A FUTURE FOR ALL OF US

A Report on Phase 1 of the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy

+ Narrative Design Toolkit

BY JEFF CHANG, NAYANTARA SEN, JANELLE TREIBITZ, SÁRA ABDULLAH, and KANA HAMMON

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Executive Summary

IN 2018, DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S attacks on migrants, immigrants, and refugees, a landmark study warned pro-immigration forces that "attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are extremely complex: even those who appear to be pro-immigrant (who even think of themselves as pro-immigrant) are often very conflicted."

A majority of Americans support the idea that migrants, immigrants, and refugees deserve to belong and thrive. Many recoiled from horrific images of family separation, violence against migrants at the border, and white nationalist violence against immigrants in cities like El Paso. Yet when the country locked down under the threat of the coronavirus and the Trump administration nearly shut down the entire immigration system, too few stood up to challenge these severe policies.

How does the pro-immigrant movement begin to confront such contradictions? To begin to answer this question, it might be better to look not to the tools of policy in the realm of traditional politics, but the tools of narrative in the realm of culture.

Cultural change precedes social change. Narrative drives policy. This is why we must be as strategic and rigorous in building narrative power as we are in building all other forms of power. Narrative is the space in which energies are activated to preserve a destructive system or build a better world for us all.

Right now, anti-immigrant forces continue to shape the dominant narratives around migrants, immigrants, and refugees, claiming that they are exploitable, expendable, criminal, and unworthy of equal treatment. These dominant narratives have fostered policies that terrorize migrants, immigrants, and refugees emotionally, economically, and physically. They protect a harmful status quo.

We are called instead to forge a new consensus. We must move a majority of people to imagine and act to create a world that does not yet exist. In order to make this world a reality, we need to orient ourselves toward the world we want to win, and make this future tangible and irresistible to a majority.

In this first phase of the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy, we hosted sixteen leaders to develop, test, and align narratives that meet our current political moment and advance our vision for the world we want to build. We supported their work with research,

coaching, and funding. We were heartened by the many breakthroughs we made together. Our work in the Butterfly Lab in this first phase affirms what we have known and gives us some directions to advance the movement towards more strategic alignment. We found:

- Nearly everyone believes immigrants deserve to belong and thrive.
- But many find it difficult to imagine an America in which that may be true.
- Core audiences respond well to all tested narratives, including those focused on shared humanity, compassion, dignity, and respect.
- But stretch audiences do not respond well to those aforementioned narratives. They do respond well to narratives of striving, responsibility, and liberty.
- Our narratives need to make sense of the past and present, and point toward immigration futures that are compelling to all.

Immigration remains the "third rail" of progressive politics. And yet, even in these discouraging times, we believe it is possible to win. When we look at the cultural transformations that other recent narrative movements—from "love is love" to #BlackLivesMatter—have made, we see pathways forward. Over a long period of time, many people built narrative infrastructures that could work in concert with policy infrastructures. When narrative power-building met the social moment, cultural inflection points turned policies previously thought unreasonable into ideas worthy of serious consideration. With immigration, we too must invest in narrative as key to winning power for migrants, immigrants, and refugees.

Artwork by Angelica Frausto, Detention Watch Network

In this report, we share with you learnings, frameworks and tools, and insights into directions we can take to move forward together. Whether you are an advocate or artist, a long-time veteran of the culture wars or thinking about how to apply narrative or cultural strategy for the first time, this report is designed to work for you.

It is also designed to help you think and act at multiple scales—locally, regionally, or nationally—with rigor, alignment, and purpose. The best narrative strategy should foster a unity of intention with a diversity of voices, approaches, and methods. It should help people work together with a sense of alignment along different timelines and fronts. We want this report to be used to build skills, capacities, and networks within the movement, and, above all, to help all of us approach narrative strategically.

You can access the full report here.
You can also access a standalone version of the toolkit here.

Recommendations

BASED ON THE BUTTERFLY LAB'S LEARNINGS in this first phase, we offer these recommendations:

1   Work together from a shared set of values and long-term vision.

- **Use the [Narrative System](#) to orient towards the future we're building together, beyond the present conditions we're challenging.** Staying grounded in deep narratives helps us make strategic choices about both short- and long-term projects. The Narrative System invites us to integrate and manifest these value frameworks into every part of our work, while helping us avoid messages, stories, and narratives that win a policy tomorrow but undermine our potential for bigger wins down the road.

- **Invest to align intersectional movements inside and outside of the migrant and immigrant justice movements.** Individuals, organizations, and funders should invest in building capacity to develop and align narrative work across the movement and build solidarity across movements.

2   Win over multiple audiences.

- **Focus on audiences with rigor. We need to better understand our target audiences, how to reach them, and how to move them.** Which narratives and stories reach them and how? Who influences them? What platforms do they use for entertainment, news, and information?

- **Shore up support among our core audiences.** A 2018 study by Ryan Senser and Eleanor Morison found that our core audiences were not as engaged as we may have hoped. Much great work before and since then has focused on solidifying their support. We need to continue to invest in reaching those audiences with content and culture that resonates, delivered on platforms they use by messengers with whom they identify.

- **Expand our definition of and engagement with core audiences, and support those who are already doing that work.** Our core audiences are also broader and deeper than we sometimes recognize, with intersectional issues that overlay their connection to immigration (i.e. Black LGBTQ migrants, indigenous-in-diaspora communities, etc). As a movement, we must more fully integrate, give power to, and support the groups that already work successfully with these audiences, as well as incorporate their voices, approaches, and priorities.

- **Invest in understanding and activating stretch audiences.** A majority of people in this country want a more humane, functional immigration system and a more welcoming society. But we must better understand the narrative "on-ramps," content, and tactics that move these audiences toward us, and we must invest into activating them.

3   Connect and expand our narrative ecosystems.

- **Invest in an ecosystem approach to narrative power-building.** We should assess the movement's narrative infrastructure, encourage more shared and collaborative work across the movement, and invest in building and connecting more aligned ecosystems.

- **To achieve narrative immersion, think and work together across multiple scales.** Narrative immersion—when people encounter a narrative in different forms and from different sources—is a powerful way to move people.[1] An ecosystem approach allows us to understand how we can together engage at multiple scales so that people are encountering our narratives across time and place, from their favorite TV shows to their worship services to their dinner table conversations.

- **Invest in artists and artist-led narrative projects as well as equitable collaborations between advocates and artists.** Artists and cultural workers remain an underused resource in the movement. Yet artists and the concepts and processes they bring have often led to breakthroughs in narrative work. Their work is central to building narrative power as well as audiences. Invest in artist-led narrative projects and equitable collaborations between advocates and artists.

4   Invest in narrative and cultural experimentation.

- **Build dedicated spaces for narrative workers to make innovations and take risks.** Because immigration work often feels high-stakes, it is necessary to create other spaces where narrative workers develop new ideas, experiment with innovative ideas, and share best practices. Funders should support more labs and cohorts for learning and prototyping, support more multi-year projects, and consider dedicating a portion of their portfolios to "risk capital" for narrative work.

- **Find narratives that can bridge to conservative- or center-leaning stretch audiences, moving them toward our long-term vision.** Our findings surprised us by showing us that there are ways to move even some of the most conservative audiences. Don't write off these audiences. Invest in robust testing and research to find the narrative "on-ramps" — values, story arcs, messengers, and subjects — that

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1   To explore narrative immersion theory more deeply, please see: *From Stories to Systems: Using a Narrative Systems Approach to Inform Pop Culture Narrative Change Grantmaking* by Bridgit Antoinette Evans. Pop Culture Collaborative, 2020. Download at: https://popcollab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Pop-Collab_ From-Stories-to-Systems.pdf

can connect these stretch audiences to our deep narratives.

- **Invest in in-person, relational experiences.** Findings from the Butterfly Lab underscore the transformative and lasting power of in-person and relational experiences — such as art installations, cultural ceremonies, county fair presentations, and deep canvassing — that may be replicable and scalable. Yet such work is often overlooked. We need more investment and research support for in-person immersive experiences and other relational, scaleable tactics.

"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO PREPARE FOR IT TODAY."

- Malcolm X

5 Build a bridge to the future.

- **Show the irresistible future and include everyone in that vision.** Showing the future is the key to unlocking pro-immigrant support. Based on our findings, we propose that imagination is the gap between people's beliefs and values and their support for pro-immigrant policies. We must paint a picture that allows people to understand what that future looks and feels like, and show that it includes them. In this way, we may compel them to work for that future.

The Undocumented Cookbook, United We Dream

Introduction

THE BUTTERFLY LAB FOR IMMIGRANT NARRATIVE STRATEGY launched in June 2020 to advance pro-immigrant narratives that recognize and honor the humanity of immigrants and advance freedom and justice for all. Over the course of fifteen months, the Lab hosted sixteen immigrant narrative leaders to develop, test, and align narratives that meet our current political moment and advance our vision for the world we want to build.

Narrative describes the stories, images, and messages that together shape our thinking and behavior in relation to migrants and migration, immigrants and immigration. Narrative is also the space in which energies are activated that can either preserve an inequitable status quo or build a better world for all. The work of the Lab is urgent because anti-immigrant forces continue to shape dominant narratives that render immigrants as exploitable, expendable, criminal, and unworthy of equal treatment. These dominant narratives have fostered policies that terrorize migrants, refugees, and immigrants emotionally, economically, and physically.

The Butterfly Lab Narrative Pyramid

Majorities of Americans support the idea that immigrants deserve to belong and thrive in the U.S.[2] However, these same Americans are not yet compelled to make those beliefs actionable for migrants, refugees, and immigrants.

For these reasons, we believe that narrative is as important as policy. We know that narrative drives policy. The corollary is that narrative deserves as much focus on strategy and infrastructure as work on policy does.

We believe that by advancing narratives that connect people living in the United States to their core beliefs and values, we can compel them to confront attacks on migrants, refugees, and immigrants, support humane and transformative action, and foster a pro-immigrant

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2   In a study conducted by Harmony Labs for the Butterfly Lab, 85% of respondents agreed with the statement: "Every person has the right to move and live freely, in community with their family, without fear of being separated from their loved ones or displaced from their home."

culture. At the same time, we believe that change will not happen on its own; it demands rigor, strategy, and a rich diversity of voices and approaches aligned around building power.

Thus, the work we sought to advance in the Lab was larger than the kind of strategic communications and campaign-focused work that the pro-immigrant movement has historically produced. Participants in the cohort sought to align their work around a set of deep narratives—value frameworks that we call a "narrative system"—that can serve as a kind of a north-star for the movement, a guide to navigate a new majority toward a new worldview. We were inspired by models of narrative power-building such as the "love is love" movement for LGBTQIA people and the Movement for Black Lives.

KEY DEFINITIONS

MESSAGE

Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that serve as reminders of what we think and how we might choose to act. They are most often used in the context of campaigns and strategic communications. The best of them become narratives.

STORY

Stories have discrete elements and building blocks such as characters, settings, conflicts and actions that unfold over an arc and through a plot. Human brains are wired to interpret and create meaning through stories, so stories are the basic unit of change.

NARRATIVE

An array of related and connected stories and messages on a particular subject, issue, or problem. Narratives suggest causes, problems and solutions. We interpret stories and messages through them. They evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action; they tell us how we should feel, think, and act. Narrative is the level at which society moves.

DEEP NARRATIVE

Narratives, in turn, are held together by underlying frameworks and values we call "deep narratives." These deep narratives constitute worldviews, the ways in which people understand their world.

NARRATIVE STRATEGY

Narrative strategy is the praxis—the combination of theory and practice—of thinking through and using stories, messages, and narratives in a purposeful way to move people toward the narratives, deep narratives, and worldviews we want to advance.

CULTURAL STRATEGY

We like the definition used by the Center for Cultural Power — "Cultural Strategy is a practice that leverages the catalytic and emotional power of culture and the arts to shift attitudes, behaviors, resources, narratives and power."

The Butterfly Lab cohort was comprised of sixteen leaders working in advocacy, organizing, policy, human rights, the arts, and popular culture. Cohort members received expert insight and coaching around narrative, narrative project design, and narrative strategy. They developed prototypes to test pro-immigrant narratives across many different platforms and audiences. Their projects were supported with small grants of $10,000 each, as well as coaching, research, impact evaluation, and Learning Exchange seminars featuring experts in narrative, oral history, folklore, fiction, behavioral science, neuroscience, pop culture, and many other areas.

Some cohort members began building new structures and practices within their organizations to expand from strategic communications into cultural strategy and narrative strategy. Others strengthened relationships to support organizational integration and learning for narrative and cultural strategies. Although the Lab was conducted entirely during a period of COVID-influenced restrictions, cohort members also built deep relationships with each other, expanding a narrative ecosystem that can support future work.

At the completion of this first phase of the Butterfly Lab, here are our topline learnings from this intensive process:

- Winning on narrative requires rigor, strategy, and alignment.
- We move people when we present a unity of values frameworks through a diversity of voices, approaches, stories, and messages.
- We should think not only in terms of short-term policy wins, but also in terms of relations with each other and destinations that we want to take a new majority toward.

Our narrative work must evoke an irresistible future, a world for which people are energized to build a new majority.

In this report, we offer an approach and a set of tools to help you think about and implement narrative strategy and narrative project design, tell you about what we did in the Butterfly Lab and its impacts, and make recommendations on future directions and investments for the movement. In this moment, the stakes of our work could not be higher. But together we can win a new majority.

Little Syria, by Omar Offendum

Accomplishments of the Butterfly Lab

We developed an innovative approach to narrative strategy that strengthens and aligns narrative campaigns, projects, and interventions.

We tested and refined frameworks and tools that strengthened the design and implementation of individual and organizational narrative projects.

We conducted original research to better understand how to move audiences toward pro-immigrant narratives.

We fostered a sustainable narrative ecosystem of artists and advocates working with each other.

We created a narrative praxis that allows individuals and organizations to align to advance pro-immigrant narratives while acting with a diversity of methods, timelines, and issues.

PART 1

The Butterfly Lab Approach

IN THIS SECTION we outline the activities of the Butterfly Lab, with a special focus on the process of designing and implementing narrative projects. We also talk about scale and diversity, and prototyping.

For the first six months of the Butterfly Lab, we worked on establishing a shared framework for approaching narrative and narrative strategy (outlined in more detail in Part 2 of this report). We forged a common understanding of what narrative is, what our narrative work is for, and how to think about narrative strategically.

In the second phase of the Butterfly Lab, cohort members worked on developing narrative prototype projects. These prototype projects allowed cohort members to implement narrative strategy directly. (If you want to access the tools the cohort members used to implement their prototypes, you can see the Toolkit below, or download it separately here.)

Thinking About Creativity and Risk

During this period of the Butterfly Lab, the politics of immigration were extremely volatile. The first phase of the work coincided with a presidential election in which immigration often took center stage against the backdrop of the coronavirus, which then-President Donald Trump used to quickly implement even more drastic anti-immigration policies. Borders were closed, asylees and refugees lost their rights of due process, and hate violence against migrants and immigrants rose. Even after the election of President Joe Biden, immigration politics remained fractious.

The Lab became a place where cohort members were afforded a bit of a sanctuary, where they could test new ideas and were encouraged to take risks. The value of prototyping lies in being able to test new ideas quickly in a short amount of time. In the pro-immigrant movement, stakes always feel urgent and high; often, taking risks can feel indulgent or even reckless. But in prototyping processes, "failure" is as great a teacher as "success." Narrative projects do not often produce transformative impacts in their first iterations and often have to be re-calibrated, tweaked and adjusted several times. All cohort members learned valuable lessons even if their projects did not deliver the immediate results they had hoped for.

> **Spaces that allow pro-immigrant narrative work to get creative, and to "fail" with low stakes, are critical to the growth of narrative work in the long run.**

Thinking About Scale

Cohort members were able to work at different scales, that is, to find and target the audiences they needed to reach. Scaling narrative projects for impact does not always mean reaching mass audiences right away. In the long run, the most successful projects support durable shifts in belief systems, worldviews, and behaviors in your target audience. They may then scale up from local or regional activations to broader audiences by replication or aggregation. For example, Monica Ramirez's Humans that Feed Us project at Justice for Migrant Women initially began as a hyper-local photographic art installation at a county fair in Sandusky County, exposing white rural communities, land-owners, consumers, and eaters to the stories of the migrant farmworkers who produce their local food.[3] In the next iteration of the project, Justice for Migrant Women moved across scales — from local to national, sector-specific to multi-sector,

by Monica Ramirez, Justice For Migrant Women. Photo by Sheri Trusty

rural to urban — by including the stories of more immigrant workers throughout the food chain, such as restaurant workers, dairy and poultry workers, and farmers. They are building partnerships with food justice advocates, food policy-makers, and academics; are expanding to pop-up art exhibitions across the nation; and are platforming to pop culture exposure through a partnership with Latina celebrity chef, Ingrid Hoffman's restaurants and television shows.

> **As Rinku Sen, Executive Director of the Narrative Initiative reminded us, "we often mistake scale for impact." Narrative work need not initially reach millions in order to have impact.**

Thinking About Diversity

To reflect the breadth and depth of pro-immigrant narrative work, the Butterfly Lab cohort was extremely diverse. Eight of its members were artists or cultural strategists, eight of its members were advocates, lawyers, policy analysts, communications professionals, or organizers.

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3   You can see their work at the Humans Who Feed Us website at: https://justice4women.org/the-humans-who-feed-us

They each had differing needs. Advocates tended to work with larger organizations with little training in narrative, as opposed to strategic communications. They tended to work in rapid-response or campaign modes. Artists tended to be much more knowledgeable about narrative strategy, and tended to work on longer-term, personal, and transformational work. The movement needs to connect and level up all of this work at the same time.

> As cohort member Aisha Shillingford put it, "We need to transform strategic communications and cultural strategy so that policy and communications folks include more imagination, feeling, and emotions in policy spaces, more dreaming and storytelling from artists. And we need artists to include more action in their work, creating socially-engaged narratives accountable and responsive to movements."

Making Narrative Projects

With these internal goals in mind, the Lab cohort spent the first six months learning theories of narrative and story, speaking with experts in narrative research, community organizing and deep canvassing, advertising, oral history, behavioral science, neuroscience, food ways, popular culture, and fiction, folklore, nonfiction, and journalism writing. In the second half of the Lab, which extended to ten months, the cohort members built and implemented narrative prototype projects to test and learn. (See our box on the Butterfly Lab Prototypes.)

In order to help cohort members better understand narrative and develop these prototype projects, the Butterfly Lab brought together a series of powerful frameworks and tools. These pieces allow practitioners to develop a design process that helps them analyze the narrative terrain, sharpen their narratives, identify and reach their audiences, choose the most effective forms and platforms to reach those audiences, focus and incorporate research, and evaluate their projects.

> These narrative frameworks and tools are included in the enclosed toolkit. Through them, we offer a praxis—a combination of theory and practice—that can serve as the basis for teaching and disseminating narrative strategy and narrative design best practices.

The Butterfly Lab cohort members began their prototyping process by deciding on their narratives, honing in on their audiences, and then designing their projects to move their audiences. (See our narrative design tools in the attached toolkit.)

Two members of the cohort, for instance, chose to work on advancing pro-immigrant narratives to Black audiences susceptible to anti-immigrant messaging. They then designed different forms—one a cartoon show, the other a cooking class/show—to try to reach these audiences. They used research to locate their audiences and built their content with a strong sense of the deep narratives to which they wanted to pull their audiences.

One cohort member experimented with new forms of digital content and cultural influencer strategies, designed for strategic placement on Youtube to off-ramp viewers who are susceptible to white nationalist rhetoric and algorithmic entrapment. Her prototype helped to disrupt pathways that produce xenophobic ideas and diverted stretch audiences away from race-baited content and misinformation online.

Two more chose to work on border issues. One hoped to transfigure narratives of danger and fear into narratives of belonging and interdependence. Another sought to develop art and ceremonial practices that might encourage people to think of "borders like water."

Artwork by Angelica Frausto, Detention Watch Network

While each of the cohort members had unique ways of approaching the narrative problem they faced, all were encouraged to learn from each other to see differences of form, ideology, approach, and more not as insurmountable, but as varied paths to the same destination, winning a new majority over to a new worldview. In the end, cohort members came away able to be more focused, rigorous, and effective in developing narrative projects and advancing their narrative strategies.
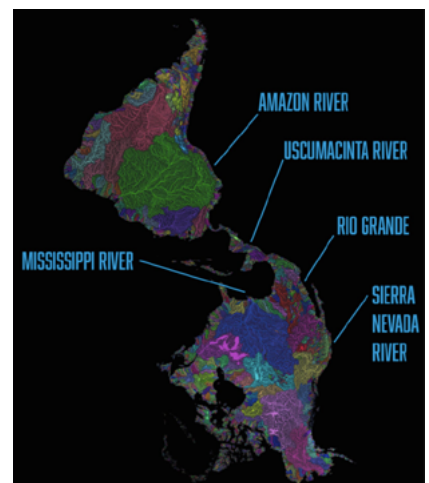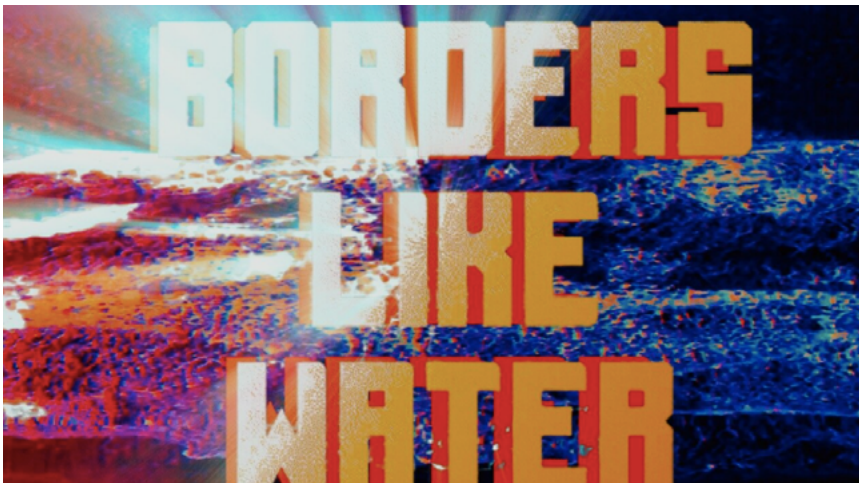
'Borders Like Water', images by ChristinaMaria Patiño Houle and Las Imaginistas

The Butterfly Lab Prototypes

Thirteen of the sixteen Butterfly Lab members produced prototype projects that were designed and implemented between January 2021 and September 2021. They represented a broad cross-section of the current narrative work in the migrant and immigrant justice movement, including:

- » Expanding refugee and resettlement policies
- » Ending immigrant detention and deportation
- » Recognizing the dignity and humanity of immigrants
- » Building immigrant identity and pride
- » Rethinking borders and border policies
- » Interrupting right-wing anti-immigrant radicalization
- » Centering indigenous peoples in immigration narratives
- » Challenging anti-immigration narratives in Black communities
- » Lifting up immigrant workers in farm work and resilience economies
- » Winning pathways to citizenship

Together these projects reached millions in a broad-cross section of audience segments across the country, including:

- » U.S.-Born, Immigrant, and Migrant audiences
- » Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Arab American, and White audiences
- » Urban and Rural audiences
- » Across all political parties / affiliations
- » Traditional media, social media, as well as in-person exhibitions and installations
- » Core, stretch, and opposition audiences

Some of the narratives these projects advanced included:

- » Immigrants are essential from their labor to their lives.
- » Black futures must include descendants of slaves and immigrants.
- » "Free Them All."[4]
- » "Borders Like Water."[5]
- » Identity, dignity, and pride of Mayan, Latinx, and Syrian American people, and undocumented immigrants.

For more detail on the individual prototype projects, please see Appendix 2.

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4   This is a narrative developed and advanced by Detention Watch Network. For more information, go to: https://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/freethemall

5   This is a narrative and network developed and advanced by Las Imaginistas. For more information, go to: https://www.lasimaginistas.com/borders

PART 2

Building Narrative Power to Win

IN THIS SECOND SECTION, we outline the way we think about narrative and narrative strategy. Our topline points are:

- **We need to reorient ourselves towards winning narrative power.[6]**

- **Narrative is as important as policy. It is a level at which societies move.**

- **Narrative must be advanced simultaneously through different stories and messages, using different forms and voices, at different scales and timelines.**

- **We must align ourselves to build our infrastructure and advance our ideas.**

- **To move forward in narrative strategy, the movement needs to invest in both continuity and risk.**

Rashad Robinson defines narrative power as "the ability to change the norms and rules our society lives by. Narrative infrastructure is the set of systems we maintain in order to do that reliably over time." The real question for our narrative movements is how we build and sustain power for narratives that enable us to make the world we want. The Butterfly Lab's approach centers on building narrative power, infrastructure, and alignment.

We Need To Talk About Narrative Power

> Building power for pro-immigrant narratives is about moving people toward values and beliefs that align and connect them with their community, and activate ways of being that help all.

We often think of narrative as something that needs to "change" or "shift." We do need to shift and change the dominant narratives that are harming us. But this approach presumes that we are always emergent and on the outside. It diminishes the narrative fights that we have already won, often through great effort, and must protect. By definition, emergent and

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6 Rashad Robinson, "Changing Our Narrative About Narrative." Othering and Belonging Institute. April 18. 2018.
   Download at: https://belonging.berkeley.edu/changing-our-narrative-about-narrative

dominant narratives are always battling in the culture. "Shifting" and "changing" should never be mistaken for the end goal, which is *winning an enduring majority*. Social movements have always been explicit about thinking and working to build power. We need to *build power* for our narratives to win.

> **Winning is about making our narratives the dominant narratives and then defending them, through narrative alignment, an infrastructure that produces narrative work, and an ecosystem that reinforces it.**

People are complicated and, by nature, hold contradictory beliefs and values. They react to stories, which activate these beliefs and values. Stories, then, are the basic unit of change. Messages are reminders of what we think and how we might choose to act. Narrative is the level at which society moves.

Narratives are made up of stories and messages which come together to help people make sense of a problem. When people believe in a narrative, they express values they hold and take action on those values. Narrative activates people to think a certain way about the problem and suggests a series of actions to take. Different narratives activate different sets of beliefs and values in people. Building power for our narratives is about getting people to think and act on the beliefs and values that we share. A shared narrative is one that simply feels like "common sense" to a group of people. We want our narratives to become "common sense" for a majority.

> **Narrative work is about activating people to go where they want to go, whether they know it yet or not.**

Because people form their identities and beliefs from many different influences, they need to be reached in many different ways—for example, through analog and social media, the arts, popular culture, their loved ones, institutions, or public individuals they trust. People's values and beliefs can be shaped by what some strategists call "immersion" in a set of narratives repeated across media, culture, and institutions. They may also develop their beliefs and values through their own life histories, experiences, and desires.

We have a better chance of building narrative power if we work on different fronts at different timelines to move different audiences in the same direction. We do know that "message discipline" can work in the context of time-bound campaigns. But people are activated at different velocities, and never just within the context of legislative, electoral, or policy campaigns. As a movement, we should aspire to reach people all the time. As Rashad Robinson has put it, "we need the ability to follow through on narrative and cultural dispersion and immersion—over time, across segments, and at scale."[7]

by Monica Ramirez, Justice For Migrant Women. Photos by Sheri Trusty

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7 Rashad Robinson, ibid.

Narrative System and Narrative Ecosystem

> **We should be advancing our narratives along different timelines, using diverse stories and messages across diverse media and platforms.**

Thinking about our work in this way allows us to understand how our individual and organizational narrative work may relate to each other's, and how we might be able to work together.

We can work together across issue areas. We can work together respecting our different interests and capacities: advocacy, arts and cultural work, activism, organizing, research, lobbying, and more. We can work together across forms and platforms: social media, the arts, journalism, and popular culture. We can work together across different timelines: in rapid-response and short-term campaign work as well as longer-term culture- and institution-building work.

We propose aligning around a narrative system and building a robust narrative ecosystem to advance our collective movement work to build narrative power.[8]

> **We define a *narrative system* as a set of deep narratives that together describe the worldview we want to activate at a majority level. A narrative system provides a "destination" for narrative projects ranging from rapid-response and policy campaigns to cultural strategies and longer-term narrative work. It sets our values, helps us to find alignment and consensus across projects and timelines, and allows us to connect our work with other social movements. The Butterfly Lab's Narrative System is included in Part 3 of this report.**

> **We define a *narrative ecosystem* as a network of connected individuals and organizations that can share knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas, capacities, and work to advance a narrative system across a diversity of fronts along different timelines.**

A narrative system gives individuals and organizations a set of deep narratives that serve as a shared destination—the worldview and the world that we want to inspire a new majority to make. It allows people working across different issues and constituencies a way to align that encourages unity while allowing for diversity. A narrative system acknowledges our collective

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8   In this work, we are in conversation with a community of cultural strategists who have been actively testing, developing, and advancing narrative strategy and methodology, including the Pop Culture Collaborative and Liz Manne Strategies (narrative system frameworks), Culture Surge and the Center for Cultural Power (narrative ecosystems), and Color of Change, Illuminative, and National Domestic Workers Alliance (narrative system activation). We have also cited Color of Change President Rashad Robinson's work on narrative power for the Othering and Belonging Institute. Along with all those whom we have cited above, we share a hope that all of this work may better help to align immigrant narrative strategy with those of other social justice movements to build robust narrative ecosystems and narrative power.

contributions and can open up new ways for us to understand each other's work. For example, lawyers who are working on immediate border issues and artists who are trying to imagine a world free of borders might be able to explore together how to rethink the narrative of the border itself.

The forging of such relationships then develops a robust narrative ecosystem. What we want readers to imagine is building a narrative ecosystem that parallels the policy ecosystems that already exist, allowing individuals and organizations to work together in new ways, and directing our shared work toward building power for the narratives that can win a new, enduring majority.

We need a broad diversity of approaches, projects, voices and experiences that produce scaling, continuous, immersive work, as well as experimental work that expands our opportunities to reach new audiences. We need both continuity (with work that is succeeding) and risk (to discover new ways to connect with our audiences) as we grow our narrative strategy and alignment for a pro-immigrant future.

Let's Be Precise: Change The *Dominant* Narrative

In our current moment, anti-immigrant forces control the dominant narratives about immigration, which include fear, scarcity, and exploitation. Because messages and stories are always interpreted through narrative, these harmful narratives determine even the ways that people receive and interpret our messages and stories. What is worse, our work may sometimes unwittingly reinforce the dominant narratives that work against us.

For example, one dominant narrative is that the primary value of immigrants is in the labor they do for "real" Americans. This narrative prevents many from seeing the full humanity of immigrants. In turn, this narrative can support narratives of exploitation (the hard-working immigrant vs. the parasitic immigrant) and of exception (the deserving vs. the undeserving immigrant). When we say, "Immigrants are essential", we mean that they are essential to their loved ones, their neighbors, their communities, and all of society, not just to their bosses. But when already influenced by the dominant narrative, some people think of immigrants as only "essential workers."

Our cohort worked on creating solutions to this narrative problem. Paola Mendoza, working with Marielena Hincapié, Saket Soni, and Monica Ramírez, developed a series of arts pieces that highlighted undocumented essential workers and the stories of those whose lives were taken by COVID-19.[9] Her work deliberately invited people to see undocumented workers as parents,

by Paola Mendoza, Immigrants are Essential

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9   You can view the work at: https://essential-immigrants.com

spouses, and members of their community, as equally human in their lives and deaths. It subverts the harmful dominant narrative and takes audiences toward the world we want, one in which immigrants' dignity and humanity is valued as much or more than their labor.

> **Building power for pro-immigrant narratives is about moving people toward values and beliefs that align and connect them with their community. It is about activate ways of being that help all.**

We Must Build A New Consensus

Those who maintain the status quo that keeps us divided, devastated, and out of power simply need to maintain the current, broken system. We have an additional burden. We are called to forge a new consensus. Our narrative work must move a majority of people to imagine and act to create a world that does not yet exist. In order to make that world a reality, we must orient ourselves toward the world we want to win. The praxis—the theory and practice—of a narrative system and ecosystem helps us to think strategically about how we can achieve something much bigger than the sum of our parts.

Here, too, we look to examples such as #BlackLivesMatter or #MeToo as a guide. We can think about how hashtags advanced by Black women organizers have come to serve as narratives under which millions around the world have been able to tell their stories and press for concrete change. The greatest measure of our success is when our narratives are adopted, expanded, and extended far outside of our circles, when our values become part of the common glue that holds our culture together.

NARRATIVE ECOSYSTEM

Cognitive & Social Scientitsts
Strategic Communications Experts
Journalists
Researchers
Artists & Performers
Movement Organizers
Cultural Strategists & Organizers
Narrative Strategists

Source: Toward a New Gravity, The Narrative Initiative
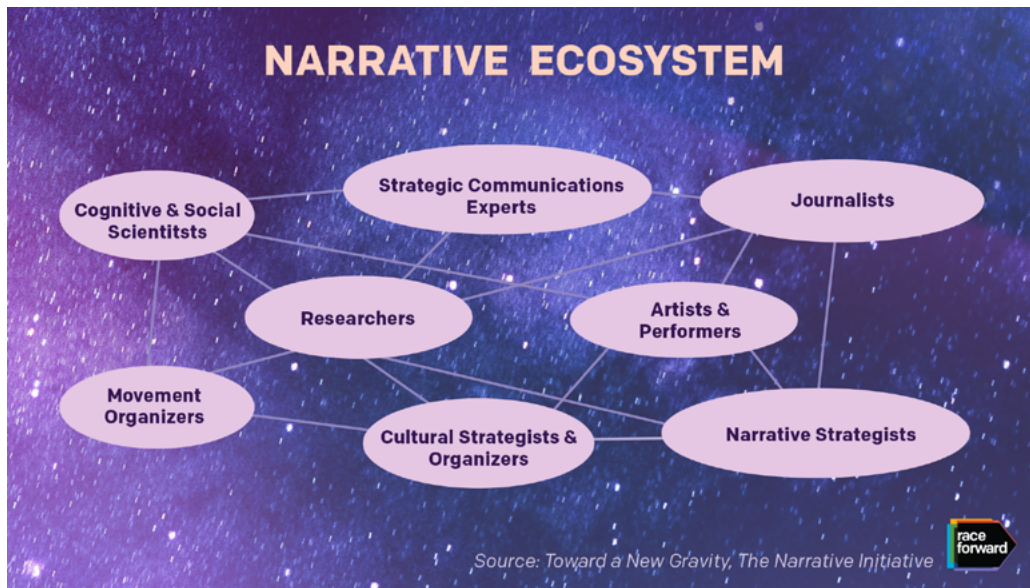
PART 3
Aligning The Movement

IN THIS LAST SECTION OF THE REPORT, we turn to the implications of the Butterfly Lab's learnings for the movement. Here are our toplines:

- **Our work must close the gap between the majority's stated beliefs and values and their actions that impact migrants and immigrants.**

- **To build a shared movement-wide narrative strategy, we must develop a narrative system that can align diverse work around cultural values.**

- **In turn, this framework can activate an ecosystem of networks, narrative projects, and content that may build a new majority.**

- **The movement needs to level up its narrative knowledge, skills, and capacities.**

- **Narrative leaders must work in a coordinated, aligned way along a wide variety of fronts to build narrative power.**

A Narrative System for the Pro-Immigrant Movement

The migrant and immigrant justice movement needs a diversity of projects, approaches, and voices working on different issues at different scales to reach both core and stretch audiences. (For more on audiences, see our narrative design tools in the attached toolkit.)

> **A vital movement fosters robust and proliferating ways to solve shared problems. It welcomes diverse voices and approaches while reaching toward a unity of purpose and destination.**

In order to develop this unity of purpose and destination, the Butterfly Lab cohort built a framework and tool for a narrative systemanchored by six deep narratives. This process built on the groundbreaking work of the Immigrant Movement Visioning Project, which, in 2019, brought together nearly 50 movement leaders to draft a long-term policy "vision statement" that articulated "what we long for in our shared future and the values we believe are necessary to achieve that north star." They named five "freedoms" to fight for and demand: the freedom

to move, freedom to thrive, freedom to stay, freedom to work, and freedom to transform.[10] Inspired by that process but wishing to extend that work from policy into narrative, the sixteen members of the Butterfly Lab cohort collectively articulated six deep narratives centering their shared values. These deep narratives form a narrative system that will allow immigrant narrative workers to find alignment and consensus across projects and timelines, and to connect their work with other social movements.

Narrative System for our FUTURE

Interdependence
We recognize our interdependence with each other and with all life. We recognize that our fate is interconnected with each other's, and so we practice mutuality.

Abundance
We recognize that there is enough for all if we live in alignment and the right relationship with the world around us, practicing love, care, community, and regeneration. When we center mindsets of sufficiency and generosity, resources can flourish into abundance. We call people toward an abundance of imagination, to make a leap with us toward our shared future.

Belonging
We see each other, welcome each other, and call each other into community. We recognize and respect the diversity of our peoples and communities, acknowledging differences as invigorating and powerful assets that push us toward transformation. We see each other's joys and struggles with clear eyes, and care for each other as if our own. We recognize the ways that systems have oppressed and harmed people differently and make equity our central practice.

Safety
We collaborate as communities to ensure collective wellbeing and peace with justice. We build these solutions in community and use equity as our guiding principle, seeking to repair the harm against those most impacted.

Dignity
We believe in the inherent value and dignity of all life that exists. All should be able to exist and express their pride in being, practicing and transmitting their identities, such as their cultures, languages, and spiritual beliefs, as long as they do not harm or debase the dignity of others.

Freedom to Thrive
We believe all beings should thrive and that communities and cultures should have equal agency to make decisions about their lives, relationships, communities, and futures. In balance and alignment with our world, we should be able to pursue our dreams, engage in quality and fulfilling work, and live with joy, dignity, and love, regardless of race, national origin, gender identity, class, caste, religion, and ability.

A narrative system activates a narrative ecosystem, revealing the ways in which networks can advance these deep narratives. Those who work across different parts of the movement— the arts, culture, strategy, media, journalism, research, and the academy—can find ways to divide up the labor and more efficiently share insights, best practices, and capacities. A vital movement requires relationality, and for work to be executed simultaneously at multiple scales all at once.

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10 See Marielena Hincapié, "Five Freedoms: A Twenty-First Century Policy Vision for Immigrant Rights," in Immigration Matters: Movements, Visions, and Strategies for a Progressive Future. Ruth Milkman, Deepak Bhargava, and Penny Lewis, editors. The New Press, 2021.

> Recognizing and purposefully building narrative ecosystems encourages asset-based strategy, where individuals, organizations, and institutions are working together from their relative strengths, rather than in reaction to the problems and differences that may segregate them (such as ideology, areas of work, policies, approaches, and timelines).

Preliminary Narrative Research Findings

The Butterfly Lab then worked with the research firm Harmony Labs to better understand how core and stretch audiences reacted to different deep narratives advanced by the cohort members in the narrative system. Harmony Labs was chosen at this stage because of its values-based approach to understanding audiences, as opposed to other approaches that center ideology, party preference, or racial demographics. Their work helped us to better identify the movement's core audiences, those who are already with us, and stretch audiences, those we need to build a new majority. Their findings resonated with what we know, and pushed us to consider new directions in future work. Specifically, they found:

» **Nearly everyone believes immigrants deserve to belong and thrive.**
» **But many find it difficult to imagine an America in which that may be true.**
» **Core audiences respond well to all narratives the cohort members tried, including narratives that focus on shared humanity, compassion, dignity, and respect.**
» **Stretch audiences do not respond well to these aforementioned narratives. They do respond well to narratives of striving, responsibility, and liberty.**
» **Our narratives need to make sense of the past and present, and point toward immigration futures that are compelling to all.**

In Phase 2 of the Butterfly Lab we will explore further how to close the gap between what people think and how they act. We will do this through supporting narrative projects and movement-wide research, and building the capacity of practitioners across the movement to do more aligned work that moves the audiences we need to reach a new majority.

Join the urgent effort to bring at-risk Afghans to safety.

Visit our **Action for Afghanistan** page to learn how you can help: bit.ly/ActForAfghanistan

IRAP International Refugee Assistance Project

International Refugee Assistance Project

What we have learned is that, on a movement level, our narrative work needs to learn how to bridge stretch audiences to become Core audiences. We need to ask how we can engage them with on-ramp narratives like striving, responsibility, and liberty to move them toward the

deep narratives we want to advance. We must activate the majority's belief that immigrants deserve to belong and thrive, move them to imagine that such a world is possible, and act to build that world.

The Work Ahead

These findings suggest that, as a movement, we have more work to do to move people from general pro-immigrant sentiment to actively advancing pro-immigrant narratives and policies. They also suggest that stretch audiences reject our stories, messages, and narratives because they may filter them through dominant narratives, such as narratives of scarcity, law and order, and labor. But we also learned that there may be ways to move stretch audiences away from these harmful dominant narratives.

We have more work to do in determining which narrative "on-ramps" can move stretch audiences toward our deep narratives, which deep narratives are the most promising for transforming particular audience segments, and what forms and platforms for narrative may be worth investment. We need to share more knowledge about our core and stretch audiences to enable leaders at all levels to advance narrative work.

Through our work to date, we have also recognized the need to build greater knowledge, capacity, and skills around narrative in the movement, greater alignment and relationality in the movement, and investment in "both/and" strategies that support work at different scales, advance continuity while encouraging risk, and reach both core and stretch audiences.

Based on our findings, we propose that imagination is the critical gap between thought and action, between people's beliefs and values and their support for pro-immigrant policies. Our collective work needs to make irresistible pro-migrant and pro-immigrant futures that people can imagine and that energize them to work to make them real. We are at our best and most successful when people's creativity can be unleashed to elaborate on these values and this vision. We win when the world we want no longer feels like the rock that we are pushing up the hill alone, but the future that all of us have helped to take flight.

A FUTURE FOR ALL OF US

A Report on Phase 1 of the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy

Narrative Design Toolkit

BY JEFF CHANG, NAYANTARA SEN, JANELLE TREIBITZ, SARA UBDULLAH, and KANA HAMMON

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Introduction

WELCOME STORYTELLERS, DREAM WEAVERS, AND COMMUNITY BUILDERS,

> **Cultural change precedes social change. Narrative drives policy. That is why we must be as strategic and rigorous in building narrative power as we are in building all other forms of power.**

This guide, which was developed in the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy, will help you get started in thinking about narrative, articulating your narrative strategy, and designing and implementing your narrative projects. By narrative project, we mean any activity that advances narrative goals, including messaging campaigns, social media campaigns, videos, art installations, street theater, deep canvassing, direct actions, mass mobilizations, and more. The tools here will allow you to analyze the narrative terrain, sharpen your narratives, identify and reach your audiences, and choose the most effective forms and platforms to reach those audiences.

Narrative work is about *meaning-making* and *transformation*. Social movements have always been explicit about thinking and working to *build power*. We want to build and sustain power for narratives that enable us to make the world we want. **Winning is about making *our* narratives the dominant narratives and then defending them.** Transforming people's worldviews and belief systems, and creating the sustainable cultural conditions for them to choose, behave, and act differently is the deep and rigorous work of building narrative power for social justice.

Before you embark on your journey, you may want to read **our Butterfly Lab report**. We elaborate on our theory and practice there. But you don't need to do that to get started. To make the best use of the toolkit, we recommend first grounding yourself in our Key Definitions.

The **Narrative Design Star** will orient you to the process of aligning your narrative goals, impacts, audiences, and forms, so that you can create nuanced and strategic projects that move your audiences towards pro-immigrant narratives. This toolkit also includes a set of worksheets to support your ideation and design, and a comprehensive step-by-step **Narrative Project Design Guide.** We then introduce you to our concepts of the **Narrative System** and **Narrative Ecosystem** to help you think about how you can collaborate with others to move your narrative work over time, across audiences, and at different scales through strategic alignment.

NOW LET'S GET STARTED!

Our Terms and Definitions

LANGUAGE IS ALIVE — and as it transforms and shifts in response to emerging cultural conditions, it also helps us create new meaning and new connections. At the time of this publication, there are multiple organizations, networks, and leaders that are helping to define the field, practices, and frameworks of narrative and cultural strategy. There are several definitions and interpretations of narrative and cultural strategy; many of them are complementary, even though parts of our field use different words to describe similar or interrelated concepts. In the Butterfly Lab, we have leaned heavily on thought leadership and definitional work that came before us, and from collaborators and guides in the field. We define the following terms, concepts, and practices this way:

MESSAGE   Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that serve as reminders of what we think and how we might choose to act. They are most often used in the context of campaigns and strategic communications. The best of them become narratives.

STORY   Stories have discrete elements and building blocks such as characters, setting, conflict and action that unfold through a plot, over an arc. Human brains are wired to interpret and create meaning through stories, so stories are the basic unit of change.

NARRATIVE   An array of related and connected stories and messages on a particular subject, issue, or problem. They suggest causes, problems and solutions. We interpret stories and messages through them. Narratives evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action; they tell us how we should feel, think, and act. Narrative is the level at which society moves.

DEEP NARRATIVE   Narratives, in turn, are held together by underlying frameworks and values we call "deep narratives." These deep narratives constitute worldviews, the ways in which people understand their world.

NARRATIVE STRATEGY   Narrative strategy is the praxis of using stories, messages, and narratives in a purposeful way to move people toward the narratives, deep narratives, and worldviews we want to advance.

CULTURAL STRATEGY   We like the definition used by the Center for Cultural Power — "Cultural Strategy is a practice that leverages the catalytic and emotional power of culture and the arts to shift attitudes, behaviors, resources, narratives and power."

NARRATIVE SYSTEM

We define a narrative system as a set of deep narratives that together describe the worldview we want to activate at a majority level. A narrative system provides a ''destination'' to ground narrative projects ranging from rapid-response and policy campaigns to cultural strategies and longer-term narrative work. It sets our values, helps us to find alignment and consensus across projects and timelines, and allows us to connect our work with other social movements.

NARRATIVE ECOSYSTEM

We define a narrative ecosystem as a network of connected individuals and organizations that can share knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas, capacities, and work to advance a narrative system across a diversity of fronts and along different timelines.

CORE AUDIENCE

A core audience is an audience whom we consider to be fundamentally in agreement with us already. Usually, our goal is to shore up and activate our core audiences to act in the ways that we need, and to lead others to do the same.

STRETCH AUDIENCE

A stretch audience is an audience whom we need to have on our side to win. Our goal is to make our stretch audiences into our core audience. Often, we will need to flex new muscles to understand, reach, and convert them.

A FEW ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS AND RESOURCES

» Narrative Initiative's Glossary of Terms in Toward New Gravity
» Narrative Initiative's Resource Library, including webinars, worksheets, and case studies
» Pop Culture Collaborative's Key Definitions - Pop Culture for Social Change

Tools for Narrative Project Design

IN THIS SECTION OF THE TOOLKIT, we offer you a set of tools developed through the Butterfly Lab to guide you through the narrative design process.

If you can, we recommend that you build in a process to test your work in a smaller prototype form. A prototype is simply a small test to see which parts of your project work. Narrative projects rarely achieve their desired reach, impact and activation in their first attempts. The value of narrative prototyping lies in being able to test new ideas quickly in a short amount of time. In the pro-immigrant movement, stakes often feel urgent and high, and risk is highly discouraged. But in a narrative design process, "failure" is as great a teacher as "success."

Use these tools to design and implement narrative projects, pausing and returning to the drawing board to iterate, re-design, test, and adjust. Projects may need to be tweaked a few times before you can hit the four corners of the Narrative Design Star and land on the clearest, testable articulation. Adjusting your design based on your audience's reactions and its impacts (versus your anticipated impacts) can inspire changes of all kinds. Thoughtful prototyping requires your team to be clear, rigorous, focused, and aspirational in design, while also holding assumptions lightly and being open to learning and change.

HERE YOU WILL FIND

1. The Narrative Design Star to act as your design compass - a framework with correlated worksheets to make sure you have the most key elements of narrative design in place.
   » The Narrative Pyramid Worksheet to help you shape, refine, and align your narrative strategy.
   » The Audience Worksheet to help you get as concrete and specific as possible about your audiences.
   » The Goals Worksheet to help you clarify both your narrative and project goals.
   » The Form Worksheet to help you brainstorm what form your narrative project will take.
2. The Step-by-Step Narrative Project Design Guide to bring all your design elements together, engage a last round of revisions and iterations, and finalize your project details.
3. An Introduction to Narrative System and Ecosystem to think strategically about possible collaborations and help you ground your work in shared deep narratives for the pro-immigrant movement.

Narrative Design Star

OUR DESIGN STAR ILLUSTRATES THE KEY ELEMENTS YOU NEED for a strategic narrative project. You can start a design process from any point on the star. The starting point will guide the logic for making choices around the other points. For instance, if you start by knowing what audience you want to engage, then that choice will naturally lead you to choose a narrative, goals, and a project form that have the potential to reach and resonate with that audience.

We invite you to use this star as a compass for your design process. Choose where to start based on what makes the most sense for your priorities and context. Then use our worksheets to help you develop and iterate each point of the star.

We recommend gathering your team and going through this design process together. Once you have made your way through all of the Design Star worksheets, you'll have the essential elements you need for an effective narrative project. The final Step-by-Step Narrative Project Design Guide will help you bring it all home and turn your project design into a plan.

DESIGN STEP ONE

Use the Design Star and linked worksheets to clarify your key design elements.

DESIGN STEP TWO

Use the Step-by-Step Narrative Project Design Guide to bring all your design elements together, finalize your design decisions, and map out the concrete details.

Narrative Pyramid Worksheet

THE NARRATIVE PYRAMID IS A TOOL to help us understand how messages, stories, narratives, and deep narratives work together to produce and reinforce values, attitudes, emotions, and actions around a particular issue or problem. It helps us to see how the opposition stacks its message, stories, narratives, and deep narratives, and how we need to construct our own narrative pyramids to advance pro-immigrant narratives.

Aligning your messages, stories, and narratives with the selected deep narratives is important for moving people toward the world we want to make. For example, we want to avoid launching short-term messaging campaigns that may reinforce harmful narratives. ***A robust narrative strategy links, aligns, and reinforces all four parts of the Narrative Strategy Pyramid from deep narratives down through messages.***

The following worksheet is designed to help you — along with your team and collaborators — to analyze the narrative terrain and identify gaps and opportunities for narrative strategy and alignment in your work.

Narrative Strategy Creates Alignment

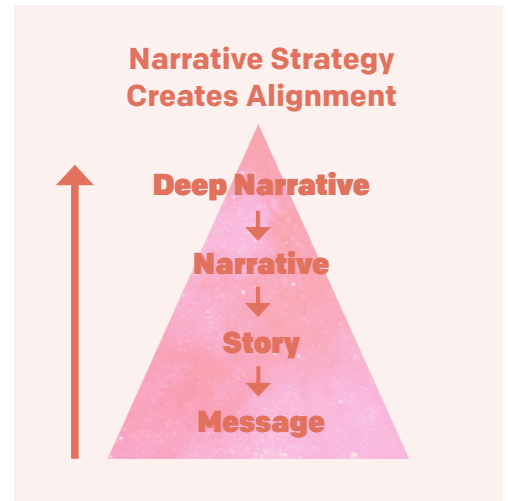Deep Narrative
↓
Narrative
↓
Story
↓
Message

STEP 1: FILL OUT THE NARRATIVE PYRAMID WORKSHEET

Complete the narrative pyramid worksheet. We recommend that you work through both sides of the pyramid tool to map your desired narrative against the opposition narrative. Also, you may want to reference our Narrative System to see if any of the deep narratives developed by movement leaders in the Butterfly Lab could be useful to you. We've provided a sample worksheet based on the "Love is Love" narrative from the Marriage Equality movement, in case that is helpful.

STEP 2: CHECK YOUR NARRATIVE ALIGNMENT

After you've filled out the Narrative Pyramid, use the guiding questions below to return to your side of the Pyramid and recheck each level in terms of alignment.

❑ Do your deep narratives, narratives, stories, and messages all align with the vision of the world you are trying to build? If not, how can you make your side of the Pyramid describe more of the future that you want?

❑ Might any part of your stories, messages, or narratives inadvertently reinforce harmful dominant narratives about immigrants, migrants, or refugees? If so, what adjustments can you make to eliminate or subvert those harmful narratives?

SAMPLE NARRATIVE PYRAMID

Marriage Equality Narrative

OPPOSITION	OURS
DEEP NARRATIVES *The underlying frameworks and values that form a worldview.* Tradition Stability Scarcity	**DEEP NARRATIVES** *The underlying frameworks and values that form a worldview.* Equality Inclusion Love
NARRATIVES *An array of related stories and messages that together evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action.* Marriage is a lifetime individual commitment between a man and a woman.	**NARRATIVES** *An array of related stories and messages that together evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action.* Love is love Marriage equality
STORIES *Stories have characters and a story arc. They create meaning and are the basic unit of change.* Stories of love and commitment between a man and a woman	**STORIES** *Stories have characters and a story arc. They create meaning and are the basic unit of change.* Stories of love and commitment between same-sex couples Stories of people supporting their LGBTQ friends'
MESSAGES *Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that remind us of what we think and how we might choose to act.* Marriage is between man and wife Rights aren't just handed out	**MESSAGES** *Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that remind us of what we think and how we might choose to act.* Love is love

NARRATIVE PYRAMID WORKSHEET

OPPOSITION	OURS
DEEP NARRATIVES *The underlying frameworks and values that form a worldview.*	**DEEP NARRATIVES** *The underlying frameworks and values that form a worldview.*
NARRATIVES *An array of related stories and messages that together evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action.*	**NARRATIVES** *An array of related stories and messages that together evoke emotion, offer analysis, and suggest action.*
STORIES *Stories have characters and a story arc. They create meaning and are the basic unit of change.*	**STORIES** *Stories have characters and a story arc. They create meaning and are the basic unit of change.*
MESSAGES *Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that remind us of what we think and how we might choose to act.*	**MESSAGES** *Hashtags, slogans, ideas, taglines that remind us of what we think and how we might choose to act.*

Audience Worksheet

THIS AUDIENCE WORKSHEET will help you identify your main audience(s), outline their key characteristics, and figure out what narratives and content might resonate with them.

IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCE

PRIMARY AUDIENCE   **SECONDARY AUDIENCE**   **OPPOSITION**
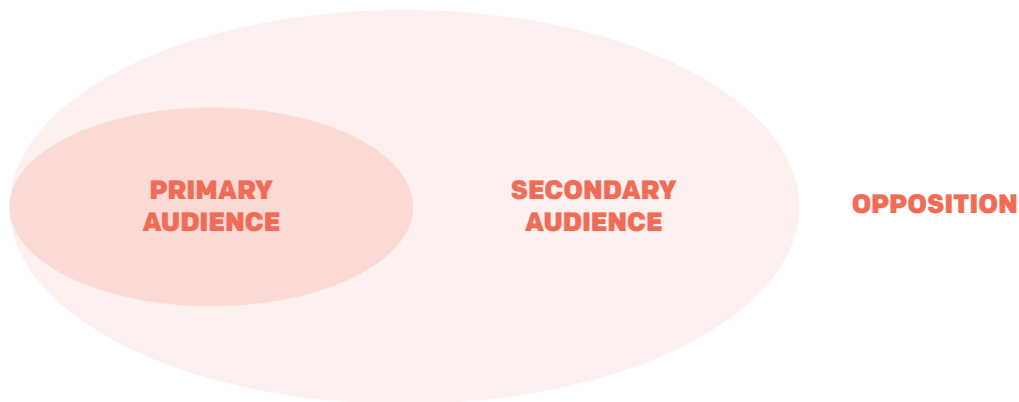
1 **Based on your completed narrative pyramid worksheet, who do you want to reach?**

	Describe your audiences:
Primary Audience *This is the audience you are directly targeting with your project.*	
Secondary Audience *This is an audience who might encounter your project, and whom you have some intention to engage, but who is not your primary target.*	
Opposition *This is an audience who will resist or challenge your project. You will likely not target them directly, but it will be important to anticipate their reactions.*	

2 Why focus on this particular primary and secondary audience?
What are the strategic benefits of reaching these audiences?

3 What do your audiences care about?

	CORE VALUES	WHAT MOTIVATES THEM	WHO OR WHAT INFLUENCES THEM?
Primary Audience			
Secondary Audience			
Opposition			

4 Where are they? Where will you reach them?

	Where do they spend time? (be specific about their places of engagement)	What do they do for fun/learning/ improvement/ spiritual experiences?	What media/art/ culture/ influencers do they engage?
Primary Audience			
Secondary Audience			

5   **What challenges do you foresee in reaching these audiences?**

6   **How might your audiences receive and react to your selected narrative?**

	What about your narrative would resonate with them?	What confusion or disconnection might they experience? What might they not understand?	What criticisms might they have? (e.g. if dominant narrative is winning)
Primary Audience			
Secondary Audience			
Opposition			

7   **How might your opposition react to your narrative?**

8   **How might your opposition's reaction to your narrative strategy help build your audience? How might you create narrative on-ramps or conditions to favorably activate your secondary audiences ?** (We're playing narrative chess here — project the reaction to the reaction.)

Goals Worksheet

THIS WORKSHEET HELPS YOU CLARIFY AND DISTINGUISH between your narrative and project impact goals. In cases where the project impact goal is to have a narrative impact, both goals will be the same. Other projects will have distinct goals.

For example, if you are trying to pass a progressive border policy and you want to challenge the "lawless border" narrative in your project, then your project impact goal might be "to compel lawmakers to support our policy vision and pass our proposed bill", while your narrative goal might be "to advance a 'safety is strong communities' narrative with stories of vibrant, cross-border community-building."

Discuss with your team the goals you have for your project and what you're hoping your project will accomplish for your narrative.

1 **What is your project impact goal? What impact do you want your project to have on your primary audiences? On your issue?**

2 **What is your narrative goal for this project? Are you trying to reframe or challenge your opposition's narrative? Build support for your own? What is the narrative impact you want to have on your primary audiences?**

Form Worksheet

THIS WORKSHEET WILL HELP YOU GENERATE IDEAS for what form your project will take. Developing the shape of a narrative project is part strategy, part creativity. We will provide some exploratory questions below to help you reflect on both.

Almost anything can serve as a vehicle to advance a narrative. Your project could take the form of a photography exhibit or YouTube video, a mixtape or a Tik Tok challenge, a science fiction series or a holiday-themed event. Or it could take the form of more traditional movement tactics such as direct actions, lobbying days, rallies, or marches.

Whatever form you choose, we invite you to use this worksheet to lean into your own creativity and have some fun brainstorming with your team.

BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

Feel free to explore any question in any order.

❋ What do you know about your audience? What do they like to do? Who influences them? What entertainment and media platforms are they on? What type of content do they typically like to experience or consume? What does this knowledge suggest about which forms would be likely to reach and resonate with them?

If you already know your narrative, what would it look like to embody it? What symbols or models might boldly illustrate your narrative?

> **Example: To change the dominant narrative about people with criminal records, the People's Paper Coop worked with returning citizens to make recycled paper out of their old criminal records, put their photos on it, and write a caption describing what people don't see about them when they look at their criminal records. They created murals with the resulting papers and used them as an advocacy tool.**

✳ What does your desired future look and feel like? What values are central to the society you are trying to build? What are the shared holidays, rituals, and celebrations that grow from those values? How would your society's institutions function differently than they do now? Is there anything from that future that you could "bring back" and manifest now?

> **Example: To build power for a narrative supporting a $19 billion bank bailout, a group of Austrian architecture students created a scale model of a sustainable city that could be built for the same price tag as the bailout. They displayed the model in a public square and gave tours of the city to audiences.**

✳ Are any of your opposition's narratives successful enough that it's worth challenging them? Can you think of ways to satirize them? Can you think of ways to illuminate the harmful underlying deep narratives that drive the opposition's narratives? Are there specific media platforms, channels, or in-person activations that are more likely to be effective in helping audiences divest from opposition narratives?

> **Example: The Greater than Fear campaign in Minnesota invited social media audiences to put photos of their dogs into a digital frame that made their dogs look like "dog-whistle-fighting" superheroes. People would then post the photos on social media to call out racist dog whistles from politicians.**

✳ Are there any significant symbols, locations, or dates that would help you illustrate the stories you want to highlight?

> **Example: Activist Bree Newsome scaled a 30-foot pole to take down the Confederate battle flag that was displayed on the grounds of the South Carolina State House in order to draw attention to institutionalized white supremacy symbolized by the flag at the seat of power.**

✳ What creative assets do you have access to? Do you know a local band? Are you a poet? Does your organization have a relationship with an artist? List out all the creative assets that come to mind. Knowing that you have those relationships, can you imagine a way to collaborate and integrate any of those assets into your project?

✳ What kinds of activities and connections bring you joy? Can you think of project ideas that build on what you would have fun doing?

Step-by-Step Narrative Project Design Guide

THE STEP-BY-STEP NARRATIVE PROJECT DESIGN GUIDE is a multi-part worksheet to help you bring all of your project design elements together after you've completed the Narrative Pyramid, Audience, Goals, and Form Worksheets. Take the time with the previous tools so that by the time you sit down to develop your project timeline and budget, and advance into the more meticulous work-planning, your team feels confident and grounded in your project idea.

In this guide, questions will prompt you to plug in the results of your work from the Narrative Design Star worksheets. You will have a chance to dig a little deeper into your audience's experience, and then you'll move into project planning details.

LET'S GET STARTED!

YOUR NARRATIVES

Plug in the results of your Narrative Pyramid Worksheet here:

a Your Selected Narrative:

_____

b The Narrative(s) you are challenging (if applicable):
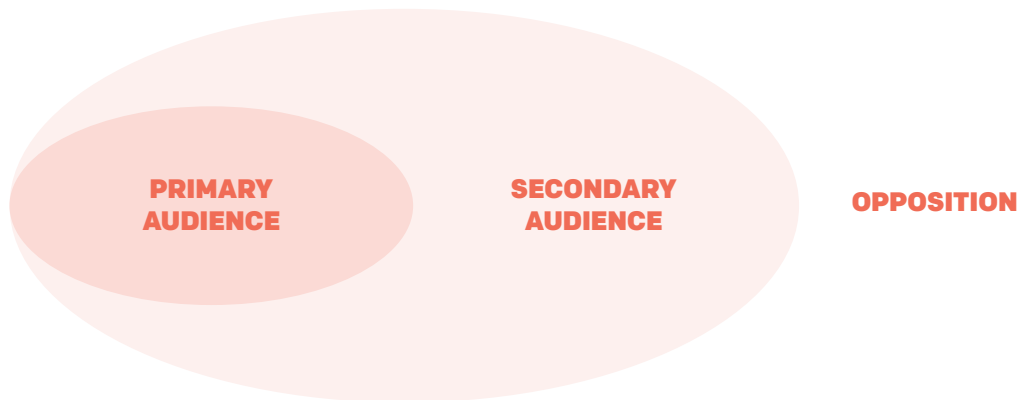
_____

c The Deep Narrative you are advancing:

_____

YOUR NARRATIVE & PROJECT IMPACT GOALS

Plug in the results of your Goals Worksheet here:

a Your project impact goal for this project:

_____

_____

_____

b Your narrative goal for this project:

_____

_____

_____

YOUR SELECTED AUDIENCE

PRIMARY
AUDIENCE

SECONDARY
AUDIENCE

OPPOSITION

Plug in the results of your Audience Worksheet here:

	Describe your audiences:
Primary Audience *This is the audience you are directly targeting with your project.*	
Secondary Audience *This is an audience who might encounter your project, and whom you have some intention to engage, but who is not your primary target.*	
Opposition *This is an audience who will resist or challenge your project. You will likely not target them directly, but it will be important to anticipate their reactions.*	

Take some time to reflect on your primary and secondary audiences and answer these questions.

a Your project will need to directly reach your primary audience. Do you have what you need to directly reach your primary audience? How and where will you reach them? How and where will you reach your secondary audience?

b What is your hypothesis that explains why you believe your project will work on your audiences? What do you know about your audiences and what are your assumptions that lead you to believe your project will have the intended impact?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FORM

a In a few short sentences, describe your narrative project idea here in a logline. *Example: (short description + audience + narrative + deep narrative) This video series for Instagram targets persuadable, non-immigrant millennials of color who have participated in Black Lives Matter protests through a variety of short, easily accessible stories. Our narrative is: just immigration is central to a racial justice agenda. We intend to advance deep narratives of mutuality and community—that we all belong to each other and that we need to look out for each other.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b Where will your project be implemented? Name your platform or venue. Use the final decisions from the Form Worksheet in the Design Star here.

_____

_____

c What will your target audience experience when encountering your project? Please be as descriptive here as possible, for instance: What will an audience member see or hear? What setting will they be in? What emotions are you hoping they will feel?

_____

_____

_____

d How will your project move your audience? How may it help put your audience in their "stretch zone"?

_____

_____

_____

PROJECT DESIGN TIMELINE

In this section, lay out the activities and steps involved in the design, implementation, and testing of your project. List dates where applicable.

Make sure in your activities you are documenting when you will be doing activities for the following:

- Project Design
- Project Implementation
- Project Testing

PROJECT PHASE	YOUR PROJECT ACTIVITIES	MONTH OF IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS AND NOTES *(*use this column to track your own progress)*
Design and Pre-Testing			
Project Implementation and Testing			
Results and Learning			

PROJECT COLLABORATORS AND IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Use the grid below to list names of people and organizations who will be directly responsible for the success of your project, and who will help you design, implement and evaluate it.

Who will you collaborate with in order to make your project happen? Besides yourself, who will help implement your idea and evaluate the results?

Process	Names of Collaborators and Implementers	Engaged by When?
Project Design		
Implementing Your Project		
Evaluating Results/ Reactions to your project		

While completing this section, you may also want to look at our Introduction to Narrative System and Narrative Ecosystem to spark more thinking about the process of collaboration.

PROJECT BUDGET

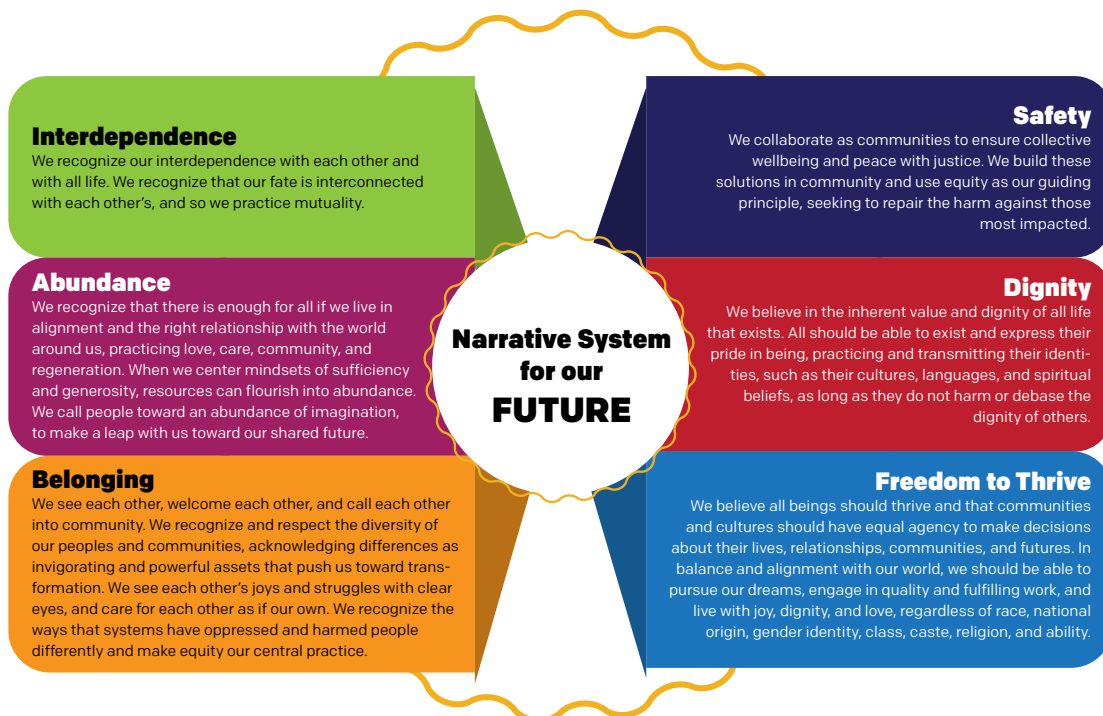Use this template below to share your project budget for your project design, implementation, and testing.

Activity and Expense Description	Projected Expense
Total Project Budget Required	
Current Amount Fundraised	

An Introduction to the Narrative System and the Narrative Ecosystem

BECAUSE WE EACH HAVE A PART TO PLAY in winning the culture, and because a multiplicity of narratives and approaches are necessary to ensure a thriving world for all, we introduce the frameworks of a narrative system and a narrative ecosystem.

People are moved and activated in different ways, along different timelines, and never just within the context of legislative, electoral, or policy campaigns. We have a better chance of building narrative power if we work with each other on different fronts, at different timelines, to move different audiences in the same direction. As a movement, we should aspire to reach people all the time.

As you design your project, use the narrative system framework to help you choose the deep narratives with which your project will align. Use the narrative ecosystem framework to help you think about how your project relates to others' work to collectively move people towards our worldview.

Narrative System for our FUTURE

Interdependence
We recognize our interdependence with each other and with all life. We recognize that our fate is interconnected with each other's, and so we practice mutuality.

Safety
We collaborate as communities to ensure collective wellbeing and peace with justice. We build these solutions in community and use equity as our guiding principle, seeking to repair the harm against those most impacted.

Abundance
We recognize that there is enough for all if we live in alignment and the right relationship with the world around us, practicing love, care, community, and regeneration. When we center mindsets of sufficiency and generosity, resources can flourish into abundance. We call people toward an abundance of imagination, to make a leap with us toward our shared future.

Dignity
We believe in the inherent value and dignity of all life that exists. All should be able to exist and express their pride in being, practicing and transmitting their identities, such as their cultures, languages, and spiritual beliefs, as long as they do not harm or debase the dignity of others.

Belonging
We see each other, welcome each other, and call each other into community. We recognize and respect the diversity of our peoples and communities, acknowledging differences as invigorating and powerful assets that push us toward transformation. We see each other's joys and struggles with clear eyes, and care for each other as if our own. We recognize the ways that systems have oppressed and harmed people differently and make equity our central practice.

Freedom to Thrive
We believe all beings should thrive and that communities and cultures should have equal agency to make decisions about their lives, relationships, communities, and futures. In balance and alignment with our world, we should be able to pursue our dreams, engage in quality and fulfilling work, and live with joy, dignity, and love, regardless of race, national origin, gender identity, class, caste, religion, and ability.
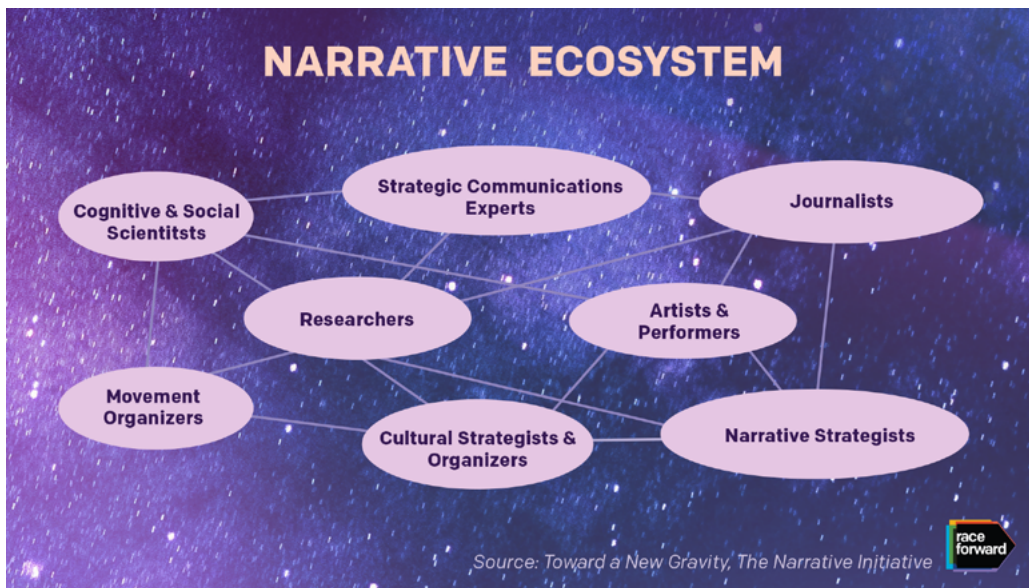
NARRATIVE SYSTEM

We define a narrative system as a set of deep narratives that together describe the worldview we want to activate at a majority level. A narrative system provides a "destination" to ground narrative projects ranging from rapid-response and policy campaigns to cultural strategies and longer-term narrative work. It sets our values, helps us to find alignment and consensus across projects and timelines, and allows us to connect our work with other social movements.

The Butterfly Lab cohort developed a narrative system to challenge the status quo. This system is anchored in six deep narratives: **Interdependence, Abundance, Belonging, Safety, Freedom to Thrive,** and **Dignity** to inform the narrative strategy work our movements need now. After reading them, ask:

- What one or two deep narratives are most resonant with the work that you are currently doing?
- Which deep narratives would require that you stretch your practices and develop new stories?
- What aligned relationships might you build with partners, collaborators, and/or allies to extend the impact of your collective work?

NARRATIVE ECOSYSTEM

Source: Toward a New Gravity, The Narrative Initiative

Our movement has an abundance of skills, capacities, and ideas. Building bridges that facilitate the easeful sharing of visions, strategies, and resources is vital in our movements. We define a narrative ecosystem as a network of connected individuals and organizations that can share knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas, capacities, and work to advance a narrative system across a diversity of fronts along different timelines.

The framework of a narrative ecosystem helps us imagine how we might be able to align ourselves with each other and work together in rapid-response and campaign timelines as well as longer timelines simultaneously.

To develop an ecosystem that prioritizes collaboration, relationality, and power-sharing, start by identifying your own role within it. The following are introductory prompts to which we encourage you to return at each step of your narrative design process. They can help you stay centered while thinking about how to forge stronger relationships.

> » Who are you? Think expansively and acknowledge how you arrived at this present moment. Who helped you? What has inspired and shaped you?
>
> » Who are your people? There is a Spanish proverb that goes, "Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are." Consider all of your human and other than human relatives. What are the places, peoples, communities, geographies, and experiences to which you feel connected?
>
> » Where are you going? What goals are you working toward—personally, culturally, and beyond? What vision of the world motivates you? What do you need to learn and what capacities do you still need to build?
>
> » With whom will you build relationships? Whose work and goals are complementary to yours? Who might extend your capacities or teach you new capacities? What aligned relationships might you build with partners, collaborators, and/or allies to extend the impact of your collective work?

The Social Change Ecosystem Map by Deepa Iyer at Building Movement Project is a useful tool for further identifying the texture of particular roles you might hold in building cultural and narrative power.

Toolkit Acknowledgements and Credits

THE WORK OF THE BUTTERFLY LAB would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of artists and organizers across movements who have developed their own methodologies, theories of change, and practices. We've had the privilege of learning from the work of many practitioners, experts, narrative organizations, collaborators, artists and culture workers, and thinkers. We acknowledge that we are one part of a much larger narrative and cultural ecosystem. And we're grateful to give credit and appreciation to this stellar community of narrative and culture change-makers and social justice leaders who have guided our journey. For a full list of credits, please see our report.

THE BUTTERFLY LAB STAFF:

This Butterfly Lab toolkit was written by the Butterfly Lab staff team, comprised of Jeff Chang, Nayantara Sen, Janelle Treibitz, sára abdullah, and Kana Hammon.

Our Constellation:
A Poem Of Perfection

Co-composed by the Butterfly Lab Cohort

Breathing in the stars I am water
I arrived with my ancestors, dreaming freedom
I arrived with gifts, you welcomed me.

Love, seeing ourselves as others, no borders
We wrap our arms around one another
We make our home where we are
Community, connection, rooted in freedom and love
We live to make room for belonging.

Freedom to stay, thrive, purposefully migrating for joy & love
Freedom of movement makes global movement
Human dignity, grounded by ancestors, creates the future.

We are authoring the future of freedoms
Our future is whatever we imagine:
"A world where all worlds can fit."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:
BUTTERFLY LAB COHORT MEMBERS, 2020-21

AISHA SHILLINGFORD

she, her, hers

Aisha Shillingford is an artist, writer and daydreamer living in Brooklyn, New York. She was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago and migrated to the United States 22 years ago. She is the Artistic Director at Intelligent Mischief, a creative studio that unleashes Black imagination to shape the future.

ANSHANTIA OSO

she, her, queen

Tia Oso is a transformational organizer and strategist. Based in Los Angeles, CA, Tia is a highly experienced community engagement professional specializing in social change initiatives, racial justice and human rights. Tia's work centers on using art, culture and media to build people power and transform policy. In addition to being an internationally respected leader on issues of racial justice, migrant rights and Black organizing, Tia is the Co-Founder and Advisor of the BLD PWR Initiative and West Coast Principal of ZEAL Multimedia Cooperative.

CARLY PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ

she/her/hers/ella

Carly Pérez Fernández is the Communications Director at Detention Watch Network. She has worked for nearly a decade fighting against immigration detention and advocating on behalf of immigrants. She is a co-lead of the communications working group for the Defund Hate Campaign and a member of the Comm/Unity Network.
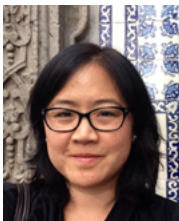
CECILLIA WANG

she, her, hers

Cecillia Wang is a civil rights lawyer and advocate. She is currently a deputy legal director at the national ACLU and previously was director of the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project and a trial attorney in the federal public defender office for the Southern District of New York. She is the daughter of immigrants (born in China and raised and educated in Taiwan) and grew up in the Bay Area. She went to UC Berkeley ('92) and Yale Law School ('95).

CHRISTINAMARIA PATIÑO-HOULE

she/ we/ they

ChristinaMaria Patiño-Houle is a mixed race and mixed indigenous fronteriza whose ancestors migrated from Tamaulipeco and Innus territory to Coahuiltecan territory. She is the Network Weaver of the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network, a Co-Chair for the Southern Borders Community Coalition, and Director of Strategy/ Co-Founder of Las Imaginistas. In 2018 Las Imaginistas was named Blade of Grass Fellows and grantees of the Artplace America National Creative Placemaking Award. Patiño-Houle has worked with Creative Time (NY) and the Center for Urban Pedagogy (NY). She holds a MFA from Columbia University (NY) and an EdM from Harvard (MA). She is the lead author for the Imaginsitas' forthcoming book on collaborative decision making and the public imagination (Amherst College Press, 2022)

CRISTINA JIMÉNEZ MORETA

She/her

Cristina Jiménez Moreta is a community organizer, strategist, and freedom fighter. She is the Executive Director & Co-founder of United We Dream (UWD), the largest immigrant youth-led network in the country. Under Cristina's leadership, UWD has grown to a powerful network of over 100 groups, 800,000 members, and a reach of 5.5 million people per month. Cristina migrated to Queens, New York from Ecuador with her family at the age of 13 seeking a better life. Cristina lived undocumented for 12 years, attending high school and college as an undocumented student. She has been organizing in immigrant communities for over a decade and was part of UWD's campaign team that led to the historic victory of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in 2012 that protected close to a million young immigrants from deportation. For her work as a social justice organizer Cristina was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by TIME Magazine, and was awarded a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 2017. Cristina currently serves on the board of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, the Hazen Foundation, Make the Road New York Action and the Dream.US.

ELIZABETH GRIZZLE VOORHEES

She / Her / Hers

Elizabeth's passion for harnessing the power of story to create positive social change has led her to her role at Define American, a media and culture change organization that uses narrative to shift the conversation about immigrants, identity and citizenship in a changing America. Elizabeth left her fifteen-year career as a television showrunner and content creator for networks such as VH1, OWN, and Lifetime Television to design

and implement long- term culture change strategies at Define American. She currently oversees all in-house video production, arts programming and ongoing work within the entertainment industry for the organization and spends her time imagining new narratives that are inclusive, accurate, compelling and can change the hearts and minds of mass audiences. Elizabeth holds a B.A. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a M.A. in Social Entrepreneurship from Pepperdine University.

JUANITA CABRERA LOPEZ (MAYA MAM NATION)
She/her/ella

Juanita is Maya Mam from the Western Highlands of Guatemala. She is a survivor of the internal armed conflict in Guatemala and a former political refugee. She has both personal and professional work experience in the defense of indigenous peoples' human rights. Her focus has been to use international law and organizations and traditional knowledge for the development of an indigenous human rights response in the areas of immigration, land rights, and environmental protection. She works with Maya leaders and elders in Guatemala and the United States through their traditional institutions.

LORELLA PRAELI
Ella/She/Her

Lorella Praeli is a freedom fighter, movement builder, and adaptive athlete. She is the President of Community Change Action and Vice President of Community Change. Lorella is passionate about building collective power to win transformative policy change at all levels of government, so that people can thrive. Most recently, she was the ACLU's Deputy National Political Director, where she fought to defend and expand the rights of immigrants and refugees. Prior to joining the ACLU, Lorella mobilized the Latinx vote as Hillary Clinton's National Latino Vote Director.
Lorella moved from Peru to Connecticut with her family at the age of ten. Her life was transformed after coming out as "undocumented and unafraid" and organizing undocumented students to step into their power in Connecticut. She then served as United We Dream's Director of Advocacy and Policy, where she led the campaign to implement DACA and was part of the team that persuaded the Obama administration to protect four million undocumented Americans through DAPA.
Lorella is a proud Latina who believes that we will win.

MARIELENA HINCAPIÉ
Ella/She/Her

Marielena Hincapié is executive director of the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) and the NILC Immigrant Justice Fund. Hincapié has more than two decades of experience in the movement for immigrant justice and has litigated key cases in defense of immigrant workers. Recognized

as a seasoned strategist and bridge-builder, Hincapié has led national policy campaigns including the creation and successful implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Under Hincapié's leadership, NILC has been at the legal forefront of the fight to stop President Trump's attempt to end DACA. Hincapié currently serves as co-chair of the Biden-Sanders Unity Taskforce on Immigration.

MARK GONZALES

He/Him

Mark Gonzales (M.Ed) is a futurist at the center of curiosity, connection, and theories of change. He serves as the Chair of the Department of the Future.

MÓNICA RAMÍREZ

She/Her/Hers

Monica Ramírez is a co-founder of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas and The Latinx House. She is also the founder of Justice for Migrant Women. Ramírez penned the "Dear Sisters" letter published by TIME on Nov. 10, 2017, on behalf of Alianza, its members and the farmworker women whose interests it represents. She also organized the Querida Family/Dear Family letter that was published in the New York Times following the El Paso massacre which reached over a billion media hits in two days. She was named a recipient of the Smithsonian's 2018 Ingenuity Award for Social Progress

OMAR OFFENDUM

He/Him

Omar Offendum is a Syrian-American rapper and spoken word artist living in Los Angeles. Known for his unique blend of Hip-Hop & Arabic poetry, he's been featured on prominent world news outlets, lectured at a number of prestigious academic institutions, collaborated with major museums & cultural organizations, and helped raise millions of dollars for various humanitarian relief groups. Offendum was recently named a Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow & member of the PILLARS Fund 'Muslim Narrative Change' cohort.

PAOLA MENDOZA

she/hers

Paola Mendoza is a film director, activist, author and artist working at the leading-edge of human rights. A co-founder of The Women's March, she served as its Artistic Director and co-authored the New York Times best seller Together We Rise: Behind the Scenes at the Protest Heard around the World. Paola's most recent book Sanctuary will be released by Penguin in

2020. Ms. Mendoza is also a critically acclaimed film director whose films have premiered at the most prestigious film festivals around the world. Her films have thoughtfully tackled the complex issues of poverty and immigration on women and children in the United States. She was named Glamour's Woman of the Year in 2017 and one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film. She is a co-founder of The Soze Agency and is a co-founder of The Resistance Revival Chorus, the critically acclaimed women's chorus that believes, "Joy is an act of resistance."

REBECCA HELLER
she/hers
Becca Heller is the co-founder and Executive Director of the International Refugee Assistance Project.

SAKET SONI
He, him
Saket Soni is a labor organizer and human rights strategist. He is founder and director of Resilience Force, a national initiative to transform America's response to natural disasters by strengthening and securing America's resilience workforce. As director, Saket crafts the organization's advocacy and media strategy, and provides strategic counsel to social justice advocates and government officials across the country. Resilience Force follows a 12-year record of successful advocacy in the post-Katrina Gulf Coast.

APPENDIX 2:
Descriptions of Butterfly Lab Prototype Projects, 2021

AISHA SHILLINGFORD

Narrative: Migration is human; borders are not.

Aisha brought together a writers' room and a team of creatives to design an Afrofuturist cartoon pilot called "Love of A Black Planet." This project targets young Black audiences susceptible to anti-immigrant messaging to embrace an expansive Afro-diasporic identity.

ASHANTIA OSO

Narrative: Black liberation is a global project. Just immigration is central to a racial justice agenda.

Tia prototyped an interactive cooking class that explored Black immigrant and diasporic foodways and global Black identity through food, developing a proposal for a possible television show. Using food as an entry point, she targeted young, Black audiences susceptible to anti-immigrant messaging.

CARLY PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ

Narrative: Every person has the right to move and live freely, in community and with their family, without fear of being separated from their loved ones or displaced from their home.

Carly put up a #FreeThemAll art installation on the White House Ellipse and launched a 35-second animated video for social media, both of which featured six portraits of people directly impacted by ICE's immigration detention system, illustrated by Angelica Frausto (Nerdy Brown Kid). These works were meant to activate a deep narrative of dignity.

CECILIA WANG

Narrative: The U.S.-Mexico border is a vibrant and safe community, a longtime and permanent home for many and the first sight of home for many new Americans.

Cecilia developed an idea for an artist-led festival in the Southern border region celebrating the vibrancy, safety, and contributions of Border communities, to activate and inform liberal and progressive audiences.

CHRISTINAMARIA PATIÑO HOULE

Narrative: "Borders Like Water"

ChristinaMaria launched a series of meditations, ceremonial rituals and dreaming sessions inviting her audiences to re-imagine the border and dream into a shared culture of liberation. Tied to four supermoons, the activities engaged indigenous culture bearers, artists, and allies linked across North and South America, using Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, and a "Borders Like Water" website.

CRISTINA JIMÉNEZ MORETA

Narrative: Immigrants belong.

Cristina developed a short video showing an AAPI immigrant youth cooking a Mexican recipe of shrimp empanadas from United We Dream's Undocumented Cookbook. The video

content was informed by focus groups of immigrant youth and aimed to increase feelings of immigrant pride and self love, as well as increase feelings of connection and mutuality among other immigrants and young people of color.

ELIZABETH GRIZZLE VOORHEES

Narrative: Immigrant contributions to our country are more than just labor.
Elizabeth tested a series of five explainer-style YouTube videos with influencers on the topic of immigration. Targeting white audiences who are susceptible to right-wing radicalization, Elizabeth tested the efficacy of these videos to interrupt that pathway to radicalization.

JUANITA CABRERA LOPEZ

Narrative: Indigenous peoples exist, have distinct needs and rights, and are a large part of forced migration.
Juanita created the Maya Artist Collective for Indigenous diasporic youth to connect, relearn, and reclaim Indigenous identities. Under the guidance of Maya Elders, a workshop series and teaser film - "Coming Home: Indigenous Resistance in the Diaspora" - serve to deepen exploration of Indigeneity, dominant narratives, and the deconstruction of colonial frameworks.

MARIELENA HINCAPIÉ

Narrative: Immigrants are essential.
Marielena and NILC developed a series of short 60-second explainer videos targeting mostly non-immigrant low-wage workers of color exploring different ways to engage audiences on the deep narrative of freedom to thrive.

MARK GONZALES

Narrative: Global belonging.
Mark tested the development of a guided conversation gaming-influenced app, "Tool for Future Memories", targeting digital users who might engage with empathy tech to change their notions of migration and immigrants.

MÓNICA RAMÍREZ

Narrative: These farmworkers are the humans who feed us.
Monica and Justice for Migrant Women created 22 profiles and portraits of immigrant community members who are employed across the food supply chain, displayed them at a county fair, and had them featured in local news media. They will be scaling the project up to create additional portraits of food workers, bringing them to national food chain networks and alliances, universities, and upscale restaurants.

OMAR OFFENDUM

Narrative: America has just as much to learn from immigrants as they do from America.
Omar created a pilot episode of a podcast called LITTLE SYRIA, featuring original songs and texts. His project seeks to explore and translate the stories of the very first Arab-American

immigrants who settled on the Lower West Side of Manhattan from the 1880s - 1940s for a broad, popular-culture audience to build support for migration.

PAOLA MENDOZA

Narrative: Immigrants are essential.

Paola created public art exhibition and a website (https://essential-immigrants.com) featuring her own portraits of seven undocumented immigrants who lost their lives to COVID. The portraits displayed in empty downtown New York and Washington D.C. storefronts, were featured in national media, and included a QR code that takes the viewer to a website where they can listen to oral history interviews of family members and petition their Congress members.

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Harmony Labs worked with the Butterfly Lab cohort to map their audiences and to test how different content landed with those audiences. We used Harmony Labs' Narrative Observatory audience analysis, which segments four audiences defined by their core values and media consumption habits rather than their demography or positions on social issues.

Defining Audiences

The four Narrative Observatory audiences are a simplification of the Universal Human Values architecture proposed by social psychologist Shalom Schwartz. This framework is "universal" which doesn't mean everyone feels the same; it means that everyone in the world—across cultures— understands each of the values in the same way. As an example, valuing tradition in China means the same thing as valuing tradition in the United States.

There are two things that set this architecture apart from other segmentations that businesses sometimes use. The first is that it's not "race blind"; it captures some of the important variation in our American culture(s) associated with race, gender, age, and other demography. That makes this a framework for talking more about those identities and how they are important. The second is that the positions of the quadrants really matter. The Don't Tread On Me group is more similar to Tough Cookies than to People Power. So that helps us think about connecting groups through stories. There are easy bridges between People Power and Tough Cookies, and People Power and If You Say So. It's a little harder (but not impossible, as we learned on this project) for People Power to connect with Don't Tread on Me because their personal values or goals are somewhat different.

- **People Power.** We refer to the single core value here as "Community", but the individual values are **"Universalism"** and **"Benevolence".** This values orientation is focused on helping people, but unlike the Tough Cookies who are ready to dig in and help the people close to them, People Power are more likely to want to help people they don't know and contribute to systems that create equity rather than equality.

- **Tough Cookies.** Tough Cookies have "Security" as their core value. The individual values in this space are "**Rule-following**", **"Tradition"**, and **"Security"**. Tough Cookies are a big part of keeping things going. They are helpers and pitchers-in, and

they help maintain stability and the status quo.

- **Don't Tread On Me.** Don't Tread On Me has **"Authority"** as their core value in our architecture, but a way to describe their values for the workplace is **Achievement, Action,** and **Control.** Don't Tread On Me are empowered to make their own decisions, and they like to lead. Somewhere near the border with If You Say So, you find creative leaders like entrepreneurs and salespeople.

- **If You Say So.** This group has **"Autonomy"** as their core value. They're all about independence, and the values that Schwartz names here are **Hedonism, Stimulation,** and **Self-Direction.** What that means in American English is that If You Say So likes fun, excitement, and choosing their own path. These are our creators, innovators, and entertainers.

Connecting Audiences to Cultural Consumption Data

Harmony Labs uses media consumption panels to measure consumption of media like YouTube videos and visits to websites. These are opt-in research panels, which means that people share their consumption in real time with researchers and can choose to leave the panels at any time. To profile the audiences for the Race Forward project, we used a panel of desktop and laptop users and a panel of TV viewers.

The four values segments were built from surveys of thousands of Americans using clustering techniques. To map the segments onto the media consumption panels, we created predictive models of segment membership from the surveys based on respondent location, age, race, gender, education, income, family structure, and other features that we had on both the survey data and on our media consumption panels, and then we score those models on the big panel data.

Cultural Audiences Mapped by Core Values

For instance, the If You Say So group tends to be younger than the other groups, so the predictive model based on the survey "guesses" that an audience member is more likely to be If You Say So if they are under 40. Many such guesses put together make up the predictive model that guesses which desktop users are in each audience and allows us to make maps of consumption of specific media like the one here. This map shows each of the different audiences that Butterfly Labs creators were interested in and puts them on the map. For instance, people who watch Adult Swim are somewhere between Don't Tread on Me and If You Say So. People who search for "personality test" are often People Power.

Testing Media

We tested 17 concepts from 8 creators to see what would move which audience. Each test was a randomized controlled trial (RCT) comparing survey responses after a "treatment," or exposure to a creator's concept, to survey responses after exposure to neutral control media. Most of the concepts we tested were static storyboards like:

These storyboards tested alternative concepts from the National Immigrant Law Center.

We also tested three audio clips from songs by creator Omar Offendum.

We collected 2,094 total control responses, approximately 200 in each of 9 waves of testing. We collected 4,042 total treatment responses, approximately 200 for each treatment we tested. The sample size target for each treatment was 200 general public responses, except for two concepts by Aisha Shillingford which were specifically targeted at African American respondents. Where we could (i.e., for general public-targeted conditions using the same questions), we used all control responses in the final analysis to maximize statistical power.

The table below shows the overall breakdown of responses by race:

RACE	% OF RESPONSES
White	70%
Black or African American	19%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4%
Latino, Latinx, or Hispanic	11%

Note that these do not add up to 100%. Race and Latino ethnicity were measured separately.

The most important part of an RCT is the outcome questions that respondents answer that allow us to measure their "movement". Each individual creator had one question specifically related to their outcome. For instance, the National Immigrant Law Center asked for agreement with "There should be a path to citizenship for all immigrants living in the United States."

For the first three tests, there were two additional standard questions that asked for agreement with:

- "Everyone in America, including immigrants, should be free to not only meet their needs but also to thrive."
- "Everyone, including immigrants, has a place here and belongs in America."

The following 7 rounds of testing (each round included multiple concepts) used these "harder" questions:

- "All immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, should be free to not only meet their needs but also to thrive in America."
- "All immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, have a place here and belong in America."

An audience was considered to have "moved" in response to a treatment if they responded with "Strongly Agree" more after treatment than after exposure to neutral content. Note that we wanted to achieve movement on both of these questions, so we included all questions in the same statistical models to detect movement. In this set of studies, we didn't see any differences in movement across the questions which suggests that these both measure the same "latent" narrative.

Testing Effects Within Audience

We really wanted to know what content worked for which audience, so we created another predictive model of audience membership to apply to the RCT survey responses. Again, we took the original survey with which we produced the segments and formed guesses of audience membership based on things like age, race, and gender. Then we scored the RCT data (which also collected age, race, gender, location, and other features) to estimate who was in which audience. We used these estimates to create analyses like the one depicted on the right that shows the zones of opportunities for specific concepts. This concept worked for progressive People Power, but also, unexpectedly, for Don't Tread on Me.

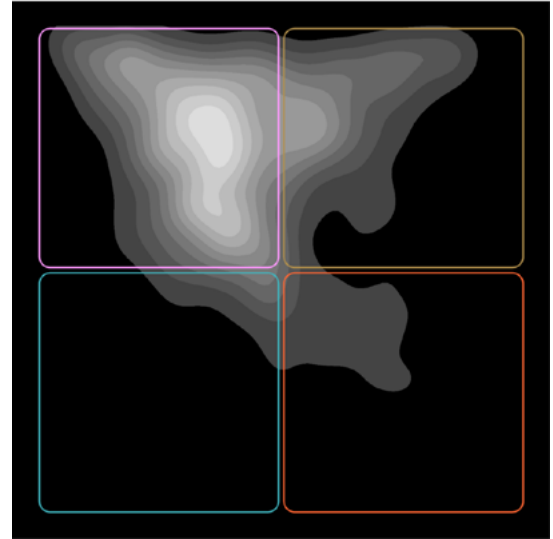Movement Toward "Strongly Agree" across 2 Pieces
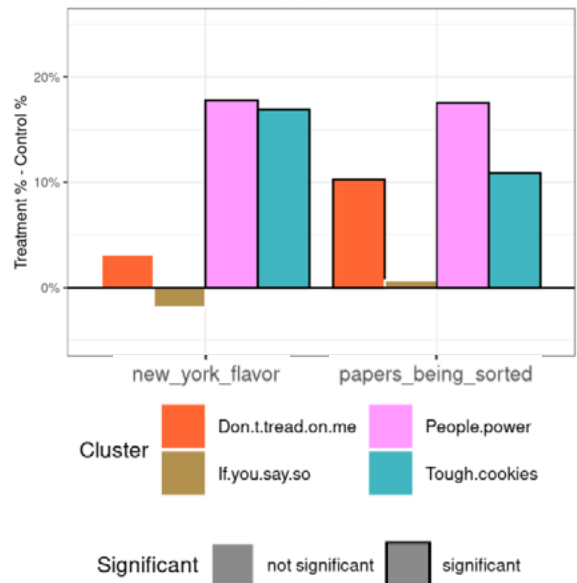
This modeling method is imprecise, but the scale of the data (we ended our studies with several thousand survey responses) helps to mitigate some of the uncertainty of the modeling process. It's best to interpret model-based results based on creative concepts (as opposed to final messages or media) as evidence of where ideas can work rather than evidence of the exact magnitude of the effects that the final work will have.

Mapping the Persuadable Audience

The entire persuadable audience is anyone who can be moved by any of the concepts the Butterfly Lab tested. We created this representation of the persuadable audience using predictive models again, but we used them in a slightly different way. We estimated agreement with the survey questions in just the control based on respondent characteristics including age, race, gender, audience membership, political orientation, and more. This estimate from the control sample is a baseline.

Map of the persuadable audience; where audiences moved the most.

Then we estimated the change in agreement based on those same characteristics. That model of change lets us identify the audience most ready to change and to draw a picture like the one on the right. It's actually not surprising that the center of gravity here is in the already-progressive People Power. That audience is primed to be transported by stories of connectedness like the ones we tested here, and many of our creators are People Power themselves, making that connection easy to make.

There are really two important features of this map compared to other persuadable universes we have created including this one for the Nuclear Threat Initiative. The first is that there is a large zone of opportunity–potentially persuadable people–in If You Say So, a relatively progressive but typically disengaged audience. The other is that there's a nontrivial portion of the Don't Tread on Me audience that can be moved. We saw this audience move in response to stories that featured hard work and striving including Omar Offendum's rap content.

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The Butterfly Lab Staff

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