussed and continuously linked to crucial changes, and potential opportunities, for the future. Among the lessons learned from the pandemic was a general awareness of how all of humanity is interlinked, but also how humanity, in turn, is linked with nature.

> *Well, this pandemic has shown us that as a global society, we are all vulnerable in a way or another, yeah. In the past, we used to think of developed/underdeveloped countries, but the pandemic has shown us that we are all the same and the problems that we face are similar. (S2-M)*

And we see that there are a large number of birds, especially seagulls, that sit down at the sunset in large numbers, which we haven't noticed before, because people were there. And the birds cannot act as free as they wish... so human beings are very dangerous to nature, and to society and to all sorts of of natural life. So this pushes us to think about ways we can change our behaviours, our ways of consumption, our everyday life in order to give opportunity for the environment for nature, to act in a very normal and natural way. (S2-M)

This led to discussions around how the pandemic had highlighted the importance of solidarity, cooperation and communication in enabling positive socio-political change and adaptation to new, and uncertain, circumstances.

And also we have to build up certain values of solidarity, we have been working through a competitive sense, between countries, each country wants to be the biggest, the richest, the most competitive, the most arms, armed, and so on. But with the pandemic, we feel that every country matters, and every country has a say, and has a role in our society. (S2-M)

Overall, the theme about the lessons from the pandemic linked to the question of how to enable international cooperation and sustain it. Key challenges and requirements were discussed, as will be outlined below, but a key point of connection with the pandemic was the emphasis that crises make us all equal to some extent, because we face similar challenges and must work together to overcome them.

3.2.2.3.   *International Cooperation for tackling climate change: What it requires and what threatens it*

From the focus group discussions, we could discern a number of ways in which values became embedded in perspectives taken towards international cooperation around the climate emergency. The values discussed above, both in terms of respect, diversity and equality, were all crucial for enabling positive and productive international cooperation.

One of the key topics discussed was related to equality, in different ways. Firstly, equality in terms of commitment to a shared cause and an awareness that we are all 'parts of a whole', as one participant stated, using the metaphor of a human body to exemplify this:

So all the parts and if you remove any of the parts or doesn't do doesn't do anything right in our body, you have a problem for the full system. So is the same in the world. And then how can we foster the cooperation, people can understand them more than compete with the other sector or other country or other community to show who is doing more or better, we need to understand that whatever I do, is just a part of it is and I do need the other one doing the other part. Otherwise, we will not sort this out. This understanding of the part and the total. (S2-M)

Equality as a value that promotes engagement was also discussed in relation to inclusivity, and how the international 'system' was perceived as a hierarchy:

There's not a national organisation that can force countries to cooperate. Yeah. So but I always feel like if the international system is more exclusive, and representative, I think this is gonna make a difference. Because we can see that the international system is kind of dominated by a couple of countries. And that's, maybe that's why some countries they don't feel that engaged in the international action. (S1-W)

But equality was also related to the potential existing inequalities in countries, which meant that tackling climate change became a 'privileged' issue that more developed and rich countries could dedicate attention to:

So that how do we kind of expect sort of governments that are sort of struggling on on sort of income basis or just sort of standard of living, to comply as well on? I don't know, I don't have an answer for that. I mean, that's part of the problem. (S1-W)

The concern around who should and could be acting to mitigate climate change, which was voiced in both focus groups, echoes some of the research findings highlighted in the literature review regarding the rich/poor and north/south divide when it comes to climate change accountability and responsibility. In light of this, cooperation was often framed in a context of competing national priorities that are politicized and where profit might trump a focus on global preservation:

Well, I wanted to point out something uncomfortable, for us is very, I mean, we know what should be, it should be that every everybody cares about the global problem, and they should act locally. Now, the fact is that the politics, not the policy, the politics, it's in the middle. Our Amazon's is burning out. It's also taken by miners, in a way that, I mean, they're destroying everything, and we cannot do anything, it's not in our hands. (S2-W)

The key issue around the politicization of global threats, such as climate change, impacted who was perceived as a legitimate actor, and who the public would trust in regard to this issue. A key requirement for climate mitigation was education, both educating the youth but also broader civic education around climate change, particularly as its impact was not as visible or 'felt' by individuals in their everyday lives. Crucial to education was communication, and developing diverse ways of communicating about climate change through different mediums and to different audiences:

Education is also very important. And I would say that we have to mainstream that communication challenge in all public policies of all the countries and even in their organisation. So as it becomes something more compulsory, somehow, much we have to mainstream it in our, in our and in towards politics, public policies. (S2-W)

I think, like, artists also important. Because like, sometimes, like, maybe sometimes, a scientist, like cannot like cope with everything. I mean. So that's why like an artist can like, give you like, you know, different perspective. (S1-M)

Communication, and transparency through communication, was also seen as crucial for cooperation, to identify resources and how these could be shared, but also to enable a space for addressing misunderstandings that might ultimately lead to distrust:

We need to set up more chances to to talk about different topics and for communication mechanisms and other other chances for more communications, because there are misunderstandings between different cultures, and we need to be frank, to be transparent, to eliminate misunderstandings between the cultural conflicts. (S1-W)

Creating more opportunities for dialogue across cultures, across differences, and across perspectives, is one potential space that can be filled by cultural relations organisations. Combining these with an element of civic education around climate change is further encouraged. This takes us to the next topic, around how and where to implement change, and we see that participants also identify a value-leadership gap within the climate change debate that could potentially be filled by cultural relations organisations as a bridge between the top and the bottom.

3.2.2.4. Tackling climate change: Levels and actors

When discussing how to tackle climate change, participants talked about the needs at the individual, local and international level. Specifically, a key lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic was that human behaviour was

flexible and adaptable to new circumstances, and this behavioural adaptability should be harnessed for climate-change-mitigating behavioural change. Emphasis on individual changes to behaviour were common, and a shift in perspective from selfishness to selflessness, was crucial.

> *It looks like the different concentrate, or scales of an onion. So, where you have a core, the core is a self. So unless a self changes the thought process, perhaps he or she will not be able to make an influence in the community. So I put it in the form of a few values that we need to abide, like embedding the qualities at the self level, to understand the need and the importance of cultural exchange to combat climate change. (S1-M)*

The emphasis on individual perceptions echoes Zakaria's (2015) argument that public perceptions matter for exerting pressure on politicians (or institutions) to take climate change cooperation seriously. As such, the public was seen as an important avenue for bottom-up change, aimed at pushing policy makers to take climate action. This emphasis on change being not only needed at the individual and community level but also in relation to changing regulations and laws around practices that harm the environment was present in the focus groups discussions as well. These changes ranged from sustainable practices in urban planning, to waste management, individual consumption and preservation of nature. While emphasis on trust in authority, and following government guidelines, was discussed, the emphasis on how to combat climate change and the theme of the link between changes at the local and global level emerged in this discussion as well.

> *And we need to understand this connection between the local and the global. So I guess we need to make sure everybody understand that anything that happens locally, affects globally and the global changes influence locally, I think when we understand not at something, one or other but they are together, how we work they together, then we can find that real change. (S2-M).*

But there was also a need for leadership and guidance for communities, acting as a bridge between the individual and the bigger structural forces:

> *I think community organisations and NGOs are really relevant these days everywhere. And I think the issue of organisation education, information, communication are critical in order to get some balance, you know, with the official acts of governments and you know, or even private corporations that in some cases, may have the responsibility of... Well, so, in that sense, the notion of leadership has moved, in my opinion, after the pandemic, from politicians to NGOs and community organisations everywhere in the world, and I think that's something that has to have more power in the future everywhere, and probably a better structure for NGOs everywhere in the world, in order to have a stronger voice on the debate of climate change. (S2-M)*

Here we identify a potential leadership gap that can be filled by cultural relations organisations, due to their unique position of being in between the local and the global, providing a connection between these levels, but also providing the resources to facilitate dialogue and the tools to educate.

It is clear from the data in the thematic analysis that climate change is an increasingly pressing global challenge, but it is one that is difficult for publics to grasp and identify its impact on their immediate lives, and it is one that is at times seen as a privileged concern that is in competition with more pressing, and visible, societal issues such as inequality, food scarcity and unemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has offered a context for reflection and awareness of how humanity is interlinked in life and in facing threats, and it has also highlighted the need for better leadership that emphasises this interlinking and provides an alternative voice, and medium, for engaging in dialogue and learning around climate change.

3.2.3 Deliberation Analysis

To examine the deliberative quality of the focus groups, we draw on a micro-level analysis. The aim of this analysis (coupled with the insights from the more content-focused analysis) was to examine how effective

dialogue could be generated on the topic of international cooperation on environmental issues.[5] It should be noted that the literature on deliberative quality oftentimes draws on data elicited from sessions that are either ongoing (online forum over multiple days) or within a longer one-off session, where participants either evaluate existing policy recommendations (documents provided ahead of time) or jointly produce policy recommendations within the discussion. However, given the multinational backgrounds of participants, and the potential politicizing of climate change, we were advised against doing so by the British Council in order to avoid the 'nationalisation' of participation. Instead, we were asked to frame participation and engagement around the common experience of working within the education, arts and cultural relations sector. Therefore, no specific policy recommendations were discussed or developed.

Another direct measure for assessing deliberative quality is to directly ask participants to self-assess the nature of the discussion in a post-deliberation questionnaire. In the Extension, we included both a pre-focus group questionnaire and a post-focus group questionnaire. The aim was 1) to allow us to capture elements of the survey by including a block of questions that replicated different questions from the mass survey in the pre- and post-questionnaire, 2) to allow us to examine how participants experienced the quality of the focus group, and 3) to allow us to examine any differences in opinions towards international cooperation as a result of the focus group discussion.

However, the uptake of the post-focus group questionnaire was limited, with only 5 participants completing it (compared to 19 participants completing the pre-focus group questionnaire).[6] Because of the low number, comparison across the questionnaires becomes statistically meaningless. The low uptake in post-focus group questionnaires in both the Pilot and the Extension prompts consideration of how useful this will be for gathering data in future research projects. Instead, utilising the pre-focus group questionnaire (as a combination of consent form and attitude measurement) might be a better option going forward.

Nevertheless, we report below on some interesting trends from the pre-focus group questionnaire (which of course, should be interpreted in light of the small sample size).

Table 10. Values that should be emphasised by the British Council.

FIRST VALUE	%	SECOND VALUE	%	THIRD VALUE	%
Equality	21	Sustainability	32	Sustainability	21
Freedom	21	Inclusion	21	Respect	21
Sustainability	16	Equality	11	Diversity	11
Peace	16	Open-mindedness	11	Freedom	11
Inclusion	11	Diversity	5	Prosperity	11
Diversity	11	Prosperity	5	Peace	5
Safety	4	Religion	5	Care	5
		Respect	5	Tolerance	5
		Tolerance	5	Solidarity	5
				Open-mindedness	5

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[5] For purposes of clarity, it should be noted that some categories of analysis (such as Topic and Engagement) were not coded as binaries (either / or) but rather within one participants turn they could Engage both with the question and with responding to another participant's points. Therefore, in some cases the percentages do not add to 100.

[6] Note that this number is higher than the total final number of participants (13), as this is on account of participants signing up to participate in the focus group but then not showing up on the day.

In terms of values that the British Council should be championing, the focus group participants ranked Equality/Freedom as the most important value, followed by Sustainability and thirdly, Respect. An explanation for the emphasis on Sustainability might be that the participants were recruited to participate in a study focused on climate change, making Sustainability concerns more salient. However, it may also be the case that Sustainability is genuinely one of the top values that the British Council's network of stakeholders and beneficiaries believes the organisation should be championing, because Sustainability was also ranked second in the Pilot's focus group survey. This hypothesis could be tested in a representative survey of people who engage with the British Council as partners, beneficiaries, suppliers and students. Finally, we also see Respect taking a prominent focus, similar to the Pilot findings.

When it came to their opinions on the role of international organisations in contexts of climate cooperation, the following trends were found in the data; participants tended to agree/strongly agree that tackling climate change should become a global priority, and that international organisations can play a crucial role in facilitating cooperation, showing preference towards either somewhat-strongly agreeing with the statement that *International organisations should take a leading role in tackling climate change, rather than governments.* Participants were overall negative towards the statement that countries should tackle climate change individually, indicating a desire for a global response. Lastly, focus group participants most strongly agreed (6.45 average out of 7) that *Fostering dialogue across nations is important for facilitating successful international cooperation*, indicating a key domain where international organisations can support, and lead, on climate cooperation.

3.2.3.1. Topic

We coded for whether a turn (i.e., the whole segment of speech from when a participant began a thought until they finished speaking) addressed the topic posed (structuring topic) or topics that emerged through the interaction (interactional topic). Similarly to the Pilot, we found that participants stayed on course and focused on the structured topics, but to a lesser degree than in the Pilot. 92% (S1) and 83% (S2) of the conversations focused on the topic at hand, while 8% (S1) and 22% (S2) focused on interactional topics. This included discussing the speed of vaccination, new legislation brought on by the pandemic and nation-level crises such as inequalities and other pressing issues. It should be noted that within one turn a participant could cover both a structural and interactional topic (meaning they could begin addressing the question but then move on to another topic within the same turn).

3.2.3.2. Reasoned opinion expression

Reasoned opinion expression is a combined measure that includes the codes for statements of opinion, agreement, or disagreement, and whether there is elaboration on that opinion expression. As Stromer-Galley (2007:10) explains, "Opinion expression was defined as an expression of the speaker's belief about how the world is. Opinions are expressed judgments the speaker has made on a person, an event, a social problem, a state of affairs, a crisis, values, and the like" (p. 10).

With regards to reasoned opinion expression, this was much higher than in the Pilot (where it was slightly over 50%), ranging from 87% (S1) to 94% (S2). This might have been an outcome of the Topic Guide being more focused on eliciting opinion rather than simply statements (of ideas/values). Of those turns, 85% (S1) and 97% (S2) had an elaboration. Again, this indicates a higher presence of reasoned opinion expression in the Extension than in the Pilot, suggesting that anchoring the focus group discussions in a concrete issue (e.g., climate change) helps to elicit clearer expressions of opinions and elaborations of these.

Looking more specifically at the presence of agreement and disagreement, we see that disagreement was quite rare. While agreement occurred in 34% (S1) and 26% (S2) of the turns that included an opinion, only 3% (S1 and S2) of disagreements occurred. Using existing literature (i.e., Stromer-Galley, 2007) as a benchmark, we find that the presence of disagreements is slightly lower but still a value to be expected from this kind of

data (and indeed the % is similar to the level of disagreement in the Pilot). Probing further into when disagreements occur, to consider what points of tension can be identified, we see that these happened in a context where participants were discussing whether shared values / common values were important for cooperation (S1) and when participants discussed at what level change should take place, local or global (S2). For the former, there was a sense of unease with emphasizing common values over and above accepting and respecting difference, a statement which other participants subsequently agreed with. For the latter, there was a sense that discussing local initiatives tackling or mitigating climate change would only get us so far, and there was a need for a global approach as all human beings are part of one society and should tackle climate change with this in mind.

3.2.3.3.   Sourcing

Overwhelmingly, when sources were used to support a claim, these focused on personal anecdotes, experiences or stories (90% in S1; 93% in S2). When participants referred to personal experiences, they often did so by highlighting their specific geographical context, using expressions like "Here in Morocco" or "In a city like Caracas". This was not observed in the Pilot, which may indicate that this type of sourcing was prompted by the multinational composition of the focus groups and shows a willingness by participants to frame their contributions as an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with people from other parts of the world. In some cases, there was also an overlap, where participants referenced both internal and external sources (13% in S1; 15% in S2) and only a number of instances where only external sources were referred to as support for an argument or opinion (13% in S1; 0% in S2). When external sources were referred to, these included reference to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, references to climate policies on a national level and references to international agreements/accords or climate focused summits.

3.2.3.4.   Equality

There was variety and range in terms of contributions and engagement across the sample. The number of speakers in the S1 session was 8 and, in the S2 session, 5. The number of words that one participant contributed to the conversation in total per session ranged from 260 to 2169 (Mean = 1156 words, Standard Deviation = 595, however see below for gender differences). The number of words per turn were counted to assess the level of engagement and time spent unpacking a point. The number of words in a turn ranged from 2 to 828 (Mean = 200 words, Standard Deviation = 146). The total number of turns by a speaker in a given group ranged from 3 to 9 (Mean = 6 turns per participant, Standard Deviation = 2.2).

As gender differences have been previously found in terms of which speakers dominate group dialogue and were evidenced in the Pilot, we examine the role of gender in our data for the Extension as well. The gender composition of the focus groups was 4 women and 4 men in S1 (50% women) and 2 women and 3 men in the S2 (40% women). Despite the fairly equal gender balance within the sessions, as in the Pilot, we find that men tend to dominate in terms of both turn-taking and time-taking within the discussions. In S1, men spoke in 66% of the turns, while women only spoke in 34% of the turns. In terms of words spoken, women spoke on average 142 words per turn, while men, on average, spoke 226 words per turn. In the S2, men spoke in 52% of the turns, while women spoke in 48% of the turns. Given the presence of one more male participant within S2, this indicates that women tended to speak in more turns than would be considered equal. If we look at words spoken, however, we find that women spoke on average 162 words per turn, while men spoke on average 239 words per turn, thus indicating that overall men tended to dominate the discussions by making longer contributions.

As with the Pilot, we find a marked gender difference in equality of speaking, with men taking up more time and more turns within the focus groups. Furthermore, in S1 we find that the chat was used in addition to audio and video functions (albeit very infrequently) only by women, both of whom were from the United Arab Emirates.

3.2.3.5. Engagement

Analysis of turn-type indicates that participants in the focus groups primarily responded to the moderator (by offering their opinion or direct answer to the question posed). 79% (S1) and 83% (S2) of all turns initiated responses to the question or addressed at the moderator. However, it was more common to find responses that, while addressing the question, would also pick up on points by previous speakers, or express agreement. Responding to others occurred 23% of time in the S1 session and 28% of the time in S2 sessions, an increase in comparison to the Pilot data (11.3% responses).

The coding also captured whether a participant continued a thought from a prior turn. This includes, for example, a participant who takes multiple turns to continue their thought or refers to her own previous points – regardless of what other participants might have said in the intervening turns. This was a relatively rare phenomenon. Only 3% (S1) and 11% (S2) of the turns were continuations of a speaker's thoughts from a prior turn.

3.2.3.6. Meta-talk

Meta-talk was similarly rare. Across the focus groups, meta-talk occurred in 8% (S1) and 14% (S2) of the turns and was often aimed at getting clarification to a question, or to challenge the question itself.

4. Conclusions

The Big Conversation Extension has enabled us to look at the role of values in international cooperation in the context of solving one of the most pressing issues facing our planet: ensuring sustainability and protecting the environment. Environmental and sustainability issues are, by nature, eminently cross-national and this made them a natural testing ground for our values models with regards to a specific and critical societal question. We did so by using a comparative survey in four countries (Japan, India, China, and Mexico) and two transnational focus groups.

On the whole, we find that citizens are typically well aware of the importance of environmental issues, and in China, it is even seen as one of the main priority values for the British Council itself. Qualitative evidence strengthened this sense of the importance of environmental and sustainability issues, notably among elites, and in the survey, the tension scale questions also emphasise the importance of the topic for many.

However, the sacrifices that people are willing to consent to in order to improve environmental protection both nationally and internationally make the situation feel a little more ambiguous. On balance, whilst countries experiencing very direct daily consequences of environmental problems such as China, India and Mexico showed a willingness to make sacrifices, reactions to the possibility of sacrifices were far more lukewarm in Japan.

Cross-sectional differences also suggested several counter-intuitive findings. If those with international exposure are typically more supportive of environmental intervention and prioritisation, we found generally little difference between young and middle-aged cohorts, and in some cases (science-led policy, or several answers from the Indian survey), we even sometimes find that younger generations are at times less likely to prioritise environmental protection at the cost of other restrictions.

The international focus groups echoed previous themes from the Pilot, emphasizing the tensions between balancing sameness (and shared values) and valuing difference, as well as the broader impact of the pandemic on the future of international cooperation. The specific insights gained from framing the discussion around climate cooperation was the emphasis on education (for both youth and broader civic education) around climate change, equality of engagement by different global actors and the move away from a global hierarchy. Organisations such as the British Council were seen as a bridge between actors of different levels (local, national, international) that could foster cooperation and dialogue.

The deliberative quality analysis of the focus groups found much higher levels of reasoned opinion expression compared to the Pilot, suggesting that anchoring the focus group discussions in a concrete issue (like climate change) helps to elicit clearer expressions of opinions and elaborations of these issues, which ultimately works towards improving the deliberative quality of the discussion. However, despite this, similarly to the Pilot, we find that there are very rare instances of disagreement, that personal narratives are the main source for elaborating opinions, and that gender inequality in speaking persists, with men dominating discussions over women.

To end on a positive note, there is certainly overwhelming support for dealing with environmental issues as a global rather than national matter, with the exception of Japan. The high ranking of sustainability as a leading British Council value in China suggests that there are at least some parts of the planet where environmental values are changing fast and radically.

4.1 Relevance for cultural relations organisations

The Big Conversation on Climate Change offers interesting insights and implications for the cultural relations sector. This final section of the report summarises the most important points, which should not be understood

as direct consequences of the research, but as reflections to help cultural relations organisations interested in this research to take it further and use it in their practice.

First, the literature on international cooperation highlights two important values, trust and solidarity, which are greatly impacted by contact between people. Part of the mission of cultural organisations like the British Council is to bring people together in a literal sense, and academic research (Rompke et al. 2018, Sally 2001, Jennings 2018) tells us that this will be essential to create positive attitudes towards others which will, in turn, enhance collaboration to address global challenges collectively. Therefore, the digitalisation of cultural relations activities caused by the pandemic should not substitute face to face events and gatherings in which formal and informal intergroup contacts are fostered. Instead, these interactions should be resumed when possible because they have the potential to enhance solidarity and trust.

Second, as shown by the quantitative and the qualitative components of this study, diversity exists even when there is a surface of similarity. Our participants have expressed in different ways and contexts that diversity should be respected and embraced, rather than diluted, celebrated rather than hidden under attitudes that overemphasize "sameness". In this regard, cultural organisations occupy a privileged space in the public world, as they are free from the over-politicisation associated with governmental institutions and, at the same time, enjoy international connections. This space should be used to put forward new narratives for international collaboration that emphasize the value of contributions from diverse voices, in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, to tackle common challenges, such as climate change. It is also important to create safe spaces for discussing uncomfortable topics and engaging in conversations with those who think differently, aimed at bridging the gaps between individuals, communities, and governments.

Finally, cultural organisations should also take from this study that their role as educators and communicators is needed to address climate change and other global challenges. Due to their prestige and mission, cultural organisations like the British Council gather all the necessary conditions to explore mechanisms to channel scientific findings in an engaging, understandable way, using for instance their creative networks of artists and creative entrepreneurs. Innovative approaches led by cultural organisations on this front could educate the public and reach audiences that will otherwise remain sceptical or, worse, completely unengaged.

Annex I. References

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Annex II. Literature Review Methodology

The literature review was conducted by first examining the scope of the academic literature using Web of Science. Web of Science combines access to multiple databases that allow researchers to examine and compile comprehensive citation data from diverse academic disciplines and across broader timeframes. Using Web of Science, we initially searched for any publications between 2015 (after the Paris Climate Agreement had been signed) and the beginning of 2021 that had the keywords 'climate change' and 'international cooperation' in the abstract. This led to a total of 840 documents (including articles, editorials, meeting reports, letters, reviews etc.). Of these, only 588 were articles that were written in English. To narrow down the sample, we used this dataset as our 'universe' and then searched which articles included 'climate change and international cooperation' in the title. This became Dataset A: N = 14. Subsequently, we searched for the following keywords within the 'universe': values (N = 55), attitudes (N = 13), dialogue (N= 17), policy (N=298). We selected the 55 articles containing the word 'values' (N = 51 after removing duplicates). These 51 articles resulted in Dataset B. Lastly, we expanded our timeframe to cover any articles including 'climate change and international cooperation' in the abstract since the year 2000 (N = 288). We then searched for those that included the word 'values' (N = 74). After removing duplicates from Datasets A and B, we ended up with a total of 33 articles in Dataset C. An additional scan using Google Scholar further generated a selected list of 4 articles (Dataset D) that focused more specifically on values and pro-environmental behaviour among individuals, and these articles were subsequently included to consider how some of the literature on individual-level values could be explored in relation to international cooperation.

As such, the literature review was based on a careful reading of 103 abstracts of academic articles published in scientific journals. The abstracts were read to establish whether the article would be suitable to read at full length, or whether the keywords were mentioned in a general way. From reading the abstract, a final sample of 26 articles were selected and downloaded for in-depth reading.

Table 11. Final sample of reviewed academic articles.

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