On Culture: A Referendum on American Democracy

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Friends and partners,

It feels like we're living through a referendum on democracy in the United States.

President Biden has made democracy a central pillar of his platform for reelection, arguing that "whether democracy is still America's sacred cause is the most urgent question of our time, and it's what the 2024 election is all about." Donald Trump counters with claims that Biden is the real "threat to democracy."

Arguments in the *Trump v. Anderson* case, in which the Supreme

Court is deciding whether or not Colorado can remove Trump from the state ballot, reveal how the case is in many ways about what democracy is and necessitates. Opponents of taking him off the ballot say this would threaten our democracy by taking power away from voters. Others argue that leaving him on the ballot is the actual threat to democracy.

In short, democracy is front and center in our public discourse. And every time it appears in another headline I wonder how Americans are making sense of it—and our political system in general. Our research shows that as Americans we tend to:

1. conflate democracy with the act of voting;
2. think of democracy as nothing more or less than "what we do in the US;" and
3. have patchy understandings of authoritarianism and fascism.

In this month's *On Culture* blog post, I dig into how these understandings are affecting our national dialogue and how we as a country are processing this pivotal moment in our democracy.

CHECK OUT THE BLOG POST

In the coming months we'll be diving even deeper into Americans' thinking about our political systems. See the "Up Next" section below for more on what's to come!

In partnership,



Clara Blustein Lindholm
Director of Research Interpretation, Culture Change Project

If you are interested in a presentation for your organization or team about the ways our culture is shifting, new trends in cultural mindsets, and

implications for your communications, please let us know using the link below!

REQUEST AN ENGAGEMENT

UP NEXT!

REVISITING MINDSETS AROUND GENDER | In the next couple months we will be digging into new data to follow up on our previous research into how Americans think about gender. Stay tuned for a deeper dive into how mindsets around gender are changing and intersecting with thinking about other issues.

CLAIMING THE SYSTEM-IS-RIGGED NARRATIVE | How can we communicate about our political and economic systems being rigged in ways that fuel action, *without* activating fatalist, racist, or xenophobic thinking about who the system is rigged against? This spring we'll share findings from a series of experimental studies on how to effectively talk about "the system." Stay tuned!

NEW FROM FRAMEWORKS



FrameWorks at the White House Youth Policy Summit
On February 13th, leaders from across the country came together for "Cultivating Possibilities: White House Youth Policy Summit 2024." The event created an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue about improving the systems and policies that impact young people. FrameWorks CEO Nat Kendall-Taylor discussed how we can reframe the conversation about young people to shift key cultural mindsets and advance supportive policy solutions.

WATCH THE RECORDING



In Case You Missed It
Last month's *On Culture* newsletter focused on American discourse around the economy, particularly during this presidential election year. Check out the blog post below for an overview of two key mindsets shaping our country's narrative about financial success and where it comes from.

CHECK OUT THE BLOG POST

SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURE CHANGERS

How Kids ACTUALLY Learn About Race | On February 12th, our friends at EmbraceRace released a new podcast focused on having well-framed, informative conversations about race with kids. The first season covers topics ranging from how to talk to kids about race to how racial attitudes differ across generations. Check out the first three episodes now!

Kinship Unity Action Agenda | In early February, Generations United, Think of Us, and the American Bar Association Center on Children and Law released the Kinship Unity Action Agenda. This resource, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is designed to function as a collective advocacy tool, including key information and priorities toward ensuring that kinship caregivers and families have the support they need to thrive.



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