FRAME WORKS

On Culture: New Research on Freedom, Fairness, and Transformative Change

1 message

Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 3:05 PM

FRAMEWORKS Culture Change Project

JANUARY 2026

Friends and partners,

As 2026 begins, many of us are absorbing and responding to the events unfolding in Minneapolis and in communities across the country. First and foremost, we stand clearly in solidarity with the people of Minneapolis, our nation's immigrant communities, and all who are making their voices heard.

In Minnesota, we're seeing people stand up for their neighbors, for their vision of the country we should be, and for the democracy we deserve. At FrameWorks' Culture Change Project, we know that core ideals are being actively contested right now across the country. In our work, we're constantly exploring these contests and the role that shifting mindsets can play in winning them.

We are committed to giving you research that can help advance an inclusive democracy in these moments and in the years ahead. Right now, we are researching how Americans are thinking about immigration enforcement activities and ICE, and we will share what we know as ideas and recommendations emerge. In the meantime, the FrameWorks team and I wanted to share our admiration to those in Minnesota who are showing us all what democracy looks like and what it takes to move toward a fairer, more just system.

In today's newsletter, I'm sharing two new resources that offer guidance for talking about politically contested values and ideals.

NEW RESEARCH: How *Fairness, Stability, and Freedom* Can Help Us Build Demand for Transformative Change

In a moment when rhetoric and action from our nation's leaders are being used to dismantle everything from the philanthropic sector to DEI to the rule of law, many are questioning how to communicate their values effectively. Our partners have asked us things like, "If I talk about freedom, will people only think about freedom from the government?" Or, "How do I appeal to the idea of stability without seeming in favor of the status quo?"

In this new report, we walk through our research on three popular, politically charged, and highly contested values—freedom, fairness, and stability—and provide practical guidance for appealing to these values in your own communications in ways that build support for structural, transformative change.

TAKE ME TO THE REPORT

ON CULTURE BLOG: Talking about American Democracy 250 Years In

As we mark the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding, I've been thinking about what challenges and opportunities this anniversary poses for those of us working to strengthen American democracy. In this month's blog post, I share some thoughts on how we might use the nation's semiquincentennial as an opportunity to talk openly not just about our past, but about what we need to change moving forward.

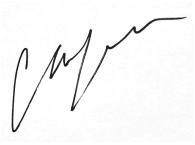
SHOW ME THE BLOG POST

There's one thing our research makes clear: There are ways we can and should talk about how our country isn't living up to many of the democratic ideals expressed during the founding. Just as we can leverage deeply-held American values like freedom and fairness to build support for a more just world, there are ways we

can leverage the 250th to do the same.

As always, please let us know about your challenges and framing questions—you can reach me at cgibbons@frameworksinstitute.org. Our research is constantly evolving and meant to be responsive to your strategic and communications needs. I hope you'll keep sharing with us.

In solidarity,



Clara Blustein Lindholm

SAVE THE DATE

Culture, Mindsets, and Democracy: Navigating a Changing Landscape

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
1:00–2:00 pm EST

In this briefing, we will share real-time research on how Americans are thinking about the ways in which the government is using force at home and abroad, with a particular focus on the use of ICE in neighborhoods and communities across the country.

REGISTER NOW

NEW FROM FRAMEWORKS

VIDEO SERIES: NARRATIVE KNOW-HOW

ICYMI: Narrative change isn't just a buzzword; it's a strategy for shifting

culture. In our Narrative Know-How video series, we unpacked what narrative change strategy looks like, why it matters, and lessons from real-world narrative shift efforts.

SHOW ME THE SERIES

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Take a look at what we did last year! Our 2025 annual report outlines stories of impact and collaboration across issues, sectors, and movements. Highlights include an impact spotlight on reframing opportunity youth across the country; a profile of collaboration in action with American Academy of Pediatrics to boost vaccine confidence; and an overview of our efforts to respond to the current social and political moment. Thank you to our funders and partners who make this work possible!

TAKE ME TO THE REPORT

UP NEXT!

TALKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY: TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CULTURE CHANGE PROJECT | COMING SOON
This report will synthesize insights and recommendations from our last two years of research on democracy. The report will lay out an emerging framing strategy that can be used to counter authoritarianism in the moment and build support for changes to democratize our political system over the long term.

ANNUAL RESEARCH UPDATE: LESSONS FROM FIVE YEARS OF THE CULTURE CHANGE PROJECT | COMING SOON
This year's research update will look back over the first five years of the Culture Change Project, offering a bird's eye view of the biggest and most important shifts in cultural mindsets over the past half-decade and what

those shifts tell us about the state of American culture.

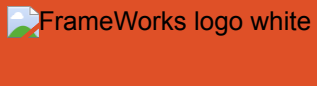
SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURE CHANGERS

AUTHORITARIANISM: HOW YOU KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT | THE HORIZONS PROJECT

Need a refresher on the basics? We like this resource from The Horizons Project, which defines democracy, outlines traits of authoritarianism, and explains how authoritarian systems emerge and undermine democratic norms and institutions. The resource also shares what the "authoritarian playbook" looks like and calls for public education, cross-partisan pro-democracy movements, and nonviolent resistance to push back.

LEVERAGING DATA RESOURCES FOR CIVIC ORGANIZING | CHARLES F. KETTERING FOUNDATION

Some of the most influential work to strengthen democracy happens at local and community levels, and to do that work, leaders need data. The Community Profile Builder (available for free on the Association of Religion Data Archives website) enables community and organizational leaders to instantly access demographic and religion data for any community in the United States, and to map community assets—an essential step in the organizing process.



follow on Instagram | follow on LinkedIn | subscribe to our YouTube channel

Copyright © 2026, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

FrameWorks Institute
1319 F St NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20004

unsubscribe from all emails | update subscription preferences