FRAME WORKS

On Culture: Changing Conversations around Immigration

Mon, Jul 28, 2025 at 3:39 PM

FRAMEWORKS Culture Change Project

JULY 2025

NEWSLETTER

On Culture



Friends and partners,

Immigrant communities are under attack and being directly harmed. We don't have all the answers, but we do know that the language we use to demand change matters. It can challenge or reinforce harmful beliefs about immigrants and immigration.

If we aren't intentional, the language we're using to fight for protections *for* immigrant communities can actually lead to an increased focus on "protecting *against*" immigrants.

TAKE ME TO THE BLOG

Our research shows that people's understandings of both immigration and the law interact to focus attention on *crime*. For example, people equate "the law" with *criminal* law. This means that conversations that touch on both law and immigration can inadvertently direct thinking toward crime and punishment.

We're also seeing mindsets that dehumanize and position immigrants as a dangerous "other." These mindsets equate people who are undocumented with criminals, making it easier for people to justify ICE's inhumane treatment of immigrants because they are "just enforcing the law."

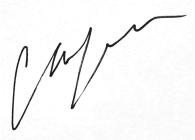
Luckily, people do see what's happening as inhumane and we're finding openings for messages that can help lay the groundwork for productive thinking. In this month's blog post, I'm walking through this new research and sharing two recommendations to reinforce less harmful ways of thinking:

1. **Back up and talk about how the system is designed.**
2. **Foreground the value of shared humanity, dignity, and respect.**

Together, we can root our messages in a principle that most Americans still hold dear: We have a moral obligation to create a humane immigration system that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

We are with you and we are here to offer support wherever we can.

In solidarity,



Clara Blustein Lindholm

RSVP NOW FOR SUMMER BRIEFINGS!

This summer, we'll be continuing our monthly briefing series on *Navigating Public Thinking about Democracy*. On the third Wednesday of each month,

we'll share insights from real-time research on how Americans are—or aren't—thinking about things like democracy, authoritarianism, the rule of law, executive overreach, and more. We'll also share emerging strategies for framing conversations in ways that help counter authoritarian threats and strengthen our democracy. We'd love for you to join us:

- **Wednesday, August 20 from 1–2pm ET**
- **Wednesday, September 17 from 1–2pm ET**

SIGN ME UP

NEW FROM FRAMEWORKS

NEW VIDEO SERIES: MINDSETS AND MOVEMENTS

In the latest installment of *Fast Frames*, we explore three of the most dominant mindsets in American culture: *Individualism*, *Otherism*, and *Fatalism*. These mindsets block efforts to build demand for more just and inclusive systems. In each episode, we take a look at what the mindset is, how it works, and how we can use our communications to open up more productive and expansive ways of thinking about solving social problems.

WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO

NEW RESOURCE: FROM "THEM" TO "OURS": FRAMING STRATEGIES FOR TALKING ABOUT IMMIGRANT YOUTH

This framing brief draws on FrameWorks' extensive research on how Americans think about both adolescence and immigration. In it, you will find an overview of the narratives that perpetuate othering—and tools to challenge them. These insights provide a framework for advocates to consistently activate a "we" mindset that reinforces belonging, builds understanding about who immigrant youth are, and raises support for programs and policies that help them thrive.

SHOW ME THE BRIEF

UP NEXT!

FRAMING THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF AI | COMING SOON
Despite the increasing prominence of artificial intelligence in public life and discourse, there remains a lack of understanding about how AI works and what it might mean for our lives. By examining the implicit assumptions that shape thinking about AI, we will identify and share strategies for deepening understanding of AI technologies, the social implications of their use, and how they can be used on behalf of the public interest.

SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURE CHANGERS

JUST NARRATIVES FOR MULTIRACIAL SOLIDARITY: A RACE FORWARD CONVENING | RACE FORWARD
Registration is now open for Just Narratives for Multiracial Solidarity—a multi-day convening in St. Louis, MO, from November 13 to 15, 2025. This event bridges narrative strategists, grassroots organizers and movement builders, racial equity advocates, artists, performers, creatives, and media makers who are dedicated to popularizing narratives for solidarity praxis, collaborative governance, and racial justice. Check out the event page for more information.

NONPROFIT TOOLKIT: RESOURCES FOR ORGANIZATIONS FACING GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS | PROTECT DEMOCRACY
This toolkit offers best practices for responding to government investigations so that organizations can keep doing lawful, mission-based work. The toolkit includes primers on questions like, “What if your organization is subject to politicized executive actions?” and, “What if your organization is the subject of a congressional investigation?”

FRAMEWORKS
Culture Change
Project

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