



# Butterfly Lab

## Lessons Learned



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# 1 Narrative Arc

# High agreement

Across audiences and questions, people already agree with a lot of this narrative.

**91%** of respondents who didn't see any immigrant stories (the "control") agreed that:

"All farmworkers, including migrants and immigrants, deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity.

**72%** of the control agreed that:

"Refugees, including those experiencing violence, persecution, or climate disaster, should be able to come to America."

**85%** of the control agreed that:

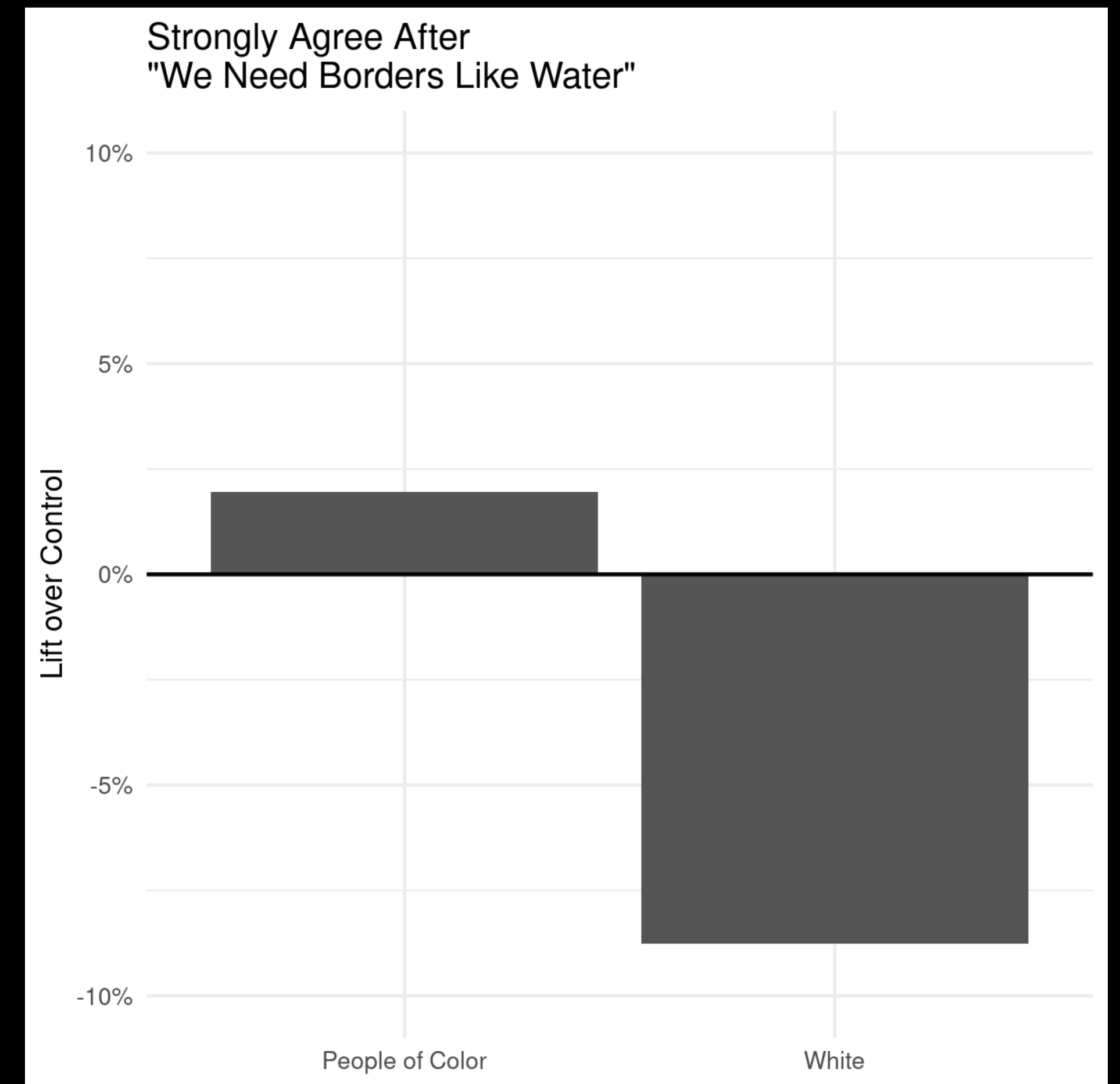
"Every person has the right to move and live freely, in community with their family, without fear of being separated from their loved ones or displaced from their home."

# Limited vision

"We need borders like water" worked exactly as it intended to for audiences of color and audiences already open to constant inquiry.

But for white audiences, this story was really challenging, and their challenge is illuminating.

Some audiences are agreeing that they *want* immigrants to belong and thrive, but they find it hard to imagine an America where that's really true.



# Put a future in it

Reaching and moving Americans toward the immigration system they *already want* will mean telling stories that narrate the past and the present but also connect them to a future vision.

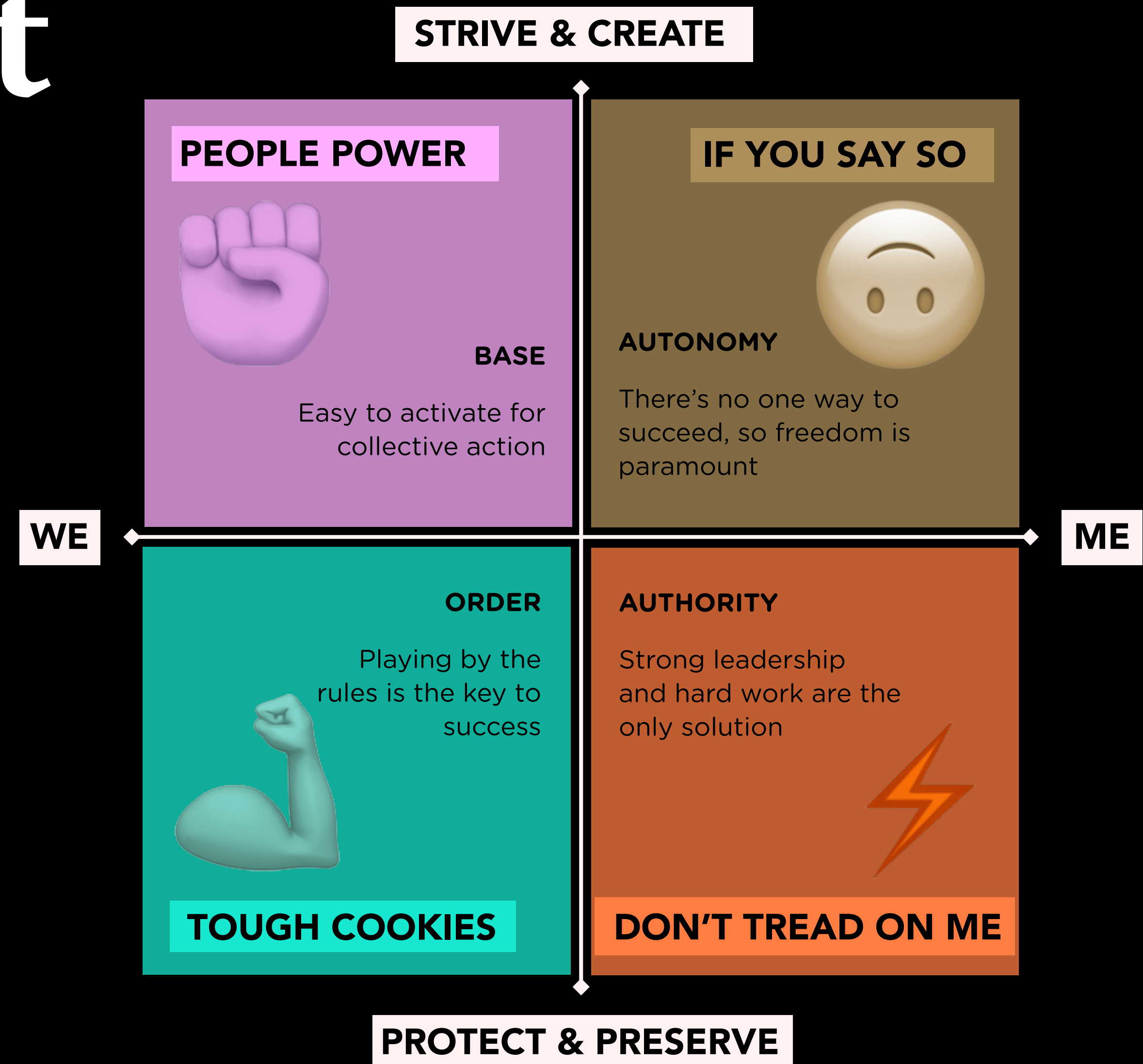
This research:

1. Proved that there are immigration stories that can move all kinds of Americans toward a narrative of immigrant thriving and belonging;
2. Points to a big base audience for those stories; and
3. Provides hypotheses about how diverse audiences outside the base connect with the narrative.

# 4 Audiences

# Values-distinct

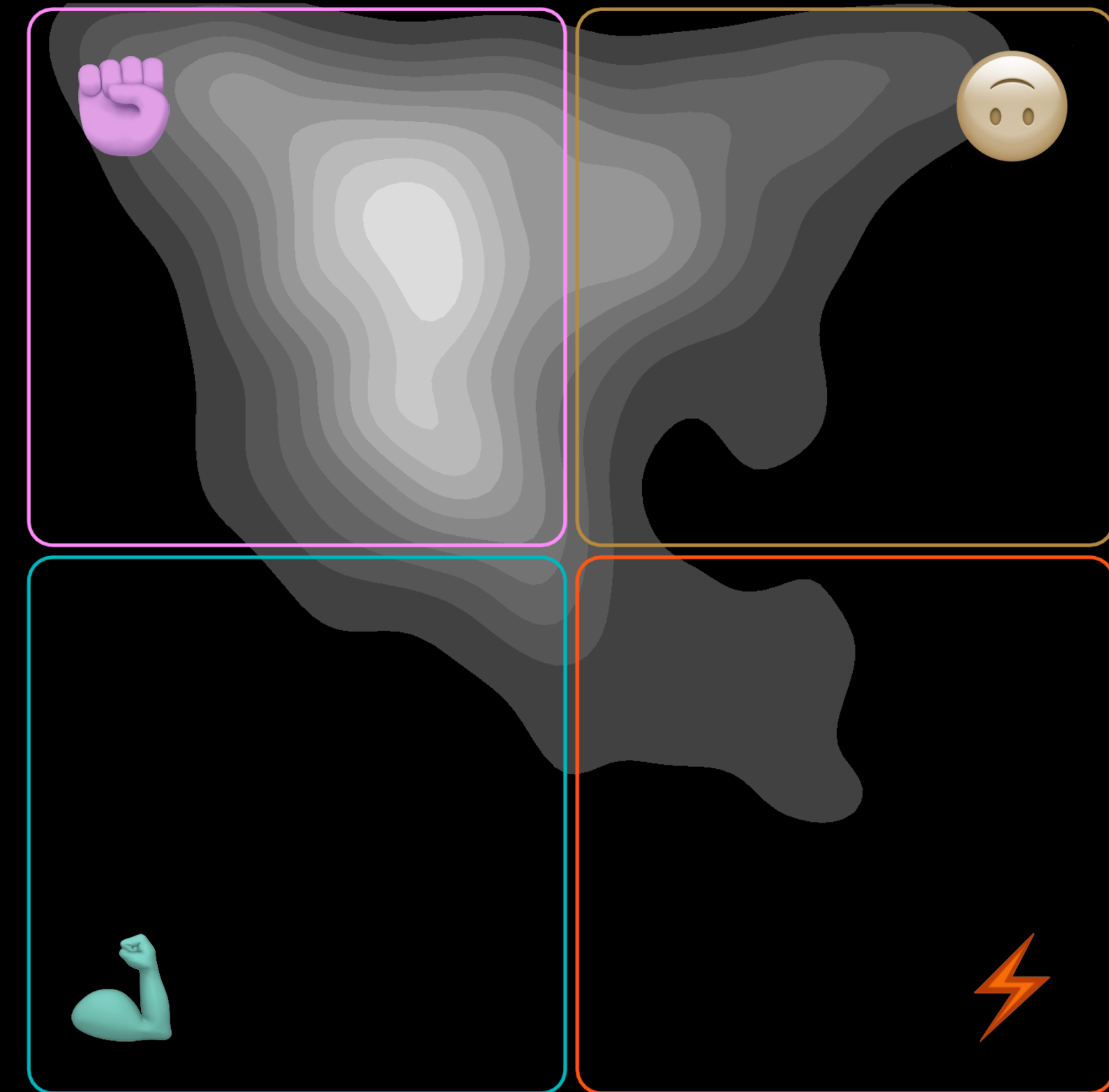
Strategically relevant, true audiences are more about values than about demography. In particular, community-orientation is an important value that defines how audiences receive immigration stories.



# Persuadables

This is a map of who moved across the whole study, all the concepts and creators. The center of gravity for the narrative is in PEOPLE POWER, but there are big opportunities in all the other audiences including very conservative DON'T TREAD ON ME.

Each of these audiences connected with the narrative in different ways.





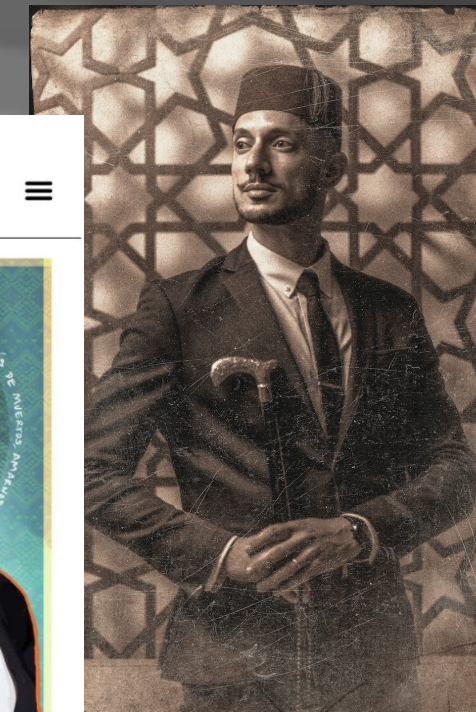
**8 Creators**  
**17 Concepts**



# People Power

There is real upside for persuasion in the base; they still have a lot of potential, but they're really easy to persuade!

They respond to shared humanity, dignity, freedom, striving, and suffering. Aiming for any persuadable group will lift PEOPLE POWER and expand the base narrative.



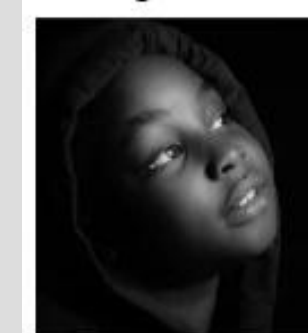
50 years after Black Earthers migrated to the planet of Rutuba to join their society, their children must participate in Tembe, a coming of age ritual journey.



After discovering the planet is in grave danger, they arrive in the capital city.



For some, the code is a long-awaited birthright.



Some are hopeful



And some are haunted



Phil



Jacobo

Free to hug my family.



Freedom to thrive.



# Non-People Power

There were only two concepts that worked significantly better outside the PEOPLE POWER base.

Audiences outside the PEOPLE POWER base responded better to a story that challenged them to free people from ICE's immigration detention system **before** telling a story (as opposed to putting that call to action at the end).

IF YOU SAY SO especially, responded strongly to Mario's story in particular. The two major themes in this story—*working hard* and *providing for family*—resonate with striving themes that moved all audiences across many concepts.



Free to hug my family.



Free to share a meal with friends.





# Striving

DON'T TREAD ON ME values power; they like to take control of their situations and environments. They like to act.

All the concepts that moved them featured labor and striving including these two concepts: The Humans Who Feed Us and Little Syria.

Only one of three pieces from Little Syria moved this audience (although another moved both TOUGH COOKIES and PEOPLE POWER). This piece, a rap, called Syria's business, focuses on achievement and making money specifically to support family members.



**Phil**



**Jacobo**



"Measuring success not by money hoarded but by family members supported."



# Responsibility

TOUGH COOKIES are “small-c” conservative. Even those who identify as Democrats (about a third) care about preserving, protecting, and defending what they have.

They responded strongly to the Immigrants are Essential, The Humans Who Feed Us, and Little Syria, all of which feature the striving themes that activate DON'T TREAD ON ME as well.

In addition, they responded to a message about the Afghan evacuation that said

“the US government failed to uphold its promise to Mohammed, costing him his **life**”

They did not respond to a message with the same story that appealed to compassion for the targeted widow.

*An Afghan widow and her sons are being targeted by the Taliban and need help getting to safety.*

*In January, Mohammad\*, a husband and father of six, was assassinated by the Taliban in front of his ten year old son.*

*His death was as preventable as it was tragic.*

*At the time of his murder, Mohammad, had been waiting more than a decade for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) to the United States.*

Compassion alone did not work.

*In January, Mohammad\*, a husband and father of six, was assassinated by the Taliban in front of his ten year old son.*

*His death was as preventable as it was tragic.*

*At the time of his murder, Mohammad, had been waiting more than a decade for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) to the United States.*

*Mohammad worked alongside the U.S. Embassy and military in Afghanistan for twelve years.*

*Yet, the U.S. government failed to uphold its promise to Mohammad, costing him **his life**.*

*Mohammad's family faces grave danger each day they remain in Afghanistan, especially as U.S. troops withdraw from the country.*

An appeal to US responsibility moved TOUGH COOKIES.



# Liberty

IF YOU SAY SO cares most about autonomy: self-determination and the ability to seek out new experiences. 70% of respondents in our surveys self-identify as “Democrats”. Almost 70% are not white. Their median age is just 38. Large majorities already “Strongly” or “Somewhat” agree with the thrive and belong questions.

But they are hard to move to “Strongly Agree” on the whole narrative and sometimes backlash against content that really moves their fellow progressives, PEOPLE POWER. *The whole audiences was much harder to move when the questions specifically referred to “undocumented” immigrants.*

Excluding white audience members reveals promise for a few concepts, notably these two that feature not “freedom” to work hard but liberty to choose our own paths.

**Freedom means freedom to rest.**



**Freedom to ride.**



**Freedom to be an American.**



**Freedom to thrive.**

Freedom to Rest

50 years after Black Earthers migrated to the planet of Rutuba to join their society, their children must participate in Tembe, a coming of age ritual journey.



For some, the code is a long-awaited birthright.



Some are hopeful

And some are haunted



But all arrive in the capital city



And prepare for the journey



Afro-futurism

# TL;DR

# Next up: the future

Majorities of this sample already agree that immigrants (regardless of status) belong and should thrive.

All kinds of stories activated the PEOPLE POWER base. Themes like shared humanity, compassion, dignity, and respect all move this audience.

Many stories also moved more conservative TOUGH COOKIES and DON'T TREAD ON ME audiences. Themes like striving (especially to provide for family) and the government's responsibility brought these audiences toward the thrive and belong narrative pillars.

Audiences—especially conservative audiences—were most challenged by being asked to imagine the future when borders are like water.

**To create that vision for the future, the Butterfly Lab can explore how to preserve a sense of rootedness and security while connecting everyone to a future that supports and promotes thriving and belongingness for immigrants.**





# Thanks for listening



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