

The Architecture of a New Racial Discourse

A FrameWorks Message Memo

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., Ph.D.

As political scientist Robert Dahl noted almost a half a century ago, race is one of the fundamental sources of cleavage in American life. The dramatic advances precipitated by the modern civil rights movement of the mid-20th century notwithstanding, America continues to struggle with positive discourse about racial matters. Indeed, most of us have experienced the rather awkward fits and starts of conversations about race in our everyday lives; whether in the workplace, in social settings, or in the public square. This memo presents findings and analysis from the FrameWorks Institute's research on how Americans think and talk about the issue of race.¹ In an effort to further the conversation about race and the policies that pertain, the FrameWorks Institute initiated the "Race, Communications and American Life Project" in 2003, which applied multi-disciplinary, multi-method research to an exploration of the dominant frames in public discourse and the reframes that hold the greatest promise for moving the dialogue forward.² This memo is a revision to an earlier report and includes a synthesis of the latest round of research (i.e., simplifying models testing; an experimental priming survey) as well as a more detailed discussion of framing strategies. The result is a communications platform that focuses on the structure and art of developing a new conversation on race that has the capacity to heighten support for a progressive race policy agenda.

The goal of this work is to understand the challenges and opportunities of moving public will, from a strategic communications perspective, on the issue of race. In particular, we explore the influence of race-based frames and reframes as they impact levels of acceptance for reforms regularly promoted by advocates. This memo lays out the communications challenges advocates are up against and begins to chart a course for a very different public conversation about race. Put differently, we identify the dominant race frame; show how it affects public reasoning; explore the reframes commonly employed by advocates; and offer some initial support for viable reframing. This analysis is based on an integrated body of research commissioned by the FrameWorks Institute. We certainly encourage readers to consult the full research reports (www.frameworksinstitute.org) and do not intend this memo to replace or supplant those papers; nonetheless, the memo does synthesize these findings and makes recommendations about the development of a coherent communications platform for racial justice advocacy.

This research was supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the JEHT Foundation, the Charles S. Mott Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. It is also informed by our earlier work on healthcare reform funded by The California Endowment and the California Wellness Foundation, the Endowment for Health and HNH Foundation in New Hampshire and St. Luke's Health Initiatives in Arizona. Additionally, we convened two meetings to elicit feedback after completing our analysis of the latest round of research in 2006: one with racial/social justice advocates held in Washington, D.C.; and another with a diverse group of funders held in New York. We benefited enormously from the feedback they provided and have incorporated their suggestions into the interpretation and analysis presented in this memo.

This project grew out of two separate but related developments. The first was FrameWork's longstanding interest in race. Several of our previous projects had significant racial implications (e.g., adolescents; early child development; crime) but our interest in race became even more focused through a series of projects on communicating health care reform. The top line result from that work is that talking about race in the context of health disparities was not compelling to people in California and Arizona. For instance, exposure to the traditional health disparities message did not result in higher levels of support for such things as universal coverage, fair access, and community clinics. While this provided us with some clues about how race works from a communications perspective, we lacked a fully coherent explanation for this phenomenon as well as a direction for alternative frames.

The second, and related, development was participation in the Structural Racism summer workshop convened by the Aspen Institute Roundtable and conducted by the Structural Racism and Community Revitalization Project. The workshop was designed to investigate how structural bias accounts for racial inequality across a range of issue domains (e.g., health, housing, education, etc.). The workshop also devoted time to a lively discussion of how best to communicate the racial equity agenda from this perspective. In the end, all agreed that this was an empirical question that could best be answered by systematic investigation.

A convincing body of social research demonstrates that people's life chances are often directly affected by institutional bias and discrimination. From access to health care, to racial profiling, to discriminatory lending and mortgage practices, to employment bias, research shows that circumstances related to external conditions significantly impact minorities' life chances. Rooting out bias embedded in social, political, and economic structures is the mission of progressive race policy advocates. The strategic tension, therefore, revolves around developing a communications strategy that elevates structural biases and flaws as the basis for racial disparities in the public consciousness; in turn, this should lead to higher levels of support for systemic reforms. FrameWorks was supported to identify a communications strategy for moving public support toward a more progressive racial policy agenda.

Specifically, we were asked to examine the relationship of race to structural reforms in a number of critical areas, which we refined to include the areas of crime, education, and community transformation (economic development, healthcare). FrameWorks commissioned Dr. Kenny J. Whitby of the University of South Carolina to survey and organize some of the key policy proposals in each of these substantive issue domains. Input was invited from national policy experts and complemented by an informal sample of policy analysts in the FrameWorks network. The full list of reforms was recoded into a manageable set of proxy policies to more effectively gauge the ability of particular communications options to influence thinking about, and policy preferences related to, race.

It is against this conceptual backdrop that this memo is situated: How do we have a more productive, engaged, and enlightened conversation about race in early 21st century America?

The Approach: Strategic Frame Analysis³

For some years now, the FrameWorks Institute has brought together a diverse group of scholars and practitioners to develop a unique perspective on communicating social issues. That perspective – Strategic Frame Analysis™ – is based on long-standing research in the social and cognitive sciences that demonstrates that people understand all issues in terms of a small set of internalized concepts and values - also known as *frames* - that allow us to accord meaning to unfolding events and new information. Frames thus serve as mental shortcuts that allow people to make sense of the world. Frames can be triggered by language choices, tone, visuals, messengers, and or values, and these communications elements, therefore, have a profound influence on decision outcomes.

Perhaps the most pervasive purpose of frames is to aid in the assignment of responsibility for the causes of and solutions to social concerns. In many cases, people are unaware of the frames they are using, and the frames themselves are commonly expressed indirectly. Moreover, these default understandings of the world can guide people's comprehension of an issue in ways they don't even recognize. One of the most important aspects of these default models is that they often lead people to understandings that they might reject at other moments of more careful reflection.

Frames have several sources. Perhaps the two most important are the general culture and the news media. The broader culture, of course, is the fountain for many core narratives about American life. The "Horatio Alger" story, for example, is a common element for understanding how the world works. It has been passed on for generations and is closely tied to a core set of American values. Likewise, the modern news media has been a main source of Americans' information about public affairs. The way the news is "framed" on many issues sets up habits of thought and expectation that, over time, are so powerful that they serve to configure new information to conform to this dominant frame. When community leaders, service organizations and advocacy groups communicate to their members and potential adherents, they have options to repeat or break these dominant frames of discourse. Put differently, dominant frames have the power to help or hinder

support for advocates' policy agendas. Understanding which frames serve to advance which policy options with which groups becomes central to any movement's strategy. The literature of social movements suggests that the prudent choice of frames, and the ability to effectively contest the opposition's frames, lie at the heart of successful policy advocacy. A more extensive description of Strategic Frame Analysis™ is available at www.frameworksinstitute.org.

While Strategic Frame Analysis™ brings new methods to bear on social issues, this perspective only confirms something that advocates have known for years: communications is among our most powerful strategic tools. Through communications we inspire people to join our efforts, convince policymakers, foundations and other leaders to prioritize our issues, and urge the media to accord it public attention. Every choice of word, metaphor, visual, or statistic conveys meaning, affecting the way these critical audiences will think about the issues, what images will come to mind and what solutions will be judged appropriate to the problem. Communications defines the problem, sets the parameters of the debate, and determines who will be heard, and who will be marginalized.

When communications is effective, research demonstrates that people can look beyond the dominant frame to consider different perspectives on an issue. When communications is ineffective; the dominant frame becomes the default people tend to rely to assign meaning to new information. Understanding this process makes it all the more important that policy experts and advocates understand the likely "default" frames that ordinary people will use in processing new information.

Working from this perspective, the FrameWorks research on race in America was designed to explore the following questions:

- How does the public think about race in the United States?
- Are there default frames that are routinely relied upon to make sense of unfamiliar situations or policies?
- How are these frames reinforced; what frames are available to people from media and the public debate?
- How do these frames affect policy preferences?
- How can racial equity be reframed to evoke a different way of thinking, one that makes appropriate policy choices salient and sensible?

Research Methods and Data Base

Although the approach we outline above is meant to be analytic, it also suggests a particular type of methodological approach. The breadth of the approach, we believe, requires a multi-method design that relies on both qualitative and quantitative measurement instruments. We utilize these methods in an iterative, interactive and integrated fashion. We begin by using qualitative measures such as cognitive elicitations in a heuristic fashion to tease out impressionistic hypotheses about the dominant frames

at play. In addition, we look for potential reframes as they emerge from the elicitation interviews. We next turn to media content analysis to confirm the existence of the frames. Here we utilize both the qualitative and quantitative forms of media content audits. Integrating the findings from these two approaches, we design a series of focus group tests to substantiate the presence of a dominant frame and to explore potential reframes (as both advanced by advocates and discovered by the FrameWorks team) in greater detail. In this phase we look for defining frame elements such as values, messages, messengers, and tone. We expose this round of findings (i.e., the results from an analysis of the dominant frame and the existence of viable reframes) to more rigorous quantitative testing in the form of large-N, probability sample priming surveys. The data for this analysis come from the following sources:

- A Content Analysis of major media was initiated May through June 2004, covering such important news events as the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision and Cover the Uninsured Week. The report covers 14 news outlets over 7 weeks, yielding 547 news stories and opinion articles. This report links Americans' perceptions of how race works in this country to habits of perception driven by persistent narratives.
- A Cognitive Media Analysis of both prototypical and aberrant news coverage was added, to deepen our appreciation for exactly how the dominant scripts affect thinking about race, and whether any of the alternative coverage yields different patterns of thinking. This report is based on a selective referral of news stories from the original database.
- Cognitive Elicitations, or one-on-one open-ended interviews, with 50 individuals in 7 states were undertaken and analyzed. This seminal work has helped the research group identify the most common and corrosive frames in play with respect to race and racism. The insights from this work grounded future iterations of the research in a small number of core issues which we were able to watch play out in the focus groups, furthering our understanding of the impact of these frames on public discourse.
- Focus Groups were conducted to assess how Americans think and talk about race in a setting of their peers. Fourteen focus groups were conducted in the late fall and early winter of 2004 with engaged citizens across the country (i.e., people who say they are registered to vote, read the newspaper frequently, are involved in community organizations, and have recently contacted a public official or spoken out on behalf of an issue.) Focus groups were divided by race and class, and followed an iterative process, discarding unproductive frames and introducing new frames as the process evolved. The groups were conducted in the following order:
 - Baltimore, MD (July 7, 2004)
 - Mixed race
 - African American

- Minneapolis, MN (August 5, 2004)
 - European American, non-college educated
 - European American, college educated
- Albuquerque, NM (August 18, 2004)
 - European American, non-college educated
 - Latino
- Newark, NJ (October 4, 2004)
 - European American, college educated
 - Chinese American
- San Francisco, CA (October 19, 2004)
 - European American, college educated
 - Korean American
- Los Angeles, CA (October 20, 2004)
 - Mixed race
 - Latino
- Nashville, TN (December 16, 2004)
 - European American, non-college educated
 - African American
- Simplifying Models Testing - Simplifying models are brief, “user-friendly” explanations that help lay people understand an issue in a way that is more compatible with expert understandings. They often, but not always, involve analogies to familiar objects or scenarios (e.g., the ways in which early experience shape the development of a child’s “brain architecture.”)

The process of developing simplifying models involves iterative stages of analysis and empirical testing, resulting in continuous winnowing and refining of hypotheses. Measures of the effectiveness of the simplifying model include subjects’ ability to remember, explain, use and repeat the explanatory idea. In other words, the testing is designed to assess whether the model has the capacity to become an organizing principle for thinking and communicating about race. The current project involved work with roughly 340 adult subjects nation-wide from a wide variety of backgrounds (75 respondents to written questionnaire; 130 one-on-one phone conversations; 135 participants in TalkBack chains).
- A Priming Survey - Survey respondents were exposed to a set of questions at the beginning of the survey, designed to “prime” or predispose a particular way of thinking. All interviewees subsequently responded to a set of core questions about racial attitudes and race-related policies. By comparing the responses of those exposed to different priming language with the responses of a control

group, we can determine the relative ability of each frame element to advance a particular view of race, thereby indicating the effects of a communications frame.

Each experiment was tested via an Internet-based survey with a national sample of adults drawn proportionate to population. Initially, the 14,152 survey respondents (unweighted n = 17,345) were randomly assigned to either a control group, which received no deliberate framing, or one of three values-based frames:

- **Racism Frame** which emphasizes race, race discrimination, and the historic and institutional advantages/disadvantages that lead to racial disparities.
- **The Opportunity Frame** which emphasizes opportunity, future prosperity, and the interconnectedness of communities that leads to shared fate.
- **The Ingenuity Frame** which focuses on the American Can Do spirit and effective solutions to address racial disparities.

A second experiment tested the contribution of the Simplifying Models identified above to reasoning about race and policy preferences. In this experiment, survey respondents who were assigned to the Opportunity Frame were randomly assigned to a null condition, which received no exposure to the Simplifying Model, or to a test frame that exposed respondents to a short statement reflecting the Prosperity Grid Simplifying Model. Survey respondents who were assigned to the Ingenuity Frame were randomly assigned to a null condition, which received no exposure to the Simplifying Model, or to a test frame that exposed respondents to a short statement reflecting the Stakeholder Effect Simplifying Model. Survey respondents who were assigned to the Racism Frame received no additional Simplifying Model experiment but were exposed to a structural racism prompt imbedded in the final question of the priming battery.

In short, this memo is based on a rich and varied body of information derived from cognitive elicitations, two types of media content analysis, focus groups, simplifying models testing, and a large-N national probability experimental priming survey. The remainder of the report focuses on the research findings and outlines a communications strategy.

The Research

Our analysis reveals three core narrative elements that represent the dominant race frame: *Historical Progress and Personal Racism; the Self Making Person; and Separate Fates*. By dominant frame we mean a cultural model that is “top of mind” for most people. The social psychologists call this “chronic accessibility,” meaning a patterned mode of thinking that appears almost automatically and serves as a lens through which people evaluate incoming information. These frames often reside in the general culture but are also reflected in and invigorated by the news media. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the dominant frame is what advocates must regularly confront in their daily ongoing activities. In this regard, understanding what you are up against is a crucial first step in developing a communications strategy. Using findings from across the data base,

we chronicle the elements of the dominant race frame.

Historical Progress and Personal Racism

A key starting point for public reasoning about race is the widespread belief that racial matters have improved dramatically in America over the last half a century. This line of thinking was easily stimulated, for example, in the cognitive elicitations. A white liberal woman in Oregon observed:

“Personally I think that America as a whole as far as race is concerned has really, really come a long way. That is my own personal belief.”

Likewise a white conservative woman in Illinois said:

“There might be small groups that will be alienated, but overall, I think it’s much better than what it was.”

The improvement, many people believe, is the direct result of changes in antidiscrimination laws and policies. A liberal Latina from California responded to the following question:

Q: Do you think there’s a difference between racism of years ago and racism of today in the US?

A: Yes. Racism of years ago was more open. You know, there was no consequence back then. If they made racial slurs or anything, there was no one to answer to. And now, there’s still a lot of racism, but it’s just hidden because of the consequences.”

The upshot is that, because racist attitudes are not socially accepted and discriminatory practices have been banned, the general public is not sure what can be done to further eliminate racist attitudes or acts. During an elicitation interview, a white conservative man from Alabama summed it up best when he said:

“How long ago was [slavery]? A hundred years? At least a hundred years, right? Black people are mayors, congressmen, doctors, lawyers. What have they got to complain about? They’ve got the same opportunities I have. I think their only handicap is if they think, you know, “I’m being crapped on because I’m Black.”

History, in this mode of reasoning, is irrelevant. It is no wonder that many of the focus groups found it difficult to even talk about race. What we are left with, then, is the notion that racism exists primarily at the level of the individual person. As a white liberal woman from Newark said:

“I don't know how you can stop racial profiling. I think it's something that has to come from within the police officers, the people that are doing it, not necessarily something that we're telling them you can't do it. Because if that's how you feel inside, then you're not going to be able to stop it no matter what.”

Moreover, because racism exists at the level of the individual, it has the capacity to

go “both ways”; for example, as whites are biased against blacks, blacks are biased against whites. In the focus groups, a college-educated white man from Newark said,

“I’ve actually seen it from both sides. When I went to college in Florida, I was out in a bar one night and a couple of Afro-Americans came in and they wanted beer. They wanted it to go and they wanted a glass at the bar. The lady said, ‘You can take it to go, but I’m not serving you at the bar’ ...Then maybe 10 years later...we walked into a bar and it was an Afro-American bar and they wouldn’t serve us...I’ve seen it from both sides.”

Likewise a white liberal woman from Oregon remarked:

“I was born in Jackson, Mississippi, and have been able to see the other side of racism, as far as Afro-Americans being racist against Caucasian or someone of another race, and it can be just as vicious. So that’s my opinion.”

Thus the location of racial discourse at the individual level ironically opens the door to a discussion of “reverse discrimination.” This, to be sure, does not provide advocates with a good chance to get their message out. As FrameWorks’ researchers conclude, “Muggings, name calling, rude clerks can all be perceived as racism on a par with not getting a seat at Denny’s.”

According to this line of reasoning, racism is likely here to stay because evil-hearted people pass along their racial bias to their children. A college educated white man from Newark commented:

“I think it’s the same thing that you see in Iraq...It’s embedded in the children. The kids, they are burning American flags at three years old and dancing in the streets when our soldiers are getting killed. It’s just passed from generation to generation.”

Solutions to the race problem, from this perspective, are misguided if they seek to legislate or litigate change. Essentially, there will always be a level of racism, according to this way of thinking, because it’s in the blood. Or, as a college educated white woman from Newark stated,

“This prejudice is rooted deeply, and that is why it’s not going away and it is probably -- I don’t know if it ever will go away.”

When the race problem is understood in this way, systemic reforms are crowded out by a very powerful narrative that focuses attention on individuals. System reforms are thus invisible, and this explains why advocates’ claims often fall on deaf ears. People are reasoning about race at the individual level, not at the systemic or societal level. That this narrative centers on individual people, means it fits nicely with another powerful trope in American culture: the Self Making Person.

The Self Making Person

There is widespread acceptance of the notion of the Self Making person (SMP) as an explanation for success or failure in life. Sayings like “anyone can make it in America”

or “only in America can a person achieve...” are common lines in the American story. They express the view that effort, drive, and moxie are the defining characteristics for success. This is nothing new of course. Individual liberalism situates personal responsibility as a core tenet of the American belief system. And it is not surprising that it is routinely used to think about race.

Informants in our studies believed that a person’s ultimate success depends, more than anything else, on the person themselves. In the elicitations, for example, a conservative white woman from Alabama had the following conversation with our interviewer:

Q: What is success, what does that mean?

A: Just kind of making / getting out of life whatever you want, you know. You can go

as far as you want. If you'll just put your mind to it, that's stuff is part of success; just accomplishing things.

Q: Where does it come from?

A: The will to want to do it. You've got to have will to get somewhere.

The belief in the Self Making Person was easily surfaced in the focus groups as well:

“My dad made us work for what we wanted and then you appreciate it. I don't want to give them anything. I don't care what color they are. I could care less. If they work and earn their way, what's the difference...I'm a firm believer in unearned is unappreciated,” (non-college educated white man, Minneapolis).

“It's up to the individual to make your own expectations in life. You set your own goals -- yellow, orange, purple or blue, you know. I came from dirt poor. I made sure I was the valedictorian in my high school; I graduated college at 21. I got out of the ghetto. It's up to the individual. I don't think it's color, everybody's fate is in their hand” (college-educated white woman, Newark)

Notably, African Americans also subscribed to individualism, as a man from Baltimore explained,

“We got two people who were in my class that are millionaires now. I also got some people who didn't make it, some people in my class now who are living on the streets who are bums, and I'm doing pretty good. So it's not just your environment, but it's what you do with it after you get it.”

For some time now, the social science research literature has shown that whites have developed “racial resentment” toward minorities in the post-civil rights era. This resentment stems from the fact that minorities (and blacks in particular) are perceived to disproportionately violate the value of individualism as represented in the Self Making Person model. Racial inequality, then, is explained as a failure by minorities to properly

inculcate themselves with the appropriate values. This view was commonly revealed in the focus groups.

A white woman in the mixed race group said:

“Two words. Bill Cosby. If you ever read the hot water he got himself into, but he didn't care a bit, was personal responsibility. Everybody at some point has to realize that they are responsible for themselves.”

In fact, the Cosby quote was frequently used by whites throughout the focus groups. This sentiment was echoed by a wide range of informants. For instance, a Chinese American man in Newark said,

“Maybe the hands have been out so long they just need somebody to put it there all the time.”

Or as a Latino from Los Angeles commented,

“I think many programs have been put forth to help minorities, to help themselves basically. The thing is - you can lead the horse to water, but you can't force it to eat.”

The main story line here is that minorities, but especially African Americans, do not fit the model of the Self Making Person. The focus on the individual, and particularly individual failings, as an explanation for racial disparities was reflected in the news content analysis. While the media did focus attention on some of the systemic barriers to minority achievement, the pertinent pattern had to do with racial differences in coverage of individuals. Across the domains of education, employment, and crime, the news media called attention to the individual failings of minorities, and especially blacks, as the central story line. For example, over a third of all stories about academic achievement disparities featuring African Americans were about such things as black students' poor attitudes, a lack of family support and low expectations of academic performance. Conversely, only three percent of the stories with whites as the central actors cited individual factors as the reason for poor academic performance. This trend was common across all of the issue domains and, not unexpectedly, most pervasive with the issue of crime. The news media, then, serves to reinforce this part of the dominant race frame.

The more people adopt this as an ideology, the harder it is for advocates to advance the view that external circumstances reduce the odds of success for particular groups. When equally compelling alternative explanations are not available for people to use in their thinking about race, unconscious beliefs about personal responsibility become very difficult to dislodge. Individualism is a very insular and self-contained mental model. This means that the structural determinants of life chances are effectively hidden from public view and more weight is given to the power of the individual to affect change.

Whites (and to some degree Asians and some Latinos) are perceived to be reflective of the Self Making Person, while minorities in general (blacks and recent Latino immigrants, more pointedly) are seen as essentially the opposite.

Put differently, the explanations for life chances between whites and non-whites are determined by fundamentally different forces. For whites, it is effort and achievement, but for minorities it is sloth and failure. Different forces, different outcomes, different lives.

Separate Fates

The final piece of the dominant race narrative is the way that minority concerns are understood as being disconnected from the shared concerns and aspirations of the broader society. Whites and non-whites have separate fates. The cognitive content analysis revealed that stories about minority communities commonly portrayed minority trajectories as distinct from those of other American lives. Sometimes the separateness is described in fairly explicit terms:

“African-American teens, who often live farther from retail outlets, have unemployment rates double those of Whites.” (“Jobless Summer,” Detroit Free Press, 5/28/04, 10A).

Other times, the separateness is less direct:

“Kerry read . . . to kindergartners at the largely Hispanic, low-income school before discussing his education plan.” (“Kerry Assails Bush on Education,” Wash Post, 5/5/04 A7).

The focus group data also supports the view that the races live in parallel universes. For instance, a white informant in Baltimore said,

“My kids went to school in a pretty diverse environment. The interesting thing that they told me was that when it came to lunch time all the black kids sat together by themselves at a table... so from my kids’ perspective they said there really isn't diversity. They are here and we are here but there really is no mixing.”

Even in integrated environments, then, whites and non-whites have little in common. The notion of separate fates has three notable consequences for the public conversation about race. First, it makes it easier to characterize minorities as the “Other,” and by definition out of the system. Two, it allows people to compartmentalize the concerns of minorities as being “over there”; no matter how well meaning, it is inevitably easy for people to be less motivated about issues that are less directly connected to themselves. Third, it makes it much harder to make the clear causal connection between minority life chances and structural arrangements. In short, white success is perceived to be the result of the Self Making Person and racial disparities are simply the by-products of the failure of minorities to properly adhere to the core value system.

Through the lens of this model, being white is practically defined as the mainstream and, by definition, the exemplar of a state of self-determination.

Q: And what characterizes white culture?

A: I think of it as standard, you know, mainstream culture to the point where it doesn't feel like it's anything. (Asian liberal woman, Elicitations, CA)

The important point, as Cultural Logic points out, is that whites are the anti-race in this narrative setup.

By contrast, the fates of blacks and other minorities are easily seen as determined more by physical and cultural circumstances related to their ethnic qualities, and less by individual will. The sentiments of a non-college educated white man from Nashville were common across the focus groups,

“We do a lot of Section 8 housing...the government is paying for their houses but they are driving Cadillac Escalades.”

Put differently, whiteness is the implicit diminution of race and maximization of Self Making. On the contrary, being black is the maximization of race and minimization of Self Making. Seeing the world through this lens makes it extremely difficult to see the common connections between the things that affect whites and non-whites alike. It makes it tough to see, for example, the fact that we –regardless of race - are all bound by the same set of concerns about education, health, employment, housing and the like. It also explains why whites cannot see white privilege as a web of structural advantages that account for, in no small measure, racial differences in success or failure.

Negative Consequences of the Dominant Race Frame

- 1. People are encouraged to believe we have made tremendous progress on matters of race.*
- 2. To the extent that racism exists, it is in the hearts and minds of “bad” people who unfortunately pass it on to their children.*
- 3. A certain level of racism, therefore, is likely to remain constant over time.*
- 4. Nonetheless, the dramatic changes in laws and policies have essentially leveled the playing field.*
- 5. Individual responsibility, not discrimination, is the driving value.*
- 6. Racial inequality is thus a function of minorities' (especially blacks') failure to take on core values associated with the Self Making Person.*
- 7. Whites and non-whites are perceived to have separate fates in life. Whites are self-determinant, while minorities are bound by circumstances beyond their control.*
- 8. Individualism is the key value in this frame.*

In all, the dominant race frame described above makes it hard for advocates to get across messages about progressive race policy reforms that focus on rooting out and constraining structural biases. Our research suggests that when people reason in this mode, it is very difficult to get them to think about racially biased systems as an

explanation for racial disparities. Instead, the value of individualism is highlighted as the critical factor explaining life success. If the dominant frame works against the preferred agenda, what frames are more promising?

Reframing Race

We utilize several methods to discover potential reframes for racial discourse; including both qualitative and quantitative techniques. As we have often noted in our public presentations, we have developed a "graveyard of framing hypotheses". This metaphor refers to the fact that reframing propositions are just that: testable notions that are either supported or defeated by the evidence. Those that are defeated are relegated to the graveyard as so many dusty bones. We begin this section by detailing several reframes that were unable to gain much traction in moving public perceptions of racial matters.

Diversity as Strength

For some time, a common theme among race advocates has been that the society is stronger as the result of diverse perspectives and experiences. This notion received full attention as a result of the amicus briefs filed by the military and the business community in the Michigan affirmative action case. The basic argument is that the country is becoming much more diverse and we should therefore benefit from the existence of, and exposure to, a variety of ideas and cultures. In the Michigan case, for example, business representatives argued that it is good for business when a company is served by a mix of perspectives. Likewise, the briefs from the military pointed out the importance of having a leadership structure representative of the diverse composition of today's armed services.

The communications challenge with this approach is that the word "diversity" quickly evokes dominant understandings of race. A discussion about what makes for a good mix of employees, students, or soldiers, for example, quickly reverts to thinking about the individual. We presented our focus groups with several different vignettes that had "diversity as strength" in the foreground. The short story is this is not an effective frame for moving public will in support of a progressive race policy agenda.

In a series of tests, we presented focus group participants with vignettes that underscored the concept of "diversity of strength." In some cases, we asked people to talk about the role of diversity in hiring; in others, we prompted people to discuss an example where diverse members of a community came together to solve a community problem. The following focus group quotes bear out the communications obstacles this frame is unable to overcome.

"It seems to communicate how fractioned this community is and that they actually had to build a bridge with each other in order to even just understand how one another was communicating." (Latino, Albuquerque).

"If I say Latino, but you'd rather be called Spanish. If I say you're white, you'd rather be called Caucasian and you spend most of that time figuring out what

everybody wants to be called, then the issues on the table aren't being addressed." (non-college-educated white man, Albuquerque).

"I almost think it's like reverse discrimination though...People talk about discrimination so much that, like for example people getting into colleges. It's always been the minorities, so now they're getting in and they're taking places of people that perhaps belong in that school." (college-educated white woman, Newark).

In theory, people agree with the idea that a company or organization is better off with diversity, but in reality they quickly become mired in a discussion about hiring the individual with the best skills or talking about the shortcomings of political correctness. From this perspective, as noted by Public Knowledge, "...diversity is an obstacle to overcome, not an asset." Once people reason from this position, it is difficult to get them to think at the level of systems. In other words, because racism and self-determination are individual matters, it is difficult for people to think through the causal sequence necessary to judiciously evaluate calls for system reforms.

Prevention - The Miner's Canary

This frame is built around the idea of the "canary in a coal mine," recently made famous by Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres in their book The Miner's Canary. The basic idea is that miners use canaries as early warning detectors for high levels of toxins in the mineshaft. When the canaries get sick, it is time for the miners to come up. When applied to minorities, the analogy is that stress fractures in minority communities (e.g., drugs, disease, loss of jobs, etc.) are an early indicator of trouble for the broader society.

In simplifying models testing, Cultural Logic exposed informants to two versions of this metaphor: Trend Indicators and Stress Cracks.

Trend Indicators

Economists now agree that the most powerful indicator of impending problems in our society is the state of minority communities. Negative trends, such as increased unemployment, rising rates of diabetes, a shortage of teachers, and falling rates of home ownership, all hit minority communities first and then affect the broader population. Minority communities are such good indicators of the problems that face us all because they are the most vulnerable and least protected communities.

Stress Cracks

Experts now agree that problems in minority communities are nearly always excellent predictors of problems that will later affect the whole country. Experts call this the Stress Cracks effect, because like small stress cracks in a plaster wall, problems in minority populations are often the first visible signs of broader structural weaknesses that will actually affect us all. From inadequate access to

healthcare, to a shortage of quality daycare, to high unemployment, problems that at first seem only to affect minority communities have actually turned out to be initial signs of much broader problems. The Stress Cracks effect offers the best indicators of the problems that need fixing in American society.

While these researchers did find some positive effects of the models in terms of understanding key concepts such as shared fate, the application of the thinking actually worked against the grain of a better conception of structural impediments to racial progress. In other words, people understood shared fate but in a negative way – something much closer to contagion/viral effects than early warnings.

It first starts out in minority communities and their problems eventually become everyone's issues.

Conservative African-American man from Massachusetts, age 21

Our welfare system is stressed and our healthcare issues are stressed because they don't have health insurance so a lot of them are on the free healthcare given by federal and local governments which taxes the working people who are legal and pay taxes and have jobs, so it's just a growing issue. That's what I think you mean by stress cracks.

Conservative white woman from Massachusetts, age 40

The way things happen in the small minority groups end up affecting the whole United States . . . If it's like that within the minority community, the minority communities splits and multiplies and it makes it the problem of the whole country. It gets out of control.

Liberal Asian-American woman from Massachusetts, age 45

As Cultural Logic notes, ". . . because the simplifying model is essentially about why we ought to care about the problem, it does not make any implications about what exactly ought to be done. The "responsible mind" isn't getting engaged." Worse yet, if the effect is indeed viral, then the response isn't to treat the cause but rather to contain the effect.

"You could look at the minority population and look at where their downfalls are --whether it be in healthcare or finance or what not, and it's a good indicator of how that relates not necessarily to minority populations, but you can probably see a trend start occurring throughout the entire population . . . I guess it's useful for the government to know because if they start looking at minority populations they can try to stop it from spreading to the entire population." Liberal White woman from Massachusetts, age 24

This frame evokes two very powerful and negative perceptions of minorities. The first is that they are weak and vulnerable, thus implicitly less deserving. Second, they are a

threat to the broader society that must be contained and quarantined. In both instances, the explanation for disparities is located at the sub-group, thus the responsibility for the solution falls to the sub-group. If the sub-group is unable to effect positive change, then it is the responsibility of the system to control the spread of negative influences.

White Privilege

One of the constant refrains from advocates is that there is little recognition of the concept of “white privilege” by the broader American public. A standard description of this concept is that whites enjoy the advantages of intergenerational transmission of assets abetted by a set of institutional arrangements and practices, exclusionary social structures, and unequal allocations of goods, services, and power. Cultural Logic talks about this as “...the idea that life chances are built largely on the ‘credit’ (in the broadest sense) extended by institutions and people around you.” Participants in the models testing portion of the study were presented with the following paragraph:

Economists now agree that the main reason why white communities are better off overall than minority communities is that whites have benefited from what experts call the Trust Advantage. In short, they're trusted more than minorities. When interacting with all kinds of institutions, from schools to hospitals, to employers to banks, to law enforcement, whites benefit more from the trust advantage than minorities do. Numerous studies show that the trust advantage gives whites a significant head start in all of these situations.

People who were willing to concede that widespread racism exists clearly understood how the Trust Advantage operated.

In white collar industry, there's not many minorities that get to the CEO level. There white people are more likely to be trusted and to get to that level than minorities. Minorities have to work really hard to get to that level in a company. And I would say maybe applying for a job as well too. Sometimes white people get more of an advantage than a minority person because of how they look or they way they dress.

Liberal Haitian-American woman, age 22

Q: Why do you think whites tend to be better off?

A: I guess probably because they have a lot of advantages. I mean typically you know maybe they're born into a better area, a better situation, and their lives are starting off a little easier. They don't have the prejudice against them which I think makes it easier for them to get ahead in life.

I think a lot of people tend to think still that a lot of [Blacks] can't be trusted and you know have an ulterior motive to rob or steal or find a free way of getting something. And I think it gives them a definitely disadvantage in trying to lead a productive life.

Liberal white woman from New York, age 38

The more telling problem, however, was among the large portion of the American population who do not accept the idea that racism undergirds American life.

Q: Can you picture some situations that are examples of this Trust Advantage?

A: Ummm...I'm not sure I agree with it -- that whites are just inherently trusted right off the bat – white communities over minority communities.

Q: Why do you think whites tend to be better off in this country?

A: White Americans born here have an advantage because they are automatically programmed to go to school and so education plays a part in that. But that comes mainly from the family unit.

Liberal white woman from Oklahoma, age 29

A: To me that doesn't sound valid. Because I live in Atlanta, GA, and they have the advantage here. You know, it's very, very, unequal so it's kind of the opposite here.

Conservative white woman from Georgia, age 43

The critical learning here is that default understandings of life chances as determined by individualism trump the idea that certain groups have an inherent amount of stored “credit” that advantages them in life. Put differently, because the model is rooted in the personal or individual (“little picture” thinking), people cannot reach a “big picture” conception of how embedded systemic bias can account for racial disparities.

To make matters worse, when people do understand something at a level higher than the individual, they turn to a programmatic understanding of the race problem. In other words, they equate the systemic deficiency as something that is addressed by just another affirmative action program. As Cultural Logic remarks, “...[s]ubjects quickly move on to the “remedy” phase of the discussion, and, inevitably, to a backlash against programs aimed at fixing the Trust Advantage problem”.

A 1:” What I think I understood if I could just jump in here is that white people are getting the benefit of the doubt for being in their communities, whether it applies to jobs or housing and that the government I guess has put / I don't know. I don't know who is putting these programs in place to level the playing field.

A 2: I'll put my two cents in here too. OK, I guess what I hear from this is that it's implied that white people are more trustworthy, just based on race alone. And this is an advantage over being a minority. And it's just implied from maybe some other stereotypical type of images of the idea of who is trustworthy and who is not.

Q: So what would you see should be different?

A 1: Well economists are agreeing. And it comes back to what we said earlier whether it was implied or perceived. If it's not truly something that you can measure and say that it's definitely out there, I'm not sure you should put programs to give other people advantages if it's only a perception.

In all, our analyses found little support for three popular framing hypotheses – *Diversity as Strength; Prevention – The Miner's Canary; and White Privilege*. In each instance, the dominant understanding of race trumped attempts to move thinking in the direction of supporting a more progressive race policy agenda. This, of course, was due to the fact that individual liberalism trumped diversity, prevention, and legacy as explanations for racial disparities. All is not lost, however, and in the next section we highlight some more promising framing propositions.

Reframing Race Redux

We identified and tested three additional reframes - Racism, Opportunity, and Ingenuity - with accompanying simplifying models (structural racism, prosperity grid, stakeholder/homeowner effect) in the latest round of research. These frames and models derive from the cumulative learning across our research methodologies and evidence-based tests; in other words, they are our most promising candidates for developing a coherent communications strategy.

Each of the frames was tested to see the extent to which they could move two kinds of indicators – attitudes about race and racial policy preferences (see below).⁴ The priming survey serves as a summary empirical test of the effectiveness of the reframes and their attendant models. Recall that we constructed the survey to be an experimental test of the influence of the respective frames on public perceptions. Study participants were assigned to one of four conditions (a control, the race frame, the opportunity frame, and the ingenuity frame). In addition, we performed a second test that allowed us to judge the independent (from each other) and joint (with the values based frames) effects of the simplifying models on attitudes and policy positions. We report the joint effects of the frame and the simplifying model in large part because the frames worked better in tandem with the models.

Racism

One of the most powerful notions in the racial justice field is the idea that racism is a value deeply and intentionally embedded in the institutions, practices, and social arrangements of American society. The systematic oppression of minorities in general, and African Americans in particular, is a hallmark feature of the U.S. brand of institutionalized racism. As a communications vehicle, however, this frame confronts several immediate challenges. The first, as we reported earlier, is that people believe the sort of virulent racism described above has essentially disappeared. The second is that even if you get people to acknowledge racist beliefs and practices, they quickly promote the ideas that it exists in the hearts and minds of “bad” people; which, in turn, can include

racist minority group members. Focus groups responded to the notion that racism was a “centuries old virus” that required a cure.

A college-educated European American woman from Newark insisted, *“All the things that are going on against Jews in France. You can't stop this. You can't stop people like this.”*

If anything, this notion seemed to leave people feeling that the situation is fundamentally intractable, as a college educated European American woman from Newark stated, *“This prejudice is rooted deeply and that is why it's not going away and it is probably -- I don't know if it ever will go away”.*

In the Newark focus groups, a white man expressed it best, *“I don't think it makes sense because we're saying and I think we've all acknowledged that these things have been occurring and the system hasn't shut down. The system is still functioning. It may not be functioning perfectly but it is still functioning. You get a decent virus in your system and it shuts down.”*

What these quotes do not convey is the tone of the conversation. In both the focus groups and the elicitations, informants quickly engaged in “rhetorical” mode. This refers to a type of conversation where the goal is less to engage in reasonable dialogue but rather to contest and stake out positions. The upshot is that a rhetorical tone is counter-productive to moving public perceptions.

As we have continued to maintain, the social analysis that accompanies this framework is compelling, but as a communications vehicle it has limitations. In recognition of this fact we redesigned the frame in such a way as to capture the structural flaws that lead to racial disparities, without the rhetorical baggage that a public conversation about the historical legacy of racism entails. Below we describe the shift from a traditional view of institutional racism to a revised conception.

A Centuries Old Virus

Have you ever gotten a virus on your computer? The system gets infected and it corrupts the whole network, both the original computer and everyone else's. If you want to fix it, you don't decide that everybody should build their own firewall. Instead, it is more efficient and effective to protect the integrity of the entire system.

Well, racism in America is much like a computer virus. Decisions based on racist assumptions left over from prior generations continue to corrupt entire systems. For example, public education continues to be funded by property taxes which results in different educational opportunities based on where one lives. States have the ability to determine restrictions on voting for those convicted of a crime, and those states with the most restrictive laws are the states that historically have had the highest proportions of minority prisoners.

Do we build firewalls around these corrupted systems, or do we take care of the virus? Just like we vigilantly guard and defend the integrity of our computer systems, we must also protect the integrity of all of America's institutions. This means removing blockages, re-routing traffic, and putting in virus protection programs. This means stopping racial profiling by highway patrol officers, repealing laws that send a person to prison for 25 years for minor offenses, and making sure that children have enough books, papers and pencils by changing school funding equations. It is time to clean out the last vestiges of a virus that has lasted far too long.

Traditional

- White privilege imbedded in the history and culture of the USA
- Intentional use of power – through public and private structures – to thwart the challenges to status quo
- Results in continued oppression of people of color (US v. THEM)

Revised

- America continues to struggle with the problem of racial inequality
- The system of discriminatory practices perpetuates itself automatically (outcome)
- Shared Fate – the impact of such a system on all of us (WE)

With this in mind, we modified the traditional racism setup to avoid some of the problems encountered by more traditional versions of the racism frame.⁵ In particular, we tried to highlight the structural side of the equation.

The results for the frame are decidedly mixed. The good news is that the race+structural racism design had statistically significant effects on racial attitudes when compared to the control condition. For example, the average level of racial resentment in the control condition was about 53%, indicating that a little over half of the respondents felt blacks didn't try hard enough, that generations of other minorities had overcome obstacles, that generations of discrimination have not held blacks back, etc. Exposure to the racism frame with the structural racism simplifying mode embedded reduced resentment by about 5% (statistically significant at the .01 level). This effect was especially pronounced for whites and Independents (-8%). Granted these effects are not large in substantive terms, but three things should be kept in mind – one, it is very difficult to move something as deeply entrenched as racial attitudes; two, this is a large sample so 5% actually represents a significant number of people; three, the experimental manipulation is not very intrusive, thus creating a rather high bar for uncovering effects. That the racism frame resulted in less resentment is a positive sign.

The bad news for this frame is that it was unable to influence people's policy preferences. The impact of exposure to the racism frame was identical to the levels of policy support in the control condition. In fact, this finding is notable for its stunning consistency across policy items as well as political and demographic groups. This finding is supported by the models testing research. Chief among its weaknesses is that it reflected no new learning or understanding. Indeed the policy discussion in the models testing led people back to the familiar trope that this is affirmative action.

“Any kind of affirmative action or any kind of quota system that set aside particular seats in a classroom for a particular race or gender in an attempt to

make things more equal is actually creating a situation where that, in and of itself, is a definition of racism.

Conservative white man from New Hampshire, age 39

It is not surprising, then, that while the racism frame has a certain value, it is limited in its ability to lift up a progressive discussion of policy options. To the contrary, it devolves to the same old rhetorical debate that characterizes the dominant frame so pervasively documented in the earlier phases of our research.

Opportunity for All

Across the FrameWorks research, there appears to be consistent support for the value of opportunity. This is especially the case when minority opportunity is connected to outcomes for non-minorities. Thus people are able to reason about racial inequality in terms of the things that prevent all people from realizing a better life. Opportunity is, by definition, about the level of access people have to societal resources and the way the system is set up to distribute them. But there are lots of places where the system falls down. It surely hurts minorities more often, but system breakdown can also hurt whites. Whatever the cause, race is not necessarily the primary determinant of success or failure. To this extent, we have linked fate.

Importantly, opportunity is not to be misconstrued as individual opportunity, but rather opportunity for all, for the society to realize its potential. In the focus group research, participants were presented with a range of vignettes focusing on education and community development that brought forward the idea of opportunity. An important aspect of this reframe entails explicitly portraying the plight of minorities in the context of other kinds of communities facing similar problems. The quotes below provide initial support for the notion that you can get people to think about racial inequality in a fundamentally different and more productive way.

"It should be the goal of the nation to make sure that everybody is educated, not just the whites or not just a certain elite class" (college educated white man, Minneapolis).

"I think it always comes down to the same situation. How do we create equal opportunity without also creating reverse discrimination?" (college-educated white man, Minneapolis).

"I don't think they are given opportunities other people are and it is hard to break out of that. They say you can work really hard and get out of it, but I don't know if that is necessarily true" (college-educated white woman, San Francisco).

"What are you going to do if you get out of jail and you can't get a job? You don't have a degree. You don't have any skills. You are going to wind up right back on the corner" (black woman, Baltimore).

"It's something necessary to do [for] people in certain communities. I don't think they're given opportunities other people are and it is hard to break out of that. They say you can

work really hard and get out of it, but I don't know if that is necessarily true” (college-educated white woman, San Francisco).

“This one gets an A; but this one means a lot more than that one does. That shouldn't keep them from getting to go to higher education. That's wrong, definitely wrong so they've got to do something” (non-college-educated white man, Albuquerque)

Forwarding opportunity as the key value has two distinct advantages. First, it takes the conversation out of the realm of racism per se and taps into the deeply held American idea of “opportunity for all”. From a framing perspective, this means that people can more clearly see the kinds of systemic barriers that constrain minority life chances, thus moving people away from ideas about the Self Making Person. Second, and very importantly, couching opportunity in the context of what is happening in non-minority communities creates a sense of linked fate or interdependence. This allows us to overcome another core element of the dominant frame; that is, the idea that what happens to minorities is in no way connected to what happens to whites. People quickly grasp ideas like the global economy can hurt all communities, or that few children – regardless of race - can succeed in life with poor schooling. The following quotes from the focus groups bear witness to this.

“Education is the beginning. All the studies show that children are the future. If you don't put the money into them, you're not putting money back into your own resource.” (college-educated white woman from San Francisco)

“I work with bankruptcy every day and I think that it's not just the minorities that I see every day. I see all races of people having to file bankruptcy because of the decline of income and the downsizing of jobs” (African American woman, Nashville)

“When you outsource things and take it out of the country or even out of the state of California, the jobs remaining primarily are those low paying, low sector service jobs.” (Latina, Los Angeles)

These optimistic signs led us to construct an opportunity frame in the priming survey research supplemented by a simplifying model called the “prosperity grid”.⁶ While we generally do not pay a great deal of attention to the marginal results of the survey items that serve as the primes, it is interesting to note in this case that a full 80% of the respondents agreed (42% strongly agree) with the idea that:

“We all live in this country together, and in many ways we share the same fate. When a community struggles with crime, poverty and little hope for a better future, the effects are passed on to future generations in that community, which then causes the problems to escalate over time and spread to other areas. The American Dream has always relied on creating an environment where everyone has an opportunity to achieve, but increasingly children growing up in minority communities face enormous obstacles in growing up to be solid, contributing members of society...”

The priming survey relays several very positive outcomes regarding the opportunity for all frame as a communications vehicle to move support for progressive positions on race.

Interestingly, and like the racism frame, the opportunity frame also has significant impacts on racial attitudes. For instance, exposure to this frame (plus the prosperity grid model) reduces racial resentment by about 7% (significant at the .001 level). The effect is most pronounced among whites, women, and Independents. Likewise, and unlike the racism frame, it increases support for a race policy agenda by 7% (significant at the .001 level). This effect is especially salient among women (9%), Republicans (7%) and Independents (9%).

The Opportunity for All Frame is very promising. The evidence from the experimental survey indicates that priming the value of opportunity encourages people to understand race-specific policies in a new light. That is, it reduces levels of opposition. This finding is significant given the common finding in the literature that Americans have a hard time supporting race-based social policies. Moreover, the models testing research with regards to the Prosperity Grid illuminates what happens when the value of Opportunity is linked to a mechanism like the Prosperity Grid: 1. it is an easy to think term - people were able to easily drop it into conversation; 2. it aided in big picture thinking - it moved people away from the level of the individual; 3. it allowed people to put the problem in practical terms - they could see cause and effect.

A Memorable Term

Q: Could you repeat the information I read, as best you can?

A: (Laughs) Oh god. Well, the idea is that there is this prosperity grid that exists that white people are much more plugged into than minorities and the grid is things like access to healthcare and better schools and better housing and all the good connections within society that have power and that the minority populations have had much less access to that grid and that's been one obstacle for them.

Liberal white woman from Virginia, age 49

Big picture thinking

Q: What do experts mean by the Prosperity Grid?

A: A system of connections that would include personal connection and connections to financial systems like home ownership programs, banking, loans, that kind of thing.

Q: Could you repeat the information I read, as best you can?

A: Minority groups don't have access to what the paragraph termed as prosperity grids which would include security grids which would include personal connections and financial and economic connections for systems like banking and home ownership.

Independent white woman from Indiana, age 38

Q: What do experts mean by the Prosperity Grid?

A: I think by the prosperity grid they're referring to knowledge of and access to funding sources and information sources and other types of resources that allow them to further their economic welfare and standards of living. Credit, healthcare services, financial advice and services and that sort of thing.

Liberal white man from North Carolina, age 44

Practical thinking – cause and effect

“Economists when they were evaluating the “prosperity grid” they found out that someone white would have a better chance of success than a minority, and they think that the best way to reverse trend was to give other groups a shot. Give ‘em the same connections as the white group would have.”

Conservative white man from Georgia, age 36

The quotes from the above informants provided real texture to our understanding of the inner workings of the opportunity for all frame. It is as if you can almost hear the wheels turning in people’s heads in a fundamentally different way. They don’t get bogged down in the mire of personal racism and are much more able to see the systemic connections.

Nonetheless, the models testing offers a caution: the opportunity frame breaks down if people perceive it to be solely about personal networks.⁷ When they do, it runs the risk of pushing the discussion back into the dominant frame of a little picture, individual level understanding of racial disparities (“who you know”). In FrameWorks parlance, the new idea gets eaten by a more familiar and powerful idea inside of people’s heads.

Q: So what do these experts mean by the prosperity grid?

A: They are trying to give you an image to associate with networking. And because minorities are relatively newer inhabitants of the country, they don’t have the old guard established networking rising up in families.

Liberal white woman from Rhode Island, age 43

Well what I heard was that white people have advantages because we have a stronger connection and build a stronger prosperity network than minorities and basically since they don’t have the same kind of network, that they’re at a disadvantage.

Moderate white woman from Texas, age 42

Still, the opportunity for all frame shows great promise. It opens the discussion to big picture thinking; it overcomes separate fate by focusing on interdependence; it is significantly aided when it is paired with the prosperity grid simplifying model; it can move both racial attitudes and support for a progressive race policy agenda; and it has the capacity to overcome the common tendency for racial discourse to bog down in unproductive rhetoric.

Ingenuity/Solutions First

One of the common mistakes made by advocates in all fields is the tendency to bury solutions messages deep in their communications material. On the other hand, advocates routinely accord inordinate attention to laying out the problems, disparities, and inequities associated with race. What we know from years of communications experience is that this type of communications produces either “compassion fatigue” (the sense that there are just too many problems in the world that deserve attention) or a sense

that the problem is so intractable that nothing advocates promote can possibly work. This is compounded by the fact that people have a hard time imagining an effective role for government in addressing social problems, and an abiding concern that minority communities do not have enough voice/responsibility in the change process.

A common sub-theme running through much of our analysis is that people are unable to see viable solutions to the race question. There is a lot of talk about problems and not much systematic attention paid to talking about solutions. When people are presented with viable and effective solutions, they are able to more clearly understand where the system breaks down and how we fix it. In addition, there is the sense that government is over-involved and minority residents aren't sufficiently involved in these solutions. As other FrameWorks research shows, people have serious problems with government taking on a lead role in addressing society's challenges.⁸ In this regard community members are empowered as a result of being involved in determining outcomes in their neighborhoods. This line of thinking was frequently evident in the focus groups.⁹

"We always hear about all these different programs and it's so hard to know if it really is going to help out. All you hear about is these programs and it just seems like putting more and more and more money into programs. So I like that they include that this is getting results for them." (Korean American woman, San Francisco)

"I think whatever the program is it has to empower the people with training, tools, education," "They can't be babysat by these officials who are starting this program. It has to be the people who can take this program and take it to where it needs to go." (Korean American woman, San Francisco)

"It depends on the community itself and whether they have people that really want to invest in it," "It's not just the money. It's going to take time and getting people together to figure out what the community wants. It depends on how active the people in the community would be." (non-college educated white woman, Nashville)

Reframing race necessitates moving solutions to the front of the conversation. When presented as being about viable solutions (in which the community played a key role), people can see an effective way to address the race problem.

We extended this analysis to the priming survey and the models testing. Survey respondents were primed with a series of questions that highlight the fact that we (as a society) know how to solve problems; the module ended with the stakeholder effect simplifying model.¹⁰ In terms of racial attitudes, exposure to the ingenuity frame/stakeholder effect model reduced racial resentment, on average, by about 4% (significant at the .01 level). This is just slightly less than the effect of exposure to the racism frame and significantly less than the impact of the opportunity frame. This effect was most pronounced for whites (5%), women (5%), and Republicans (7%). The impact of the ingenuity frame on support for a progressive race policy agenda is a bit more impressive. As compared to the control, exposure to this frame (and model) increased policy support by an average of 7% (the same size as the effect for the opportunity frame). This effect was most pronounced for whites and Democrats (+8%). The impact

of the ingenuity frame on race policy was approximate to the impact of the opportunity frame.

The effectiveness of the ingenuity frame - as concretized by the stakeholder effect model - was also evident in the models testing. The stakeholder model is predicated on the idea that having a stake in the community such as owning your own home or business produces any number of positive side benefits; benefits that accrue both the individual and to the broader community. On this line of reasoning, stakeholding anchors people, it gives them a stake, and it has the capacity to move them into the middle class. Study participants reacted to this model in the following way:

Yes . . . Because there are some of those areas close to where I live. And I think in the longer term, actually, it would contribute to my well being.

White Conservative man from California, age 62

Yeah, because I think the more people that own homes, the better the neighborhoods are going to be and the better and safer the communities are going to be.

White Conservative man from Texas, age 21

People that own their own homes are more likely to care about what kind of state they are in and what their neighbors are like and things like that. And it creates economic stability – economic stability and social stability are really closely related. And you would see people . . . demanding more from their schools and demanding more from community services and things like that.

Liberal Hispanic man from Texas, age 21

Right, I think it helps in making everything safer – better for children, better environment for kids to grow up in and safer for everybody to visit.

White Conservative woman from Maryland, age 44

That the model was able to open up the conversation for people representing several different demographic groups is a testament to its ability to aid conversations about race that were less defensive (e.g., few reference to topics such as “reverse racism,” etc.), and less rhetorical. That people were able to carry this thinking through when reasoning about policy solutions (even those that amount to a kind of affirmative action) with little pushback against establishing preferential treatment for minorities is quite remarkable. And in this way, it is thoroughly consistent with the priming survey results.

In short, talking about solutions overcomes a number of communications obstacles. It gets around the notion that we have solved the race problem in America by allowing people to talk about problems related to race in the context of viable means of addressing them. It does so by employing a practical tone. This frame element also gets around the question of separate fates by highlighting community empowerment in a way that sounds familiar to a mainstream accustomed to advocating on their own behalf. In addition, it

shows how all benefit when communities work together. A final advantage of this approach is that it gets around the Self Making Person by demonstrating that minority communities are not dependent on handouts; to the contrary, they need government to do a better job of providing the tools that allow minority communities to help themselves.

To conclude this section, it is useful to look at the impact of all three reframes on attitudes and policy preferences across individual differences (e.g., race, party, and gender). This provides clues as to how one might design the structure of a communications strategy. With regard to the impact of the reframes on racial attitudes, all three reframes have a measurable effect on white study participants. Exposure to any of the three reduces racial resentment. On the other hand, African Americans are not significantly affected by the reframes (although the signs for opportunity and ingenuity are in the right direction). For Latinos in the survey, the opportunity frame had the most significant impact on racial attitudes (exposure reduces resentment by 5%). Finally, gender differences are constant across the three reframes; that is, both men and women are equally influenced by exposure such that their levels of racial resentment are notably reduced. In short, a communications platform designed to ameliorate racism would be well served using any of the reframes or relevant combinations thereof (we will return to this point shortly).

In terms of the influence of the reframes on support for race-based public policies, whites are most susceptible to frame influences in the opportunity and ingenuity conditions respectively. African Americans are also susceptible to frame influences in these two conditions but in reversed order of magnitude (opportunity has a more measurable impact than ingenuity). Interestingly, Latinos are unaffected by exposure to opportunity or ingenuity but respond very negatively to the structural racism frame. Support for race-based policy is actually reduced by 8% in this condition.

Partisan differences in response to the three reframes reveal an interesting picture. For Democrats, the ingenuity frame has the greatest impact on policy support. This probably isn't that surprising, given their tendency to support government intervention as a policy tool. But it may suggest movement away from charity as a solution or motivation. Republicans, on the other hand, are most influenced by the opportunity frame (+10%) and to a lesser degree the ingenuity frame (+6). Again, one wouldn't be surprised by this pattern of results given the rights claims about equality of opportunity (compassionate conservatism) and the "ownership society". Independents, predictably sit in the middle; they are significantly and equally influenced by both the opportunity and ingenuity reframes.

Conclusion

This memo reports on the results of the FrameWorks research on race over the past two years. It encompasses a wide and deep research base that spans theory and practice; qualitative and quantitative research methods; and time and space. We have systematically explored the ways that ordinary Americans of all different racial, political, and demographic profiles understand and apply racial thinking in their everyday lives. Additionally, we have paid close attention to the role of the media in the public dialogue. We are now in a position, we believe, to offer some solid recommendations for how

advocates and stakeholders can build a new conversation on race; a conversation that has the potential to elevate support for a progressive race policy agenda.

The take-away from our project is that there are very promising avenues to reframe the conversation around race in the United States. It requires, however, being intentional and systematic in the way we think and talk in the public square. Perhaps more importantly, it requires us to free ourselves from the constraints of a traditional racial discourse that has become mired in rhetoric, apathy, and backlash. The upshot of our increasingly worn approach is that it has not served our interests well in terms of building support for the kind of policy agenda that will fundamentally transform many of American's most disadvantaged communities. The primary purpose of this project, therefore, has to been design the architecture that can lead to a new racial discourse in America.

One of the underlying assumptions of the project is that structural and systemic biases are strong predictors of racial disparities. The communications challenge, therefore, is how to elevate this understanding in the public consciousness. The first step in our analysis was to determine exactly what we were up against. This meant getting inside the public's reasoning about race. We did this utilizing qualitative methods such as cognitive elicitations and focus groups. The central finding of a narrative with a few distinct elements:

- Racism is a thing of the past
- To the extent it still exists it resides in the hearts of evil men and women (who can be white or minority)
- Racial disparities are best understood as a function of individual responsibility as ascribed to the self-making person
- Whites and non-whites do not share common fate.

The communications implications are clear:

- Conversations cannot begin by priming the historical legacy of racism;
- they cannot lead the audience to think about the issue as being about people, as opposed to situations;
- they cannot focus on the triumphant individual or other exceptionalizing mechanisms;
- they cannot engage in a rhetorical debate about the intentionality of bias
- and they cannot focus on problems/disparities to the exclusion of solutions.

With this in mind, we explored several potential reframes. As is typically the case, some did not have the power to sustain themselves in terms of positively influencing racial discourse. So, for example, the notion of the miner's canary as a metaphor for minority communities as early warning detectors was trumped by people's sense that minority communities get sick because they are weak and vulnerable; moreover, people reasoned that, if there is a chance for contagion effects, quarantining is the best strategy. Not surprisingly, this did not lead to a more productive policy conversation.

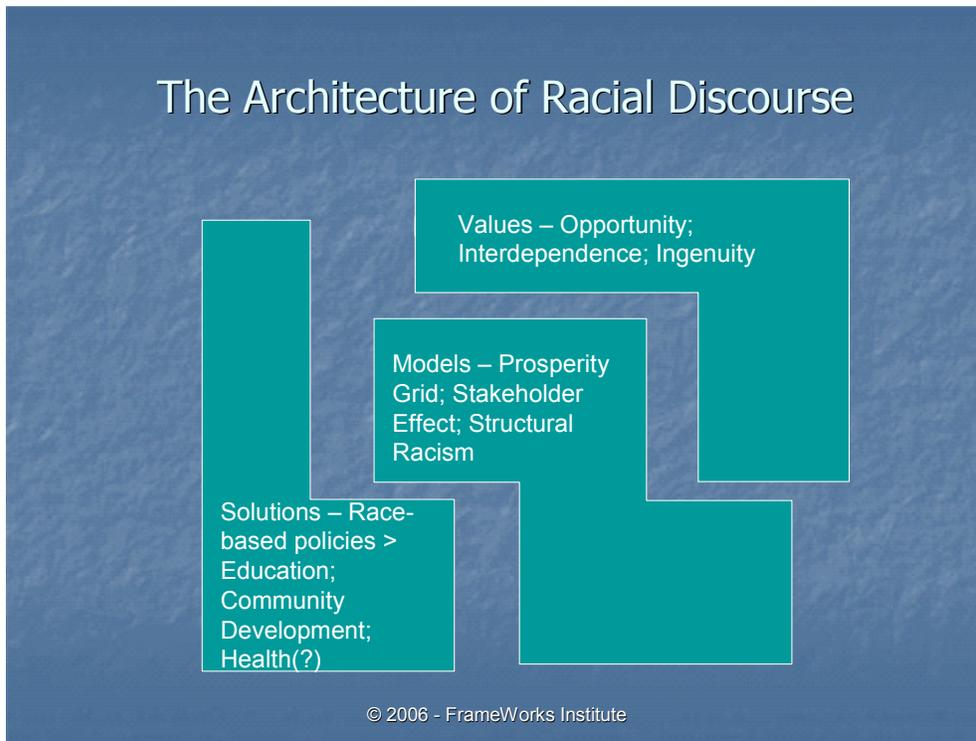
Three values-based frames survived preliminary testing - opportunity for all; ingenuity; and racism - and were paired with accompanying simplifying models in the next round of testing. One of the more interesting tests involved the notion of evoking racism as a value-based explanation for racial disparities. As we note in the report, traditional

approaches based on institutional racism have tended to begin the conversation with rhetorical language that, as our research attests, quickly drives people into a defensive and calcified mode. In many cases the conversation just stops. In recognition of this, we revised the traditional conception to include racism as a value but moved the discussion of structural bias further up in the communications. While this frame still had difficulty in moving the conversation in models testing, it did display the ability to reduce the amount of racial resentment among white Americans. In other words, if one's goal is to have more racial understanding, then this frame has the potential to play a pivotal role (e. g., cultural competency training). Nonetheless, the racism frame has little if any capacity to move policy support. Thus, if the communication's goal is to engender support for specific policy claims, the racism frame would not be the appropriate frame to use.

The Opportunity for All and Ingenuity frames show great promise in their ability to move both racial attitudes and policy preferences. This is especially true when coupled with the prosperity grid and stakeholder simplifying models. While the opportunity frame demonstrates the greatest impact, both frames have broad appeal across demographic groupings. The opportunity model is effective because of its ability to overcome several of the deleterious effects of the dominant frame of understanding. For instance, it enables big picture thinking which, in turn, makes it easier for people to have a conversation about systems reform. Put differently, it takes people out of a dialogue about personal racism and fixes attention on the deeply held American belief in opportunity. At the same time it elevates notion of shared fate among people, thus negating the belief that minority concerns are unrelated to the concerns of the broader society.

The art of framing lies in utilizing the research-based findings to design and build a communications strategy that is true to the core message, while at the same time creating sufficient malleability to fit different situations and purposes. The schematic below represents a framework for this architecture. It calls for an intentional alignment of values-based messages, concrete mental models, and a sound policy agenda.

The Architecture of Racial Discourse



The new discourse on race requires a fundamental re-engineering of the way that we think and talk about race. Over the course of the next year or so we will develop more specific tools and applications that amplify the learning from the research phase of the project. Products will include templates for op-eds, speeches, brochures and other communications materials. In addition, we will convene and conduct a series of workshops whereby we teach basic framing principles, share the research products and build the capacity of advocates to more effectively communicate race.

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About the Author

FRANKLIN D. GILLIAM JR. is a Senior Fellow at the FrameWorks Institute and Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships, Professor of Political Science and founding director of the Center for Communications and Community at UCLA. Dr. Gilliam received his B.A. from Drake University and his Ph.D. from University of Iowa. He has also taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Grinnell College, and the

University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. He has taught with former Vice President Al Gore at Columbia University, Fisk University, and Middle Tennessee State University. At FrameWorks, Dr. Gilliam has served as project director for the Framing Race in America Project and has contributed to projects on health care, early child development, youth, and rural issues. He is co-author with Susan Bales of “Communications for Social Good” (The Foundation Center, April 2004).

Dr. Gilliam is the also author of the *Farther to Go: Reading and Cases in African-American Politics* (Harcourt Brace) Dr. Gilliam has also published in the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Social Policy Report*, *Urban Affairs Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *Nieman Reports*, *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Public Opinion*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Government and Policy*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Psychology*, *Ethiopian Review* and *The Source*.

He has served on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. In addition, he has served on the National Advisory Board, National Center for Child Traumatic Stress; National Selection Committee, Faculty Scholars Program, William T. Grant Foundation; National Advisory Committee, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR); National Advisory Board, Institute for Community Peace; Community Advisory Board, Sempra Energy, The Gas Company; and the Community Investment Cabinet, Los Angeles United Way.

In 2004 Dr. Gilliam was awarded the Mark O. Hatfield National Scholar Award, Portland State University and in 2006 he was presented with the Distinguished Alumni, University of Iowa, 2006.

All FrameWorks research reports are edited by the Institute.

¹ FrameWorks projects draw from an array of contributing scholars and analysts whose work is summarized in these pages; for a complete listing of reports, see www.frameworksinstitute.org.

² For more on the approach of Strategic Frame Analysis, and the terminology incorporated in this report, see Bales, S.N. and F.Gilliam, “Communications for Social Good,” New York: The Foundation Center, April 2004; for a synopsis of terms used in this document, see FrameWorks E-Zine #8 at www.frameworksinstitute.org.

³ This section is substantially derived from previous FrameWorks’ publications and is quoted here with FrameWorks’ permission. However, all subsequent quotations from this section should be attributed to the FrameWorks Institute and the original materials from which these observations are drawn.

⁴ Summary scales were created out of the two batteries of items. The racial resentment scale is widely used as a measure of racial attitudes in the social science literature. See, David O. Sears and P.J. Henry, (2005) “Over Thirty Years Later: A Contemporary Loot at Symbolic Racism,” *Advances in Experimental Psychology*, (37) 95-149. The racial resentment battery consists of the following items (Cronbach’s alpha = .79):

- Irish, Italians, Jewish, and other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up; blacks should do the same without special favors.

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- It's really a matter of some people just not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.
 - Generations of slavery have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
 - Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
 - Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried.
 - Government officials usually pay less attention to a request or complaint from a black person than from a white person.

The policy indicators items were part of a list constructed by Professor Kenny Whitby. Their inclusion was based on two reasons: 1. they reflected a broad range of issue domains; 2. they scaled together most precisely. These items are (Cronbach's alpha = .67):

- Provide incentives for banks to provide loans to businesses in minority communities
- Establish public magnet schools in poor and racially isolated districts
- Require employers to provide health insurance to their workers to help address disparities in health and wellness because minority workers are the most likely to be without health insurance

⁵ This is the actual wording of the Racism prime and the Structural Racism simplifying model is listed below:

Racism Prime

Better for the US:	
To encourage racial and ethnic minorities to blend into American culture by giving up some important aspects of their own culture	64%
OR	
To encourage racial and ethnic minorities to maintain their own culture more strongly, even if that means they do not blend into American culture as well	36%
Closer to your view about racial disparities:	
Minorities have worse jobs, income and housing than white people because of historic advantages and wealth that continue to be passed down to children in white families, giving them a head start in a college education, a down payment on a first home and so on.	23% strongly held
OR	
Minorities have worse jobs, income and housing than white people due to discriminatory practices such as less funding for minority schools, less civic investment and less attention to economic development in minority neighborhoods.	3.9 average on a 7 point scale
Goals of MLK have been achieved	20% strongly held
	5% all
	37% most
	55% some
Situation for minorities has	85% improved (38% greatly)
Structural Racism Model	
In 21 st century America, we continue to see deep and growing racial disparities. Minorities are more likely to live in poverty, have less educational achievement, worse health care, and higher rates of crime. These problems are no accident; they are due to a history of discriminatory policies and practices. Structural racism is a term that describes the complex factors that produce and maintain racial inequality. It identifies how public policies and institutional practices consistently reproduce racially inequitable outcomes. As a nation, we pay little attention to economic development in minority communities, we provide less funding to minority schools, and we have criminal justice policies focused on harsh punishments when prevention is needed. If we are to truly realize the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we must accept and establish racial equity to solve these problems once and for all.	49% agree (19% strongly)

⁶ This is the actual wording of the opportunity prime and the prosperity grid model:

Opportunity Prime	
Priority of future prosperity	81% priority (21% top)

Concern about some communities having far less opportunity than others	60% concerned (24% extremely)
Better for the US: To ensure future prosperity for all Americans by strengthening the public systems that can provide opportunity for everyone, such as schools, first time home ownership programs and so on	45%
OR To ensure future prosperity for all Americans by strengthening communities to provide opportunity for everyone, through economic development, crime prevention programs and so on	55%
Closer to your view about communities: America should be the land of opportunity for every child, but the reality is that some children, particularly minority children, do not have the same opportunities for success. Frequently, minority schools have less funding and minority communities have less economic development and few good-paying jobs, resulting in little hope for a better life. To make the American Dream truly achievable for everyone, we must address these problems together.	13% strongly held
OR A community ridden with poverty and crime affects us all, because the effects ripple out to surrounding areas and harm quality of life for everyone. To address these problems once and for all, it is time for everyone to work together, regardless of race or ethnicity. To ensure future prosperity for all, we must work with struggling communities to improve educational opportunity, to attract businesses with good jobs, and improve access to health care. These improvements will end up benefiting everyone.	5.0 average on a 7 point scale
View of interconnections: Americans' fate is more closely tied than ever before	47% strongly held
OR American's have always had a shared fate, and new technology hasn't changed that very much	60%
In the future, American life will: Become much more interconnected	40%
Become a little more interconnected	44%
We all live in this country together, and in many ways we share the same fate. When a community struggles with crime, poverty and little hope for a better future, the effects are passed on to future generations in that community, which then causes the problems to escalate over time and spread to other areas. The American Dream has always relied on creating an environment where everyone has an opportunity to achieve, but increasingly children growing up in minority communities face enormous obstacles in growing up to be solid, contributing members of society, because the communities in which they live have few thriving businesses, provide little opportunity for a college education, and frequently do not have the health professionals to address unmet health problems. We need to make sure that public education provides a good education for every child, not just children in wealthy school districts; and we need to attract businesses with good jobs and address barriers in local economies to make sure that every community provides an opportunity to succeed. That will result in better quality of life and future prosperity for us all.	34%
	80% agree (42% strongly)

Prosperity Grid

Economists now agree that one of the most practical investments in American life would be to plug minority communities into the network of institutions that make prosperity possible - banks, home and business ownership programs, educational institutions and so forth. Experts call this the Prosperity Grid. The white population has been better connected over the years to these institutions. Minority communities have never had the opportunity to get connected to the Prosperity Grid in the same way. Plugging minorities in would build their prosperity, create a stronger economy overall, and improve American communities.

4% heard a lot about this concept

⁷ One additional caution of the Opportunity/Prosperity Grid Frame is that it constrains people’s perceptions that government has a constructive role to play in the opportunity process. The survey included some questions about the appropriate role of government in solving society’s problems. Respondents exposed to the opportunity frame became more skeptical that people can make a difference. The idea that people working together can make a great deal of difference in solving problems declines by 8 percentage points overall. Drops in support are particularly apparent among engaged citizens (+10 points), Independents (+11 points), younger respondents under 35 years old (+15 points), college-educated men (+15 points), older women (+11 points), and those who live in the Midwest (+14 points).

⁸ For more on this topic, see FrameWorks’ research on how Americans think about government at www.demos.org.

⁹ Focus group respondents were presented with the following excerpt from a print news story:

Local Development Initiative Showing Progress

State governments across the nation are eyeing a five-year-old (San Francisco wording: *Kentucky*; all others: *Illinois*) initiative that is re-shaping opportunity in the state. A number of urban and rural communities (All but San Francisco heard: *from Chicago to the farm towns of Southern Illinois*) were experiencing rising crime, declining school test scores, and disappearing economies. Faced with this situation, state legislators knew that dramatic action was needed to keep the state from dividing along class and race lines.

“We are the product of our environment,” stated Mayor Cyrus Blackwell. “For most of us, the forces that provide opportunity or raise barriers blend into the background of our lives: the ability to attend a quality school, walk safe streets, pay for college, or get a loan to buy a home or start a business. We take these opportunities for granted. In many communities, however, these opportunities are hard to find, making success in life more difficult.”

In the 1990s economic analysts began to notice growing disparities across the state. “Business incentives were concentrated in white, wealthy suburbs,” stated economist Jean Harrison. “That drew resources away from low-income rural and urban areas and created a number of impoverished communities. These communities became increasingly likely to have failing schools, unsafe streets, and little economic opportunity. Try to start a business in these communities, and you’d find few banks willing to provide a loan. Talk to a bright kid who gets good grades, and you’d discover that her parents can’t afford to send her to college.”

To address the growing disparities, the state worked with citizens to create a development plan for their community, replicating the process with citizens in 30 communities around the state. Citizens provided the energy and vision while the state provided technical assistance and \$100,000 grants to help communities get started implementing their common vision. One inner city community used a portion of the grant to provide low-interest business loans to residents. A rural community used a portion of the grant to attract a child care center to the area.

The Governor is committed to the program and officials in other states are watching closely to see if it will be successful and able to be replicated in other states.

¹⁰ The test language for the Ingenuity frame and the Stakeholder effect model is listed below.

Test Language to Prime an Ingenuity Frame

Priority of finding effective solutions to social issues	92% priority (42% top)
Heard about developments:	
The state legislature that reduced by 75% the number of state residents without health insurance, by allowing any state resident to buy into the state's public health insurance program at a rate adjusted for income.	26% heard
The 15 major state universities that worked together to develop a plan to double the number of minority students by guaranteeing admission to <u>every</u> student in their state who ranks in the top 10% of the senior class, regardless of race. This new system has resulted in: 1) a high performing student body; 2) no racial or class prejudice in admissions; and 3) a diverse student body that benefits everyone.	25% heard
The state that addressed the needs of minority communities with severe, unrelenting poverty, by using policies to create a more favorable economic climate in these communities, for example: creating special zones with tax incentives for job creation, low-interest loans for residents to start new businesses, and funding for civic organizations to develop community centers and activities for youth. Five years into the program, new businesses are flourishing, the poverty rate has been cut in half, incidence of crime has plummeted, and high school graduation rates are rising.	26% heard
Closer to your view of finding solutions:	
There are lots of citizens and organizations that are solving problems every day, and turning poor and minority communities around with hard work and helpful government programs, but we rarely hear about these success stories on the news. Because we don't hear about these successes on the news, it can feel as though there are few solutions, when the reality is that there are lots of problems being solved every day.	35% strongly held
OR	
There are lots of examples of poor and minority communities that have been revitalized due to the hard work of citizens, civic organizations, elected leaders who work together to develop approaches to turn communities around and improve quality of life. You don't have to look very far to find effective solutions to the problems we face.	3.4 average on a 7 point scale
Most important and effective advancement:	
Creating Social Security, which virtually eliminated high poverty rates among the elderly	27%
Fluoridating water systems, which dramatically reduced cavities and improved oral health	2%
Childhood immunizations, which have nearly eliminated illnesses such as polio, small pox, measles and so on	55%
Headstart preschool programs which have boosted educational performance among low-income and minority students	17%
In the future, Americans	
Will continue to make significant progress in solving problems because when we work together we can accomplish anything	64%
As Americans, we want to solve problems when we see them and we want community leaders and public officials to take responsibility for bringing our attention to problems and helping us find effective solutions. The fact is that effective solutions do exist, but too often we as a society are not putting a high enough priority on expanding the use of effective policies and programs. People did not fix problems like polio through sheer will; it took coordination, planning and programs. Progress is being made. Some states have...creation of small businesses in minority communities. We have solutions; it is time to make this a priority.	74% agree (31% strongly)

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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