

# The State of American Culture: 2023–2024

## Research Evidence and Methods

This research report is a companion to *The State of American Culture: 2023–2024*, which reviews key findings emerging from the FrameWorks Institute's Culture Change Project. This report includes all the text of that update while adding additional evidence to substantiate the findings reported there, as well as including an appendix on research methods. For each of the findings, we have added an evidence section to clearly indicate the additional information. These sections include graphs from our culture tracking survey as well as additional evidence from qualitative research.



FRAMEWORKS  
**Culture Change**  
Project



# Overview

For the past four years, the FrameWorks Institute has been tracking how American thinking is changing in light of the social, economic, and political turmoil of 2020 and beyond. This year, the United States has seen a [rising cost of living](#), denial or restriction of reproductive health care in [22 states](#), and a fraught political landscape, all of which shape our cultural consciousness.

In the first few years of the Culture Change Project, we observed that the long-standing cultural mindset of individualism, while still dominant in the American consciousness, was becoming slightly more balanced with systemic understandings of the world when it came to thinking about some issues. People had started to more readily see how the environments and systems around us shape our lived experiences, especially when it comes to how we understand financial success. These gains in structural thinking were not even across every issue, however, and over the last year we have seen that individualism is gaining traction among younger people across a range of issues. Individualistic thinking about topics like racism and health have returned to pre-pandemic highs.

At the same time, we're also seeing a strong desire for fundamental, transformative change in the United States. Notably, Americans *across the political spectrum* are dissatisfied with the status quo, worried about [rigged systems](#), and looking for ways to overcome divisions. This acknowledgment that something isn't working, coupled with a strong desire for transformation, presents an important opportunity for communicators working to build systems and policy that advance a more just world.

The Culture Change Project is ongoing, and we still have much to learn about how these mindsets work together and signal openings for meaningful cultural change. But the shifts and patterns we've seen over the past year offer important clues as to what is going on in American culture—and how we might tap into it through effective framing and strategy.

In this report, you will find an overview of seven key findings about the state of American culture in 2024, as well as a preview of the important questions we'll be investigating over the course of our next year of research.

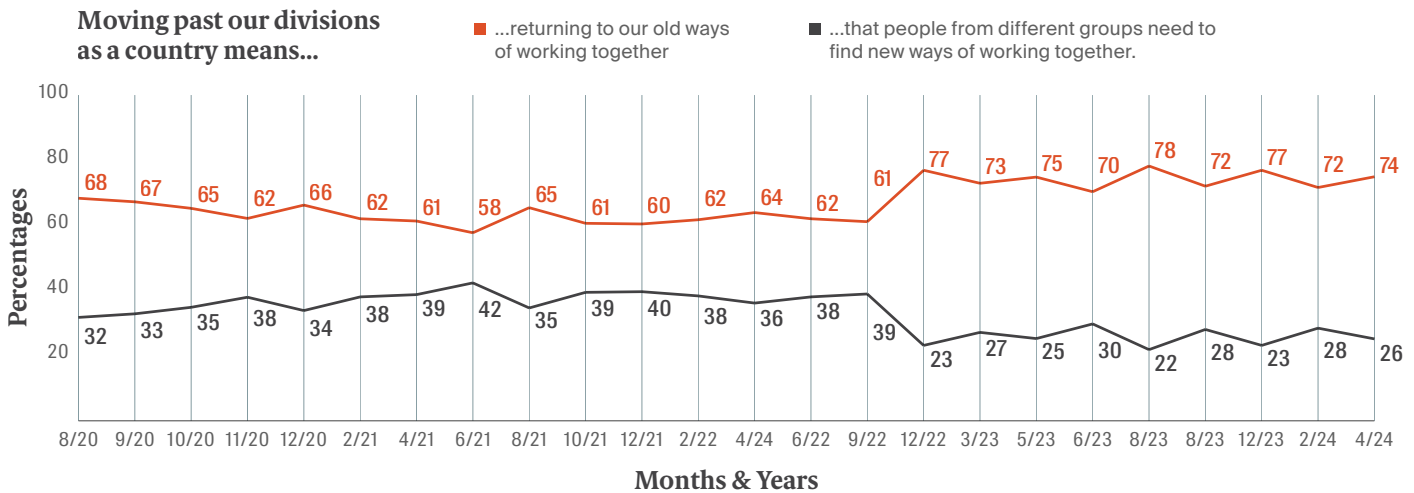
## FINDING #1

# Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the state of our country and think things should change—but aren't sure what that change should look like.

We increasingly find that members of the US public are seeking fundamental changes to our society. In surveys, focus groups, and interviews, we see people deeply unhappy with the status quo—often because they see our society as rigged by the powerful few against the many. Yet they struggle to envision a different future.

In surveys and focus groups, we find that Americans are growing more receptive to the idea that our country needs radical change. In a May 2024 survey, 67 percent of participants agreed that “We need to remake our society in major ways,” and 56 percent agreed that “Our society needs to be radically restructured.”

People increasingly are looking for something new and different—not the restoration of a supposedly better past. More people than ever believe that moving past our divisions as a country means finding new ways of working together:



One surprising place we see the depth of dissatisfaction with our current systems is in thinking about the Constitution. Unlike in recent decades, when veneration of the Constitution was largely unquestioned, we see the Constitution being called into question as an outdated product of its time. Our [research into mindsets around democracy](#) suggests that Americans' faith in the Constitution is cracking:

“I understand where people come from that are like, ‘[the Constitution] is a sacred document and no one should question it,’ but it was written so long ago in a different time, with different situations, different technology, different world, different problems. [...] There could be situations where things could be rewritten or added, deleted, etc. from the original document, I feel, because of how times are so much different now.”

### Research Participant

Despite this increasingly strong yearning for fundamental and even radical change, people struggle to envision a better future. Even when asked to imagine what a better future might look like, solutions are hard to come by, hoping that perhaps [technology or charismatic leaders](#) could help us overcome our divisions as a society and make life better.

This difficulty imagining a positive future is rooted in two deeply held mindsets—*system is rigged* thinking and *personalistic* thinking about government. The idea that *systems are rigged* by the powerful few makes it hard to envision how change is possible—any fundamental changes seem out of reach, as they’ll be prevented by those with power.

And the tendency to equate government entirely with individual leaders in charge—or *personalistic* thinking—makes it hard to envision what change would look like that isn’t just swapping out the leaders in power. This way of thinking can, in fact, fuel authoritarianism, as it leads people to think we need leaders who are *fundamentally* different and not tied to standard political norms. If the only way to envision fundamental change is bringing in a leader who is *really* different—a savior who can come in and fix our problems for us—this opens the door for a charismatic authoritarian leader.

## IMPLICATIONS:

Americans are surprisingly open to transformative change, but generally can’t envision what this change could look like, or how we’d get there. The disconnect between knowing the scope of our problems and not knowing what can fix them creates a dangerous willingness to hand power over to an outside actor who can come in and change everything.

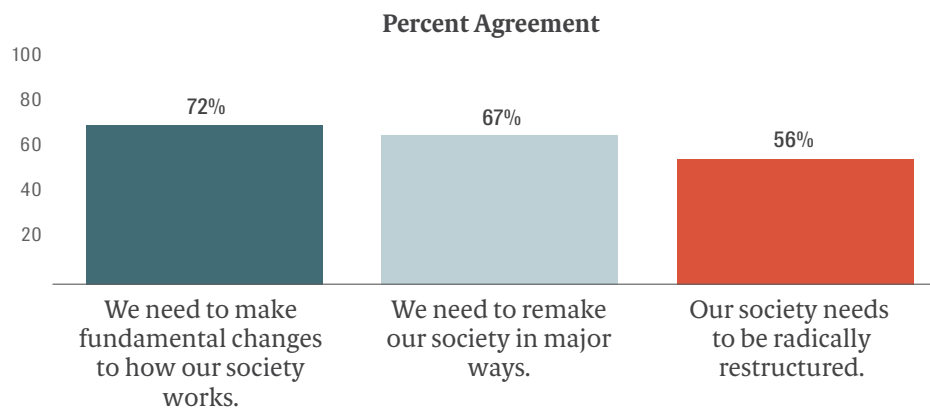
Progressives need ways of responding to this opening and talking about major change in ways that address dissatisfaction with the status quo and enable people to think about a better future and how we’d get there. This year, we’ll be conducting research into the best ways to respond to this dissatisfaction and address the desire for fundamental change given the dangers of fatalism and authoritarianism.

## Evidence:

In focus groups across the last several years, we have seen an increase in talk indicating a desire for major changes to US society. Participants across demographic and ideological groups take for granted that our existing systems and practices as a society are not working well and express a desire for things to be fundamentally different. They often struggle to imagine what that future would look like or how we could get there—a challenge illustrated by the focus group conversations about the future discussed above and described more fully in our [recent blog](#).

To further explore this desire for fundamental changes to society, we have developed a set of survey items that allow us to quantitatively measure this attitude. As we note above, in a May 2024 survey, a substantial majority of participants indicated a desire for major, fundamental changes to society (see figure below).

These results correspond with other survey research. For example, a [Pew survey in 2021](#) found that 85 percent of Americans say the political system needs “major changes” or should be “completely reformed.” In the same survey, 66 percent of participants said the same about the economic system, and 76 percent about the health care system.



## FINDING #2

# The idea that our “system is rigged” can be leveraged to build support for change.

As we have discussed in [previous Culture Change Project reports](#), the “system is rigged” mindset has become increasingly dominant over the past several years. The assumption that the powerful few are rigging “the system” to benefit themselves at the expense of the rest of us is widespread across groups and is drawn on to make sense of almost every aspect of American society. In our February 2024 Culture Change Tracking Survey, nearly 70 percent of Americans agreed that “the system is rigged.” This mindset is contested cultural terrain—it can lead to demands for changing systems to be more just, it can prompt xenophobic and racist scapegoating (elites are rigging the system for “them” and against “you”), or it can lead to fatalism.

Given the dominance of this mindset in our cultural discourse and its malleability, over the past year, we embarked on research to figure out how progressive communicators can *most effectively* talk about rigged systems. How can we talk about rigged systems in ways that leverage this mindset’s centering of power to build support for progressive change, while inoculating against reactionary thinking and fatalism?

Our research indicates that there are ways of talking about rigged systems that meet these goals:

1. When we pair system is rigged framing with the right values, we flip fatalism on its head. In our research, we found that beginning a message about rigged systems with the right values enables people to envision change. Specifically, we identified three values—Solidarity, Popular Self-Government, and Freedom from Domination—that help people think about the possibility of unrigging systems and making society fairer.
2. Explanation can illuminate the black box of the rigged system and prevent reactionary thinking. People generally don’t understand how systems are rigged. This opens the door for scapegoating and authoritarianism, which often go hand in hand. When people don’t realize the true sources of social problems, it creates space to point the finger at marginalized groups and to think that the only way to change things is by giving power to charismatic leaders. We’ve found that simple explanations of how systems are rigged and how they can be unrigged decrease xenophobia and authoritarian attitudes. By filling in the blanks of the mindset with progressive explanations, we can steer it away from reaction and exclusion.
3. Matching the scale of problem and solution is critical. One of the major challenges of using “system is rigged” framing to build support for change is that we need to put forward solutions that are at the same scale as the problems we’re trying to fix—and when we talk about “the system” generally, many of the solutions we want to build support for can come across as too small to fix it. Our research shows that this can cue fatalism and make it harder

to advocate for our solutions. Communicators can address this by getting specific or going big. They can spotlight a specific aspect of the system, explain how it works, and offer a tangible solution that would fix it. Or they can go big and offer a vision of transformative change at scale that would genuinely unrig whole systems (though there are limitations to this approach, as people struggle to see how these changes would happen).

This fall, we'll be releasing our full research findings on how to use *system is rigged* framing, including additional insights around framing solutions, how to use tested values to build efficacy around progressive change, and how to leverage *system is rigged* thinking to counter white supremacy.

## IMPLICATIONS:

The *system is rigged* mindset is a mixed bag. While it can be and is often used to critique corporate power and mobilize support for structural progressive change, it can be—and often is—used to promote a right populist agenda. And by making our problems seem too big to fix—if *the whole system is rigged, how do we possibly change it?*—it can lead people to disengage.

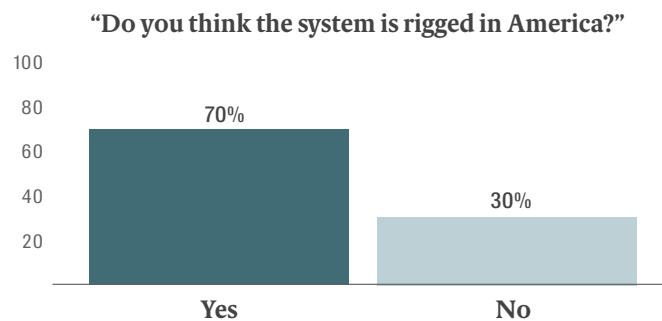
Yet we can't just avoid this mindset. It is *incredibly* pervasive in thinking across issues and across groups. If we cede this contested cultural terrain to the right, this will undermine progressive causes across issues for years to come. Figuring out how to win the contest over what our "rigged systems" involve is essential, and that requires talking about rigged systems in the right ways.

## Evidence:

As noted above, we will provide a fuller discussion of findings from our recent *system is rigged* research in an upcoming report, which will include qualitative and quantitative evidence for the findings.

We have discussed the *system is rigged* mindset in several existing reports and briefs, including our [report on cultural mindsets of democracy and the political system](#); last year's [Culture Change Project research report](#); and this [brief on emerging trends](#) from 2022.

The graph below illustrates the breakdown of participant responses to the question "Do you think the system is rigged in America?" (Survey fielded in February 2024.)



Results vary slightly across groups, but a large majority of every demographic and ideological group surveyed answers yes to this question. For example, 74 percent of women answered yes, but so did 65 percent of men. Similarly, 75 percent of Black participants answered yes, but so did 68 percent of white participants. Republicans agreed slightly more than Democrats (73 percent compared to 65 percent), but large majorities of both groups said yes. Younger participants most consistently agreed that the system is rigged—81 percent of participants aged 18–29 said yes—and agreement decreased with age. But even among participants aged 60 and above, 58 percent said yes. Similarly, less educated participants agreed more strongly, with 83 percent of participants with less than a high school degree in agreement, but we even saw a majority of people with a graduate degree—54 percent—agree.

These results indicate, not surprisingly, that more privileged groups are somewhat less likely to agree that the system is rigged, yet it is striking that even among the most privileged groups, majorities agree that the system is rigged. These results confirm patterns identified through qualitative research—that participants across groups consistently draw on this mindset in making sense of American society and current events.

### FINDING 3

## Individualistic thinking about racism and health has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

In the first few years of the Culture Change Project, we saw a promising sign: a rise in structural thinking about social issues. The idea that social systems and structures shape people's outcomes in life has long existed in the background, as an alternative to the dominant individualistic idea that it's our individual choices and willpower that determine how we do. Yet for a couple of years, this structural mindset moved closer to the foreground of people's thinking, and individualism slightly weakened its grip on American culture.

Unfortunately, this trend has not only stalled but reversed. In our survey, the gains in structural thinking we initially saw (reaching their peak in 2021) have now been lost. Individualistic thinking about certain issues is now endorsed at *higher* rates than we saw in August 2020 when we began tracking it.

The return of individualism and decline of structural thinking has been particularly notable in people's thinking about two issues: racism and health.

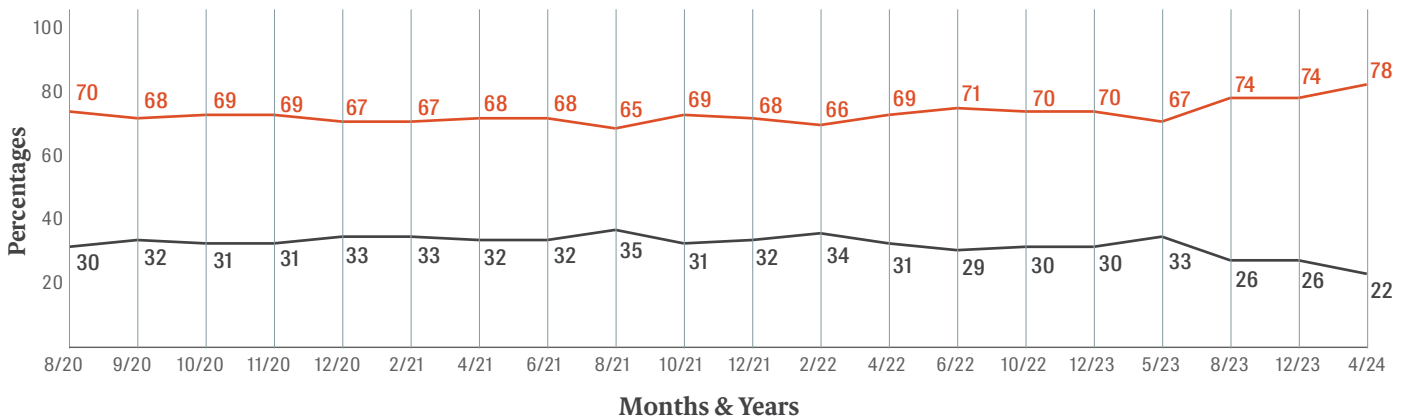
### The decline of structural thinking about racism

Structural understandings of racism are less strongly endorsed than when we started measuring them in August 2020. When asked which they agree with more, only 22 percent of participants in our nationally representative survey now choose an understanding of racial discrimination as the result of how our laws, policies, and institutions work, over an understanding of it as the result of individuals' bias and prejudice. This is 13 percentage points lower than in August 2021, when 35 percent of survey participants endorsed the structural view.



**Participants in our nationally representative survey believe that racial discrimination is the result of...**

■ ... individuals' bias and prejudice    ■ ... how our laws, policies, and institutions work



The decrease in structural understandings of racism this year is even more pronounced among specific groups: **Latino participants'** endorsement of the structural view of racism is down nearly 20 percentage points since last spring; and **younger people** (aged 18–29), who had been much more likely to choose the structural view of racism than older groups, are now endorsing the interpersonal view at the same rates as older people.

The turn toward individualism among younger people is not limited to thinking about racism, as we discuss below. While shifts in thinking among Latino participants are tricky to interpret, since this group is diverse and includes people with different identities and social situations, this finding is important, as it makes clear that the decline in structural thinking about racism is not simply among white, non-Hispanic Americans.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

The racial justice uprisings of 2020 and the enduring effects of the Black Lives Matter movement made structural understandings of racism more available to a wider group of people, but as memory of the uprisings fades, it seems that these views are typically not the default for most people when they think about racism. Advocates and communicators can pull those structural understandings back into the foreground with the right framing.

One strategy our research has consistently shown to be helpful in strengthening structural understandings of racism is to illustrate the link between harmful policies—both past and present—and negative modern-day outcomes. Providing specific examples helps move structural racism from the realm of the abstract and elusive to a concrete reality that can be addressed. For example, explaining how “urban renewal” policies passed in the 1960s have led to concentrated poverty in communities of color today can help people see how structural racism shapes the world around us:

“Urban renewal” involved highway construction projects that bulldozed hundreds of homes, sometimes clearing out more than 50 percent of local businesses and leaving behind dozens of vacant storefronts. Neighborhoods chosen for such projects were often well-established Black communities. Residents were left with half as many job opportunities. Without the means to work and thrive, community wellbeing declined.

For more resources on how to strengthen structural thinking about racism, check out:

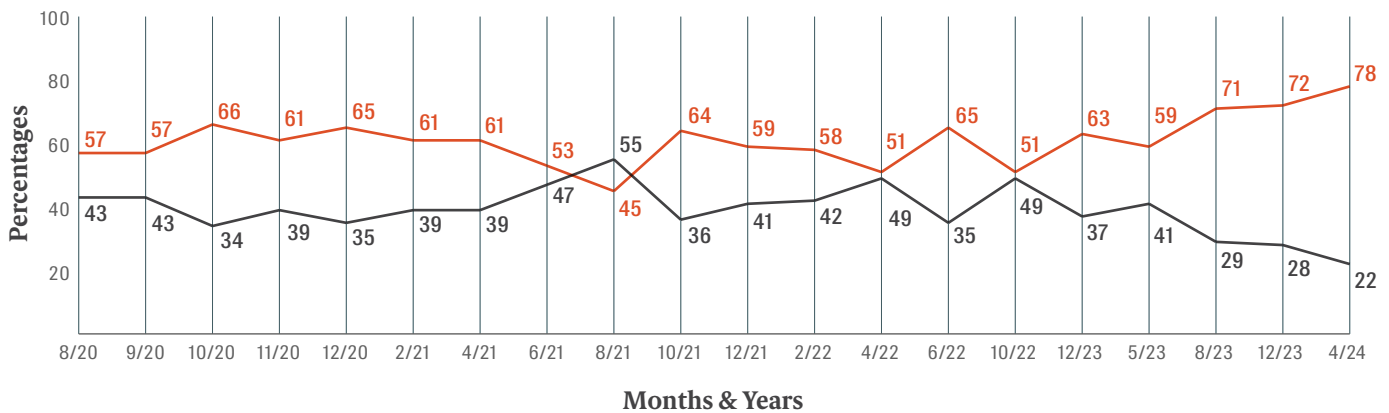
- [Where We Thrive: Communicating about Resident-Centered Neighborhood Revitalization](#), A Communications Toolkit produced in partnership with Purpose Built Communities
- [Navigating Cultural Mindsets of Race and Place in the United States](#)
- [Talking About Racism in Child and Family Advocacy](#)
- [Framing Community Safety: Guidance for Effective Communication](#)

### Evidence:

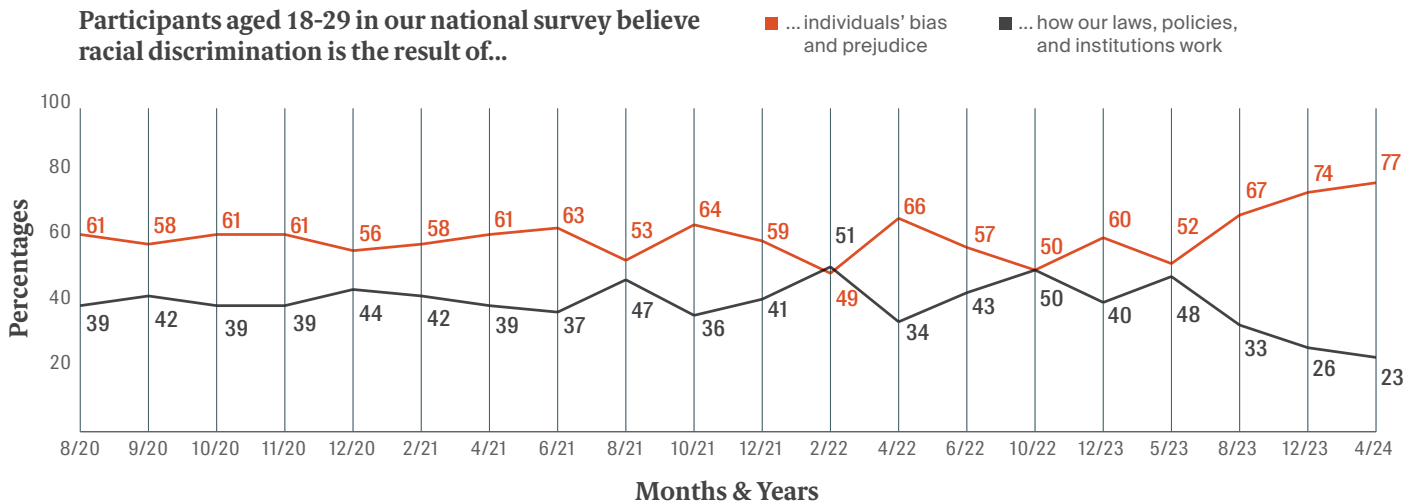
The figures below show group-specific results for the survey question discussed above, which asks people to choose between a structural understanding of racism and an interpersonal understanding.

As the below graph illustrates, between May 2023 and April 2024 we have seen a notable decline in structural thinking about racism among Latino participants in our survey. While there is a degree of noise in these results, due a smaller sample of Latino participants (compared to the overall sample), the trend is nonetheless striking. The proportion of Latino participants who endorsed the structural view in each of the last three surveys is lower than for any other survey since we began fielding surveys in August 2020.

**Latino participants in our national survey believe racial discrimination is the result of...** ■ ... individuals' bias and prejudice ■ ... how our laws, policies, and institutions work



The below graph illustrates the very similar trend among participants aged 18–29. Again, we see a degree of noise, but also a very clear trend—a decline in structural thinking about racism from May 2023 to April 2024.



### The increasing strength of health individualism

Individualistic understandings of health outcomes are more dominant than they have been in the history of the Culture Change Project. *Health individualism*—the belief that individuals' lifestyle choices determine how healthy they are—has been overwhelmingly dominant throughout our research. [In 2023](#) we reported that systemic thinking about health—the idea that social contexts and systems shape our health—peaked in the winter of 2021–22, though even then the vast majority of people chose an individualistic view. Since then, systemic thinking has continued to weaken. As of April 2024, only 17 percent of respondents endorsed a systemic view of health over a more individualistic one.

This rise in health individualism over the last year seems particularly driven by **younger age groups** (ages 18–29 and 30–44), who—unlike what we have seen in previous years—are now endorsing an individualistic understanding of health outcomes at the same rate as older people.

## IMPLICATIONS:

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If we want to build support for the programs and policies needed for health equity, we must work to combat the idea that our health is simply a product of personal choices and behaviors. Our research on framing health has shown that it's crucial for communicators to foreground the effects of social conditions and policy contexts when talking about health to show that health is a public issue that requires us to engage collectively as a society. That might look something like the following:

- **Most of our health is shaped by our environments: the places we work, the options we have for food, our commutes, our communities, and more. As a society, we create these health environments through policies and other collective decisions about housing, transportation, education, community planning, and more.**
- **Society's decisions, both past and present, have set up barriers to essential resources like affordable, healthy food; stable, safe places to live; opportunities to socialize and connect with others; and the ability to get a good education, good jobs, and good health care. When we see different patterns in the health and wellbeing of different communities or social groups, we can trace most disparities to health environments and the decisions that created them.**

For more resources on how to frame health as a systemic issue, check out:

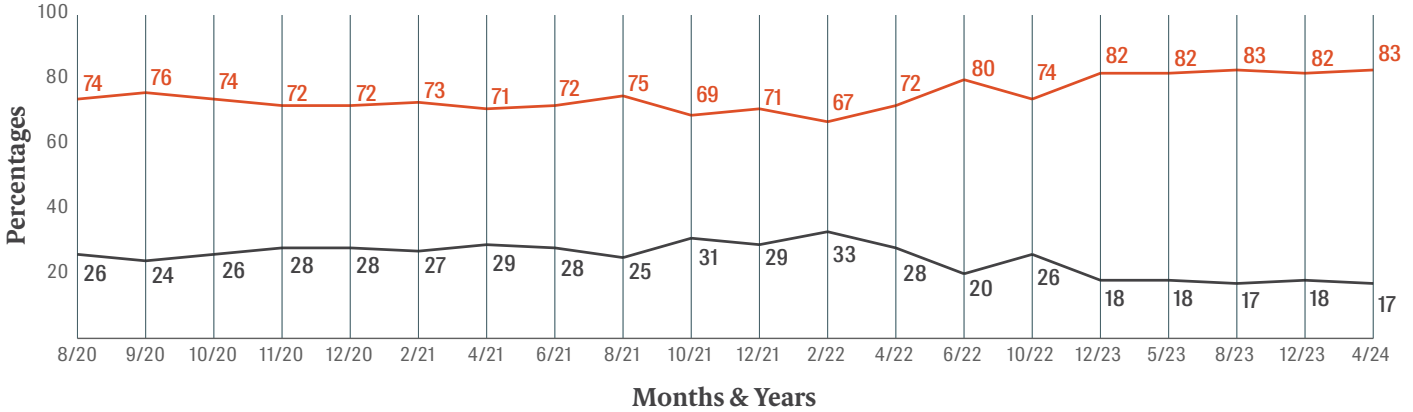
- [Reframing Health Disparities in Rural America: A Communications Toolkit](#)
- [Explain the Frame: Expand on health](#)
- [Explaining the Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [Changing the Narrative Together: Three Effective Strategies for Talking about Youth Mental Health](#)
- [Excessive Alcohol Use and Health Equity](#)
- [Framing the Foundation of Community Health](#)

## Evidence:

The figure below shows responses to the question discussed above—which asks people to choose between statements encapsulating individualistic and systemic or ecological understandings of health—for our whole sample between August 2020 and April 2024. As the graph shows, support for individualistic thinking in the five most recent surveys is higher than at any previous time the survey was fielded.

### Participants of all ages in our national survey believe health is the result of...

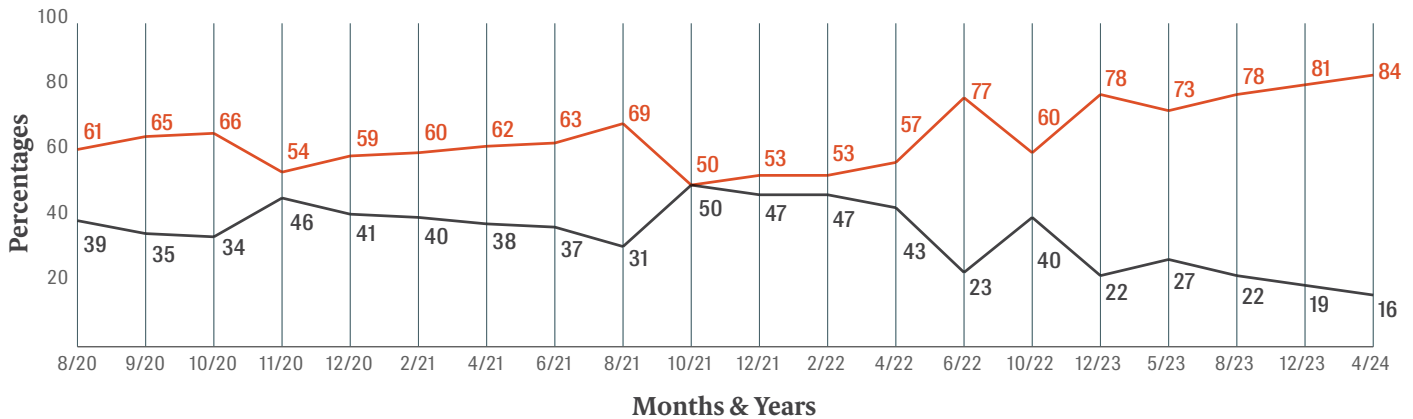
■ Individuals' lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise, determine how healthy they are. ■ The neighborhood people live in determines how health they are.



We see a much starker pattern among younger participants. As the graph below shows, there's a clear trend indicating a substantial increase over time in the strength of *health individualism* among participants aged 18–29, with recent results aligning with the whole sample. In other words, younger participants previously chose the individualistic option much less than older participants, but now are endorsing this option at similar rates to older groups. Results for participants aged 30–44 are quite similar. In recent surveys, near or above 80 percent of all age groups are choosing the individualistic statement.

### Participants aged 18-29 in our national survey believe health is the result of...

■ Individuals' lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise, determine how healthy they are. ■ The neighborhood people live in determines how health they are.



## FINDING 4

# More than ever before, we are seeing Americans think at a systemic level about our economy and financial success.

While systemic thinking about health and racism has recently declined, the idea that the economy is a designed system continues to gain strength.

In the past year, we've picked up further evidence that the American public is moving beyond the neoliberal assumptions of the Reagan era, which used to be conventional wisdom. As we've [reported previously](#), members of the public widely recognize that government choices shape how the economy works and whom it benefits. We're now seeing increasing rejection of the idea that the US is a meritocracy and stronger recognition that inequality is the result of collective choices.

In our survey, we ask participants to choose between two mindsets that are available to think about financial success: a *meritocracy* mindset (the idea that financial success is due to talent and hard work) and an *opportunity structures* mindset (the idea that our opportunities shape our economic outcomes). Until 2023, endorsement of these mindsets was relatively balanced and stable over the course of our research. That balance shifted in March of last year, when research participants began endorsing the *opportunity structures* mindset at higher levels than we'd seen since the start of the project in 2020, and this trend has held throughout the last year. As of March 2024, 60 percent of respondents endorsed the *opportunity structures* mindset and only 40 percent endorsed the *meritocracy*.

Prior to 2023, participants had routinely endorsed the idea that economic inequality is “natural” over the view that economic inequality is due to choices our society has made—but by July of 2023 that balance shifted. As of March 2024, 57 percent of respondents endorsed the idea that inequality is due to choices about how our economy will work.

These changes suggest that a paradigm shift is underway in how Americans think about the economy, which mirrors a [sea change in economic policymaking](#). This shift in mindsets likely both reflects and has enabled the rise of economic populism (on the right and left) and the new conventional wisdom that government does and should shape the economy. The debate is now about *how* the government should try to shape the economy and for *whom*, rather than whether it should be involved in the first place.

Despite this shift in thinking about the economy, it's important to highlight that [people still generally hold individualistic and naturalistic mindsets when it comes to thinking about work and labor](#). In addition, even though people increasingly recognize that government choices shape how the economy works, people's understanding of how this works is typically quite limited. There is, thus, much more work ahead to build support for more just and equitable labor systems and for the structural changes needed to create a truly just and inclusive economy.

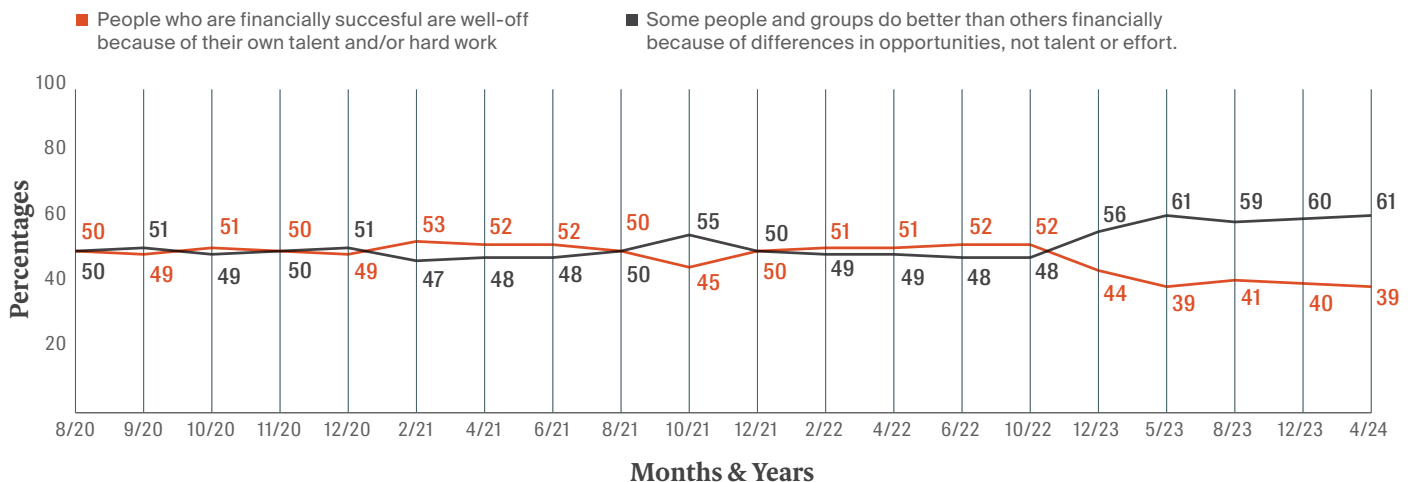
## IMPLICATIONS:

This is a moment when progressive communicators have an opportunity to show *how* economic policies can benefit (or harm) people. It's crucial for us to connect the dots and explain how these policies affect people's lives, and to make a proactive case about *whom* government should benefit to actively counter racist and xenophobic narratives.

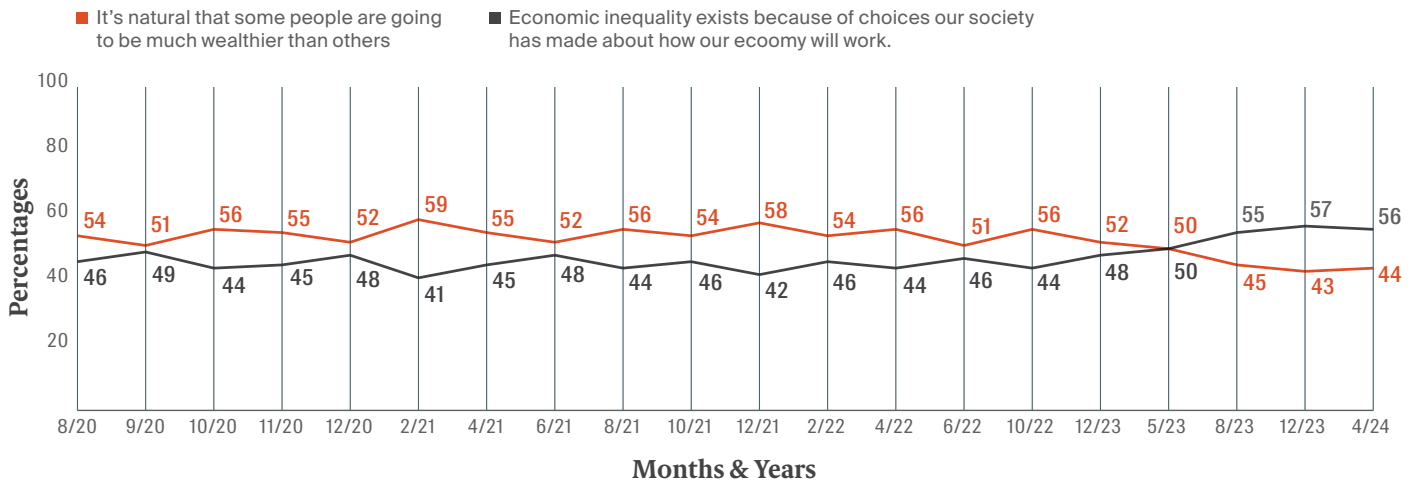
It is also important to broaden and extend this structural, designed thinking about the economy to thinking about work. To develop frames that help with this, FrameWorks has recently launched the WorkShift Project, a multi-year initiative designed to change narratives around work and labor. You can find the latest research on public thinking and effective framing strategies from WorkShift by visiting <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/work-shift/>

## Evidence:

The graph below shows a clear shift in the balance between *meritocracy* and *opportunity structures* mindsets. Until March 2023, neither of the two statements articulating these mindsets were endorsed by more than 55 of participants. Yet in each of the following four surveys, the *opportunity structures* mindset was chosen by 56 percent or more of participants, with over 60 percent endorsing this mindset in two surveys. These numbers suggest a meaningful shift in the relative strength of these mindsets.



The graph below illustrates the aligned shift in thinking about economic inequality. In the last couple of surveys, the *inequality is natural* mindset has been overtaken by the *inequality is designed* mindset, with more participants endorsing the latter for the first time since we began fielding the survey. This trend is newer than the trend noted in the first graph, but taken together, these survey results strongly suggest that fundamental assumptions about the economy continue to change. We will monitor these trends to see whether they continue or whether thinking moves back in a neoliberal direction.



## FINDING 5

# Mindsets around gender are in flux—and lie at the center of a volatile site of contestation in American culture.

Over the course of the Culture Change Project, we’ve identified three core mindsets that structure Americans’ thinking about gender:

- **Gender is a fixed binary:** the assumption that everyone’s gender is either “man” or “woman,” and that gender is assigned at birth and remains unchanged throughout a person’s life
- **Gender essentialism:** the idea that biological sex determines character and behavior
- **Gender is constructed:** the idea that differences between genders are the result of what society expects

New data from our tracking survey has revealed that **while younger people are less likely than older people to believe that gender is a fixed binary, they are more likely to endorse gender essentialism.** This means that younger people are more likely to think that our biological sex determines our personal behavior—believing, for example, that women are “naturally more caring” and men “naturally more aggressive.” We aren’t sure yet why this is happening. One factor may be the rise of the [tradwife phenomenon](#) on social media—content aimed at promoting (and romanticizing) traditional gender roles among younger people. Lived experience might also play a role—younger people are more likely than older people to have grown up with both parents working, but might still have experienced women doing a majority of the care work, perhaps reinforcing the idea that women are “naturally” more caring than men.



Meanwhile, participants in our focus groups—across political party lines—are using transphobic language as shorthand to explain what they see as wrong with the “modern” world today. We consistently see talk like this in our research:

“Now, you can even identify yourself as an Apache helicopter because the world is going crazy. If I say I’m a cow, I wanna be a cow, I can identify as a cow. What is that? I don’t find that normal.”

**Research participant, Democrat**

That “now…” at the beginning of the participant’s statement gets at the belief that in an older, “better” time, everyone understood that there were only two fixed genders. We frequently hear talk that reflects the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset in this way, where participants either implicitly or explicitly compare a present they are dissatisfied with to a past where things were more “normal.” That kind of talk comes not only from the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset, but also from a mindset we call the *threat of modernity* mindset—the idea that life in this country used to be better and is getting worse. The *threat of modernity* mindset is often used in reactionary defense of the status quo.

It’s becoming increasingly clear that **the idea that *gender is a fixed binary* is a hugely important, volatile site of contestation in American culture right now. This mindset lies at the center of political and social reaction—the push to restore and reinforce hierarchies across domains in American society. As a result, every progressive advocate has a stake in this contestation over gender.**

Our research shows that the more strongly someone assumes that gender is a fixed binary, the more likely they are to:

- Oppose immigration policies such as support for asylum seekers and expanding legal pathways to citizenship
- Oppose criminal legal reform such as the abolition of private prisons
- Oppose government-provided child care for all families
- Oppose affirmative action, reparations made to Black Americans who are the descendants of enslaved people, and including clear discussions of slavery and racism in the teaching of US history in schools
- Oppose making it easier for workers to join a union
- Oppose a single-payer national health plan
- Oppose a universal basic income.

More than almost any other mindset we study, the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset is linked to staunch support for upholding the status quo. In other words, the idea that *gender is a fixed binary* lies at the heart of regressive thinking—it’s one of the linchpins of reactionary thinking in the United States.

## IMPLICATIONS:

There is already a highly coordinated effort to create a moral panic around trans issues, and the language of that panic has made its way into mainstream discourse, in part because it taps into fears about the “modern” world and discomfort with the disruption of social hierarchies. If we are to push back against this reactionary movement, we must make a highly coordinated effort as well, intentionally and strategically combating regressive understandings of gender across issues.

Progressives widely recognize that racism is bound up with all social issues, and that combating it is necessary for transformative change across issues. This research indicates that, in a similar vein, gender should not be treated as a narrow issue. These reactionary understandings of gender *must* be recognized and combated across social issues.

## Evidence:

The table below shows mean scores for *gender essentialism* and *gender is a fixed binary* mindsets, divided by age group. These scores indicate the average level of agreement with statements that articulate the core assumptions of these mindsets. The higher the score, the greater the agreement. Means are from a survey fielded in March 2024.

The table shows the pattern described above—younger people (18–29 years old), on average, endorse *gender essentialism* more strongly than older people. Yet younger people agree with the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset less than older groups.

	Ages 18–29	Ages 30–44	Ages 45–59	Ages 60+
Gender Essentialism	64	61	62	55
Gender Is a Fixed Binary	54	64	71	67

The items were on nine-point Likert-type scales (see Appendix B for items). Means have been transposed to a 100-point scale, so 50 represents the midpoint of the scale (“neither agree nor disagree”). As scores get closer to zero, this indicates increasingly strong rejection of the mindset. As scores get closer to 100, this indicates increasingly strong endorsement of the mindset.

These results indicate, as we might expect, a degree of generational flux in thinking about gender, but they also suggest that the shifts in thinking among younger generations do not represent a simple break from patriarchal norms. Further research is needed to unpack these results, including looking at differences between young men and young women, as there is [substantial evidence](#) that young men and women are increasingly diverging in their thinking about a range of topics. Our current sample size does not allow us to conduct this analysis on existing data, but we should be able to explore this in future surveys.

The correlation table below shows the relationship between the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset and the policies discussed in the above section. We see that the mindset is negatively correlated with all the progressive policies we asked about, and most of these correlations

are moderate or large correlations. What these correlations mean is that the more strongly someone endorses the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset, the less they support these policies (or the more strongly they oppose them).

**Correlations between *Gender Is a Fixed Binary* Mindset and Policies**

	Pathway to Citizenship	Support Asylum Seekers	Abolish Private Prisons	Government-Provided Child Care	Paid Leave	Single-Payer Health Care
Gender Is a Fixed Binary	-0.56***	-0.52***	-0.22***	-0.42***	-0.31***	-0.39***
	Affirmative Action	Reparations	Teaching about Slavery and Racism in Schools	Universal Basic Income	Pro-Union policies	
Gender Is a Fixed Binary	-0.35***	-0.40***	-0.45***	-0.33***	-0.40***	

Results from February and March 2024 surveys  
 \* = p < .05, \*\* = p < .01, \*\*\* = p < .001  
 0.10–0.29 = small correlation, 0.30–0.49 = moderate correlation, 0.50+ = large correlation

This survey evidence, coupled with the qualitative evidence from focus groups discussed above and [described elsewhere](#), makes clear that the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset is tightly linked with regressive thinking about a wide range of topics.

**FINDING 6**  
**Individualistic and reactionary thinking is gaining traction among younger people.**

As discussed above, we’re seeing the strengthening of individualistic and reactionary thinking among younger participants in our research across a range of issues: the rise in endorsement of gender essentialism, health individualism, and an interpersonal view of racism.

Taken together, these results suggest that younger people are retrenching in mindsets that justify the status quo and existing power relations and that blame individuals for problems they face. More research is needed to deepen our understanding of these troubling trends, but the trends themselves seem relatively clear.

## IMPLICATIONS:

We often assume that because younger people have held more progressive views on some issues, they must think in more progressive ways across the board—but that’s not always the case. It’s vital for communicators not to take their younger audiences for granted, even on issues (like race and health) where they have held more structural understandings in the past. We’ll be digging into this finding more in the future, looking into whether this trend is being driven by particular subgroups of young people.

### Evidence:

The patterns in youth mindset endorsement are described in the findings above. Specifically:

- Refer to **Finding 3** for data around young people’s endorsement of health individualism
- Refer to **Finding 3** for data around young people’s endorsement of an interpersonal understanding of racism
- Refer to **Finding 5** for data around young people’s endorsement of gender essentialism

## FINDING 7

### Some mindsets cluster together. This could have major implications for social change work.

We all have multiple mindsets that we can use to think about a given issue—for example, we can all think both individualistically *and* contextually about what shapes our health. New research into the cultural mindsets we all share is showing that many of the mindsets we use to make sense of the world are connected to each other.

Several sets of mindsets seem to cluster together. For each cluster, the more strongly people endorse one mindset in the cluster, the more strongly they tend to endorse others in that cluster. The mindsets in each cluster hang together because they’re grounded in assumptions that are, in some way, mutually reinforcing.

The first cluster includes mindsets that are naturalistic, individualistic, or reactionary. These characteristics are mutually reinforcing. When people think of society as arising from natural processes and forces, they often see this “natural order” as something that shouldn’t be challenged. Attempts to change it seem foolish at best and dangerous at worst. It also seems natural that it’s up to individuals to navigate this natural order to the best of their abilities. This cluster includes many mindsets:

- **Individualism**, the idea that what happens to an individual in their life is primarily the result of the choices they make
- **Pathologizing Black Culture**, a set of harmful and racist beliefs about Black communities
- **Limited Government**, the idea that government should play a limited role in our lives
- **Meritocracy**, the idea that financial success is due to talent and hard work
- **Colorblind Racism**, the idea that talking about race is the reason for our country's divisions
- **Market Naturalism**, the idea that who benefits in our economy is determined naturally by the free market
- **Health Individualism**, the idea that individuals' lifestyle choices determine how healthy they are
- **Gender Essentialism**, the idea that biological sex determines character and behavior
- **Gender is a Fixed Binary**, the assumption that everyone's gender is either "man" or "woman" and that gender is assigned at birth and remains unchanged throughout a person's life

The second cluster includes mindsets that are oriented toward collective, rather than individual, decisions, as well as mindsets that center designed systems. These mindsets are also mutually reinforcing. When people think of social reality as a product of collective choices, they tend to see how social systems and structures shape people's outcomes in life. These assumptions tend to go together, and lead people to see a broader role for collective action to address social problems. Whereas the first cluster is linked with reactionary thinking, these mindsets tend to make it easier to see why and how we should *contest* the status quo. This cluster, like the first, includes mindsets on a range of different issues:

- **Systemic Thinking**, the idea that what happens to an individual in their life is the result of how our society is organized
- **Systemic Model of Racism**, the understanding that racial discrimination is the result of how our laws, policies, and institutions work
- **Expansive Government**, the idea that government should do what it takes to make sure people have what they need
- **Designed Economy**, the idea that policy choices determine how the economy works and whom it benefits
- **Opportunity Structures**, the idea that access opportunities shape our economic outcomes
- **Systemic Thinking about Health**, the understanding that environments and context determine how healthy we are
- **Gender Is Constructed**, the idea that differences between genders are the result of what society expects

It's critical to highlight that these clusters are loosely linked networks, not tightly organized ideologies or worldviews. They tend to hang together, but they're sets of discrete mindsets. And both sets are available to be drawn on across groups. In one moment, someone might draw on mindsets from the first cluster, and in the next, draw on mindsets from the second cluster.

Moreover, some mindsets don't fit neatly into one of these clusters. These mindsets can be applied in ways that link up with the different types of thinking that characterize each cluster. For example, fatalism can accompany naturalistic thinking (we can't fix problems because that's just the way of things), but it can also accompany designed systems thinking (we can't fix problems because those with power are intentionally shaping systems to their benefit). Similarly, the *system is rigged* mindset can be linked with reactionary thinking or with thinking about the possibility of transformative social redesign.

## IMPLICATIONS:

In the coming year, we'll continue to explore these clusters to better understand how they are connected to each other. We suspect that strengthening one mindset in a cluster is likely to strengthen others in the same cluster. If that's true, then there may be multiple avenues to weakening reactionary, individualistic, and naturalistic thinking. For example, it may be that if we can counter and weaken the *gender is a fixed binary* mindset, this might simultaneously undercut the *pathologizing Black culture* mindset, and vice versa. It could be that there are particular mindsets in each cluster that serve a linchpin role—they cue and buttress other mindsets—and are thus especially important to tackle.

## Evidence:

The correlation tables below show the positive relationships among mindsets in each cluster. We consistently see moderate or large positive correlations between each of the mindsets in each cluster. These correlations indicate that the more strongly people endorse one mindset, the more strongly they endorse the other.

For survey length reasons, we track mindsets across three different surveys, which means that there are different sets of mindsets included in each survey. As a result, we don't have correlation data between every mindset, but rather correlations among subsets of the mindsets in each cluster. There are occasions, however, where the same mindset was included in multiple surveys. These mindsets offer a bridge between the sets of correlations. We can see, for example, that the *limited government* and *pathologizing Black culture* mindsets are positively correlated with every other mindset listed. Between these mindsets that bridge surveys and strong qualitative reasons for grouping mindsets together, we have strong confidence that the mindsets listed in each cluster are, in fact, linked with all the other mindsets in the cluster.

### Correlations for the Naturalistic, Individualistic, Reactionary Cluster

	Individualism	Pathologizing Black Culture	Limited Government	Meritocracy	Market Naturalism	Gender Essentialism
Pathologizing Black Culture	0.60***					
Limited Government	0.44***	0.42***				
Meritocracy	0.72***	0.49***	0.29***			
Market Naturalism	0.51***	0.46***	0.40***	0.60***		
Gender Essentialism	0.48***	0.44***	0.31***	0.43***	0.34***	
Gender Is a Fixed Binary	0.51***	0.47***	0.36***	0.39***	0.34***	0.45***

Results from March 2024 survey

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

	Health Individualism	Colorblind Racism	Pathologizing Black Culture
Colorblind Racism	0.43***		
Pathologizing Black Culture	0.38***	0.53***	
Limited Government	0.37***	0.46***	0.53***

Results from April 2024 survey

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

### Correlations for the Collective, Designed, Systemic Cluster

	Expansive Government	Systemic Thinking about Health
Systemic Thinking about Health	.26***	
Structural Model of Racism	.48***	.39***

Results from April 2024 survey

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

	Opportunity Structures	Designed Economy	Gender Is Constructed
Designed Economy	0.67***		
Gender Is Constructed	0.46***	0.43***	
Structural Thinking	0.53**	0.45***	0.53***

Results from November 2023 survey

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

# This coming year, the Culture Change Project is digging into...

## 01

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### The strategic implications of how mindsets cluster together.

As described above, we believe that further understanding how mindsets are related to each other can help us identify pathways to weaken harmful ways of thinking and strengthen more productive ones. This year, we'll explore these hypotheses and expand our understanding of how these mindsets are connected. Understanding these connections can strengthen our understanding of how culture and narrative change efforts on different issues can reinforce and amplify each other's effects and where it's most critical for movements to come together to tackle mindsets that obstruct or enable change across issues.

## 02

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### How to frame with values to build systemic thinking across issues.

As we've discussed in this report, systemic thinking is on the rise around some issues (e.g., the economy)—but not all. We're currently conducting research into how values can be used to strengthen systemic thinking across issues like the economy, race and racism, democracy, and other issues. We're exploring the effects of values that are already associated with progressive causes (like justice and solidarity), as well as how to steer contested values (like freedom and fairness) in progressive directions and whether it's possible to use traditionally conservative values (like family and security) for progressive ends. This research will result in insights about which values are best suited to shift underlying cultural mindsets in the right direction and whether values framing that works on one issue is likely to help or harm efforts on other issues.



## 03

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### How to navigate the deep dissatisfaction with the status quo and desire for fundamental change, given people’s difficulty envisioning a better future.

Over the last year, our research has pointed again and again to Americans’ dissatisfaction with the current state of our country and openness to fundamental or even radical changes to how our society operates. Yet we’ve also seen how that desire for change can lead people to yearn for a strong leader to come in and fix all of the problems in our country (see finding 1 above). Communicators need ways of navigating this terrain in ways that counter authoritarian attitudes, cultivate collective efficacy, and build support for progressive change. In the coming year, we will conduct research to understand how different ways of responding to this deep dissatisfaction and desire for change affect these outcomes.

## 04

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### How to build a more inclusive we the people.

In the coming year, we will begin investigating how framing can help build a more inclusive understanding of “we the people”—one that encompasses all groups within American society and that people in different groups can see themselves and others in.

We plan to identify ways of talking about a collective “we the people” that:

1. Marginalized groups see themselves in and want to be called into
2. Dominant groups see themselves in while also seeing marginalized groups in
3. Strengthen reciprocity, mutuality, and collective responsibility
4. Counter dehumanizing and reactionary mindsets
5. Avoid cuing jingoism, American exceptionalism, and other “us vs. them” mindsets
6. Are motivating and help to catalyze progressive movement coalitions.

# Appendix A: Methods

We are using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to understand whether and how cultural mindsets are shifting and to explore how mindsets are being used to make sense of salient issues.

## Peer Discourse Sessions

This report includes findings from two rounds of peer discourse sessions (a form of focus group). We conducted nine sessions in December 2022, another nine in October 2023, and six sessions in January 2024.

The sessions in December 2022 focused on the system is rigged mindset and how to effectively talk about or frame rigged systems. The sessions in October 2023 explored anti-“wokeness” discourse and how to effectively respond to this discourse. The sessions in January 2024 explored how people think about the future and whether and how people can envision positive futures; they also explored mindsets around health and voting, with a focus on refining how we ask about these issues in our surveys.

We held these sessions virtually, using Zoom, with participants giving their consent to be recorded. The participants were recruited to represent variation across demographic characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, political identification, residential location (urban/suburban/rural), geographical location (city/region), and education. The December 2022 and October 2023 sessions were split by political affiliation; for each set, we conducted three sessions with participants who identified as Republican or leaned Republican; three sessions with participants who identified as Democratic or leaned Democratic; and three sessions with a mix of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. These sessions were otherwise demographically mixed. In January 2024, all sessions were demographically mixed, including by partisan identity.

## Culture Tracking Survey

Since August 2020 we have conducted a regular, nationally representative tracking survey to quantitatively measure and track cultural mindsets—both foundational mindsets (e.g., individualism) and mindsets on specific issues (economy, health, race and racism, government). The survey asks a series of questions to gauge people’s endorsement of specific mindsets. It also includes questions to gauge support for key policies (e.g., a jobs guarantee, Medicare for All, paid family leave, reparations), allowing us to look at the relationship between the strength with which people hold certain mindsets and their support for specific policies. The survey was fielded monthly from August 2020 through December 2020 and bimonthly from February 2021 through June 2022, and then again in September 2022. Beginning in December 2022, to increase the number of questions we can ask, we split the

survey into three discrete surveys, each of which is fielded three times per year. We are happy to provide more information about the fielding schedule upon request. This report covers survey results through May 2024.

Target quotas for the tracking surveys are set according to national benchmarks for age, gender, household income, education level, race/ethnicity, and political party affiliation. All data are also weighted to match these benchmarks. Starting in 2024, we have oversampled in some tracking surveys for racial/ethnic groups and age to support subgroup analyses, with a minimum target of  $n = 200$  for each racial/ethnic group. Where able, all analyses regarding race/ethnicity were conducted using the nationally representative sample and the oversample to ensure adequate power for stratified analyses. Full sample analyses were conducted using only the nationally representative sample.

In presenting survey findings about mindsets, we draw on two different types of survey questions:

- 1. Mindset Batteries.** For each mindset explored, we have developed a series of survey items that articulate the core assumption(s) of the mindset. Each battery consists of multiple questions designed to get at the concept at the core of the mindset. Mindset endorsement is measured primarily through Likert-type items with nine-point response scales. Over the course of the last four years, we have conducted a series of psychometric tests to reduce the number of items used to measure endorsement of each mindset, as well as ensure that the items retained to measure each mindset are adequate and reliable. For all new scales, we conduct exploratory factor analyses (EFA) using oblique promax rotation to establish the psychometric robustness of each scale. Items with rotated factor loadings below  $|.40|$  were dropped from each battery. Once finalized, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is used to assess internal consistency among the items in each battery. Given that there are various heuristics for determining acceptable internal consistency, we determined that batteries with internal consistency scores of  $.60$  or above would be considered acceptable. For scales that have been previously used or tested, we conduct a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), once or twice per year, to test the expected dimensionality of our outcome scales and ensure it remains a good fit to the survey data over time. During this process, survey items are specified to load onto their intended factors, with correlations among factors estimated freely using the marker method approach. We use Maximum Likelihood Estimation with Robust Standard Errors (MLR) to account for potential deviations from normality and model misspecifications. For model fit evaluation, we adopt an inclusive approach that considers multiple fit indices. Recognizing that chi-square is overly sensitive to sample size and minor model misspecifications, we used three approximate fit indices: the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), with thresholds of  $< .050$  for close fit and  $< .080$  for reasonable fit; the Comparative Fit Index (CFI); and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI3), with thresholds of  $> .900$  for acceptable fit and  $> .950$  for excellent fit.

After assessing internal consistency, items within each battery are combined into composite

scores that indicate participants' average endorsement of the cultural mindset measured by each battery. These composite scores are then rescaled such that a composite of zero indicates strong disagreement with the mindset, 50 indicates neutral feelings about the mindset, and 100 indicates strong endorsement of the mindset.

Correlations are used to determine the relationships between cultural mindsets, or the relationships between target opinions and policies and cultural mindsets. A threshold of  $p < .05$  is used to determine whether two variables are significantly correlated. A correlation coefficient within the range of 0.1–0.3 is considered a small association; a correlation coefficient within the range of 0.30–0.50 is considered a medium association; and a correlation of 0.50 or higher is considered a large association.

**2. Forced-Choice Questions.** These questions ask people to choose between two statements that each represent the core idea of competing mindsets. In interpreting these results, it is important to emphasize that this should not be understood to suggest that some people hold one mindset while others hold the other mindset. In reality, people hold multiple, contradictory ways of thinking at the same time. In practice, people toggle back and forth between different mindsets, sometimes using one to make sense of information and experiences, sometimes drawing on another. The choice of one mindset over the other can be seen as an indication of the relative salience or dominance of these mindsets for individuals. The fact that people choose one mindset over another suggests that they are likely to more consistently and frequently draw upon that mindset. It does not mean that they reject or never draw upon the competing mindset.

In this project and this report, survey results are always interpreted in combination with qualitative analyses, both from this project and from past research. Qualitative research that FrameWorks and others conducted before the project began, as well as external polling that extends beyond the time frame of the survey, provides critical context for interpreting results from the tracking survey.

# Appendix B: Survey Questions

## I. Mindset Batteries

Below, we list the survey items in each mindset battery. Together, these items are used to create a composite measure for each mindset. In this appendix, we include only the batteries reported on.

The mindset battery items begin with the following instruction:

“On the next few pages, we’ll ask you how much you agree or disagree with each of a series of statements. There are no right or wrong answers; rather, we are simply interested in better understanding the beliefs that people such as yourself hold on a wide range of issues. Please take the time to consider each statement in its own right.”

Participants are then asked to rate each statement on a nine-point Likert-type scale, from “Very strongly disagree” to “Very strongly agree.”

In the survey, statements for mindsets are randomized within blocks. Here, we group each statement by mindset. Participants do not see the mindset names.

### **Colorblind Racism**

- Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
- Talking about race only divides us.
- If we just stopped focusing on race, we wouldn’t be so divided.

### **Designed Economy**

- The laws and policies we make determine how our economy works.
- Policy choices determine how the economy works and who it benefits.
- Economic inequality exists because of choices our society has made about how our economy will work.
- Our laws and policies determine how much power corporations have.
- Economic inequality is the result of the laws and policies our government has put into place.
- Our laws and policies are the reason why some people are much wealthier than others.

## **Expansive Government**

- It is government's job to provide individuals with the resources and services they need.
- Government should play a large role in shaping how our economy works.
- Government should do whatever it takes to make sure people have what they need.

## **Gender Essentialism**

- Women are naturally more nurturing than men.
- Women are naturally more emotional than men.
- Men are naturally more aggressive than women.
- Men are naturally more decisive than women.
- Personality differences between men and women are largely a result of biology.
- There are natural differences in how men and women behave.

## **Gender Is Constructed**

- Upbringing influences men and women's behavior far more than biology does.
- Differences between men and women are the result of what society expects and encourages.
- During upbringing, some personality traits are encouraged more in girls than in boys.
- Men and women are encouraged to behave differently.
- Personality differences between girls and boys are primarily the result of upbringing.
- Boys and girls behave in different ways because society treats them differently.

## **Gender Is a Fixed Binary**

- Everyone belongs in one of two gender categories: man or woman.
- In nature there are two genders, no exceptions.
- All children are either girls or boys.
- It's possible for people to change genders. (reverse)
- Gender is fluid, and can change over time. (reverse)

## Health Individualism

- Individuals' lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise, determine how healthy they are.
- Whether someone is healthy or not is largely determined by their willpower and drive.
- A person's health is their responsibility – and theirs alone.
- A person will be healthy if they make good choices about nutrition and exercise.
- If a person wants to be healthy, they are responsible for making lifestyle changes to accomplish this.

## Individualism

- What happens to an individual in their life is primarily the result of the choices they make.
- How well people do in life is mostly determined by how much willpower and drive they have.
- If someone works hard enough, they'll succeed in life.
- How we do in life is our own responsibility, and no one else's.

## Limited Government

- Government should limit itself to protecting human health and safety, and shouldn't be in the business of providing for people's other needs.
- Receiving benefits from the government, like subsidized housing or food, makes people less likely to get a job or work hard.
- Private individuals and organizations, such as businesses, generally produce better outcomes for society than the government does.
- Government should be hands off when it comes to the economy.
- Government should play a limited role in our lives.

## Market Naturalism

- Who benefits in our economy is determined naturally by the free market.
- The free market just works well, naturally.
- Our economy naturally generates wealth.
- People do better in society when we allow business competition.
- If the economy is left to work on its own, it will naturally produce what we need.

## **Meritocracy**

- It's natural that some people are going to be much wealthier than others.
- People who are financially successful are well-off because of their own talent and/or hard work.
- Anyone who works hard enough can get ahead in American society.
- People who work hard will naturally be more successful.

## **Opportunity Structures**

- Our place in society shapes our opportunities in life.
- Some people and groups do better than others financially because of differences in opportunities, not talent or effort.
- The opportunities we are given shape how well we do in life.
- Society is set up so that some groups have better access to opportunities than others.
- The way society is designed results in some people having fewer options than others.
- Society is set up so that some people don't have a real chance to do well.

## **Pathologizing Black Culture**

- Black inner-city communities would do better if they took responsibility for their lives rather than relying on welfare.
- The reason why poor urban communities are poor is because they don't value hard work.
- If poor families want to do better, they should stop having children that they cannot afford.

## **Structural Model of Racism**

- Racial discrimination is the result of how our laws, policies, and institutions work.
- Discriminatory policies continue to disadvantage Black people today.
- Black people are affected by discriminatory laws and policies.
- Though we have outlawed some racist practices like slavery, Black people are still affected by the lingering effects of these practices.

## **Structural Thinking**

- How people do in life is our whole society's responsibility.
- How successful people are in life is determined by how our society is structured.
- The opportunities available in our communities shape our outcomes in life.

## **Systemic Thinking about Health**

- Where a person lives affects their health.
- The neighborhood people live in determines how healthy they are.
- How healthy people are is mostly determined by how our society and economy are structured.



## II. Forced-Choice Questions

The forced-choice questions begin with the following instruction:

“For the next few questions, we want to ask you to choose between two statements. Please tell us which of the following statements in each pair comes closer to your own opinion, even if you don’t totally agree with either one.”

Below, we list the forced-choice questions reported on. For each, we include the two competing statements participants are asked to choose between. Mindset names are listed in parentheses after the statements; these are for reference only and are not included in the statements participants see.

### **Which comes closer to your own opinion?**

- People who are financially successful are well-off because of their own talent and/or hard work. (*Meritocracy*)
- Some people and groups do better than others financially because of differences in opportunities, not talent or effort. (*Opportunity Structures*)

### **Which comes closer to your own opinion?**

- Moving past our divisions as a country means that people from different groups need to find new ways of working together. (*Unity through Progress*)
- Moving past our divisions as a country means returning to our old ways of working together. (*Unity through Restoration*)

### **Which comes closer to your own opinion?**

- Individuals’ lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise, determine how healthy they are. (*Health Individualism*)
- The neighborhood people live in determines how healthy they are. (*Systemic Thinking about Health*)

### **Which comes closer to your own opinion?**

- Racial discrimination is the result of individuals' bias and prejudice.  
*(Interpersonal Model of Racism)*
- Racial discrimination is the result of how our laws, policies, and institutions work.  
*(Structural Model of Racism)*

### **Which comes closer to your own opinion?**

- It's natural that some people are going to be much wealthier than others.  
*(Inequality is Natural)*
- Economic inequality exists because of choices our society has made about how our economy will work. *(Inequality is Designed)*

### **Do you think the system is rigged in America?**

- Yes
- No

## **III. Policy Support Items**

Participants were asked about each of the following policies, rating these on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support.”

- Do you support or oppose abolishing all private, for-profit prisons and detention centers?
- Do you support or oppose expanding legal pathways to U.S. citizenship for people who are undocumented?
- Do you support or oppose increased funding for food and shelter programs to assist refugees and people seeking asylum in the U.S.?
- Do you support or oppose proposals for the US government to make cash payments to Black Americans who are descendants of slaves?
- Do you support or oppose changing labor laws to make it easier for workers to form or join a union?
- Do you support or oppose proposals to create a new system of government-provided childcare for all families?
- Do you support or oppose a policy to provide all workers paid family and medical leave from a fund that employers and workers must contribute to?
- Do you support or oppose proposals for a universal basic income, that pays all Americans \$1,000 per month?
- Do you support or oppose proposals for a national health plan, sometimes called Medicare for All, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?

- Do you support or oppose changing the national school curriculum to teach U.S. history with more emphasis on slavery and racism?
- Do you support or oppose using race and ethnicity as a factor in college admissions decisions?

## IV. Support for Systemic Change

In a survey experiment conducted in May 2024 to understand the effects of different ways of talking about rigged systems, we measured participants' support for major societal change using the following items. Participants were asked to rate each statement on a seven-point Likert-type scale, from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree."

- Our society needs to be radically restructured.
- We need to make fundamental changes to how our society works.
- We need to remake our society in major ways.

To stay up-to-date on findings from the FrameWorks Institute's *Culture Change Project*, please follow us on Instagram (@frameworksinstitute), LinkedIn, and subscribe to our monthly On Culture newsletter here.

