

**Valuing Immigration:
How Frame Elements Contribute to Effective Communications**

Prepared for the FrameWorks Institute

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no issue presents the contradictions within Americans' thinking more strongly than immigration. On the one hand, we are a country built by immigrants; our national memory includes both the *Mayflower* and the Statue of Liberty. On the other hand, our history is freighted with anti-immigrant episodes from the Know Nothing movement in the mid-nineteenth century until present times when vigilantes advocate and purport to patrol the Mexican border. As such, these contradictions in thinking have a long, deep history in the United States and require that immigration advocates think carefully about the way they approach communications, if the goal is to generate greater public support for progressive reforms.

Communications about immigration is a particularly salient topic today because reform of immigration policy has reemerged at the forefront of legislative and political debates, moving up from the bottom of the political to-do list. Immigration as a pressing social issue reemerged powerfully on the American political landscape following the 9/11 attacks. The national conversation about how to keep America safe from "foreign" intruders became the impetus for stricter border controls, stricter enforcement of immigrant employment policies, and the creation of new federal and state institutions – notably the cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which today oversees most immigration issues. As part of an attempt to enforce immigration laws and to reflect a "get tough" stance, the federal government initiated a series of large-scale work site raids, increased the difficulty of pursuing legalization, and introduced new policies that some argue have eroded due process in favor of expediency in adjudicating cases involving immigrants. This episode in America's stance on immigration has been incredibly controversial on both sides of the political aisle – with conservatives criticizing the slow pace and small scale of efforts to enforce immigration policies and progressives, by contrast, eschewing the strategic direction of these initiatives altogether.

The communications field has never been more crowded and ripe with admonitions to progressive advocates about what they should do to frame this issue. Most have now settled on a strategy that combines (at the very least) "talking values" and "talking solutions," but they have avoided giving direction to advocates about the thorny issue of race and ethnicity. That is, how do advocates talk about immigration reform without triggering the backlash that often comes when such reform efforts are expected to benefit racial and ethnic minorities? For obvious reasons, advocates do not want to reinvigorate the xenophobic diatribe that followed 9/11 in the national debate of this issue. Advocates fear that a public dialogue that focuses on immigrants (documented and undocumented) would once again make them targets of populist backlashes, such as California's Proposition 187, which bars undocumented immigrants from basic social services. Yet, even a cursory eavesdrop into the public debate of immigration policy in the U.S. today conveys the sense that race and ethnicity live and are prominent features of that conversation – even when they are not directly addressed by advocates.

Representative Melvin Watt (D-NC) summed it up this way:

...immigration law and immigration policy [reflects] the confusions and dishonesty and racial attitudes and class attitudes we have in this country in other domestic areas, and I have found that same kind of irrational class-based, race-based kind of thinking existing in our immigration policies.ⁱ

Understandably then, there is much consternation among advocates about *how*, *when* and *whether* to talk about the unique needs and experiences of racial minorities who are immigrants. This is further complicated when advocates try to weave the race conversation into larger narratives that attempt to remind the public of more broadly shared American values. In trying to do so, they often face the tactical dilemma of finding ways to communicate about issues like:

- the prejudice with which racial and ethnic minorities are treated by the justice system (effectively criminalizing immigrants, especially in enforcement activities like work site raids, or that in many places Latinos are routinely pulled over in traffic stops and asked to produce proof of their immigration status);
- the hardships that make racial and ethnic minorities more vulnerable as immigrants (for example, the gang problems that go relatively unmitigated because residents fear that law enforcement agencies will ask for immigration documentation); or
- the fact that some immigrant groups are treated differently than others (that refugees from Haiti seem to be treated differently than those from Europe or Cuba, for example).

While the issue of how, when, and whether to directly address the racial and ethnic overtones of social policy has always been a tough one for advocates – especially those who know the value of communications in affecting public support – a new set of opportunities for progressive advocates has made this question germane again. In particular, immigration advocates have been buoyed by the election of an African American president – one who is sympathetic to the issues of racial and ethnic minorities and who has vowed to make substantial reforms in this area. As such, they see opportunities to get traction on a wide range of progressive immigration measures. The challenge from a communications perspective is, in some ways, how to use broader values to talk about policy reform, and at the same time bring light to the precarious circumstances in which current immigration policies have left millions of racial and ethnic minorities. More simply, do they frame this discussion by *talking values* (to evoke a sense of commonality among all Americans) or *talking values and race* (to draw more attention to the unique circumstances of racial and ethnic minorities) to get traction on immigration reform issues?

To bring some clarity to this question and give advocates more guidance with which to structure their communications about the immigration reform proposals currently being floated in political circles, we conducted a series of experimental surveys to test various approaches. This research, supported by the California Endowment, incorporates findings from two experimental surveys where respondents were exposed to differing value treatments and then asked about their preferences with respect to immigration policy. To understand the impact of presenting race as part of the communications around immigration, we designed the experiments so that some of the values were imbued with the issue of race and others, in contrast, were not. More specifically, we set out to understand the effects of three kinds of value frames: (1) frames that specifically implicate racial and ethnic discrimination, structural racism or inequality in explaining why society ought to enact policy reforms; (2) frames that simply underscore the benefits that might accrue to racial and ethnic minority communities if policy reforms were enacted; and (3) frames with no racial overtones at all. This report presents the findings from these experiments regarding which values align more readily with support for progressive immigration policies and, in doing so, underscores important lessons about how race/ethnicity may be positioned in the immigration frame to elevate policy support.

The format of this report is straightforward. We begin with a general discussion of issue framing and then turn to a delineation of the values we tested as part of both experimental surveys. We then discuss the methods employed to test the values in both surveys and subsequently conclude by discussing the findings and their implications for advocates of immigration reform policies. Finally, based on FrameWorks' *Talking Disparities Toolkit*, we give an example in Appendix C of how to structure an alternative more effective communications message around immigration and race/ethnicity.

VALUES, FRAMES, AND PUBLIC THINKING

We borrow the notion of “frames” from the cognitive and social sciences to describe one way people use information to make judgments about a wide range of things including their opinions about public policies. Scholars in the cognitive and social sciences use the term “framing” to describe the connection between the way that issues are presented to the public and, alternatively, the way those issues are then understood by the public.ⁱⁱ Put another way, frames are rhetorical devices that people use to organize information in order to give meaning to the world around them, as described in the following excerpts from the scholarly literature about framing (see also, Kinder, 2007; Reese et al., 2001):

“Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6)

“[[f]rames activate knowledge, stimulate ‘stocks of cultural morals and values, and create contexts.” (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 47)

“[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.”
(Entman, 1993, p. 52)

While it is beyond the scope of this report to recap the vast scholarly literature, the FrameWorks Institute has written extensively over the last decade about framing as a practical exercise for advocates and has used these broad scholarly notions of “framing” to develop a practical taxonomy for advocates to use in their efforts to reshape public thinking. We agree with Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 39) who point out that framing “has been used in different ways in several different disciplines to mean different things with different outcomes” (see Chong & Druckman, 2007, for a good review of the literature on framing theory). Nevertheless, our interest in frames is built around the idea that people’s attitudes and opinions can be greatly affected by exposure to presentation of elements within a frame (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Iyengar, 1991).

In this paper, we test “frame effects” or the extent to which altering the way policy issues are organized has an impact on public thinking about those issues. The conventional wisdom among scholars is that frame effects on public opinion stem from the psychological process known as accessibility (Entman, 1993). That is, contextual cues in the frame activate particular mental representations, which stay “on top of the mental bin” (Domke, Shah & Wackman, 1998), thus becoming more accessible in memory at the time of judgment. In turn, these accessible representations form the basis for subsequent judgments (Wyer & Srull, 1989).

We use this basic notion to guide the design of our experimental surveys and to highlight frame effects that we uncover in this research. More specifically, our study of frame effects in an experimental setting entails three very general steps. First, we delineate a list of candidate frame elements that our research suggests would be necessary for “reframing” (or changing the way the public thinks about) the issue. The candidate frame elements typically emerge from our qualitative research on the topic and, often, from the arsenal of FrameWorks prior research on other related issues. Second, experimental participants are given a survey in which they are exposed to the frame elements. Third, participants’ reactions to a wide range of policy proposals are then observed. Testing for frame effects, then, is ultimately about the way in which incoming messages influence judgment.

This study, in particular, focuses on the importance of incorporating and articulating values as an integral part of the frame. At the broadest level, values are the ideals that provide the organizing principles on which people reach decisions (Rokeach 1973). FrameWorks research on a wide range of issues has shown that when people think about social issues from the vantage point of alternative values, the output of their thinking (i.e., their political opinions) varies. For instance,

when prompted to think about an issue from the vantage point of “equality,” people often reach different conclusions than when they are prompted by values like “liberty” or “merit.” The key for FrameWorks is that people are not ideologically static when it comes to policy issues. This stands in stark contrast to the “rational choice model” that assumes that people will always reason consistently from one predominant value (generally thought to be “self-interest”). Rather, our research suggests that value systems are more dynamic and flexible than one might expect, and the literature on frame effects increasingly reflects this understanding (Converse, 1964).

It is important to also note that values are an important part of any issue frame and clearly articulating values in a frame can serve the purposes of elevating a whole host of policies – even those that might be considered anti-progressive.ⁱⁱⁱ As a result, FrameWorks regularly tests and evaluates the impact of values that have been shown in our prior qualitative research to elevate progressive policies as well as to broaden the overall lens through which people come to attribute responsibility for solving social problems. This process acknowledges that some values are more likely to “stick” to an issue than others and that empirical research is necessary to determine which values are more applicable to an issue than others (for a review, see Nelson & Willey, 2003). For example, prior experimental research by FrameWorks has shown that the value of Ingenuity increased support for public policy solutions as diverse as global warming and early child development but failed to do so in our research on policies affecting rural America. As a result, we contend that the role of values is important but contested terrain, and our purpose in this report is to evaluate how a set of values (many of which proved promising in our qualitative research on immigration) perform in elevating immigration policies within a much larger experimental research examination.

RACIALIZING VALUES AND IMMIGRATION POLICY

The findings detailed in this report come from two experimental studies designed to understand how the presentation of values and race/ethnicity within an issue frame affect public support for immigration reform. More specifically, we wanted to see if introducing an explicit appeal for progressive policy reform on the basis of race (of racial discrimination, in particular) at the values level of the frame would extend policy support more than values frames that made use of no such appeals. As such, we designed two experimental studies to capture the frame effects associated with different types of values and, as we discuss below, we specifically explore two separate but related lines of inquiry with respect to operationalizing race as part of an issue frame on immigration.

(1) Study I – Examining the Impact of Current Communications Practice

In the first study (referred to as *Study I* in the report), we wanted to understand the impact of a popular communications practice among progressive policy advocates – use and development of an issue frame that begins with an appeal for policy reform based on the: (1) articulation of the problems faced by racial minorities; (2) incorporation of a strongly held value (often fairness) that is expected to motivate policymakers to swift action on behalf of these groups; and (3) a suggestion that the group might benefit directly from the passage of a new legislative proposal, program, or service. For example, during a recent conference call, leaders from the civil rights community issued the following statements jointly on unemployment^{iv}:

Those disproportionately impacted by the economic crisis must receive assistance proportionate to their real needs. The diversity of American communities clearly dictates that one size does not fit all. We have to rebuild Main Street and rescue back street. We can't just go back to the economy of three to four years ago when African Americans suffered perennial unemployment rates that were consistently twice that of whites. We have to do more to rebuild the economy for everyone to have access to the American dream. We have to challenge those in Congress who insist on saying no to everything. Over 50 years ago, then-segregationist Alabama Governor George Wallace stood in front of the school house doors to stop the integration of the University of Alabama. Now we have primarily Republicans standing in the door to oppose jobs bills to bring employment to millions of Americans, refusing to support extending unemployment insurance to help people cope with this unprecedented crisis – saying no, no, no when people are suffering, suffering. – *Ben Jealous, President and CEO of the NAACP*

We are calling for the government to create jobs for Latinos, but the policies enacted so far have not done enough to help these workers. As unemployment continues to rise, a crisis of confidence is brewing in our communities. Lawmakers must show us that they are listening to Latino workers and have a targeted plan to create jobs in the hardest-hit communities. – *Janet Murgía, President and CEO of the National Council of La Raza*

Across our country, high and lingering unemployment – particularly among young workers, low-income workers and workers of color – are straining families to the breaking point and decimating whole communities. While our economy is no longer on the brink of collapse, it should be obvious to everyone that the pace of the recovery is not generating jobs fast enough to sustain our growing workforce. That's why it's now a moral imperative for Congress and the Obama Administration to take bold, meaningful action to ensure that our nation's working families survive this crisis and to create jobs now that put us on a sound foundation for future prosperity. – *Wade Henderson, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights*

These statements attempt to make a compelling case for policy reform, and because this is a common way that communications around progressive immigration policies are cast, we wanted to test this strategy and its impact on reform support. As such, we designed each of the treatments in the first experiment with a value and a statement that addresses the need for policy reform based on a specific set of community-level problems faced by racial minorities. Figure 1 is an example of one of the value treatments in the study. Figure 1 gives the specific wording of Fairness Across Groups – where the value of fairness is combined with an emphasis on group differences and patterns of inequality across three sectors – education, lending practices, and health care. Areas highlighted in Figure 1 most directly reflect these essential elements of the frames.

Figure 1. Example of a Treatment in Study I

Figure 1. Example of a Treatment in Study I
Fairness Across Groups
<p>Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in America. Some people believe that problems in American communities are the result of discriminatory practices that continue to unfairly target some Americans. Whether overtly or more subtly, some Americans are treated differently when it comes to such things as getting ahead in the classroom, applying for a home loan or being able to see a doctor. According to this view, we need to renew our commitment to a just society if we are to achieve real equality. We can do this by devoting more resources to policies that uncover discrimination and address fairness in our society. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets in a manner that is fairer to American communities.</p>

In addition to Fairness Across Groups, we tested four other values in *Study I* (Opportunity for All, Ingenuity, Prevention, and Fairness Between Places). All four of the latter values were included in the study because they have been shown to be effective in moving public support for policy in our research on other related policy topics. In contrast, the concept of Fairness Across Groups has generally not been shown in our prior research to elevate policy support, and for this reason, we did not expect it to do well on immigration either. Fairness Across Groups was included in this experiment however to show the policy impact of this value (as a common articulation by policy advocates) in contrast to other values that we have found to be more promising in framing social issues. In particular, the value Fairness Between Places was specifically included as a contrast to Fairness Across Groups and to address the fairness concept in a way that we have found in our research to be more productive in elevating policy support.^v

In all, the values in *Study I* attempt to explain *why* society ought to undertake substantive policy reforms in terms of the problems racial and ethnic minorities face in society such as discrimination, differential treatment, and inequality. Table 1 identifies the full list of values tested in *Study I*, and the full narrative of these treatments (as narrated in the survey) can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1. Values Tested in the Experimental Surveys	
Study I	Study II
Opportunity for All Ingenuity Prevention Fairness Between Places Fairness Across Groups	Disparities Colorblind Prevention Prosperity Opportunity for All Interdependence Ingenuity Fairness Between Places Fairness Across Groups

(2) Study II – Re-evaluating the Bundled Values/Race Frame

In a second study (referred to in the report as *Study II*), we study the impact of values and get at the introduction of race/ethnicity in a slightly different way. Rather than introducing race into the frame by enumerating the problems faced by racial and ethnic minorities, we examine the impact of a set of values that inherently remind the public of race and then contrast them with a set of race-neutral values. In this study, the race-neutral values (Prevention, Opportunity for All, Interdependence, Ingenuity and Fairness Between Places) are tested against values that remind the public of race (Disparities, Fairness Across Groups and Colorblind). The derivation of the values used in this study come from our prior research on race, and the rationale for their inclusion in the study is discussed in substantial detail in a major report of that research found on FrameWorks’ website.^{vi}

In Figure 2, we provide an example of both types of treatments; we contrast a race-neutral value (Fairness Between Places) with a race-specific value (Fairness Across Groups). In this study, we test the extent to which talking about fairness between “places” versus fairness about the circumstances of specific racial and ethnic “groups” elevates support for immigration. Areas highlighted in Figure 2 are simply to point out the contrasts between the essential elements of these frames. The full text of the value treatments used in *Study II* can be found in Appendix A.

It is important to note here that both of these “fairness” values are different from their narration in Study I because the values in Study II were designed with a different purpose in mind. More specifically, while both sets of treatments are designed to explain why society ought to enact substantive policy reforms that will benefit racial and ethnic minority communities, the treatments in Study II try to do so without specifically implicating discriminatory practices or structural racism. Based on prior FrameWorks research, we hypothesized that the race-neutral values (like Fairness Between Places) would ultimately outperform those that framed

immigration as a policy domain with an explicitly racial backdrop (like Fairness Across Groups).^{vii} That is, prior FrameWorks research has found that framing social issues with an explicitly racial lens (as stemming from intentional discrimination, structural racism or inequality) has a deleterious effect – negating public support on some issues and depressing it slightly on others. As a result, we wanted to demonstrate the impact on policy support when the frame focuses squarely on race-neutral, broader values. We also hoped to show more productive ways of telling this story (in the case above, the story about fairness) to immigration advocates.

Figure 2. Example of a Race-Neutral Value and a Race-Specific Treatment in Study II	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Race-Neutral Value Example - Fairness Between Places</i></p> <p>Lately there has been a lot of talk about fairness among different parts of our country. Some people believe that certain communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well. This is because programs and services are not fairly distributed across all communities. When some communities are denied the resources they need, they are unable to overcome problems like poor health and education. According to this view, we need to level the playing field so that every community has access to quality health and education programs and services. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets more fairly among communities?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Race-Specific Value Example - Fairness Across Groups</i></p> <p>Lately there has been a lot of talk about fairness between different groups in our country. Some people believe that some groups are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well. This is because programs and services are not fairly distributed among all groups in our society. When some groups are denied the resources they need, they are unable to overcome problems like poor health and education. According to this view, we need to make sure that all groups in our country have equal access to quality health and education programs and services. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets more fairly among groups?</p>

Evaluated in tandem, both studies (which were conducted using an identical web-based survey format) allow us to understand the impact of values and the presentation of race/ethnicity on frames, albeit in different but complementary ways.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

- *Study I* was designed to understand the impact of a fairly common communications practice among advocates and the findings from this study are unambiguous – the strategy of using the current problems faced by racial and ethnic minorities to appeal for policy reforms, followed by a value or moral imperative that tries to incite action on the part of policymakers, is ineffective for building public support for immigration reform. The fact that at least two of the values treatments we tested (Opportunity for All and Fairness Across Groups) actually depress immigration policy support means that advocates using this communications strategy with some regularity might actually be doing more harm than good.

- Moreover, we speculate that the value frames in *Study I* were not effective in moving policy support for immigration because the structure of these frames undermined the most important role of values; they remind the public that the reform policies discussed will likely benefit a small group of “others,” and as a result, they do not answer the essential question that values respond to in a frame: Why should *I* be concerned? That is, they essentially fail to communicate the shared consequences of inaction. Thus, this practice (which essentially assigns policy benefits to a racial minority group) is shown to be an ineffective communications strategy for elevating policy support.
- In *Study II*, we sought to broaden the communications approach tested – to test the impact of combining values and race but also to contrast that approach with one we felt (based on prior research) would be more promising. As such, we tested the race-specific values against race-neutral values. Here, we found that race-neutral values outperformed all other values as well as the control condition. The two race-neutral values which perform best in terms of elevating immigration reform policies are: (1) Fairness Between Places and (2) Prosperity. Both values are proven in this experiment to be statistically significant and their performance in the experiment provides strong confirmation that communications about immigration that incorporate Fairness Between Places or Prosperity are more likely to elevate support for immigration reforms.
- The value of Fairness Between Places associates fairness with access to and distribution of services across all communities, i.e., that “certain communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well” and, as a result, we need to “level the playing field so that every community has access” to the resources they need to thrive.
- The value of Prosperity emphasizes that problems in community well-being “undermine prosperity, like poor health and education” and, as a result, we need to work hard to develop the “human and community resources vital to our ability to achieve a prosperous society.” Prosperity, as a value then, underscores the vital community supports that are necessary to promote prosperity for the society overall.
- Interestingly, both values (Fairness Between Places and Prosperity) elevate public support for a different set of discrete policies within the overall immigration battery. That is, both value treatments win greater levels of overall public support by attaching themselves differently to the issue of immigration. As such, when we disaggregate the immigration battery, we find that Fairness Between Places is best at elevating support for family reunification, access to immigrant resource centers, and universal driver’s licenses. Alternatively, Prosperity performed best in policies that affect employer hiring and the immigrant labor force.
- In Appendix C, we provide a message templates culled from FrameWorks’ Disparities Toolkit that can be used by advocates to talk more effectively about immigration reform and the plight of racial and ethnic minorities as immigrants

RESEARCH METHODS

The 4,275 experimental participants in *Study II* and the 1,626 participants in *Study I* came from an Internet panel maintained by YouGov Polimetrix. Participants were matched on gender, age, race, education, and party identification and weighted to correspond to known marginals for the population of registered voters in the United States from the 2006 American Community Survey.

Dependent Measures

In both studies, we use a common set of questions to measure support for immigration policies. In particular, six questions form the basis on which we chart respondents' reactions to the value treatments. These six policy questions covered: a) family reunification, b) resource centers, c) citizenship opportunities, d) driver's licenses proof, e) federal laws that prohibit hiring and f) funding to secure borders. The last two questions were reversed in the questionnaire to avoid "response set" but are presented here in the same more positive, more progressive format as the other questions. The exact wording of each treatment is in Appendix A, and the wording of the immigration questions used is presented in the Appendix B.

To derive a summary measure, a principal components analysis (PCA) was performed on the six questions that revealed that the questions loaded on a single factor; PCA is used to "squash" multiple questions into a single measure for analysis. The main advantage of using PCA is that we can look to the one combined outcome measure rather than pay attention to responses to six separate questions. Specifically, this method combines responses to the questions into a single scale, and our analysis shows that such responses accounts for 45 percent of the variance in respondents' answers to all the questions. Statisticians call this the central tendency or principal component of the responses. This combined measure ran from -2.74 to 1.92, where a higher number indicates a more progressive response; thus, a respondent who gave perfectly progressive answers to all six questions would receive a 1.92, while a perfect anti-progressive would receive a -2.74.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings from Study I

In *Study I*, the average respondent reaction to the immigration policy battery after exposure to each of the value frames is presented in Table 2. In this table (and all subsequent tables) the numbers in each row represent the mean response to each question or, in the case of the last column, the mean across all of the specific immigration questions asked in the survey. The means were derived using a series of t-tests^{viii} for significance, asterisks always denote statistical significance, and higher numbers always signify more progressive responses.

Table 2 summarizes the primary results from *Study I*. Here we find that *none of the values reached conventional levels of statistical significance in terms of demonstrating the ability to move immigration policy forward. Moreover, several of the values even depressed support for immigration policy (Opportunity for All and Fairness Across Groups), and the remainder only barely moved support above the control condition.*

Table 2. Study I – Immigration Battery Results Using Racialized Values Frames							
Treatment	a	b	c	d	e	f	Mean (across all questions)
Control	-0.1	0.41	-0.37	-0.65	-0.06	-0.13	0
Opportunity for All	-0.16	0.25	-0.39	-0.64	-0.28	-0.15	-0.137
Ingenuity	-0.07	0.4	-0.26	-0.42	-0.24	-0.09	0.189
Prevention	-0.06	0.22	-0.33	-0.67	-0.03	0.12	0.031
Fairness Across Groups	-0.22	0.23	-0.48	-0.79	-0.09	0.05	-0.102
Fairness Between Places	-0.04	0.39	-0.2	-0.71	-0.12	0.12	0.052

Note: Asterisks and highlighted text indicate levels of statistical significance ** p < .01.
Policy Key: a) family reunification, b) resource centers, c) pathway to citizenship, d) universal driver’s license eligibility, e) reprioritize federal hiring laws, and f) reprioritize border control measures

The findings summarized in Table 2 are particularly important because the treatments in this experiment epitomize in many respects a very common communications practice among advocates – an appeal for policy reform based on an articulation of the problems a specific group faces, expression of a moral imperative or value that invites action on behalf of that group, followed by a suggestion that the group might specifically benefit from the passage of a new legislative proposal, program, or service. More specifically, *framing the conversation about immigration with a race-specific value (or one that reminds the public that the issue is in part about race/ethnicity) is not an effective way to frame the issue for the purposes of building broader public support.* In this respect, the implications from our experiment here are resoundingly clear – none of the treatments are effective for this purpose and at least two of the values treatments actually depress policy support (by moving support in the negative direction in Table 2).

Clearly, the value frames (as a whole) performed poorly in this study and failed to elevate immigration policy support. This is likely to be because the structure of these frames undermined one of the most important roles that values play in a frame. Among other things, articulating values in an issue frame serves to make more visible the societal implications of policy action. In this way, values are essential in that they help to broaden public thinking about policy issues and to understand why resolving the problems identified in the frame are in the broader public interest. In the case of immigration, values should help ordinary Americans (most of whom are not likely to see themselves as directly benefiting from immigration policy reform)

to see how such progressive policies could have a positive effect on their lives as well on the nation as a whole. In doing so, the values should help people see the importance of reform as well as to see it as imperative to the nation's success.

Clearly, the frames identified in *Study I* have difficulty performing this task, and they *likely undermine the ability of the values to do their best work. That is, they remind the public that the beneficiaries of immigration policies will be a small group of "others" and, as a result, they do little to motivate public support.* Moreover, the frames in *Study I* go one more step in this direction by making more explicit the kinds of problems this small group of "others" face without articulating the relationship of these problems to broader societal concerns. As a result, this strategy proves to be ineffective in elevating public support and in some cases (as shown in our analyses) actually depresses support for immigration reform.

The results from *Study I* are not surprising to us. Previous FrameWorks research on related topics has consistently shown that framing issues from the vantage point of discriminatory practices, structural racism or inequality can be problematic for building a broad constituency of policy support on issues. In the second study, we test race-based values directly against race-neutral frames. Thus, our hypothesis going into *Study II* was that race-neutral values would be more constructive toward elevating support for immigration reform policies. As such, we designed a second study to specifically examine this hypothesis.

Findings from Study II

In *Study II*, Table 3 summarizes the experiment findings. The means in the final column suggest that there are significant frame effects on two of the values tested; the asterisks denote statistical significance and higher numbers signify more progressive responses.

More specifically, we find that *two values outperform the rest in terms of moving respondents toward more progressive viewpoints on immigration: Fairness Between Places and Prosperity. Both values are shown in the experimental results to have statistically significant frame effects that (based on their magnitude) are capable of elevating support for immigration reform.*

The best performer, Fairness Between Places, generated a factor score of .055 – a movement of almost .2 relative to the control group. While a movement of .2 is not terribly large, considering that the means are scored on a five-point scale, from -3 to 2, it is impressive that this much movement in deeply held attitudes was engendered by such a small treatment. More importantly, the movement in this case is statistically significant (at the level of .01) which indicates that less than one time in a hundred would we see such a movement arise at random. To convey the magnitude of the shift we note that if, for example, a person read a book with the same effect per word as in this treatment, their attitudes would shift from completely anti-progressive to

completely progressive. Thus, while the movement is small, it is not due to chance and is quite potent when assessed against the length of the communication that caused it.

Table 3. Study II – Immigration Battery Results Comparing Race-Specific and Race-Neutral Iterations							
Treatment	a	b	c	d	e	f	Mean (across all questions)
Control	-0.11	-0.92	0	0.07	0.94	0.89	-0.142
<u>Race-Specific Value Treatments</u>							
Disparities	-0.11	-0.89	-0.02	0.27	1.07	1.08	-0.036
Colorblind	-0.06	-1.01	0.09	0.19	1.16	1.11	-0.01
Fairness Across Groups	-0.05	-0.87	0.05	0.34	1.1	1	-0.011
<u>Race-Neutral Value Treatments</u>							
Prevention	0.02	-0.85	0.13	0.16	1.12	1.05	0.014
Prosperity	-0.06	-0.97	0.12	0.29	1.18	1.19	0.037**
Opportunity for All	0.01	-0.91	0.15	0.31	1.1	1.1	0.035
Interdependence	-0.04	-0.9	0.12	0.34	1.15	1.09	0.037
Ingenuity	-0.03	-0.84	0.13	0.21	1.15	1.1	0.019
Fairness Between Places	0.06	-0.79	0.09	0.36	1.13	1.06	0.055**
Note: Asterisks and highlighted text indicate levels of statistical significance ** p < .01.							
Policy Key: a) family reunification, b) resource centers, c) pathway to citizenship, d) universal driver’s license eligibility, e) reprioritize federal hiring laws, and f) reprioritize border control measures							

Keeping in mind that higher scores mean more support for policy, Table 3 makes it clear that Fairness Between Places also posted the highest scores for questions: a) family reunification, b) resource centers, and d) driver’s licenses proof. In the survey, the Fairness Between Places treatment emphasized that resources to address problems in community well-being are not distributed well between places, i.e., that “certain communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well” and, as a result, we need to “level the playing field so that every community has access” to the resources they need to thrive. In many ways, this value aligns with the notions of “access” and “allocation” in ways that lead the public to think more progressively about immigration policies. So, the results ultimately suggest that this value (which emphasizes access to resources and the allocation system) is a constructive window through which the public comes to view the advantage of key immigration policies.

The value of Prosperity also performed well, generating a factor score of .037 and scored highest on questions about: e) federal hiring laws and f) not increasing funding secure borders. In the survey, the Prosperity treatment emphasized that problems in community well-being “undermined prosperity, like poor health and education” and, as a result, we need to work hard to develop the “human and community resources vital to our ability to achieve a prosperous society.” Here, the value underscored the vital community supports that are necessary to

promote prosperity for the society overall, and it is clear that when respondents were thinking about the prosperity of the nation, they were less likely to support policies that would undermine the ability of employers to hire workers and policies that might reduce the immigrant labor force.

It is also interesting to note that both values (Fairness Between Places and Prosperity) work in terms of elevating immigration policies but that each works to advance a different set of policies. Fairness Between Places seems to do its best work when it is tasked with policies around family reunification, access to immigrant resource centers, and universal driver's licenses.

Alternatively, the value of Prosperity seemed to perform best on policies that affect employer hiring and the immigrant labor force. Thus, as we argued earlier in this report, values elevate policy support or “win” because of their ability to attach themselves differently to social issues, and this notion is especially borne out by this finding.

Finally, all of the *race-neutral values outperformed all values that invoked race as well as the control condition (which received no exposure to values frames)*. *None of the values that invoked race (Disparities, Colorblind, and Fairness Across Groups) are observed to reach statistical significance, and they all score in the bottom three when compared to the other values.*

As such, the implication of these findings for communications about immigration are fairly clear – values that invoke race or that make racialized appeals on behalf of policy reform are not the optimal choices for crafting effective messages about immigration policies. Rather, *advocates would do better to use the value of Fairness Between Places (which underscores differential community access to resources) or the value Prosperity (which underscores the economic development implications of immigration policies).*

DISCUSSION

In this report, we used the findings from two experimental surveys to understand the effects of three types of value frames: (1) frames that specifically implicate racial and ethnic discrimination, structural racism or inequality in explaining why society ought to enact policy reforms; (2) frames that simply underscore the benefits that might accrue to racial and ethnic minority communities if policy reforms were enacted; and (3) frames with no racial overtones at all. *Study I* presented values that emphasized the first types of values, and we found lackluster effects on policy when those were tasked with impacting immigration policies. *Study II* was designed to test the second and third types of frames (as identified above), and we find that it is the latter with the strongest impacts on immigration policy.

As such, our data show very clearly that using a race-neutral approach (where values like Fairness Between Places and Prosperity are allowed to stand alone) represents a more useful

strategy than framing values around race and ethnicity. Advocates should not take this to mean that they should avoid talking about race or ethnicity nor the benefits that might accrue to racial and ethnic minorities if immigration policy reforms are enacted. Rather, advocates should use race-neutral values at the top of their communications as a foundation for, and to set the tone for, more elaborate discussions about immigration reforms that have substantial implications for racial and ethnic minorities. That is, our admonition to advocates remains clear – *talk values AND talk race, but start the public conversation with stand-alone values (like Prosperity) to set up the subsequent conversation about specific policies and the benefit to racial and ethnic minorities. That is, the presentation of race is likely to be best expressed in the frame in illustrating the need for specific policy measures.* The point is that there are alternative stories about America, its values, and the policy reforms it needs to fully live up to its promises to a nation of immigrants. Our research simply suggests that those alternative stories – ones that begin with a strong reminder of the societal benefits of those reforms - should be at the top of the advocates’ “to-do” list.

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APPENDIX A. NARRATIVE OF THE TREATMENTS

Study I:

1. Control Group.

2. Opportunity. Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in America. Some people believe that American communities still face many barriers to opportunity. They have more declining school budgets, restrictive lending practices and fewer health professionals. The American Dream has always relied on creating an environment where everyone has an opportunity to achieve. According to this view, we need to devote more attention to ensuring that every community provides an opportunity to succeed for all its residents. This will result in a better quality of life and future prosperity for the nation as a whole. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to improving conditions in American communities.

3. Ingenuity. Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in America. Some people believe that we as a society are not devoting enough attention to effective policies and programs that benefit American communities. They maintain that effective solutions do exist. Progress can be made if programs are routinely evaluated and the good ones brought to scale in all communities. According to this view, smart states have significantly improved conditions in some American communities. They have done this by raising teacher quality, creating lending policies for buying homes, and increasing the number of health professionals. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to creating better solutions to problems affecting American communities.

4. Prevention. Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in America. Some people believe that preventing problems in American communities is important because they will eventually become everyone's problems. Preventing declining school budgets, restrictive lending practices and a scarcity of health professionals in American communities will prevent worse problems in the future. According to this view, we can prevent further damage to our nation by devoting more resources to addressing these problems in American communities before they become more serious. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to preventing problems affecting American communities.

5. Fairness Across Groups. Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in America. Some people believe that problems in American communities are the result of discriminatory practices that continue to unfairly target some Americans. Whether overtly or more subtly, some Americans are treated differently when it comes to such things as getting ahead in the classroom, applying for a home loan or being able to see a doctor. According to this view, we need to renew our commitment to a just society if we are to achieve real equality. We can do this by devoting more resources to policies that uncover discrimination and address fairness in our society. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets in a manner that is fairer to American communities.

6. Fairness Between Places. Lately there has been a lot of talk about social conditions in

America. Some people believe that America will only prosper when all American communities have a fair chance to achieve. The reality is that some American communities are not enjoying the same benefits as the rest of the nation. This happens because the efforts that enhance a community's well-being, like economic development, availability of health care programs and opportunities for a good education, have not benefited all communities. We need to make sure that those parts of the country that are at a disadvantage get their fair share. Please tell us if you have heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets in a manner that is fairer to American communities.

Study II:

1. Control Group.

2. Disparities. Lately there has been a lot of talk about disparities in our country. Some people believe that discrimination continues to create differences in the quality of health and education programs and services available to people. This puts some groups at greater risk for problems than others. For this reason, it is important to reduce disparities by promoting programs and improving services available to those groups. According to this view, we should eliminate differences in the quality of services people can get because it harms their quality of life. Have you heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to address disparities?

3. Colorblind. Lately there has been a lot of talk about the value of having a color blind society. Some people believe that in order to get to a point where race is no longer a dividing line, we need to resolve differences in the quality of health and education programs and services that racial and ethnic groups can get. These continuing differences block our ability to achieve a color blind society. According to this view, we should promote programs and improve services to racial and ethnic minorities so that our nation can move on. Have you heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to achieve a color blind society?

4. Prevention. Lately there has been a lot of talk about prevention in our country. Some people believe that we should prevent health and education problems before they occur. When we don't address them, they eventually become worse and cost more to fix. For this reason, it is important to promote programs and improve services that keep problems from occurring in the first place. According to this view, we can save lives and money if we make good prevention programs easier for everyone to access. Have you heard this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to prevention?

5. Prosperity. Lately there has been a lot of talk about prosperity in our country. Some people believe that we should do more to address problems that undermine prosperity, like poor health and education. When we support overall community well-being, it increases the chances that our society will thrive. For this reason, it is important to promote programs and improve services that keep our society moving forward. According to this view, developing human and community resources is vital to our ability to achieve a prosperous society. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to create greater prosperity?

6. Opportunity. Lately there has been a lot of talk about opportunity for all in our country. Some people believe that too many people still face barriers to good health and education. Our country's ability to achieve is undermined when not enough people have access to the things that help you succeed in life. For this reason, we need to ensure that everyone has access to the programs and services that strengthen opportunity in our country. According to this view, promoting programs and improving services that enhance opportunity will result in a better quality of life for the whole nation. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to improve opportunity for all?

7. Interdependence. Lately there has been a lot of talk about how we are all connected in our country. Some people believe that we will only succeed when all parts of the nation are in good shape. Problems of poor health and education that happen in one part of the nation end up affecting us all. For this reason, moving ahead as a country requires promoting programs and improving services everywhere so that we all benefit from our interconnection. According to this view, all communities must be able to realize their potential and contribute to the country. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to recognize the connections among communities?

8. Ingenuity. Lately there has been a lot of talk about the need to use more innovation in our country. Some people believe that society is not applying enough American ingenuity to promoting programs and improving services that benefit communities. We can make progress toward solving health and education problems if programs are evaluated and the effective ones are continued. For this reason, innovation should be a priority. According to this view, smart states have significantly made conditions better in some communities by finding innovative ways to improve and promote health and education programs. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets to inventing better solutions?

9. Fairness Between Places. Lately there has been a lot of talk about fairness among different parts of our country. Some people believe that certain communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well. This is because programs and services are not fairly distributed across all communities. When some communities are denied the resources they need, they are unable to overcome problems like poor health and education. According to this view, we need to level the playing field so that every community has access to quality health and education programs and services. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets more fairly among communities?

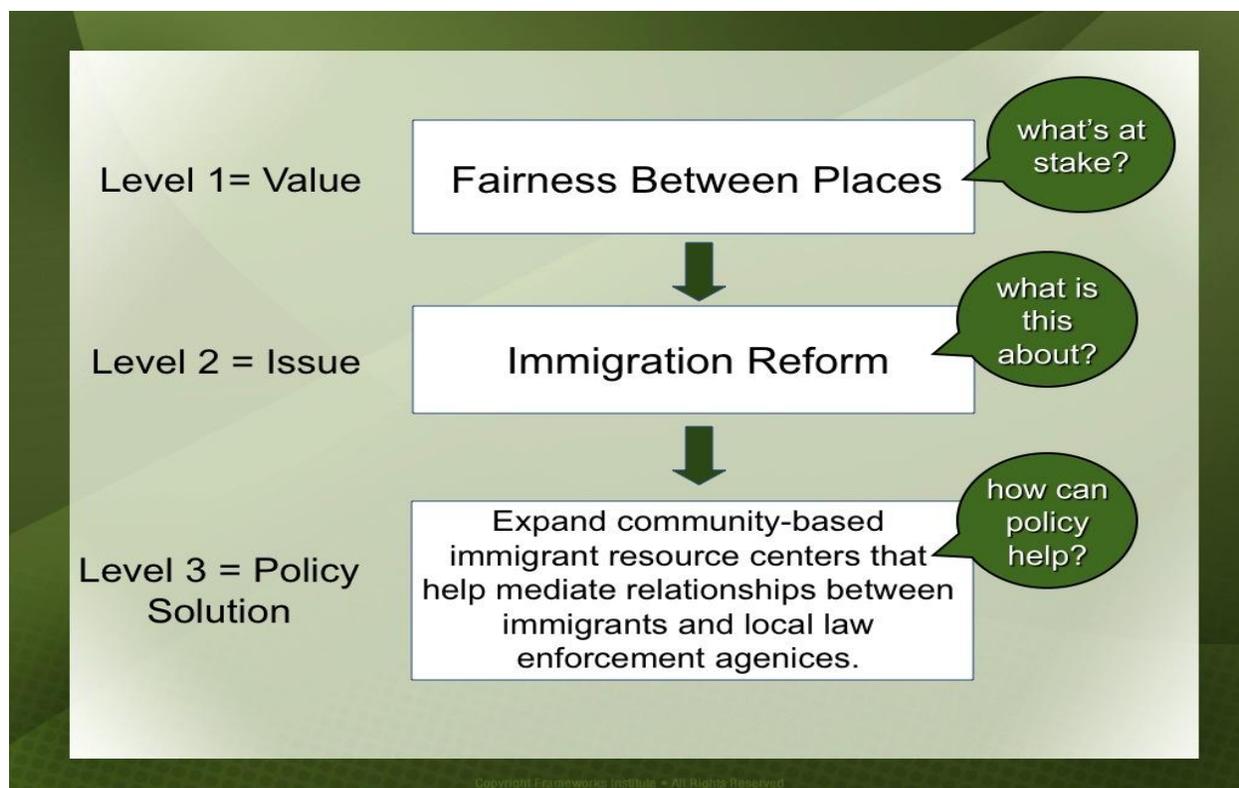
10. Fairness Across Groups. Lately there has been a lot of talk about fairness between different groups in our country. Some people believe that some groups are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well. This is because programs and services are not fairly distributed among all groups in our society. When some groups are denied the resources they need, they are unable to overcome problems like poor health and education. According to this view, we need to make sure that all groups in our country have equal access to quality health and education programs and services. Have you heard of this explanation of why we should allocate societal assets more fairly among groups?

APPENDIX B. THE IMMIGRATION BATTERY

1. Support family reunification by reducing the federal backlog of applications from U.S. residents who wish to sponsor the immigration of an immediate family member.
2. Expand community-based immigrant resource centers that provide opportunities for recent lawful immigrants to learn English.
3. Create greater opportunities for immigrants to become permanent residents or citizens.
4. Make state-issued driver's licenses proof of an individual's identity and proof of authorization to drive a motor vehicle, regardless of immigration status.
5. Enforce federal laws that prohibit hiring undocumented workers by stepping up immigration enforcement work site and neighborhood raids.
6. Provide more funding to more effectively secure the nation's borders (including erecting higher fences, hiring more border patrols agents, and extraditing unlawful entrants back to their own country).

APPENDIX C: FRAMING IMMIGRATION DISPARITIES

Graphic Message Template:



Narrative Message Template:

*In many parts of our country, some communities are struggling because they are not given a fair chance to do well. This is because programs and services are not fairly distributed across all communities [Value = **Fairness Between Places**]. When some communities don't have access to critical sources of information and resources, they are unable to overcome problems like gang violence which affects many immigrant communities because residents who could shed light on the problem do not always have proper immigration documentation and this can pose problems when law enforcement is called. [Issue = **Immigration**] There are a number of things we can do to level the playing field so that where you live doesn't determine the resources and extent of protection you receive from law enforcement. For example, we could expand access to community-based immigrant resource centers that could play a mediating function by relaying critical information from community members to law enforcement agencies about gang activity. [Solution = **Community-based immigration resource centers**].^{ix}*

A wider range of examples for effectively communicating about racial and ethnic disparities can be found in Frameworks' Talking Disparities Toolkit at: <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/race/ap.html>

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The FrameWorks Institute is an independent nonprofit research organization founded in 1999 to advance the nonprofit sector's communications capacity by identifying, translating and modeling relevant scholarly research for framing the public discourse about social problems. It has become known for its development of Strategic Frame Analysis™, which roots communications practice in the cognitive and social sciences. FrameWorks designs, commissions, manages and publishes multi-method, multi-disciplinary communications research to prepare nonprofit organizations to expand their constituency base, to build public will, and to further public understanding of specific social issues. In addition to working closely with scientists and social policy experts familiar with the specific issue, its work is informed by communications scholars and practitioners who are convened to discuss the research problem, and to work together in outlining potential strategies for advancing public understanding of remedial policies. The Institute publishes its research and recommendations at www.frameworksinstitute.org.

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ⁱ Melvin L. Watt, Present and future of immigration reform, In *In Defense of the Alien*, 21 (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1999).

ⁱⁱ See, for example, the exercise in Kahneman (1982). In this classic study, alternative descriptions of the same problem result in widely disparate judgments about the solution. In this famous framing experiment, Kahneman and his colleagues manipulated the description of a medical decision. After randomly assigning participants to two groups, the first group read the following:

Imagine the United States is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the program are as follows: If program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved. If program B is adopted there is a one-third probability that 600 people will be saved, and two-thirds probability that no people would be saved.

Another group, otherwise identically cared for, read a different description:

Imagine the United States is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the program are as follows: If

program C is adopted, 400 people will die. If program D is adopted, there is a one-third probability that no one will die, and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die.

According to the laws of probability (which boil down to multiplication and division), these descriptions present the same choice. Undergrads randomly assigned to the first description favored A to B by 72 to 28 percent. In contrast, undergrads treated to the second description favored D to C by 78 to 22 percent. Indeed, it is hard to find a stronger example of framing effects and attitude change due to the presentation of the problem.

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example, Manuel, T. (2009). *Preparing America for the 21st century: Values that work in promoting education reform efforts*. Washington, D.C.: FrameWorks Institute.

^{iv} Press release from the National Council of La Raza, February 19, 2010 entitled Civil Rights Coalition Urges Congressional Leadership to Act Swiftly on Debilitating Jobs Crisis.

^v We should note here that while Fairness Across Groups has proven to be unproductive in elevating policy support in our prior research, we have found Fairness Between Places (a frame that tries to get at fairness from the vantage point of the allocation of resources across places) to more predictably attach itself to progressive policies. For more insights about the difference between the two, see:

http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/framebytes/FrameByte_fairness_frames.pdf

^{vi} Gilliam Jr., F. & Manuel, T. (2009). *The illogic of literalness: Narrative lessons in the presentation of race policies*. Washington, D.C.: FrameWorks Institute.

^{vii} See the following FrameWorks papers, for example: (1) Gilliam Jr., F. & Manuel, T. (2009). *The illogic of literalness: Narrative lessons in the presentation of race policies*. Washington, D.C.: FrameWorks Institute.; (2) Gilliam Jr., F. (2008). *Effects of explicitness in the framing of race*. Washington, D.C.: FrameWorks Institute.

^{viii} The t-test is probably the most commonly used procedure for significance testing. Here, we use an independent samples t-test which allows us to ascertain whether or not two independent populations have different mean values on our policy measures. The t-test allows us to answer this question by using the t-test statistic to determine a p-value that indicates how likely we could have gotten these results by chance. By convention, if there is a less than 5% chance of getting the observed differences by chance, we reject the null hypothesis and say we found a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

^{ix} The policy solutions used in this template is not intended as recommendations, only as an example.