



California Affordable Housing Narrative Research

September 1, 2020

(Re)Defining the Target via Audience Segmentation

What are we hoping to accomplish?

- + Establish a novel way to **understand the values-based mindsets** that exist among CA voters toward the issue of housing affordability that gets beyond the activation/persuasion/neutralization tripartite
- + Define a diverse audience **beyond demographics**
- + Develop profiles (segments) of the audience with shared characteristics to help advocates know which types of mindsets they are — or could be — targeting
- + Offer the field of housing advocates a shared foundational, long-term narrative framework with accompanying **messages that resonate with each segment**

Example Mindset Value Statements

Having a home is something that needs to be earned. It's not something that you should expect to be provided for you.

Government intervention in the housing market makes housing more expensive for everybody.

When communities are successful, people will inevitably want to live there and housing costs will rise.

Most people who can't afford housing are struggling because they made poor choices.

Government intervention in the housing market is essential to ensuring people have safe, affordable places to live.

I prefer to live in a community of people that are similar to me.

Individuals born with more opportunities in life have a responsibility to ensure everyone has a roof over their head.

It's a shame that neighborhoods evolve over time with new and different kinds of residents.

In times of need, one should never rely on the generosity of others

Meet the Mindsets



Rugged Individualists

Segment = 28%

"Housing security - and other financial achievements - need to be earned. It's every person for themselves."

-Housing is a privilege, not a right

-Not everyone can afford a place to live, and that's not my fault or problem



American Dreamers

Segment = 17%

"The American Dream is attainable if you buckle down, work hard, and take care of your community."

-Values insular community, although ultimately looks out for themselves

-Expensive housing is a sign of success that we should all strive for



Pro-government Pragmatists

Segment = 14%

"People need to work hard to achieve housing security, but the government should help create a system that provides opportunity for everyone."

- Everyone deserves somewhere to live

-However, owning a home is something you must work for



Dream Disruptors

Segment = 13%

"We shouldn't rely on legacy ideas and systems to solve modern day problems."

-Neighborhoods need to adapt to changing realities

-The market is to blame for the housing crisis



Equity Enthusiast

Segment = 28%

Everyone should be able to achieve their version of the American Dream; A rising tide lifts all boats!

-Housing is a basic human right

-Individuals born with more opportunities are responsible to ensure everyone has a roof over their head



Rugged Individualists

Defining beliefs & values

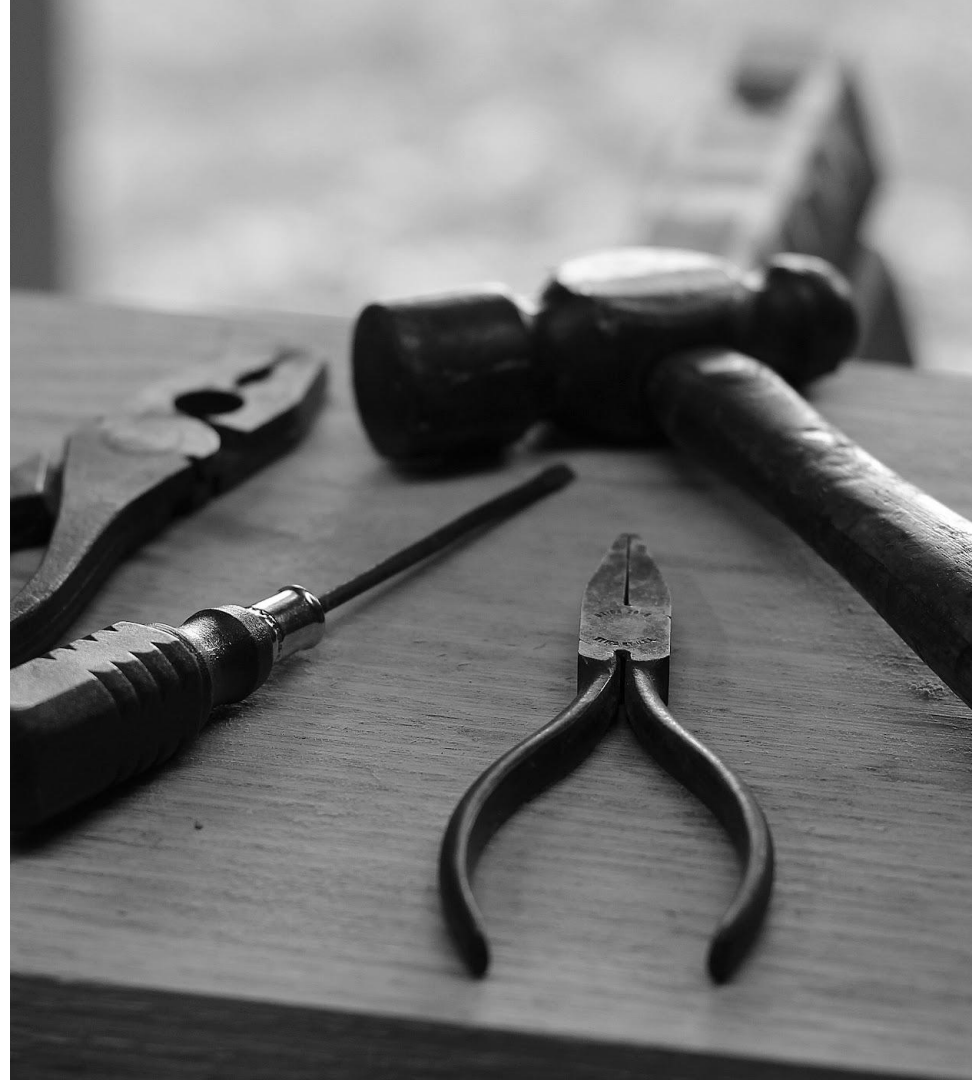
- Housing is a privilege
- Too expensive? Pay more or move to an affordable area
- Opposes government intervention
- Home ownership is an avenue for wealth generation
- Does not value diversity
- Prefers living in close-knit community with similar people
- Does not feel responsible to think of affordable housing for others
- Homelessness is a result of bad personal choices
- Individualism over collectivism



American Dreamers

Defining beliefs & values

- Housing should be earned
- High housing costs is a sign of success
- Values and trusts insular community
- Ultimately looks out for themselves
- Feels less safe in communities with lots of different types of people
- Prefers to live among people with similar race/ethnicity and SES
- It's a shame when neighborhoods evolve over time
- Does not really understand the government's role in creating affordable housing
- Open to government intervention if it helps them





Pro-Govt Pragmatists

Defining beliefs & values

- Housing is both a right and a privilege
- Everyone should have a decent place to live, but not everyone can right now
- Government should intervene to provide affordable and safe housing for everyone
- Owning a home is an opportunity for wealth generation
- Values close-knit community and diversity
- Would be proud to live in a community with affordable housing
- Would choose a neighborhood further from jobs, as long as housing prices are within budget
- Prioritizes collectivism over individualism



Dream Disruptors

Defining beliefs & values

- Supportive of housing reforms, but skeptical of current system
- Unconcerned about home ownership or property values
- Envisions a future where everyone has a home, but no one has more than they need
- Community's success has nothing to do with high housing costs
- Americans should be able to achieve financial security without owning a home
- Does not express strong community ties
- Most open to change in neighborhoods
- Healthy neighborhoods need to adapt to changing realities





Equity Enthusiasts

Defining beliefs & values

- Housing is a basic human right
- Highly supportive of housing reforms
- Sees value in home ownership, and wants that opportunity for everyone
- Collectivist to their core
- Individuals born with more opportunities have a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to housing
- Providing decent housing is the key to addressing homelessness
- Thinks of others before themselves
- Most willing to make personal sacrifices and use their own resources to help strangers

Personal Concerns Ranked Across Segments



Rugged
Individualists

- 1 Homelessness *
- 2 **Housing affordability**
- 3 Non-violent crime
- 4 Drugs *
- 5 Violent crime
- 6 Healthcare
- 7 Poverty *
- 8 Unemployment
- 9 Undocumented immigrants
- 10 Traffic *
- 11 Transportation
- 12 Public education *
- 13 Pollution
- 14 Access to healthy food
- 15 Climate change
- 16 Racial tension *
- 17 Access to recreational areas



American
Dreamers

- Housing affordability**
- Homelessness
 - Drugs *
 - Violent crime
 - Healthcare
 - Poverty
 - Unemployment
 - Non-violent crime
 - Traffic
 - Public education *
 - Transportation
 - Pollution
 - Access to healthy food
 - Climate change
 - Undocumented immigrants *
 - Access to recreational areas
 - Racial tension



Pro-government
Pragmatists

- Homelessness
- Housing affordability ***
- Poverty
- Healthcare
- Violent crime *
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- Climate change *
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Dream
Disruptors

- Housing affordability ***
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Equity
Enthusiast

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 - Public education *
 - Access to recreational areas *
 - Undocumented immigrants

* Statistically more important than item below

Unpacking Mindsets



Rugged Individualists

Collective ● ● ● ● ●

Diversity ● ● ● ● ●

Basic Right ● ● ● ● ●

Open to Change ● ● ● ● ●

Housing Reform ● ● ● ● ●



American Dreamers

Collective ● ● ● ● ●

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Housing Reform ● ● ● ● ●

VALIDATION

Focus Group Dominant Themes

- + Most Californians — except Rugged Individualists — don't believe that the *standard* American Dream is achievable.
 - + However, this presents an opportunity! The strong desire to stay in CA no matter what forces most to create their own version of the **Californian Dream** to take advantage of CA's abundant creative energy and inspiration.
- + The notion of **each member of a community as a puzzle piece** resonated with Equity Enthusiasts. Others segments feel that communities can still thrive even if missing a few pieces of the puzzle.
 - + This may be because many of their communities are currently functioning (well in their opinions) and don't have some of these elements (e.g., affordable homes, dependable public transit).

DOUBLE CLICK

What is a narrative frame?

- + At its core, a narrative frame is a storytelling technique. An effective narrative frame casts an issue in a compelling and approachable storyline that alters how an audience perceives an issue.

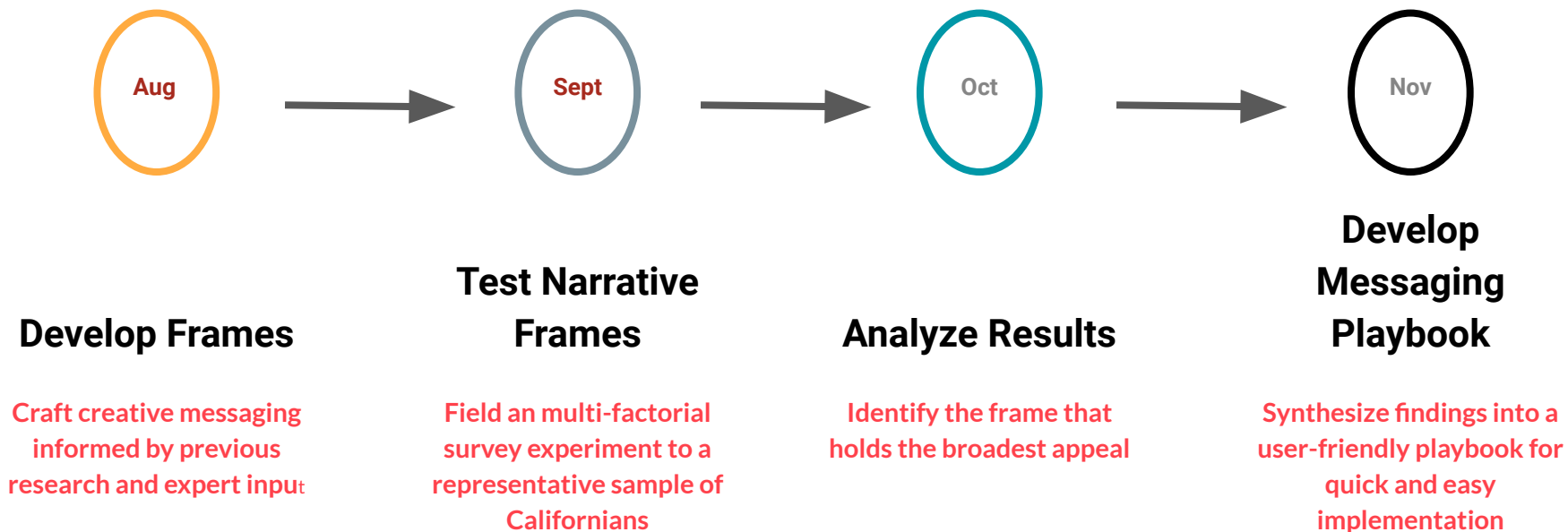
Can you give me an example?

- + To convince an audience to care about criminal justice reform, one could talk about the need for reform using a **Law and Order** or **Second Chances** frame.
 - + A Law and Order frame conjures images and emotions of force, harshness, and a lack of forgiveness
 - + While a Second Chances frame casts the role of the system to improve people passing through it, not to inflict further harm.

Name	Summary
Racial Inequity	More than any other place in the nation, California has the best opportunity to create a racially just housing system and correct historic wrongs.
Neighborhood Stability	Making sure every Californian has access to a safe and stable home isn't just a nice-to-have, it's key to our collective resilience.
American Dream = Access to Success	Focus on empowerment and the opportunity to provide people with access to success
California Dream = Build What Matters To You	We care less about everyone owning a traditional home and we care more about making sure everyone can afford to live in communities rich with diversity.
American Dream = Safe, Stable Home	Every Californian deserves a chance at achieving the American Dream, and that starts with having access to a safe and stable home
Better Together	Connect individual with collective benefits. The sum is greater than its parts.

LOOKING AHEAD

Housing Voter Narrative Study





Thank you!

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Looking Ahead...

Housing Voter Narrative Study

Why this matters?

- + Housing advocates across California have voiced the need for a **statewide narrative framework that's both broad and deep**
- + Resources dedicated to communications and narrative work at the state level tend to be short-term, campaign-based, and reactive
- + The lack of a shared foundational vision and narrative end goal can lead to diffused and sometimes counterproductive messaging
- + Need a **data-driven approach to resetting on a foundational narrative framework** that can be used statewide