On Culture: Questions We're Asking in 2025

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FRAMEWORKS Culture Change Project

DECEMBER 2024

NEWSLETTER

On Culture



Friends and partners,

As we continue to make sense of a complicated and trying 2024, we're looking ahead to a year that we know will also be challenging. 2025 will bring a new administration in Washington, debates about controversial *policy ideas*, and an unknowable host of cultural events and trends that will shape headlines, social media feeds, and kitchen table conversations.

With all this change comes new and evolving questions about American culture—many of which we plan to investigate in 2025. By

looking at mindsets that cut across issues and finding frames and narratives that strengthen collective, systemic, inclusionary aspects of culture, we can identify ways of addressing the underlying challenges and headwinds that we're facing across movements.

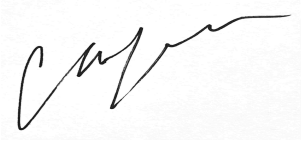
Here's a preview of what we'll do in 2025:

- **Assess the strategic implications of "mindset clusters."** Our research has already shown that some mindsets tend to cluster together—like *Individualism*, *Meritocracy*, and *Market Naturalism*, for example. Within each cluster, the more strongly people endorse one mindset, the more strongly they endorse others in that cluster. In 2025 we'll continue to explore these connections to understand how culture change efforts on different issues can reinforce and amplify each other's effects, and where it's most critical for movements to come together to address mindsets that obstruct or enable change.
- **Examine how to frame with values to build systemic thinking across issues.** We're currently researching how to appeal to certain values to strengthen systemic thinking across the board, on topics ranging from the economy to democracy to race and racism. This research will also examine the pros and cons of engaging with politically contested values—like freedom and fairness.
- **Explore how to navigate Americans' deep desire for fundamental change.** Our research to date shows that there is a critical mass of Americans who are deeply dissatisfied with the status quo, but struggle to envision a different future. We'll explore how to navigate this challenge and help people imagine a better future without turning to charismatic strong men or technology as a *deus ex machina* that would swoop in and fix things.
- **Examine how to build a more inclusive "we the people."** In the coming year, we will begin investigating how framing can help build a more inclusive understanding of "we the people"—one that encompasses all groups within American society and that people in different groups can see themselves and others in.
- **Investigate how immigration and gender are connected to broader cultural trends.** It is readily apparent—both in our research and in the news—how salient immigration and gender are in our current politics and people's thinking about society. We aspire to deepen our understanding of how mindsets on

these issues are connected to broader cultural currents and how to respond to them.

We look forward to continuing to share what we learn in hopes that it can support our collective work in the years ahead.

In partnership,



Clara Blustein Lindholm
Director of Research Interpretation, Culture Change Project

UP NEXT!

HOW TO TALK ABOUT RIGGED SYSTEMS | JANUARY 2025

The idea that our systems are rigged by a powerful few to benefit themselves and hurt the rest of us is *highly dominant* in American culture. We'll soon be sharing a full research report with recommendations for how to navigate this complicated and highly contested cultural terrain in ways that allow us to critique the concentration and misuse of power while *avoiding* activating the mindset's fatalistic, xenophobic, and authoritarian dimensions.

NEW RESOURCES ON IMMIGRATION | EARLY 2025

From talk of mass deportations to ending birthright citizenship, conversations about immigration are top-of-mind for many advocates and communicators. In early 2025, we'll be starting a new article series featuring framing insights for navigating immigration discourse. If you'd like to be notified when new resources are available, you can sign up for immigration-related email updates here.

NEW VIDEO SERIES: MINDSETS AND MOVEMENTS | EARLY 2025

In the next installment of *Fast Frames*, we're exploring three of the most dominant mindsets in American culture: *Individualism*, *Otherism*, and *Fatalism*. These mindsets often block efforts to build demand for more just and inclusive systems. In each episode, we'll 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.

NEW FROM FRAMEWORKS

WHY MOST AMERICANS THINK THE SYSTEM IS RIGGED

Seventy percent of Americans think that the powerful few are rigging the system at the expense of the rest of us. This "system-is-rigged" mindset is used to make sense of almost every aspect of society—but depending on how it's applied, the mindset can either perpetuate racist and xenophobic scapegoating or facilitate productive critiques of power. This new brief digs into how people across social groups think about rigged systems and provides emerging guidance on how communicators can talk about those rigged systems to advance more productive conclusions.

TAKE ME TO THE BRIEF

FACT SHEET: 6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CULTURAL MINDSETS

At FrameWorks, we spend a lot of our time studying and talking about cultural mindsets. But what are they, and why do they matter? This new fact sheet outlines six features of cultural mindsets, providing a primer for advocates and storytellers on a foundational piece of the science of framing.

SHOW ME THE FACT SHEET

WEBINAR: HOW TO COUNTER PUBLIC HEALTH MYTHS AND ELEVATE SCIENCE NOW

Purveyors of health misinformation have gained a foothold in American culture. How can advocates push back? On December 5th, we hosted a webinar exploring the most important framing strategies for dampening disinformation, reducing polarization, and rebuilding trust in science.

WATCH THE FULL WEBINAR

SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURE CHANGERS

QUICK START GUIDE TO REFRAME AGING ADVOCACY | NATIONAL CENTER TO REFRAME AGING

Our friends at the National Center to Reframe Aging recently shared a new advocacy guide to help communicators implement research-informed strategies to talk about policies and programs that support healthy aging. The guide includes Dos and Don'ts for communicating about key aging issues.

CREATING A UNIFIED VISION OF HEALTH EQUITY | ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION AND BLIS COLLABORATIVE

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—in partnership with the BLIS Collective and Story Strategy Group—have developed a narrative action guide for advancing health equity. The "Health Equity Narrative House" is a tool to help communicators create, amplify, and organize around narratives that help move the conversation in the direction of collective wellbeing.

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