CZI Housing Narrative Research

ONE PAGER

Last updated: June 3, 2020

Why are we investing in narrative research?

Housing advocates across California have voiced the need for a statewide narrative framework that's both broad and deep. We regularly hear that resources dedicated to communications and narrative work at the state level tend to be short-term, campaign-based, and reactive.

Moreover, we find ourselves in an extraordinary moment where housing needs across the state are in an unprecedented crisis yet housing advocates are struggling to get the support needed to advance meaningful solutions.

Therefore, CZI is contributing to technical mixed-methods research expertise to examine and analyze voter sentiment and underlying value orientations towards a wide slate of reforms, policies, approaches, and attitudes towards the issue of housing affordability.

We hope this rigorous research provides California housing advocates with evidence-based narratives that might enhance the long-term narrative change work that housing advocates are doing at this critical moment in our state.

What is it designed to do?

We believe that if we can identify a unifying narrative framework and set of corresponding messages that shift attitudes and values in support of housing reform, housing advocates will have a greater opportunity to advance a wide range of meaningful housing policies across the state that align with voters' values — whatever they may be. We also believe that this may increase the possibility of stronger collaboration across housing advocates who have slightly differing, but important, advocacy priorities related to housing.

Using a methodology relatively unique to the social justice field, we are collecting the most comprehensive California-based dataset on perceptions of the housing crisis. We will test narrative frames and specific messages by segments across the state and monitor changes in housing-related values in response to more effective narratives. As far as we know, it is the first and most comprehensive approach of its kind and we are eager to share our findings with other narrative researchers and housing advocates who can use this work.

Who is this research designed for?

This narrative research is designed to be used by California housing advocates across the state. We hope this research adds a level of methodologicalrigorthat builds off existing expertise from the field of housing advocates and culminates in a summary of strategies and tactics that could be used to shift existing narratives and establish new ones thatresonate with the individual needs and values of the communities they serve.

Who is the intended audience?

These narrative frames and messages are designed for an audience of California registered voters and tailored to speak to each of the dominant values and mindsets with regard to housing reform.

How are we going to do this?

1. In the first half of 2019, media monitoring, focus groups, and in-home interviews were conducted to assess the landscape of housing issues in California.
2. In the second half of 2019, we used the initialresearch to develop a mindset segmentation of California voters based on their values and paradigm toward housing reform. This resulted in five discrete segments that capture the dominant views across the state.
3. In June 2020, we will conduct ten focus group discussions to explore messaging frames that we hypothesize may resonate with each segment (two groups per segment). These groups will provide insights into the language each segment uses to talk about housing reform, and may also generate additional frames to considertesting. From these groups, we will develop a set of frames and messages to test through a state-wide survey.
4. In July 2020, we plan to field a state-wide factorial survey experiment to a large, representative sample of California voters that will test the persuasion effect of each message frame by segment.
5. By fall 2020, we will have messaging recommendations that summarizes which message frame(s) hold the broadest appeal to California voters and those that appeal to each mindset.
6. Based on the results and feedback from the field, we may consider developing curricula, trainings, workshops, toolkits and other materials to empower advocates to use research insights and align on a shared foundational narrative framework. We also expect to tighten and refine these results for specific issues and geographies in future phases of this work.

Who are our research partners?

+ Dr. Tiffany Manuel (TheCaseMade)
+ Gradient Metrics (Kyle Block, Nina Sabarre, Tom Vladeck)
+ The Youngblood Group (Mike Youngblood, PhD)

+ [Protagonist](#)
+ Elizabeth Stroud, Independent Strategist