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Connecting the Country to the Rest of the Country: Analysis of a Priming Survey Exploring Views of Rural America

By Meg Bostrom, Public Knowledge LLC
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Introduction

In early 2003, the Kellogg Foundation asked the FrameWorks Institute to assist in the Foundation's efforts to develop effective language to promote policies that would benefit Rural America. Over the course of the following year, the FrameWorks Institute reviewed the Foundation's existing research and conducted several original qualitative research projects. To test hypotheses developed over the course of these qualitative research efforts, Public Knowledge and the FrameWorks Institute research team devised a survey designed to test the effects of specific frame elements on attitudes toward Rural America and support for policy solutions.

Most Americans believe that it is important to prioritize the needs of *both* urban and rural areas, and most Americans highly rate several policies to address rural problems. In fact, urban, suburban, and rural residents are more alike than different in their views of the issues facing Rural America. The central distinction between world views is not based upon where one lives. Rather, the central consideration appears to be one's perceptions of the appropriate role for collective action versus perceptions of the responsibility of individual communities in creating their own success or failure.

Throughout the survey, certain demographic groups consistently: support prioritizing the needs of urban and rural areas, see responsibility at all levels of government, rate the importance of policies highly, and agree with the values of interdependence and collective action. These core audiences include Democrats, women, minority respondents and those with less education. An opposing world view is held among Republicans, men, white respondents and those with more education. These audiences are less likely to prioritize the needs of any geographic area, rate all policies as less important, and place primary responsibility on local governments in rural areas to solve the problems facing these communities.

The challenge for communicators, this survey analyst concludes, is neither to improve the public's views of rural people nor develop a public fondness for Rural America. Rather, building public will for policy change on behalf of Rural America will require a communications frame that illuminates the role of policy decisions in creating rural problems and in addressing rural concerns, and one that builds a sense of geographic interdependence to connect all people to these issues, wherever they live.

Two of the three frames tested in this survey show an ability to create these understandings. The Fairness Frame, designed to provide a rationale for why rural areas are struggling, shifts opinion in a beneficial direction. It increases the priority of rural areas, the responsibility of the federal and state government in addressing rural concerns, and it lifts support for some policies. The Interdependence Frame, designed to re-connect rural areas to the rest of the country, is able to shift many of the same perceptions. Specifically, it increases the priority of rural areas and the responsibility of federal and

local government. It builds support for addressing rural problems together, but shows just minimal effect in lifting support for policies.

The central distinction between the effects of the frames is that each frame appeals to different audiences. Both frames increase support among younger women and those who live in rural areas. The Fairness Frame is more effective with Democrats, minorities, Southerners and men, while the Interdependence Frame is more effective with Independents, white respondents and younger men.

Finally, the survey tested the effect of a Simplifying Model¹ designed to link the needs of urban, suburban and rural areas, and to provide a causal story explaining the decline of rural areas. When the effect of the Simplifying Model is isolated, it is clear that the Simplifying Model shifts perception, particularly among Republicans and college-educated respondents. However, combining the values frames and the Simplifying Model results in more beneficial movement in public perception than either the values frames or the Simplifying Model alone. This dynamic is more apparent with the Fairness Frame than the Interdependence Frame, since the Interdependence Frame already incorporates some elements of the Simplifying Model.

In summary, this research finds that the Fairness and Interdependence Frames, combined with the Simplifying Model, move public understanding and policy support in a beneficial direction. Each element appeals to different audiences but there is synergy between the elements, so the most effective strategy for communications would be to merge the Fairness and Interdependence Frames with the Simplifying Model to tell a cohesive story.

Method

This survey was designed to quantify the effects of various frames identified in previous FrameWorks research on public attitudes toward rural areas and on public support for policies to benefit rural areas. Throughout, the report will refer to the concept of “framing.” The FrameWorks Institute defines framing as referring to “the way a story is told -- its selective use of particular symbols, metaphors, and messengers, for example – and to the way these cues, in turn, trigger the shared and durable cultural models that people use to make sense of their world” (Bales and Gilliam, 2002). Research on how people think demonstrates that people use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world, and that new information provides cues to help people determine how to connect the new information to what they already know. This lens on the issue then quickly defines issue understanding, priority, consequences, solutions and responsibility for fixing the

¹ Cultural Logic explains that “people typically rely on analogies in order to learn complex, abstract concepts. These concrete analogies are simplifying models - they help people organize information into a clear picture in their heads, including facts and ideas that they have been exposed to, but never been able to put together in a coherent way.” For more on simplifying models, see the FrameWorks Institute e-zine, Issue No. 19, “Opening Up the Black Box: A Case Study in Simplifying Models” by Axel Aubrun and Joe Grady for Cultural Logic, with Susan Bales of the FrameWorks Institute, available at www.frameworksinstitute.org.

problem. This is framing. (Note: For more information on frames and framing, see the FrameWorks Institute web site at www.frameworksinstitute.org.)

This survey incorporated a series of “priming” experiments to cue specific frames, and then determine the extent to which exposure to the frames subsequently influenced reasoning and attitudes about rural areas. Specifically, 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. Then all interviewees responded to the same set of core questions about rural areas. 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 to advance a policy menu, thereby indicating the effects of a communications frame on public opinion.

Each framing experiment was tested with a national sample of adults drawn proportionate to population. Initially, the 3100 survey respondents were randomly assigned to either a control group, which received no deliberate framing, or one of three test frames:

- **The Fairness Frame** communicates that rural areas are struggling because they are not given a fair share of the nation’s resources, and the solution is to level the playing field.
- **The Cooperation Frame** highlights the challenges facing the nation as a whole and states that the solution is for all regions to work together, wherever the need is most pressing – urban or rural.
- **The Interdependence Frame** states that the nation is one entity that is being affected by declining rural areas and the solution is to work together to reconnect rural areas, which will benefit the nation as a whole.

A second experiment tested the effectiveness of a Simplifying Model to communicate the problems facing rural areas and the relationship between urban, suburban and rural areas. In this experiment, the 3100 survey respondents were randomly assigned to a control group, which received no deliberate framing, or to a test frame that exposed respondents to a short statement reflecting the Simplifying Model.

To isolate the effects of each experiment, the sample was carefully constructed to allow for an analysis of the second experiment, in isolation, as well as in combination with the effects of the first experiment. Quotas for gender and region were set for each cell:

Sample Design – Number of Interviews by Split Sample Experiments						
Second Experiment	First Experiment					
		Control	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence	Total
	Control	500	350	350	350	1550
	Simplifying Model	500	350	350	350	1550
	Total	1000	700	700	700	3100

After the first experiment in which the various primes were introduced, survey respondents were asked a series of questions designed to judge the frames’ ability to

change public attitudes and to move the public toward support for a range of policy goals. This was done by analyzing responses to such questions as:

- Please rate (a series of issues) for how important a priority you believe the issue should be, on a scale where zero means not a priority and 10 means an extremely important priority.
- How important is it for the nation to make the needs of each of the following areas a priority:
 - Cities and urban areas
 - Suburban areas
 - Small towns and rural areas
- For each of the following, please tell me how much responsibility it should have for addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas in the nation:
 - Federal government
 - State government
 - Local governments in rural areas

After the second experiment in which the Simplifying Model was introduced, survey respondents were asked to respond to additional policy and attitudinal questions:

- Please rate (a series of issues) for how important a priority you believe the issue should be, on a scale where zero means not a priority and 10 means an extremely important priority.
- Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:
 - The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation, so we must address their issues together
 - People in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems, so outside interference should be discouraged
 - Progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas, so there is little that can be done to help them now.

By analyzing the pattern of response to these questions within each experimental split and comparing test responses to a control split that received no frame, it is possible to begin to determine the impact of each frame on public attitudes. The attitudinal questions are just as important as the policy support questions in determining the effect of the framing experiments, as these attitudinal questions correlate with policy support.

The effects of each of the experiments are typically subtle, resulting in single-digit shifts in opinion. Dominant models of understanding are developed throughout the course of our lives, and changing those models takes time and significant exposure to new frames. A short survey of this type can provide directional understanding, but will not fully represent the shifts in public opinion that might occur over a long period of exposure to new frames.

The survey analysis is based on telephone interviews with 3105 adults nationwide, conducted July 20th – July 30th, 2004. Each main split or division consists of a national sample of adults drawn proportionate to population. Demographic characteristics (age, education, political party identification) were weighted when necessary to be consistent across splits. Most percentages in this document refer to a base sample size of at least 700 interviews, which results in a sampling error of no more than +/- 3.7%. (Error decreases as opinion on a question becomes more polarized.) *Unless otherwise noted, only statistically significant differences are included in this report.*

The following analysis begins with a review of current public perceptions, based solely on the responses of the control group (or that group uninfluenced by the effects of the framing experiments). An analysis of the effects of each frame and the effects of the experiments on different target audiences follows. Finally, the paper ends with brief observations about the overall implications of this research.

Current Opinion

Note: This section is based upon the response of the Control Group which includes 1005 interviews nationwide. Regionally, 317 interviews were conducted among people who live in urban areas, 498 suburban, and 190 rural.

Americans believe that it is important for the nation to make the needs of small towns and rural areas a priority. In fact, more survey respondents state that it is important to prioritize small towns and rural areas (63% important, 18% extremely important) than say it is important to prioritize the needs of cities and urban areas (58%, 17%) or suburban areas (48%, 11%).²

Interestingly, there are more similarities than differences in the patterns of response to these questions among demographic groups. The demographic groups that place a high priority on the needs of rural areas tend to be the same demographic groups that place a high priority on urban areas (Democrats, less educated voters, and heavy television viewers) while those groups expressing lower levels of support for rural areas also show lower levels of support for urban areas (Republicans, more educated voters, and light television viewers). While one's relationship to rural areas does influence response, the demographic patterns in response overall suggest that geography may be less relevant in determining policy support than other attitudes, such as concern about the state of the country or the role for collective action in addressing problems.

Rural Areas

Nearly two thirds (63%) of survey respondents say that it is important to make the needs of small towns and rural areas a priority, but only 18% say that it is extremely important. Democrats, less educated voters, and heavy television viewers tend to place a higher priority on rural and urban areas while Republicans, more educated voters, and light television viewers tend to place a lower priority on these areas. Specifically:

- Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say that it is extremely important to make the needs of small towns and rural areas a priority (22% and 13% respectively);
- Those with no more than a high school education are more likely than college graduates to rate the needs of rural areas as extremely important (24% and 13% respectively);

² A note of caution: the relative importance of small towns and rural areas may be overstated. While this finding is based on the response of the control group which was not exposed to an experimental prime, respondents were asked to rate a number of policies for rural areas prior to this question, which may have influenced survey participants' response to these questions.

- Heavy television viewers are more likely to say it is extremely important to prioritize the needs of rural areas and small towns than those who watch very little television (24% and 14% respectively); and
- Those who live in the Northeast region of the United States are more likely to rate the needs of rural areas highly (22%), while those who live in the West are far less likely to say they are extremely important (11%).

As the next section will demonstrate, the patterns of response noted above mirror survey participants' views of the needs of urban areas.

However, other demographic patterns differ as people consider the needs of rural and urban areas. Importantly, survey respondents' relationships to rural areas influence their response to this question. Those who live in rural areas (24% extremely important) or those who have visited rural areas (23%) are more likely to say it is extremely important to make the needs of small towns and rural areas a priority, while those who *used to live* in rural areas and those who say they have a limited knowledge of rural areas are significantly less likely to say this is extremely important (only 14% each).

There are also strong differences by gender. Women are more likely to rate rural areas as extremely important (23%), especially older women (26%), and women without a college education (27%), while men are far less likely to do so (only 12% say rural areas are extremely important), especially younger men (10%) and college-educated men (8%).

Urban Areas

A majority (58%) say that it is important to make the needs of cities and urban areas a priority, but only 17% say that this is extremely important. Many of the responses among demographic groups mirror the patterns of response outlined for the priority of rural areas. Like rural areas:

- Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say that it is extremely important to make the needs of cities and urban areas a priority (23% and 11% respectively);
- Those with no more than a high school education are more likely than college graduates to say the needs of cities and urban areas are extremely important (21% and 13% respectively); and
- Those who live in the Northeast (26%) and heavy television viewers (23%) are particularly likely to prioritize the needs of urban areas.

Again, where one lives also influences response to this question. Those who currently live in urban areas (20% extremely important) and those who say they have little relationship with rural areas (23%), are more likely to say that it is extremely important to make the needs of cities and urban areas a priority, while those who currently live in rural areas are far less likely to say this is extremely important (13%).

Interestingly, gender does not emerge as a key distinction on this question. Instead, education level defines response among women, with college educated women far less

likely to prioritize urban areas than women without a college education (14% and 21%, respectively). One other demographic group emerges in response to this question – a high percentage of non-white respondents say that it is extremely important to make the needs of cities and urban areas a priority (27%).

Suburban Areas

Only 48% say that it is important for the nation to prioritize the needs of suburban areas, and just 11% say this is extremely important. In this instance, party identification is not a distinguishing factor, but other demographic patterns continue:

- As with rural and urban areas, college educated respondents are far less likely to say that it is extremely important to meet the needs of suburban areas (7%) than those with no more than a high school education (18%);
- Heavy television viewers (18%) continue to be more likely to respond that it is extremely important to prioritize the needs of these areas; and
- Just as with urban areas, non-white respondents say that it is extremely important to prioritize the needs of suburban areas (16%).

Although survey respondents may prioritize the needs of rural areas, most also believe that it is up to local and state government to meet these needs, not the federal government. While there is widespread agreement that local and state government should have responsibility for addressing the needs of rural areas, there is significant disagreement about the role for federal government.

Local Government

More survey respondents point to the responsibility of local governments in addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas, than point to the responsibility of state and federal government, in that order. Fully 91% believe that local governments in rural areas should have responsibility for addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas, and 65% say local governments have “a lot of responsibility.” A majority of all demographic groups agree that local governments should have a lot of responsibility for rural areas, including those who currently live in urban (66% “a lot of responsibility”) suburban (65%) or rural areas (60%). In fact, there are few demographic distinctions on this question with the exception of education. Those with no more than a high school education are less likely to say that local governments should have a lot of responsibility (52% say “a lot”) while those with a postgraduate degree are among the most likely to say it should have a lot of responsibility (74%).

State Government

Most survey respondents believe state government should have some responsibility for addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas (88%), but only a slim majority (51%) says that state government should have “a lot of responsibility” which is 14

percentage points lower than the response given for local governments in rural areas. Interestingly, those who live in rural areas are less likely than respondents overall to say that state government should have a lot of responsibility for rural areas (44% of rural respondents say state government should have “a lot of responsibility”). Otherwise, the demographic patterns noted in response to the importance of making the needs of rural areas a priority continue in response to the role for state government:

- More Democrats than Republicans say state government should have a lot of responsibility (58% and 45% respectively);
- Those who live in the Northeast are more likely than those who live in the Midwest to say that state government should have a lot of responsibility (59% and 42% respectively);
- Non-white respondents (65%) and heavy television viewers (57%) also say the state government should have a lot of responsibility.

Federal Government

Nearly three quarters (71%) believe the federal government should have responsibility for addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas, but just 27% say the federal government should have a lot of responsibility for that task. It is in response to this question that distinctly different world views emerge among demographic groups, with Democratic, female, younger, minority and less educated respondents more likely to support federal government responsibility than Republican, male, older, white and more educated respondents. Specifically:

Federal Government Responsibility for Addressing Concerns of Rural Areas
% Should Have A Lot of Responsibility

High Support	Low Support		
Democrats	35%	Republicans	18%
Women	30%	Men	23%
Younger women	33%	Younger men	22%
High school graduates	32%	College graduates	21%
Heavy TV viewer	34%	Light TV viewer	20%
Northeast region	32%	Midwest region	20%
Non-college women	31%	College men	17%
Minority	49%	White	22%
< 30 years old	34%	Senior citizens	22%
Single/separated/divorced	34%	Traditional family	19%

Most survey respondents want to assist rural areas. More than eight in ten survey respondents agree that all Americans should work together to address the needs of rural areas and nearly as many reject the notion that progress is inevitable and little can be done to help rural areas. At the same time, survey respondents divide concerning whether or not people in rural areas should handle their own problems.

Interdependence

“The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together.”

Survey respondents overwhelmingly agree with this statement. Fully 84% agree and 48% strongly agree that “the challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together.” Importantly, this perspective is shared by urban (47% strongly agree), suburban (50%), and rural residents (46%).

Those more likely to strongly agree include the demographic groups that consistently show support for rural areas throughout the survey: Democrats (58%) and Independents (53%), non-white respondents (59%), women (53%) especially older women (55%), those who are single, separated or divorced with young children at home (69%), and those who watch a lot of television (56%). Only 14% disagree, and those most likely to disagree include: Republicans (20%), younger men (20%), and college-educated men (20%).

Inevitable Progress

Progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas, so there is little that can be done to help them now.

Survey respondents reject the idea that rural areas are beyond help. Only 19% agree and 79% disagree (50% strongly) that “progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas so there is little that can be done to help them now.” Urban (49% strongly disagree), suburban (51%) and rural residents (47%) all reject this statement.

Working women (57%) and college educated women (61%) are among the most likely to strongly disagree. Those most likely to agree with the statement include some demographic groups that express support for rural areas: non-white respondents (28%), those with a high school education or less (27%), traditional families (26%), senior citizens (26%), and those who watch a lot of television (25%).

Independence and Interference

People in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems, so outside interference should be discouraged.

A slight majority rejects the statement (52% disagree) that “people in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems, so outside interference should be discouraged” while 45% agree with the statement. Across geographic distinctions, survey participants similarly divide in response: urban (45% agree, 53% disagree), suburban (42%, 54%), and rural (52%, 45%).

As has been a pattern throughout the survey findings, Democrats and women tend to have one perspective, while Republicans and men have another. Majorities of Democrats and women reject this statement, specifically: Democrats (63%), women (58%) especially younger women (62%) and women without a college education (60%). Majorities of Republicans and men agree with this statement, specifically: Republicans (53%), men (52%) especially older men (59%) and college-educated men (55%).

According to survey respondents' ratings, the policies included in the survey represent a range of priorities. Some of the policies, particularly those that state broad policy goals, are rated very highly by survey respondents. Other policy recommendations, such as the placement of government jobs and the role of federal government agencies, are seen as far less important priorities.

The public places high priority on a number of policies, particularly those that state broad policy goals. At the top of survey respondents' list of priorities are: availability of healthcare (8.3 average priority rating on a scale of 1 to 10), high-quality education (8.3), the environment (8.2), and medical scholarships (8.0). Most of the policies ranked as mid-level priorities concern developing the economy in rural areas: emerging industries(7.7), small business expansion (7.5), college scholarships for teachers (7.5), Internet connections in schools (7.3), organic farming (7.1), biofuels industry (6.9), and regional anchors for economic development (6.9). The policy with the lowest priority rating is coordinating rural policy through one federal agency (5.4).

Generally, those who place the highest importance on the policies are the demographic groups that voice support for rural areas throughout the survey, including: Democrats, Independents, non-white respondents, heavy TV viewers, and those who are separated,

Importance of Policy Priority

Average Rating on a 1-10 Scale

Please rate each of the following for how important a priority you believe it should be, on a scale where zero means not a priority and 10 means an extremely important priority.

Increase the availability of healthcare in rural communities, particularly preventive healthcare services	8.3
Develop educational programs in rural areas that provide the high-quality education that will be needed in the new economy	8.3
Address continuing environmental problems, including groundwater pollution from industrial farms and environmental degradation caused by mining and forestry	8.2
Offer medical school scholarships to those from any region who agree to practice in rural areas for at least five years	8.0
Invest in emerging industries in rural areas, such as agricultural biotechnology or wind power	7.7
Provide incentives for small businesses to start up or expand in rural areas	7.5
Offer college scholarships to those from any region who agree to teach in rural schools for at least five years	7.5
Expand high-speed Internet connections in rural schools	7.3
Provide assistance for family farmers to transition to organic farming which is more profitable for farmers	7.1
Develop the biofuels industry which would provide a market for corn stalks and other agricultural by-products	6.9
Target and develop a small number of rural areas with the potential to become regional anchors for jobs and economic development	6.9
Locate more government contracts and government jobs in rural areas	6.8
Expand high-speed Internet connections and cell phone coverage in rural areas	6.7
Institute regional smart-growth strategies that restrict major development to those areas with existing infrastructure, and protect rural areas from sprawl	6.5
Coordinate all national efforts for rural policy through one federal agency	5.4

single, divorced or widowed with children, women, especially working women and older women, and those with no more than a high school education. Interestingly, policy ratings are fairly constant across geographic identifiers, with those who live in rural areas significantly more likely to support just a few, not all, of the policies.

Perceptions of the issue influence support for policies. As noted in the methodology section, several attitudinal questions were included in the survey to determine the effect of each frame. These attitudes correlate with policy support. When a frame is able to shift response on an attitudinal question that correlates with policy support, this movement in perception is as relevant to determining the success of the experiment as movement in policy support alone.

Looking just at average policy priority, it is clear that each attitudinal indicator correlates with policy support. For example, those who believe that it is “extremely important” to make the needs of small towns and rural areas a priority rate the policy priorities significantly higher than those who say the needs of small towns and rural areas are “very important.” (The pattern continues among those saying “somewhat” and “not important” but these categories are omitted here for space and simplicity.) In each instance, the response correlating with the highest policy support is italicized. Communications needs to move people toward these positive perceptions to build support for rural policies.

Average Policy Priority on a 1-10 Scale By Response to Key Indicator Questions	<i>Average Policy Rating</i>
<i>Those who say small towns and rural areas are extremely important give the policies an average rating of</i>	8.25
Those who say small towns and rural areas are very important give the policies an average rating of	7.62
<i>Those who say suburban areas are extremely important give the policies an average rating of</i>	8.12
Those who say suburban areas are very important give the policies an average rating of	7.55
<i>Those who say cities and urban areas are extremely important give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.82
Those who say cities and urban areas are very important give the policies an average rating of	7.53
<i>Those who say the federal government should have a lot of responsibility give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.80
Those who say the federal government should have some responsibility give the policies an average rating of	7.44
<i>That who say state government should have a lot of responsibility give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.58
Those who say state government should have some responsibility give the policies an average rating of	7.16
<i>Those who say local government should have a lot of responsibility give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.44

Those who say local government should have some responsibility give the policies an average rating of	7.22
The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together	
<i>Those who Strongly Agree give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.82
Those who Somewhat Agree give the policies an average rating of	6.92
People in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems, so outside interference should be discouraged	
<i>Those who Strongly Disagree give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.85
Those who Somewhat Disagree give the policies an average rating of	7.44
Progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas, so there is little that can be done to help them now.	
<i>Those who Strongly Disagree give the policies an average rating of</i>	7.33³
Those who Somewhat Disagree give the policies an average rating of	7.02

Changing the Conversation

The objective of this research is to develop a communications strategy that will lead to increased public support for a range of policies for Rural America. Based on the results of the qualitative research phase, the research team developed three reframes that demonstrated promise:

- **The Fairness Frame** communicates that rural areas are struggling because they are not given a fair share of the nation's resources, and the solution is to level the playing field.
- **The Cooperation Frame** highlights the challenges facing the nation as a whole and states that the solution is for all regions to work together wherever the need is most pressing – urban or rural.
- **The Interdependence Frame** states that the nation is one entity that is being affected by declining rural areas and the solution is to work together to reconnect rural areas, which will benefit the nation as a whole.

Survey participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups (a control group that received no deliberate framing and the three test frames) and exposed to different survey versions designed to trigger distinct ways of thinking about rural issues which might be assumed to affect public attitudes about Rural America and public support for a number of policies. The results of the experiments are reported below.

³ Directional difference, not statistically significant.

The Fairness Frame

Note: This section is based upon the response of those exposed to the Fairness Frame which includes 700 interviews nationwide. Regionally, 220 interviews were conducted among people who live in urban areas, 350 suburban, and 130 rural.

The Fairness Frame provides a rationale for why rural areas are struggling. Rather than allow people to worry that progress is inevitable and that rural areas are destined to disappear,⁴ this frame suggests that the fault lies in national decision-making concerning the distribution of resources. Rural areas get less than their fair share, and the solution is to level the playing field.

The Fairness Frame shifts opinion in a beneficial direction. It increases the priority of rural areas, the responsibility of the federal and state government in addressing rural concerns, and it lifts support for some policies.

The Fairness Frame is particularly effective in shifting the views of younger women, those who live in rural areas, Democrats, minorities, Southerners and men.

Table: Test Language for Fairness Frame	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Test Language</u>
Job Rating	Thinking about “the problems facing small towns and rural places in America,” rate the job we are doing in “addressing the economic and social problems facing small towns and rural places in America”
Issue Concern	That small towns and rural places in America are being left behind because they are not getting the resources they need
Agree/Disagree	In this country, we believe that all Americans should have the same opportunities. But the reality is that people in small towns and rural places are not enjoying the same benefits as the rest of the nation. In fact, nearly all of the poorest counties in the nation are in rural America, and the divide between urban and rural prosperity is becoming greater. This happens because the efforts that enhance a community’s well-being, like economic development, availability of healthcare programs, and opportunities for a good education, have disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas. People in rural areas have proven they have ingenuity and a desire to work hard; they just need the same resources to succeed. We need to level the playing field and make sure that those parts of the country that are at a disadvantage get their fair share of opportunities.
Satisfaction with Nation’s Efforts	To make sure that rural people enjoy the same benefits as people who live elsewhere

Response to Test Language

Most survey respondents already believe that insufficient work is being done to address the problems facing small towns and rural places in America. Two thirds (69%) believe the nation is doing an “only fair” or “poor job” in “addressing the economic and social problems facing small towns and rural places in America,” with 27% saying “poor.” Only 24% of survey respondents believe that the nation is doing an “excellent” or “good job” in this area. In addition, a majority (58%) is dissatisfied with the nation’s efforts “to

⁴ The qualitative phase of research found that these beliefs are readily available to the public.

make sure that rural people enjoy the same benefits as people who live elsewhere,” and only 36% say they are satisfied with the nation’s efforts in this area.

At the same time, few are concerned about the decline of rural areas. Less than half (46%) are concerned “that small towns and rural places in America are being left behind because they are not getting the resources they need,” and only 14% are extremely concerned.

A statement exemplifying the frame results in fairly widespread agreement. Three-quarters (77%) agree, and a majority (51%) strongly agrees with the statement, “In this country, we believe that all Americans should have the same opportunities. But the reality is that people in small towns and rural places are not enjoying the same benefits as the rest of the nation. In fact, nearly all of the poorest counties in the nation are in Rural America, and the divide between urban and rural prosperity is becoming greater. This happens because the efforts that enhance a community’s well-being, like economic development, availability of healthcare programs, and opportunities for a good education, have disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas. People in rural areas have proven they have ingenuity and a desire to work hard; they just need the same resources to succeed. We need to level the playing field and make sure that those parts of the country that are at a disadvantage get their fair share of opportunities.”

Effect of the Frame

Whether survey respondents agree with the frame is less relevant than whether the frame creates a new way of understanding the issues facing rural areas. The Fairness Frame makes progress in shifting survey respondents toward a world view that is supportive of rural areas. It increases the priority of meeting the needs of small towns and rural areas (+4 points “extremely important”) while not increasing the priority of urban or suburban areas compared to the control. This indicates that its effect is centered on views toward rural areas.

Furthermore, the Fairness Frame builds support for collective action to address the needs of rural areas. It increases respondents’ views of the responsibility of both the federal and state government in addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas (+7 points “a lot of responsibility”, +8 points respectively). It creates directional, but not statistically significant, increases in the ratings of the responsibility of local governments in rural areas (+4 points). Finally, it increases the percentage of respondents who strongly disagree with the statement, “people in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged” (+6 points in “strongly disagree”).

Concerning policies, the Fairness Frame demonstrates some ability to lift support among survey respondents. In the first policy battery placed just after the experiment to test the values frames, the Fairness Frame lifted support for three policies: “provide incentives for small businesses to start up or expand in rural areas,” “expand high-speed Internet connections and cell phone coverage in rural areas,” and “develop the biofuels industry

which would provide a market for corn stalks and other agricultural byproducts.” The Fairness Frame also shows some residual effect in the second policy battery, which was primarily designed to test the effect of the Simplifying Model. The Fairness Frame lifts support for two policies in the second policy battery: “expand high-speed Internet connections in rural schools,” and “locate more government contracts and government jobs in rural areas.”

Both the Fairness Frame and the Interdependence Frame shift perceptions in beneficial directions among younger women and those who currently live in rural areas. Beyond those groups, the Fairness and Interdependence Frames appeal to different audiences. The Fairness Frame is particularly convincing to Democrats, minorities, Southerners and men. Specifically:

- The Fairness Frame demonstrates the most ability to shift opinion among younger women. Younger women increase their ratings for the importance of meeting the needs of rural areas (+13 points “important”), become more likely to say the state is responsible (+ 10 points “a lot of responsibility”), and become more likely to reject the statement about “discouraging outside interference” (+19 points “strongly disagree”). Finally, the Fairness Frame lifts younger women’s priority ratings for 10 policies.
- Democrats are also positively affected by the Fairness Frame. Democrats increase their ratings for the importance of meeting the needs of rural areas (+10 points “important”). More Democrats say the federal and state governments have a lot of responsibility for rural areas (+12 points and +8 points respectively). They reject the notion of “discouraging outside interference” in higher percentages (+8 points “strongly disagree”) and their priority ratings for 10 policies increase.
- When exposed to the Fairness Frame, minority respondents become more likely to see the importance of meeting the needs of rural areas (+11 points “extremely important”) and become more likely to reject “discouraging outside interference” (+17 “strongly disagree”). Finally, their priority ratings increase for seven policies.
- Survey respondents who live in the South are influenced by the Fairness Frame. They become more likely to see the importance of meeting the needs of rural areas (+8 points “extremely important”), to see state responsibility (+9 points), and local responsibility (+11 points). They reject the idea of “discouraging outside interference” in higher percentages (+8 points “strongly disagree”) and increase their priority ratings for five policies.
- Men shift their perceptions in a beneficial direction when exposed to the Fairness Frame. Higher percentages of men rate meeting the needs of rural areas as extremely important (+5 points “extremely important”). They are also more

likely to see the responsibility of federal (+9 points), state (+10 points), and local government (+8 points).

- Those who currently live in rural areas respond to the Fairness Frame. More rural residents say that federal and state governments have responsibility for rural areas (+11 points and +9 points, respectively). Their priority ratings for four policies also increase.

The Cooperation Frame

Note: This section is based upon the response of those exposed to the Cooperation Frame which includes 700 interviews nationwide. Regionally, 220 interviews were conducted among people who live in urban areas, 350 suburban, and 130 rural.

The Cooperation Frame was designed to highlight the challenges facing the nation as a whole and to make a case for Rural America's contribution to solutions. Therefore, rather than define the problem as rural areas, this frame suggests that the problems are national in scope (the economy, education, and healthcare), but that progress cannot be made on these problems unless all regions work together to address the issues wherever they occur

The Cooperation Frame is unable to shift attitudes about rural areas, and it does not result in an increase in support for rural policies. In short, while it may make a case for cooperation, it does not make a case for Rural America.

Table: Test Language for Cooperation Frame	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Test Language</u>
Job Rating	Thinking about “national issues like the economy, education, and healthcare that affect both rural and urban areas,” rate the job we are doing in “cooperating among different regions of the nation to address these kinds of major issues”
Issue Concern	That infighting and selfishness between regions is keeping us from addressing major national issues
Agree/Disagree	In this country, we believe that any challenge can be overcome if we work together to solve it. Right now, there are a series of problems that require urban and rural areas to work together to make progress. The reality is that the nation’s economic, educational, health, and community systems break down in inner cities as well as in small towns and rural areas. The only way we can strengthen the economy, or improve education and healthcare, or enhance community well-being, is to set aside our divisions, work together, and invest wherever the need and opportunity is most pressing. Each part of the country has different skills and resources to bring to address these issues. To seize the opportunities and surmount the challenges of the 21 st century, we need unique cooperation among all regions in the country.
Satisfaction with Nation’s Efforts	To cooperate to address major issues shared by all parts of the nation

Response to Test Language

Survey respondents believe that the nation is doing a poor job in cooperating to address national problems. Only 27% report that the nation is doing an “excellent” or “good job” in “cooperating among different regions of the nation to address these kinds of major issues” like “the economy, education, and healthcare that affect both rural and urban areas,” while 68% believe the nation is doing an “only fair” or “poor job,” and 25% say “poor.” Furthermore, only 31% are satisfied and 64% are dissatisfied with the nation’s efforts “to cooperate to address major issues shared by all parts of the nation.”

At the same time, few are very concerned about the lack of regional cooperation. Only 44% are concerned “that infighting and selfishness between regions is keeping us from addressing major national issues,” and just 15% are “extremely concerned.”

A statement exemplifying the Cooperation Frame results in very high levels of agreement. Fully 84% agree, and 61% strongly agree with the statement, “In this country, we believe that any challenge can be overcome if we work together to solve it. Right now, there are a series of problems that require urban and rural areas to work together to make progress. The reality is that the nation’s economic, educational, health, and community systems break down in inner cities as well as in small towns and rural areas. The only way we can strengthen the economy, or improve education and healthcare, or enhance community well-being, is to set aside our divisions, work together, and invest wherever the need and opportunity is most pressing. Each part of the country has different skills and resources to bring to address these issues. To seize the opportunities and surmount the challenges of the 21st century, we need unique cooperation among all regions in the country.”

Effect of the Frame

There are very few statistically significant shifts in response to the Cooperation Frame, and the few that do occur are not necessarily helpful in advancing policy for rural areas. For example, in comparison with the Fairness Frame and the Interdependence Frame, the Cooperation Frame increases the priority of cities and urban areas, not rural areas (+6 points “extremely important”, +4 points respectively). It creates no statistically significant shifts in the perceived responsibility of the federal, state or local government in addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas and it results in no statistically significant increases in policy support.

The Cooperation Frame increases the percentage of respondents who strongly disagree with the statement, “people in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged” (+5 points “strongly disagree”).

The Cooperation Frame lifts support for six policies among younger women, and increases the percentage of younger women who strongly disagree with “discouraging

outside interference” (+10 strongly disagree). At the same time, it increases younger women’s ratings for the importance of meeting the needs of cities and urban areas (+11 “extremely important”).

Other than moving opinion among younger women (who shift after exposure to all of the tested values frames), the Cooperation Frame demonstrates little ability to move subgroups. In fact, it lifts the importance of meeting the priorities of cities and urban areas among many demographic groups, demonstrating that it may shift the focus away from rural areas.

The Interdependence Frame

Note: This section is based upon the response of those exposed to the Interdependence Frame which includes 700 interviews nationwide. Regionally, 220 interviews were conducted among people who live in urban areas, 350 suburban, and 130 rural.

The objective of the Interdependence Frame is to re-connect rural areas to the rest of the country, rather than allow people to think of rural areas as separate, distant. This frame states that the nation is one entity that is being affected by the decline of rural areas and the solution is to work together to reconnect rural areas, which will benefit the nation as a whole.

The Interdependence Frame is effective in increasing the priority of rural areas, the responsibility of federal and local government, and in building support for addressing rural problems together. It shows a minimal effect

Table: Test Language for Interdependence Frame	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Test Language</u>
Job Rating	Thinking about “the well-being of the nation as a whole in terms of its education, healthcare and economic systems,” rate the job we are doing in “making sure that all regions of the nation are functioning and contributing to the vitality of the nation”
Issue Concern	That unaddressed problems and untapped assets that exist in some parts of the country are holding back the nation’s progress
Agree/Disagree	In this country, we believe that what affects Americans in one part of the nation affects us all and that we will only succeed when all parts of the nation are in good shape. We have a unique opportunity to move ahead as a country through creating good jobs and economic opportunity, improving education, reforming healthcare, and strengthening communities. Indicators of well-being suggest that small towns and rural places are breaking down and the effect is spreading to the well-being of the nation as a whole. This is happening because the efforts that enhance a community’s well-being, like economic development, availability of health care programs, and opportunities for a good education, have disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas, which results in cutting rural places off from opportunities. We can prevent further damage by working together to reconnect the skills and resources that exist in the nation’s heartland, which will then reverberate throughout the nation.
Satisfaction with Nation’s Efforts	To make sure that all regions in the nation are in good shape and contributing to the nation’s progress

in lifting support for policies.

Two groups respond to both the Interdependence and Fairness Frames: younger women and those who live in rural areas. However, some groups only respond to the Interdependence Frame: Independents, white respondents and younger men.

Response to Test Language

Similar to the response to the Fairness and Cooperation frames, survey respondents give the nation poor ratings for the job it is doing in making sure all regions are in good shape. A majority (60%) states that the nation is doing an “only fair” or “poor job” in “making sure that all regions of the nation are functioning and contributing to the vitality of the nation” with 19% saying “poor.” Nearly four in ten (39%) give an “excellent” or “good” rating to the nation’s performance in this area. Furthermore, a majority (58%) is dissatisfied with the nation’s efforts “to make sure that all regions in the nation are in good shape and contributing to the nation’s progress,” while only 39% are satisfied.

At the same time, survey respondents’ level of concern in this area is low. Only 39% are concerned “that unaddressed problems and untapped assets that exist in some parts of the country are holding back the nation’s progress,” and just 14% are “extremely concerned.”

In response to a statement exemplifying the frame, nearly three-quarters (72%) agree, and 44% strongly agree that, “In this country, we believe that what affects Americans in one part of the nation affects us all and that we will only succeed when all parts of the nation are in good shape. We have a unique opportunity to move ahead as a country through creating good jobs and economic opportunity, improving education, reforming healthcare, and strengthening communities. Indicators of well-being suggest that small towns and rural places are breaking down and the effect is spreading to the well-being of the nation as a whole. This is happening because the efforts that enhance a community’s well-being, like economic development, availability of healthcare programs, and opportunities for a good education, have disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas, which results in cutting rural places off from opportunities. We can prevent further damage by working together to reconnect the skills and resources that exist in the nation’s heartland, which will then reverberate throughout the nation.”

Effect of the Frame

As noted earlier, the response to the test language is less important than the quantifiable impact of the test language in shifting survey respondents’ perceptions of rural areas and support for rural policies. The Interdependence Frame results in several beneficial shifts in attitudes. It increases the priority of meeting the needs of small towns and rural areas (+3 points “extremely important”), while not increasing the priority of urban or suburban areas. Again, this suggests that its effect is unique to rural areas and it does not have a residual effect on perceptions of urban or suburban areas.

The Interdependence Frame increases respondents' views of the responsibility of the federal and local government in addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas (+6 points "a lot of responsibility," +5 points, respectively). It creates directional, but not statistically significant, movement in the responsibility of state government (+4 points). This frame also creates beneficial shifts in response to two of the three attitudinal statements. Respondents are more likely to strongly agree with the statement, "the challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together" (+5 points). And, they are more likely to reject the statement, "people in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged" (+8 points "strongly disagree").

On policies, the Interdependence Frame lifts support for two policies in the first policy battery which is the battery designed to test the impact of the values frames: "provide incentives for small businesses to start up or expand in rural areas," and "develop the biofuels industry, which would provide a market for corn stalks and other agricultural byproducts." It has no residual effect in boosting support for policies in the second policy battery, which was designed to test the effect of the Simplifying Model, but sometimes will also show residual effects from the first experiment (as in the response to the Fairness Frame).

The Interdependence Frame is particularly effective among certain demographic groups. Some of these are the same groups that shift in response to the Fairness Frame, such as younger women and those who currently live in rural areas. Other groups shift perception when exposed to the Interdependence Frame, but not the Fairness Frame, including Independents, white respondents, and younger men. Specifically:

- Younger women demonstrate significant movement in a number of perceptions. They increase their ratings for the perceived importance of making the needs of rural areas a priority (+13 points in importance) and in state responsibility (+13 points "a lot of responsibility"). They are more likely to reject "discouraging outside interference" (+11 points "strongly disagree"). Support for 8 policies increases among younger women when they are exposed to this frame.
- Those who currently live in rural areas also shift perception when exposed to the Interdependence Frame. They are more likely to say that paying attention to the needs of rural areas is extremely important (+7 points) and to say that the federal government should have a lot of responsibility for rural areas (+10 points). The Interdependence Frame causes those in rural areas to be more likely to recognize the importance of addressing rural issues together (+11 points "strongly agree") and to reject "discouraging outside interference" (+9 points "strongly disagree").
- When exposed to the Interdependence Frame, Independents rate meeting the needs of all areas as more important: rural areas (+10 points in importance), suburbs (+11 points), and cities (+13 points). In addition, it increases Independents' recognition of the responsibility of the federal government (+10

points) and they become more likely to reject “discouraging outside interference” (+11 points “strongly disagree”).

- The views of white respondents shift when exposed to the Interdependence Frame. They increase their ratings for the importance of rural areas (+7 points in importance). Ratings for the responsibility of all levels of government also increase: federal (+7 points “a lot of responsibility”), state (+8 points) and local (+6 points). Finally, they become more likely to reject “discouraging outside interference” (+8 points).
- Younger men, who are generally less supportive of rural areas, shift opinion on two key measures – the importance of meeting the needs of rural areas (+8 points “extremely important”) and in federal responsibility (+15 points).

The Simplifying Model

Note: This section is based upon the response of those exposed to the Simplifying Model which includes 1552 interviews nationwide. Regionally, 488 interviews were conducted among people who live in urban areas, 774 suburban, and 290 rural.

The qualitative phase of FrameWorks research found that certain ways of understanding rural areas create barriers to policy support, such as the public’s belief that the decline of rural areas is inevitable and caused by progress, and that the concerns of rural areas are separate and distinct from the needs of urban and suburban areas. Qualitative research by Cultural Logic and Public Knowledge suggested that it would be important for communications to link the needs of urban, suburban and rural areas, and that people would need to hear causal stories explaining the decline of rural areas.

To address these recommendations, Cultural Logic developed a Simplifying Model to incorporate into the survey design. Importantly, the success of a Simplifying Model depends upon both the *concept* conveyed by the Simplifying Model, as well as the *language* used to describe the concept. If the language is faulty, the Simplifying Model will not test well, even if the concept is sound. Typically, two rounds of testing are used to develop the concept of the Simplifying Model and refine the language used to describe the Simplifying Model. In this instance, the research team had to rely upon just the preliminary qualitative work to develop the concept and language. The survey included the following language to test the Simplifying Model:

Experts say that vast areas of America are suffering from what they call the “Tourniquet Effect.” The loss of factory jobs, small farms and small businesses in rural areas has the effect of cutting off the normal circulation between those regions and the rest of the country. When the normal flow of money, people, and services that link urban and rural regions together is choked off, rural areas are left stranded and withering, and the Tourniquet Effect makes the country as a whole less healthy. When the tourniquet is loosened by the reestablishment of

economic and other ties, the critical flow of money, people and services is restored and the whole country benefits.

This represents a new concept for survey respondents – only 22% say they had heard anything about this before. This is a positive finding since one of the main advantages of Simplifying Models is that their unfamiliarity acts to prompt a re-examination of an issue.

The Simplifying Model was the second of two experiments in the survey, therefore some of the indicators used to test the values frames do not apply to the test of the Simplifying Model. The indicators of the effect of the Simplifying Model include agreement with three statements, and support for a series of policies.

The Simplifying Model generally shifts understanding of rural areas in a beneficial direction. The Simplifying Model, alone without being combined with a values prime, increases the percentage of respondents who agree with the statement, “The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together” (+5 points agree). It also increases the percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement, “people in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged” (+13 points “disagree”).

But the survey also suggests that the Simplifying Model has one undesirable effect. It softens disagreement with the statement, “progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas so there is little that can be done to help them now.” While there was no change in the overall percentage who disagree with the statement, the percent who strongly disagree drops (-8 points).

When the effect of the Simplifying Model is isolated, it is clear that the Simplifying Model shifts perception. The effect of the Simplifying Model is strongest among Republicans and college-educated respondents.

The Simplifying Model, alone, increases survey respondents’ sense of interdependence. It increases the percentage of survey respondents who agree with the statement, “The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation, so we must address their issues together” (+5 points “agree”). It is particularly effective in increasing agreement among younger men (+11 points), Republicans (+10 points), college educated respondents (+10 points), and among those who currently live in rural areas (+9 points).

The Simplifying Model, alone, also increases the percentage of survey respondents who reject the notion that outside interference in rural areas should be discouraged. Among nearly every demographic group, the Simplifying Model increases the percentage of survey respondents who disagree with the statement “People in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged” (+13 points “disagree”). The increase is particularly strong among college

graduates (+25 points), minorities (+ 17 points), those who have spent a limited amount of time in rural areas (+19 points), and Republicans (+16 points).

However, combining the values frames and the Simplifying Model results in more beneficial shifts than the Simplifying Model alone. This effect is particularly pronounced for the Fairness Frame.

As noted, the Simplifying Model in isolation results in two beneficial shifts in opinion and one negative shift in opinion. On the positive side, it increases survey respondents' agreement with an interdependence statement (+5 points agree), and causes more respondents to reject that "outside interference should be discouraged" (+13 points "disagree"). However, it inadvertently softens disagreement with the idea that progress is inevitable (-8 points "strongly disagree").

Comparing the effects of the Simplifying Model with the effects of the Fairness Frame demonstrates that there are more beneficial shifts in public perception when the Fairness Frame and Simplifying Model are combined than when either is presented in isolation. When survey respondents are exposed to just the Fairness Frame, there are no significant shifts on these questions. When survey respondents are exposed to both the Fairness Frame and the Simplifying Model, they are just as likely to reject the idea of discouraging outside interference as when exposed to the Model alone, and the inadvertent softening in disagreement with the inevitability of progress does not occur. Most important, the combination of the Fairness Frame and the Simplifying Model results in a statistically significant increase in support for three policies.

Indicator	Model Compared to Control	Fairness Compared to Control	Fairness and Model Compared to Control
Address together	+5 agree	No Change	No Change
Discourage Outside Interference	+13 disagree	No Change	+13 disagree
Progress is Inevitable	-8 strong disagree (negative result)	No Change	No Change
Policies	No Change	No Change	+3 policies, +2 compared to control/model

* Positive comparisons marked in gray.

Since the Interdependence Frame incorporates the concept of the Simplifying Model, there are fewer distinctions in public perception based on whether or not respondents were exposed to the Interdependence Frame alone or in combination with the Simplifying Model. Those exposed to the Interdependence Frame alone were more likely to increase in agreement with a statement about interdependence (+5 points "agree"), while those who also heard the Simplifying Model were no more likely to agree. However, in other ways the pattern of response was similar whether respondents heard the model or not. Those exposed to the Interdependence Frame were more likely than the control group to reject the idea of discouraging outside interference whether they were exposed to the Simplifying Model or not (+9 points "strongly disagree," +11 points respectively).

Furthermore, the inadvertent softening in disagreement with the inevitability of progress does not occur with the Interdependence Frame whether it was combined with the Simplifying Model or not.

Indicator	Model Compared to Control	Interdependence Compared to Control	Interdependence and Model Compared to Control
Address together	+5 agree	+5 agree	
Discourage Outside Interference	+13 disagree	+9 strongly disagree	+11 strongly disagree
Progress is Inevitable	-8 strong disagree	No Change	No Change
Policies	No Change	No Change	No Change

* Positive comparisons marked in gray.

As noted earlier in this report. The Cooperation Frame results in few beneficial shifts in opinion. It performs marginally better when combined with the Simplifying Model, but it continues to be a weak frame overall.

Conclusions

- The Fairness Frame was designed to provide a rationale for why rural areas are struggling. It has several beneficial effects; it:
 - Increases the priority of rural areas
 - Increases perceived responsibility of the federal and state government
 - Lifts support for some policies
 - Is particularly effective with younger women, those who live in rural areas, Democrats, minorities, Southerners and men
- The Interdependence Frame was designed to re-connect rural areas to the rest of the country. It also has several beneficial effects; it:
 - Increases the priority of rural areas
 - Increases perceived responsibility of federal and local government
 - Increases support for addressing rural problems together
 - Demonstrates some (limited) ability to lift support for policies
 - Is particularly effective with younger women, those who live in rural areas, Independents, white respondents and younger men.
- The Simplifying Model was designed to provide a simple image and practical explanation to complement the values frames described above. It links the needs of urban, suburban and rural areas, and it provides a causal story explaining the decline of rural areas.
 - In isolation, the Simplifying Model shifts perception, particularly among Republicans and college-educated respondents.

- The combination of a values frame with the Simplifying Model is more effective than either the values frames or the Simplifying Model in isolation. This is particularly true for the Fairness Frame.
- Each element appeals to different audiences but there is synergy between the elements, so the most effective strategy for communications would be to merge the Fairness Frame, the Interdependence Frame and the Simplifying Model into a cohesive story.

Priming Survey – July 2004
July 20-30, 2004
N=3105, In Percent

viii. Split 1

C1	Control1	n=1005
F	Fairness	n=700
R	Cooperation	n=700
I	Interdependence	n=700

ix. Split 2

C2	Control2	n=1553
M	Model	n=1552

Hello, I am calling for National Opinion Survey and the Kellogg Foundation. I would like to ask you a few questions facing our nation, state and local community. Your participation is completely voluntary. You can stop the interview at any point or you may refuse to answer any questions. I am not selling anything and I will not ask you for a donation.

The Kellogg Foundation is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to apply knowledge to solve the problems of people.

Your phone number was randomly selected and we do not know your name or address. While we will not ask you anything private or personal, we assure you that your responses will remain anonymous. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The interview will last approximately 12 minutes.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Dr. Frank Fear at Michigan State University at (517)432-0734. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Since this is a scientific study, we need a balance of men and women, may I speak to the youngest man 18 years or older who is at home right now.

(Repeat for new respondent if necessary)

By answering the questions you are consenting to be part of this study and have your answers included in the results. May I start the interview now?

RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER (DO NOT ASK).

Male	48
Female	52

1. Think for a moment about (PHRASE 1). How would you rate the job we are doing in (PHRASE 2). Are we doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job in (PHRASE 2)?

C1: Control1: skip question

- F: Fairness:** 1: The problems facing small towns and rural places in America
 2: Addressing the economic and social problems facing small towns and rural places in America
- R: Cooperation:** 1: National issues like the economy, education, and healthcare that affect both rural and urban areas
 2: Cooperating among different regions of the nation to address these kinds of major issues
- I: Interdependence:** 1: The well-being of the nation as a whole in terms of its education, health care and economic systems
 2: Making sure that all regions of the nation are functioning and contributing to the vitality of the nation

	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
Excellent	3	2	5
Good	21	25	34
Only fair	42	43	41
Poor	27	25	19
Don't know	7	5	3

2. How concerned are you (ISSUE) – extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

C1: Control1: skip question

- F: Fairness:** that small towns and rural places in America are being left behind because they are not getting the resources they need
- R: Cooperation:** that infighting and selfishness between regions is keeping us from addressing major national issues
- I: Interdependence:** that unaddressed problems and untapped assets that exist in some parts of the country are holding back the nation's progress

	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
Extremely concerned	14	15	14
Very concerned	32	29	25
Somewhat concerned	41	36	45
Not at all concerned	11	17	13
Don't know	2	3	4

3. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement.
 (FOLLOW UP) And do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that?

	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
Agree, strongly	51	61	44
Agree, not strong	26	23	28
Don't know	4	3	6
Disagree, not strong	9	7	13
Disagree, strongly	10	7	10

C1: Control1: skip question

F: Fairness: In this country, we believe that all Americans should have the same opportunities. But the reality is that people in small towns and rural places are not enjoying the same benefits as the rest of the nation. In fact, nearly all of the poorest counties in the nation are in rural America, and the divide between urban and rural prosperity is becoming greater. This happens because the efforts that enhance a community's wellbeing, like economic development, availability of health care programs, and opportunities for a good education, have disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas. People in rural areas have proven they have ingenuity and a desire to work hard; they just need the same resources to succeed. We need to level the playing field and make sure that those parts of the country that are at a disadvantage get their fair share of opportunities.

R: Cooperation: In this country, we believe that any challenge can be overcome if we work together to solve it. Right now, there are a series of problems that require urban and rural areas to work together to make progress. The reality is that the nation's economic, educational, health, and community systems break down in inner cities as well as in small town and rural areas. The only way we can strengthen the economy, or improve education and healthcare, or enhance community wellbeing, is to set aside our divisions, work together, and invest wherever the need and opportunity is most pressing. Each part of the country has different skills and resources to bring to address these issues. To seize the opportunities and surmount the challenges of the 21st century, we need unique cooperation among all regions in the country.

I: Interdependence: In this country, we believe that what affects Americans in one part of the nation affects us all and that we will only succeed when all parts of the nation are in good shape. We have a unique opportunity to move ahead as a country through creating good jobs and economic opportunity, improving education, reforming health care, and strengthening communities. Indicators of wellbeing suggest that small towns and rural places are breaking down and the effect is spreading to the wellbeing of the nation as a whole. This is happening because the efforts that enhance a community's wellbeing, like economic development, availability of health care programs, and opportunities for a good education, have

disproportionately benefited metropolitan areas, which results in cutting rural places off from opportunities. We can prevent further damage by working together to reconnect the skills and resources that exist in the nation's heartland, which will then reverberate throughout the nation.

Please rate each of the following for how important a priority you believe it should be, on a scale where zero means not a priority and 10 means an extremely important priority.
(MARK 11 FOR DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED)

RANDOMIZE

	Average on a 10-Point Scale			
	Control	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
4. Provide incentives for small businesses to start up or expand in rural areas	7.5	7.8	7.5	7.7
5. Expand high-speed Internet connections and cell phone coverage in rural areas	6.7	7.0	6.6	6.7
6. Offer college scholarships to those from any region who agree to teach in rural schools for at least five years	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.6
7. Increase the availability of health care in rural communities, particularly preventive health care services	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
8. Develop educational programs in rural areas that provide the high quality education that will be needed in the new economy	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
9. Institute regional smart-growth strategies that restrict major development to those areas with existing infrastructure, and protect rural areas from sprawl	6.5	6.7	6.6	6.6
10. Develop the biofuels industry which would provide a market for corn stalks and other agricultural by-products	6.9	7.3	7.1	7.2
11. Target and develop a small number of rural areas with the potential to become regional anchors for jobs and economic development	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.0

12. Would you say you are generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the nation's efforts to (ISSUE):

C1: Control: skip question

F: Fairness: 1: make sure that rural people enjoy the same benefits as people who live elsewhere

R: Cooperation: 1: Cooperate to address major issues shared by all parts of the nation

I: Interdependence: 1: Make sure that all regions in the nation are in good shape and contributing to the nation's progress

	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
Satisfied	36	31	39
Dissatisfied	58	64	58
Don't know	7	5	3

How important is it for the nation to make the needs of each of the following areas a priority – extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important? First, how important is it to prioritize the needs of (READ) – extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

RANDOMIZE

	% Extremely Important			
	Control	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
13. Cities and urban areas	17	14	20	16
14. Suburban areas	11	11	11	11
15. Small towns and rural areas	18	22	21	21

For each of the following, please tell me how much responsibility it should have for addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas in the nation – a lot of responsibility, some, a little, or not much? When it comes to addressing the concerns of small towns and rural areas, does the (READ) have a lot of responsibility, some, a little or not much?

RANDOMIZE

	% A Lot of Responsibility			
	Control	Fairness	Cooperation	Interdependence
16. Federal government	27	34	30	33
17. State government	51	59	54	55
18. Local governments in rural areas	65	69	65	70

NEW SPLIT**C2: Control2 (skip question)****M: Model**

19. Experts say that vast areas of America are suffering from what they Call the "Tourniquet Effect." The loss of factory jobs, small farms and small businesses in rural areas has the effect of cutting off the normal circulation between those regions and the rest of the country. When the normal flow of money, people, and services that link urban and rural regions together is choked off, rural areas are left stranded and withering, and the Tourniquet Effect makes the country as a whole less healthy. When the tourniquet is loosened by the reestablishment of economic and other ties, the critical flow of money, people and services is restored and the whole country benefits.

M Split Only		
Yes	22	
No	76	
Don't know	1	

Please rate each of the following for how important a priority you believe it should be, on a scale where zero means not a priority and 10 means an extremely important priority.
(MARK 11 FOR DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED)

RANDOMIZE

	Average 10-Point Scale	
	Control	Model
20. Expand high-speed Internet connections in rural schools	7.4	7.5
21. Invest in emerging industries in rural areas, such as agricultural biotechnology or wind power	7.7	7.8
22. Locate more government contracts and government jobs in rural areas	6.8	7.0
23. Offer medical school scholarships to those from any region who agree to practice in rural areas for at least five years	8.0	8.0
24. Coordinate all national efforts for rural policy through one federal agency	5.4	5.5
25. Address continuing environmental problems, including groundwater pollution from industrial farms and environmental degradation caused by mining and forestry	8.3	8.2
26. Provide assistance for family farmers to transition to organic farming which is more profitable for farmers	7.2	7.2

C2: Control2 (skip intro)

M: Model Still thinking about the Tourniquet Effect that is choking off the normal flow of money, people and services that link urban and rural regions....

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

(FOLLOW UP) And do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that?

RANDOMIZE ORDER

	Strongly Agree	Agree Not Strong	Disagree Not Strong	Strongly Disagree
27. The challenges and opportunities in small towns and rural areas will affect the nation so we must address their issues together				
Control 2	50	36	9	4
Model	49	38	8	4
28. People in small towns and rural areas are capable of handling their own problems so outside interference should be discouraged				
Control 2	18	22	31	26
Model	15	18	35	29
29. Progress will inevitably destroy small towns and rural areas so there is little that can be done to help them now.				
Control 2	9	10	31	49
Model	10	9	33	45

And now, just a few more quick questions for statistical purposes. This information will only be used for analysis of this study, and will be kept completely confidential.

N=3105

30. Do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican or Independent? (**IF INDEPENDENT, DON'T KNOW**) Would you say you are closer to the Democrats or Republicans?

Democrat.....	32
Lean Democrat	9
Independent, no lean.....	15
Lean Republican.....	9
Republican	29
Don't know / Refused.....	7

31. Are you currently registered to vote or not?

Yes.....	89
No.....	10
Don't know	1

32. If the election for president were held today, would you vote for (ROTATE ORDER) George Bush, the Republican candidate OR John Kerry, the Democratic candidate? (IF UNDECIDED) Well which candidate are you leaning toward?

George Bush/Republican.....	39
Lean Bush	2
Lean Kerry	2
John Kerry/Democrat	41
Ralph Nader (vol.).....	1
Can't vote	1
Won't vote	2
Don't know	12

33. In what year were you born?

18-29 years old	13
30-39 years old	14
40-49 years old	20
50-64 years old	31
65+ years	19
Refused	3

34. What is your employment status?

Employed full time.....	45
Employed part time.....	7
Self employed	8
Not employed but looking	4
Homemaker.....	5
Student.....	3
Retired	24
Other, not working	2
Refused.....	1

35. Are you married, living with a partner, single, separated, widowed, or divorced?

Married	58
Living with a partner	5
Single, never married	17
Separated/divorced	10
Widowed	8
Refused	2

36. (IF MARRIED) Does your spouse work, part-time or more, outside the home or would you say that your spouse's work is mainly at home?

Employed	66
At home	33
Refused	1

37. Do you have any children?

Yes	74
No	25
Refused	1

38. (IF YES) In which of the following age groups do they belong? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Under 2 years old	6
2-5 years old	13
6-11 years old	17
12-18 years old	21
Over 18 years old	68
Refused	-

39. What is the last year of schooling that you have completed?

1 - 11th grade	4
High school graduate	23
Non-college post H.S. (e.g. tech)	2
Some college (jr. college)	24
College graduate	26
Post-graduate school/PHD	18
Don't know	2

40. What is your race?

White	80
Black	7
Hispanic (Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, etc.)	6
Asian/pacific islander	1
Other	2
Mixed race	1
Don't know/refused	4

41. And are you of Spanish or Hispanic descent?

Included above

42. On average, about how many hours of television would you say you watch each day?

2.8 hours

43. And finally, which of the following best describes your personal experience with small towns and rural areas:

I currently live in a rural area	38
I used to live in a rural area	26
While I haven't lived there, I have spent a lot of time visiting rural areas	13
I have spent a limited amount of time in rural areas.....	17
I have never really been in rural areas	5
Don't know (vol.)	2

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME [TERMINATE]

Demographic Comparisons	% Survey	% US Population
Census Region		
Northeast	19	19
Midwest	23	23
South	36	36
West	23	23
Geography		
Urban	31	31
Suburban	50	50
Rural	19	19
Gender		
Female	52	51.6
Male	48	48.4
Age		
18-29 years old	13	19
30-39 years old	14	20
40-49 years old	20	21
50-64 years old	31	22
65+ years	19	17
Refused	3	-
In labor force (Survey is based on 18+ population; Census figures are 16+ population)	60	63.9
Married (Survey is based on 18+ population; Census figures are 15+ population)	58	51.6
Children under 18 years old (Survey is based on having children; Census figures are based on households with children.)	30	35.5
Education (Survey is based on 18+ population; Census figures are based on age 18+ but the category definitions are not completely equivalent.)		
Non high school graduate	4	15.8
High school graduate	23	
High school graduate or higher	94	84.2
Non-college post H.S. (e.g. tech)	2	
Some college (jr. college)	24	
College graduate (Includes 2-year degree)	26	
Post-graduate school/PHD	18	
Bachelor's degree or higher	-	25.2
Don't know	2	-
Race/Ethnicity (Survey places people into one category; Census tracks race and ethnicity as overlapping categories and allows for multiple race categories.)		
White	80	77.1
Black	7	12.9
Hispanic (Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, etc.)	6	12.5
Asian/pacific islander	1	4.2