The Arizona Narrative Project
Findings from three online message boards
Where does this fit into the research?

The online message boards are just one piece of a thorough research plan.
Who did we speak to?
Overall, in our three groups, we spoke with white base voters, Latino base voters, and white persuadable voters. The messaging tested in the group is NOT aimed at every demographic in the state, but rather our progressive base, along with some sets of potentially persuadable voters.
Today’s Discussion

Today’s discussion will be a high level discussion.

We do not plan to make any conclusions or recommendations at this time. This will come later in a full report.

Today is to discuss the highlights, observations, and early findings from these three message boards.

While this discussion focuses on the message boards, much of the message board content was built off of the interviews completed with stakeholders.
Overview

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Early Findings
Early Findings Across Groups:

1) We are clearly still in a change electorate. Folks are anxious about the direction of the state and country, and it's hard to see the brand of "politicians" or "government" being much more damaged than what we see in these discussions; almost universally politicians are seen as out for themselves.

2) There is an almost universal perception across the groups, regardless of partisanship or race, that there’s an insidious relationship between politicians and their donors or just “the wealthy.”

3) The rich/wealthy/upper class have a leg up over everyone else in terms of opportunities to thrive and getting politicians to help them.

4) Though respondents filter everything through a partisan lens, it is remarkable how un-partied this discussion was. Folks do not assume that Republicans are bad and that Democrats are good, for instance.
Early Findings: Base Anglos

The base Anglo participants were economically anxious – worrying about wages and underemployment rather than unemployment and a lack of available jobs.

Politicians are viewed as corrupt, greedy, and in it for themselves. They want these politicians to be held accountable for their actions, and Governor Ducey can be targeted in this way.

Populist messaging resonates with this group, though it may need to be framed through a more local lens – rather than “Wall Street,” which is a distant entity. There are opportunities to tie it to Arizona corporations.

There is a vulnerability for progressives when it comes to who is “taking advantage of the system.” Mixed in with notions that politicians, the wealthy, and the powerful are exploiting the system were gut reactions that echoed sentiments of the Reagan-era “welfare queen.”
Early Findings: Base Latinos

Schools are a top concern for base Latinos. Before being prompted, many participants brought up failures in the education system as the top reason for Arizona being on the “wrong track.”

The “Golden Rule” is often repeated by these participants. While most struggle to live by this principle in their everyday lives, it is an aspirational goal that we should find messaging around.

The participants in this group cited loyalty and honesty as their top two values. For their elected officials, this means a desire for transparency and accountability.

Similar to the Anglo base group, these participants are not citing the lack of jobs, but rather the low wages of the labor opportunities in Arizona.

Sentiments of discrimination based on race are found from beginning to end in these message boards.
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Early Findings: Persuadable Anglos

A top principle for this group was “honesty.” This value of honesty is likely related to the government resentment felt by this group. They view government as corrupt, dishonest, and not transparent.

Similar to other groups, the “Golden Rule” stuck out in this group of persuadable Anglos, and we must find ways to message around this moral value.

The persuadable Anglo participants also worried about wages and underemployment rather than a lack of available jobs. This economic theme was repeated in all three groups.

The persuadable Anglo group behaved like strong liberals when it came to sentiments of “helping each other out,” and taxing the rich. However, a majority of this group voted for Trump, and a breaking point may have been immigration. This group obsesses over the difference of “legal” vs. “illegal” immigration.
Early Findings: Across Groups

Economic anxiety is a key theme in all three of these groups. Participants are not so much worried about the availability of jobs, but rather the low wages of the available jobs.

Schools and education are also important across all three groups. Most participants believe that Arizona public schools are on the “wrong track,” and they want to see more money put into classrooms and teacher salaries.

Government and politicians are seen as corrupt and out of touch. Across groups, politicians are viewed as in the pockets of wealthy donors. Participants want more transparency and accountability for elected officials.

Participants believe that the wealthy and corporations should pay more, and they see the working class footing the bill – whether through low wages or higher tax rates.
Highlights: Values, the Economy, and Public Policy
What values do participants share?
Participants reflect on many of the same shared values and principles. However, these values are not unique to Arizona. In fact, participants say there are no Arizona-specific values.

- Loyalty
- Respect
- Responsibility
- The Golden Rule
- Taking care of each other
- Honesty
  - Honesty is important language for progressives to grab. Participants don’t believe politicians and leaders are honest (this plays to corruption and transparency).
- Safety and Security
- Family
  - These participants want to live and raise a family in a state with good schools, a good economy, and a safe environment.

"Honesty is fundamental. Honesty builds trust. The government can use honesty to gain the trust of the people.”
—Base Latino Man

“I live for my two children and making sure they have the best possible tools available to them to be the people that I aspire them to be.” — Base Anglo Woman

“The principles or standards of behavior that are important are treating others the way you would want to be treated... It comes down to respecting others.” — Persuadable Anglo Woman
Is there a typical Arizonan?
Upon self-reflection, the base Anglo group do not think there is a typical Arizonan, and neither does the base Latino group.

• However, persuadable Anglos do think there is a typical Arizonan, and that person looks a lot like them.

• Family is a huge shared value, thought not specific to Arizona.
  • Protecting family
  • Working hard for family

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“Typical Arizonans are people of all walks of life. You have the majority minority here, Hispanics, Asians that have been here for years also. We all do what we have to do to make ends meet or we work for the government. The Arizona community all in all is a group of people who care! Family values, not rude either.” – Base Latina Woman
The economy is paramount, but each group has a different take.

1. There is tremendous economic anxiety and frustration. Participants worry about making ends meet and raising a family. No party and no leader is filling this space.

2. Latinos call JOBS a value – a good job is a value. Anglos did not talk about jobs in this way.

3. Many felt they could find another job if they lost theirs, but there is less confidence in finding a job that pays a sustainable wage.

4. Many participants felt other people who did not work hard and relied on the system were part of the problem. This was true across groups and leaves room for conservative groups like Libre to move in.

5. The notion of an equal playing field is important across groups. Words like “equality” and “opportunity” pop for participants, though “fairness,” does not do as well. While people believe in “equality” and “opportunity” as a value and right, “fairness” is seen as less achievable.
Schools and education are top of mind.
Schools are brought up unprompted in these groups, and when formally discussed, almost all participants believe that education in Arizona is on the “wrong track.”

They are pessimistic, frustrated, and fed-up. Yet, they are also hopeful for a future where they can send their children and grandchildren to good public schools.

- Funding
- Class sizes
- Teacher pay
- Violence in schools

“Public schools are underfunded, teachers are underpaid, and it is affecting our youth.” – Base Latina Woman

“Arizona is sadly way behind on education. I feel it is due to not properly being funded and we can’t retain and keep amazing educators because they aren’t paid anywhere near their worth. Schools are forced to take extracurricular activities out like music, art, because they now have to use those fund for those extra to their run day to day procedures.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman

“Teachers are expected to be superheroes with low compensation, it is not a good model to expect superhero performance for low pay.” – Base Anglo Man

“Teachers are not getting paid nearly enough for what they do, schools are not getting the funding they need, and most curriculum is outdated.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman
Immigration continues to be a top issue.
A 2017 summer survey showed persuadable Anglos had heard enough about immigration.

This is what we are learning now about Anglos and immigration:

- Anglos, specifically persuadable Anglos, say there is a right way and a wrong way to go about immigration.
- They focus on the “legal” aspect of coming to America. If “they” did it legally it would be less of a problem. This is either an easy out or an opening to discuss making legal immigration easier.
- There was also less direct conversation about the ills of immigration and lots of recognition of the good that comes from immigration.
- The distinction between immigration and immigrants in the Anglo persuasion group was quite telling.

“I believe that immigration means providing and sustaining and fair path to citizenship for all individuals desiring to become citizens.” – Base Anglo Woman

“They contribute a lot to the economy, they take jobs rich white folks refuse to apply for, they provide unique cultural experiences we wouldn’t have here, otherwise.” – Base Latinx

“Again, it boils down to if you are legal vs illegal. (I’m) all for immigration when done legally. It affect[s] me by supporting them with my tax dollars.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman
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Perceptions of the government vary, but there is some consistency.

No one relies on the government, defends the government, or expects much from government.

1. The shift away from defending government among base Anglos and Latino might have to do with the current President. However, progressive Anglos and Latinos have been frustrated with government for some time.

2. They want government to be honest, transparent, and work for everybody; but, they are dubious.

3. Anglos focused a bit more on federal government, while Latinos had more to say about local government (probably not surprising, with Arpaio).

4. The conversation around Ducey and the state legislature was short and flat. There was much more said about McCain and to some extent Flake.

5. There is conflation between government as an institution and the political leaders who currently occupy government.

“We can only end this corruption if we hold these politicians accountable and get involved by volunteering, voting, and making a difference.” — Base Anglo Woman

“I feel like the government works off of money and corruption.” — Persuadable Anglo Woman

“I think maybe it’s harder for congress to pass a bill for the entire country that will benefit and apply to everyone from coast to coast. When it comes to just the state of Arizona, I think it’s more specific to our needs and address what is important to Arizona at that current time. I think all states are on different timelines, so state government is more impactful.” — Base Latina Woman
Who gets ahead? Who gets taken advantage of?

There were incredibly rich conversations about who is getting ahead, who sacrifices, and who is taking advantage of others.

• Corporations and the wealthy are easily identified as people who are getting ahead and even taking advantage of the system and other people who have less.

• However, it’s not just corporations – it’s political donors. Participants across groups alluded to imagery of politicians being in the pockets of the wealthy few.

• Progressives can be vulnerable to the angle of welfare recipients taking advantage of the system. Many participants felt other people who didn’t work hard and relied on the system were part of the problem.

“I do see some people taking advantage of the system like food stamps, section 8, and other benefits. There should be a limit on how long these benefits can be received.” – Base Latina Woman

“The working class deserves more and the wealthy should give up more.” – Base Latina Woman

“The government works to benefit the ultra-rich and the big corporations. Pretty much anyone can get elected to government despite their lack of qualification or brain power (hence our current "president"), as long as they have a team to do their dirty work and corrupt the entire process.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman

“Corporations have significantly more disposable income than the average family, allowing them to lobby and have significant influence.” – Base Anglo Man
Challenges
The discussion of race felt like it happened not in different groups, but in entirely different states.

- Latinos went immediately to racial discrimination, and discussed race from beginning to end.

- The base Anglo participants talked about racial inequities, but it was not as top of mind for these participants as it was in the base Latino group.

- The legacy of Arpaio provided an example for both the base Anglo and Latino groups to talk about race and discrimination in Arizona.

- While the base groups openly talked about racial discrimination, it stands the chance of isolating the persuasion voters.

“I've been discriminated against as a women and a Latina. Mostly it is being treated as less than and talked down to because of both factors. I have had people try to discredit my successes by saying that they are only a result of affirmative action.” – Base Latina Woman

“I have dual discrimination... [I] have a lot of people coming to me on my job, discriminating [against] me, talking about me, just because of my race and where I'm from.” – Base Latina Woman

“Racism is definitely an issue. We look for enemies everywhere, and minority populations, especially Latinos, are easy targets since we're right on the border with Mexico.” – Base Anglo Woman
The immigration and race discussion opens new potential fissures. There are threats to the ability to join progressives together, regardless of race. We must ask ourselves: How do we (do we even) talk about immigration in a way that is consistent and values driven to these three different groups?

- Respondents question whether or not Latinos and Anglos share values, and this is true even without defining Latinos as “immigrants.”
- This is not just true of Anglo groups, but also of the Latino base group – there is skepticism that Anglos and Latinos share the same principles.
- However, there is a flip side – there are places where Latinos and Anglos share values, and it’s all about family. Family is the core for both of these groups, whether it be safety for your family or opportunities for children in the future.

“Not all white people share values and not all Mexican people share values.” – Base Anglo Man

“Most Latinos I see in America are perfectly fine speaking their own language and having their own values rather than becoming a part of the country they are living in.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman

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The wealthy and corporations

There is strong acknowledgement across the groups that the wealthy and corporations can pay more.

• The way persuadable Anglos frame the one-percent is – “power in the hands of a few.”

• The way base Anglos and Latinos talk about the one-percent is – “the wealthy and corporations.”

• Participants did not have a clear definition or understanding of the terminology: “special interests.”

• There is a clear link between politicians and wealthy donors.

“The wealthy have a lot of advantages over the average Joe. I know, I was raised affluent and live working poor now.” – Base Anglo Woman

“They use their power to advance the interests of the few not the many.” – Persuadable Anglo Man

“Our elected officials and their wealthy, well-connected friends write our laws to benefit their bottom lines, not ours.” – Base Latina Woman
What level of government should we focus on?

In their language and discussion, participants are aware of national politicians and D.C. politics, but clueless about the state legislature.

• All groups focus on national politicians with the exception of Arpaio.

• Federal policies such as healthcare are vitally important to all three of these groups.

• State level decisions regarding education funding are extremely important to all three groups.

• No level of government is seen as “clean” from corruption and greed.

“All politicians are the same I think they all tell you exactly what you want to hear so that they are elected, but when it comes down to it, they don’t follow through.” – Base Anglo Woman

“‘Healthcare is a privilege, not a right.’ That statement says everything about the attitude of the current administration, which is sickening. The attempted repeals of the ACA are solely for the hateful purpose of undoing the good things that President Obama accomplished during his tenure, no matter how many people are left without medical insurance in the process.” – Persuadable Anglo Woman

“Joe Arpaio abused his power; he is a racist and a bigot.” – Base Latina Woman
Questions?