RACE CLASS
NARRATIVE ACTION

MIDWEST RACE CLASS
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Results from AAPI, African American and Latinx Respondents

MIDWEST RACE CLASS NARRATIVE ACTION

In the Midwest and beyond, political forces resistant to racial and economic justice have long relied upon stoking racial resentment in order to court white voters and inflict harms on Black people, new immigrants and other communities of color. Meanwhile, progressives have too long relied upon colorblind, economic-only approaches that fail to rebut our opposition's claims and relegate racial justice issues to "special interests," offering people of color little reason to want to engage politically. In response, progressive organizations in MI, MN, MO, OH, PA and WI came together to apply and extend the original Race-Class Narrative (RCN) Project in order to uncover effective ways of persuading the middle and mobilizing a justifiably disenchanted base with a narrative rooted in race, class and gender tailored to each particular state context. This brief provides key insights and messaging recommendations based on research done across these states and, in particular, in our deeper explorations with African American voters, Latinx voters, and Asian American and Pacific Islander adults.

Core Insights

- Effective messages follow a set order: shared value, problem, solution. In contrast, leading with problems, or lingering in our description of them, makes our solutions seem less credible. It primes people's understandable cynicism and reluctance to get involved.

- For narratives and distinct wording choices to work, they must be heard over and again. This requires that people be willing to repeat them. Messages about enacting solutions and promoting a desirable future garner greater enthusiasm from our base, including among people of color, and prove more persuasive to the middle than those centered on addressing problems.

- Speak about race, class and gender as interconnected: Describe the shared values that exist across these lines. Call out the ways our opposition divides us by race and gender or shames and blames particular groups in order to distract us while they hand kickbacks to the richest 1% and keep us from uniting for our economic wellbeing.

- Messages about division and scapegoating, as opposed to just economic concerns, are powerful ways to connect the targeted harms done to particular groups to the financial hardships familiar to many. However, it's vital to guard against accusations

that we are the ones sowing discord. We do this by first naming what we hold in common and, when we describe our solutions, including explicit calls for cross racial solidarity to make this a place where fairness, freedom and prosperity are for all of us, no exceptions.

Top Rated Overall and Issue Narratives Among Respondents of Color

AMERICA'S/STATE STRENGTH

America's strength comes from our ability to work together – bringing together people from different places and of different races into a whole. For this to be a place where everyone can thrive, we cannot let the 1% and the politicians they pay for divide us against each other based on what someone looks like, where they come from, or how much money they have. We need to join together to fight for our future, just like we won better wages, safer workplaces, and civil rights in our past. Coming together, we can elect new leaders who will deliver better healthcare for our families, quality schools for our kids, and a fair return on our work.

RACE, CLASS AND GENDER

Most of us work hard for our families, no matter what we look like or where we come from. But today, a powerful few pit us against each other, blocking our efforts to ensure a fair return on our work and paid time to care for our families, affordable childcare for our kids and quality healthcare for our loved ones – [and even restricting our rights to make decisions about our own bodies.] By joining together to rewrite the rules, we can ensure every one of us, whether we're women or men, young or old, White or Black, can care for our families, have our voices heard and our rights respected.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

America's strength comes from our ability to work together – bringing together people from different places and of different races into a whole. For this to be a place where everyone can thrive, we cannot let the 1% and the politicians they pay for divide us against each other based on what someone looks like, where they come from, or how much money they have. We need to join together to fight for our future, just like we won better wages, safer workplaces, and civil rights in our past. Coming together, we can elect new leaders who will deliver better healthcare for our families, quality schools for our kids, and a fair return on our work.

REVENUE

Most of us want to leave things better for those to come, no matter what we look like or where we're from. But today, the richest 1% grab record profits, while refusing to contribute to the services the rest of us pitch in for and everyone uses. This powerful few pit us against each other based on what we look like or what our zip code is so we won't close the loopholes they exploit or raise the revenue we need. Together, we can make sure that those who have done well in [state], do right by [state]. By rewriting the rules so everyone contributes, we can provide healthcare for our families, quality schools for our kids, and a better life for generations to come.

Policy Preferences and Issue Responses

We tested different approaches to promote progressive policies and to most effectively combat opposition claims. These are our most effective messages for engaging our base and persuading the middle on these policy and issue arguments across states and oversamples.

Progressive Policies	African American Voters	Latinx Voters	Asian American & Pacific Islander Adults
Ensure people's voting rights by allowing for election day registration and automatic voter registration.	81% (44% strongly)	75% (38% strongly)	76% (29% strongly)
Make sure every child can get a quality education by raising taxes on the state's largest corporations and the wealthiest 1% of residents.	80% (45% strongly)	73% (38% strongly)	76% (33% strongly)

Progressive Policies	African American Voters	Latinx Voters	Asian American & Pacific Islander Adults
Bring greater fairness to our criminal justice system by ending mass incarceration and punishment for drug use and providing comprehensive training to police to curb bias.	79% (46% strongly)	71% (33% strongly)	74% (25% strongly)
Protect our air, water, and land by transitioning to locally made clean renewable energy.	77% (44% strongly)	73% (37% strongly)	84% (33% strongly)
Ensure people have the freedom to decide for ourselves whether and when to have children through access to reproductive healthcare including, prenatal care, contraception, and abortion care.	77% (43% strongly)	71% (39% strongly)	74% (32% strongly)
Make sure anyone can access public programs that provide support for food, healthcare and housing, regardless of their immigration status.	73% (41% strongly)	61% (26% strongly)	67% (21% strongly)

Rebuttals Against Opposition Claims	African American Voters' Agreement (% agreeing with opposition statement)	Latinx Voters' Agreement (% agreeing with opposition statement)	Asian American and Pacific Islander Adults' Agreement (% agreeing with oppo. statement)
[Immigrant Rights] For America to be the 'land of the free and home of the brave' we need to respect and embrace people with the courage and tenacity to move for a better life.	**76%** (16%)	**70%** (23%)	**73%** (18%)
[Police Reform] We need to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our communities and that requires training police in de-escalation and anti-bias and ensuring they uphold their oath to protect and serve all	**64%** (31%)	**58%** (31%)	**59%** (29%)
[Countering Fear Mongering] We need elected leaders who will reject Trump's divide and conquer tactics and put working people first, whether we're White, Black, or Brown	**74%** (18%)	**62%** (28%)	**57%** (31%)

Rebuttals Against Opposition Claims	African American Voters' Agreement (% agreeing with opposition statement)	Latinx Voters' Agreement (% agreeing with opposition statement)	Asian American and Pacific Islander Adults' Agreement (% agreeing with oppo. statement)
[Countering Anti-government, Trickle Down Economics] To make life better for working people we need to invest in education, create better paying jobs, and make healthcare more affordable for White, Black, and Brown people struggling to make ends meet	**77%** (20%)	**68%** (23%)	**70%** (20%)

Words that Work

Embrace	Replace	Explanation
Certain politicians; a handful of CEOs; some corporations	Politicians; CEOs; corporations; the wealthy	Respondents reject absolutes, even implied ones.
[Naming villains] Richest 1%	Billionaires; Top 1%	African American and Latinx voters are equally receptive to these labels, but "richest 1%" alienates the opposition more and resonates more strongly with Asian American and Pacific Islander adults.
[Naming goal] Move toward greater equality	Make things better	People of color are more motivated by explicit calls for equality, as are overall persuadable and base voters across races.

Embrace	Replace	Explanation
[Naming division] The powerful few benefit by exploiting divisions	Divide us against each other	African American and Latinx voters and Asian American and Pacific Islander adults agree more readily when we imply divisions are pre-existing and elites exacerbate them.
Unions of working people	Labor unions	Despite the greater familiarity of "labor unions," "unions of working people" makes the members focal and thus garners greater approval.
For America to be the 'land of the free and home of the brave' we need to respect and embrace people with the courage and tenacity to move for a better life	People who move here to make a better life for their families help make this a stronger, more prosperous nation	Tying to core values of freedom and underscoring immigrants' courage and tenacity is a more effective rebuttal to anti-immigrant claims than describing how they benefit the nation. This holds true for respondents who are immigrants themselves.
To make life better for working people we need to invest in education, create better paying jobs, and make healthcare more affordable for White, Black, and Brown people struggling to make ends meet	To make life better for working people we need to make things right for those who are being harmed the most today, especially African Americans and immigrants	A race-class narrative approach that builds toward cross-racial solidarity is more motivating and persuasive than one rooted in ideas of racial repair.
Ensuring women and men are equal in our society is largely a matter of men changing how they treat the women in their lives	Ensuring women and men are equal in our society is largely a matter of women changing what they expect of men in their lives	Focusing on men's behavior and how it should evolve elicited strong agreement and more productive engagement on gender equity.

Embrace	Replace	Explanation
Making sure our political leaders treat people of all races, backgrounds, and genders equally should be a key priority for our Nation.	Tackling the racism and sexism promoted by some political leaders should be a key priority for our nation	A more aspirational appeal for equality generates greater agreement across racial groups than calls to end 'isms.
Men should treat women equally and fairly, and we need to do more to make this happen.	Women deserve equality and fairness, and we need to do more to make this happen.	People of color agree more strongly on a call for equality that asserts what men should do than what women deserve.

Contact Information

Please direct any inquiries regarding this summary to info@raceclassnarrativeaction.com

Endnotes

1. Race-Class Narrative Project, led by Ian Haney López, Anat Shenker-Osorio, and Heather McGhee, 2018.

2. Present research fielded January 31 to February 25, 2020 and consists of six online state dial surveys from a voter-file matched panel (N=600 voters per state), regional over-samples of AAPI voters (N=403), Latinx voters (N=186), African American voters (N=215), and union member respondents (N=797), as well as a national survey of Spanish speaking adults (N=401) reflecting an unweighted sample size of N=4404. Margin of error of +/- 1.48% at the 95th confidence interval.

3. Messages have been adapted from what was dial tested in order to incorporate learnings from moment to moment responses. These messages were also top performers among white respondents across states. One additional message entitled Historical Injustice performed well among African Americans but failed to garner support either from our base or persuadable respondents in every other demographic group.

4. Across states, except PA, we tested a tailored version of this message that named the state and lifted up values core to its identity. Version shared here is adapted from national one, tested in PA and in our demographic oversamples across the region.

5. Rebuttals were split-sampled in order to perform wording experiments; the more effective formulations appear here.