

Which messages move?

Results from the Meme Factory's content-driven, audience-focused, social-media exploration of four progressive frames

Our goals

Messages -> Media

Take polling paragraphs and transform them into a wide variety of visual content to see how creatively flexible the different messages are relative to each other.

Analog -> Digital

Distribute visual posts on Facebook to see how these ideas connect with real people, behaving normally, in the “real” world.

Tailor to audiences

Specifically target two interesting audiences to enable tighter content-audience tailoring. Rather than testing the *same* posts to different audiences, create *different* posts for different people.

Our content strategy

In previous Meme Factory experiments, we've focused on doing paid Facebook distribution of rapidly-prototyped videos across various audiences.



In this experiment, we focused on building two Facebook pages with distinct demographics, creating dozens and dozens of unique pieces of social-native visual content (memes, charts, quotes, GIFs, and more) for each, and posting to the pages largely organically.

Why? Because we believe that a higher-output creative process will lead to more creative content; that social images are the minimum viable content unit for effective testing: fast, cheap, and expressive; and that tailoring content to audiences reveals the flexibility of message frames more completely.

Our audiences

Urban youth

Defined as: “People aged 18-29 who live in urban areas.” A “civic engagement” audience.



FB page:

[“The Actual Actual”](#)

Some groups interested in this audience:
NextGen America, For Our Future, March for our Lives.

Suburban women

Defined as: “Women with at least ‘some college’ who live in suburban areas.” A “persuasion” audience.



FB page:

[“Wonder Women Goals”](#)

Some groups interested in this audience:
Planned Parenthood For America, NARAL, EMILY’s List.

Our process

Prepare

Audience development

We grew a Facebook pages around both of our audiences and gathered existing qualitative research and consumer data on them.

Create & Post

Meme creation for each message

Our team generated dozens of pieces of visual content for each message per audience, over the course of a few weeks, and both posted and boosted each one to measure engagement.

Measure

Engagement + persuasion

Using digital surveys, we tested the persuasive impact of the highest-engagement content from each message-audience pairing.

Highest-performing content from all 4 message frames

Message frames and polling-paragraph language sourced from existing Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research work for a coalition of progressive organizations including MoveOn.org, SEIU, Working Families Party, NARAL, Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood for America, and Center for Popular Democracy Action.

“Change”

“Our political leadership has divided our country and plunged our government into chaos, and our elected officials continue to sit by and let it happen. We need a change to set our country back on the right path.”



We must bring the light to them in November.

"Change" for urban youth

We have to change our history of not turning out to vote—if not the results are on us.

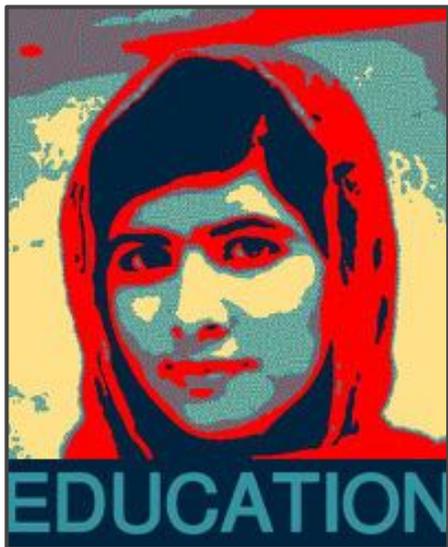


My current feelings about the state of the world



Something needs to change.

"Change" for suburban women



Malala is so inspirational: education does change a person.



TFW you managed to get a progressive-as-hell sermon about inequality and poverty quoting MLK Jr. into the royal wedding



Time's up.



TFW you're the first English-African-American princess



A Royal wedding where the Duchess-to-be walked herself down the aisle: what a dream.

“Rigged”

“We need a country that works for the middle class and working families, not just the wealthy and big corporations. Though unemployment may be low, the cost of living is high, and too many people are living paycheck to paycheck. Politicians are making it more difficult for working people to negotiate better wages and benefits. We need a change. We need to boldly rewrite the rules of the economy so it works for working families and the middle class again.”

This is Matthew Charles

- He is a 51 year old Army veteran
- He spent 21 years in prison for selling drugs
- He was granted early release in 2016, and started his rehabilitated life.
- He got a job, volunteered every week, went to church, and reconnected with family.
- The DA decided to appeal his release and now he's going back to jail.



This is not right.

“Rigged” for urban youth

We live in a country that appropriates money to parade around our military like North Korea does but doesn't appropriate money to supporting our veterans. Something seem wrong there?



Ya know, maybe a survivable minimum wage would help...



The UK could have given every homeless person in their country \$140,000 AKA: They could have eradicated homeless.



Get married," they say. "Buy a house," they say. When we're over here hardly able to buy groceries.



Q: How much did undocumented immigrants pay in income taxes to the federal government in 2015?

A: 23.6 billion

We need an economy that serves everyone paying into it.

"Rigged" for suburban women

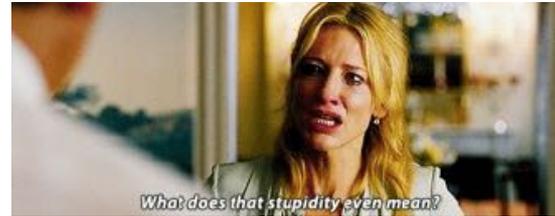
HOW MUCH EACH FAMILY OR TAXPAYER GAINS OR LOSES					
INCOME GROUP	2019	2021	2023	2025	2027
< \$10,000	-\$79.96	-\$304.37	-\$390.49	-\$456.03	-\$530.42
\$10,000-\$20,000	-\$46.68	-\$436.04	-\$500.03	-\$588.95	-\$788.10
\$20,000-\$30,000	-\$3.72	-\$414.75	-\$464.38	-\$550.42	-\$743.14
\$30,000-\$40,000	\$244.83	-\$48.37	-\$153.43	-\$160.49	-\$467.93
\$40,000-\$50,000	\$470.37	\$200.92	\$131.32	\$109.25	-\$366.86
\$50,000-\$75,000	\$812.98	\$706.07	\$605.30	\$612.06	-\$138.91
\$75,000-\$100,000	\$1,206.62	\$1,168.77	\$989.29	\$1,026.64	\$71.32
\$100,000-\$200,000	\$2,094.76	\$2,053.00	\$1,659.92	\$1,700.39	\$160.21
\$200,000-\$500,000	\$6,508.96	\$6,373.66	\$5,241.04	\$5,584.23	\$523.03
\$500,000-\$1 million	\$21,691.37	\$20,415.25	\$15,758.85	\$16,583.75	\$1596.71
\$1 million and over	\$59,615.38	\$49,126.71	\$22,053.87	\$25,875.61	\$9189.19

Source: CBO

Here's how much families of different incomes are benefiting or losing after the recent tax reform bill. Notice a trend?

California	New Jersey
Minimum Wage: \$11.00	Minimum Wage: \$8.60
Single-earner annual income at that rate: \$22,880	Single-earner annual income at that rate: \$17,888
Livable wage for a single, childless worker: \$29,140	Livable wage for a single, childless worker: \$28,537
Texas	Florida
Minimum Wage: \$7.25	Minimum Wage: \$8.25
Single-earner annual income at that rate: \$15,080	Single-earner annual income at that rate: \$17,160
Livable wage for a single, childless worker: \$22,942	Livable wage for a single, childless worker: \$24,440

What's "livable" depends so much on where you are, and what's happening. Livable, in this case, doesn't include such extravagances as travel, meals out (ever), or money left over to save: only the bare necessities.



When people try to claim that giving tax cuts to the wealthy will "trickle down"

Average cost of a child during its first year of life: **\$12,000**

Average additional cost of daycare: **\$18,000**

Median annual household income in California in 2017: **\$64,500**

... but under proposed GOP legislation,

maternity & pregnancy services would not be a required benefit for healthcare plans.

The average cost of delivering a baby without insurance? **\$30,000**

Having no support from a healthcare plan when having a baby doesn't seem like the answer.

“Freedom/ Protect”

“America was founded on freedom. That means freedom for all, not just for some. Whether it's the freedom to love who you want, the freedom of religion, the freedom to make decisions about our bodies, or the freedom to walk down the street without fear of harassment, discrimination, or even violence – we need to protect these freedoms for all Americans.”

THE FACE RACISTS MAKE



WHEN THEIR FAVORITE TV SHOW GETS CANCELED BECAUSE OF HATE SPEECH

"Freedom/Protect" for urban youth

Politicians aren't hiding their attacks on your freedom.



Yes, we have freedom of speech. No, our speech doesn't come without consequences.

When a children's show is too relatable to everyday life 🐻

The state of women in 2018



We don't have freedom of the press for nothing.

“Freedom/Protect” for suburban women

Women aren't free if we aren't free to control our own bodies.

Period.

It really is this simple.



Memo to everyone who wants to take away women's reproductive freedoms:

Truth.



Women running to the polls to protect our freedom like



Clear faith in our President



Sara Benincasa
@SaraJBenincasa

I am offering \$300 to the journalist who very seriously asks Trump his opinion on our nation's relations with Wakanda and gets the question and answer recorded live on video. I know \$300 doesn't sound like a lot to some people but I also know what most reporters make so...\$300.

7:58 AM · 13 Jan 18

...but fact & fiction are hard.

“Communities Under Attack”

“Americans of all stripes – including women, people of color, Muslims, immigrants, and LGBTQ people -- are under attack. We need a change. We need to stand up to these attacks and protect our communities.”

It's nice that you can hold your child, but what about the nearly 1,500 children that were lost by the US government?
#WhereAreTheChildren

Ivanka Trump
@IvankaTrump

My ❤️! #SundayMorning



How can we trust the current people in power when they can't even keep track of vulnerable children in their care?

"Communities Under Attack" for urban youth



It's 2018! Get over your ism's and your phobias and start respecting people.



People aren't illegal and trying to live your American dream shouldn't be a crime.



Learn how YOUR family got to this stolen land.



Less Kanye, more Barack.

“Communities Under Attack” for suburban women

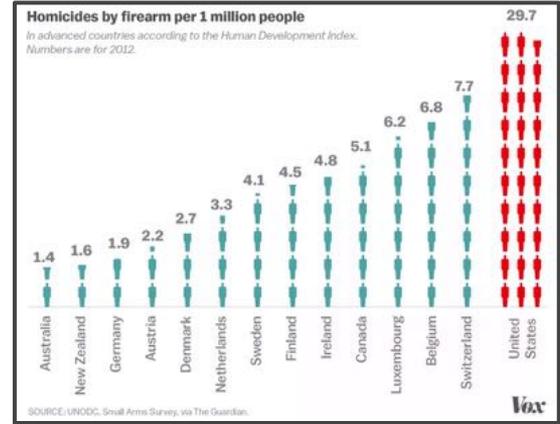
Not in our name.

US lost track of 1,500 immigrant children, but says it's not 'legally responsible'

By Dakin Andone, CNN
Updated 8:16 PM ET, Sun May 27, 2018



One of these
is not like
the others.



Reading the headlines + counting the weeks until November = this



You can only pick one.



Diane Guerrero was just 14 when she came home to an empty house one day: her parents were deported to Colombia. No kid deserves to see their family broken up.

Measuring the most engaging *and* most persuasive messages

Testing methodology

Analyze engagement

Identify the highest-performing posts

Boost each post with \$20 to get sufficient signal. Use Facebook reach, like, and share data to select the most-engaging 5 posts per message-audience.

Build surveys with Civis

Craft questions and bundle visuals

We decided on key persuasion metrics and presented content in 5-visual groupings, by message, to mitigate the peculiar specificity of any one piece of content

Test persuasion by message-audience

Persuasion for each audience

We surveyed 3,000 people, split between audiences, to evaluate the impact of the highest-engagement content from each message-audience pairing as compared to controls

Average engagement, shares & reach by message

Metrics by message	Page		Combined
	Urban Youth	Suburban Women	
Average of total reach as a % of page likes at the time			
Change	114%	48%	81%
Communities	62%	31%	47%
Freedom	67%	66%	67%
Rigged	89%	42%	66%
Average of share rate			
Change	0.86%	1.02%	0.94%
Communities	1.02%	1.30%	1.16%
Freedom	0.76%	1.69%	1.23%
Rigged	1.14%	1.59%	1.36%

NOTES ON THE METRICS

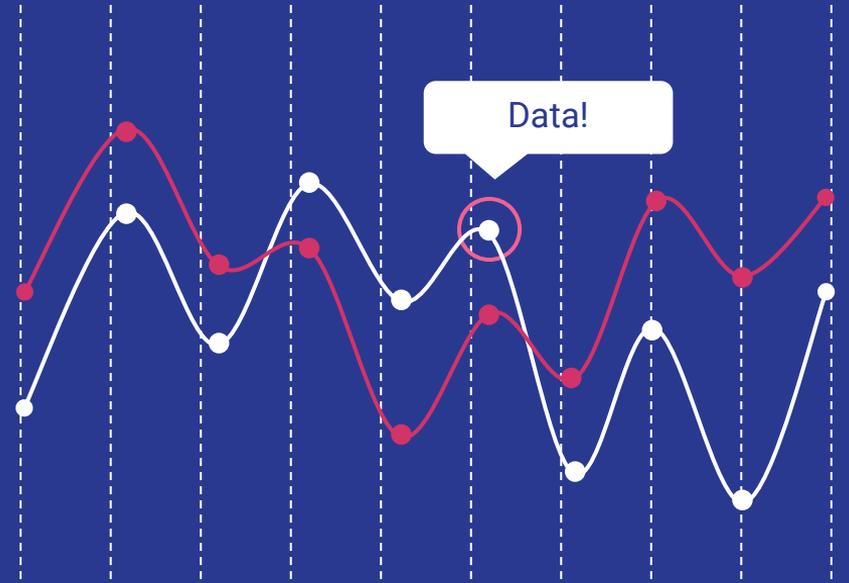
- “Total reach” is an important gauge of how cost-efficiently we can talk about this message, using content, on Facebook
- “Share rate” gives us an additional sense of which messages sparked the most active interest amongst our target audiences
- For Urban Youth, the high reach % for “Change” was driven by two extreme outlier posts, so we discounted that result to some extent.

Persuasion of most-engaging posts by message

Message	Suburban Women effects	Urban Youth effects
“Rigged”	+4% anti-incumbent sentiment Potential increase to vote intent?	+6% Presidential disapproval (though it boosted positive feelings from conservatives)
“Change”	+6% anti-incumbent sentiment Potential backlash to vote intent?	+4% vote intent
“Communities Under Attack”	+1% Presidential disapproval	No persuasion detected
“Freedom/Protect ”	No persuasion detected	+3% Presidential disapproval

Conclusions

Actionable insights
for each audience,
for each metric,
and overall



#1: Balancing reach, sharing, and a variety of survey-assessed persuasion metrics, **“Change”** and **“Rigged”** outperformed **“Freedom”** and **“Communities”** with our social-media audiences.

Balancing engagement with persuasion

The transition from dense message paragraphs to highly engaging visual content leads to, in most cases, broader messages that are more appealing but carry less argument. That's one of the reasons we believe this process is so valuable: because it forces messages down a gauntlet they'll have to brave soon anyway.

But we need to make sure we don't lose the persuasive substance along the way, so we use survey-based persuasion testing to check our findings.

For example, in this experiment, if we looked at Facebook performance alone for the Suburban Women audience, "Freedom" would have been the clear winner. But when we gut-checked the persuasive effect of the "Freedom" content, we saw that it didn't move the needle. So we eliminated that message, and focused on the best across-the-board performers.

Highly engaging post: “Rigged” for Urban Youth

This is Matthew Charles

- He is a 51 year old Army veteran
- He spent 21 years in prison for selling drugs
- He was granted early release in 2016, and started his rehabilitated life.
- He got a job, volunteered every week, went to church, and reconnected with family.
- The DA decided to appeal his release and now he's going back to jail.



The Actual Actual
Like This Page · May 30 · 🌐

This is not right.

Hannah Taylor, Denise Hall, Daniel Ortega and 91 others like this.

326 Shares 13 Comments

View 7 more comments

Tony Geesters And yet we have a 69 out with just getting his high school diploma
2w

Marcelius Hines For drugs smh
2w

Ka'Pree Basnight Him Sway Swaavee
2w

Pat O'Donnell this mans sentence should be commuted 100%
2w

Michael Bolton That's just a corrupt DA that wants to add to his sentencing sheet. Fire the DA since he's playing with others

This post was shared more than 325 times and reached over 25,000 users with only \$20 of boosting behind it.

Highly-engaging post: “Rigged” for Sub. Women

Q: How much did undocumented immigrants pay in income taxes to the federal government in 2015?

A: 23.6 billion

Wonder Women Goals
Like This Page · 110 · 20 · 49

We need an economy that serves everyone paying into it.

Laurie Levensler, Kim Hurley, Plamselby Dee and 277 others like this.

112 Shares · 10 Comments

View 4 more comments

Vita Marie Hoffman Ya right! 🙄 Illegally because they shouldn't even be allowed to get documentation, it's falsified documents!

3w

↳ 13 Replies

Kathryn Amy Ramirez That's about 23.6 billion more than Trump has paid.

3w

Christina Levenner How much did trump pay?

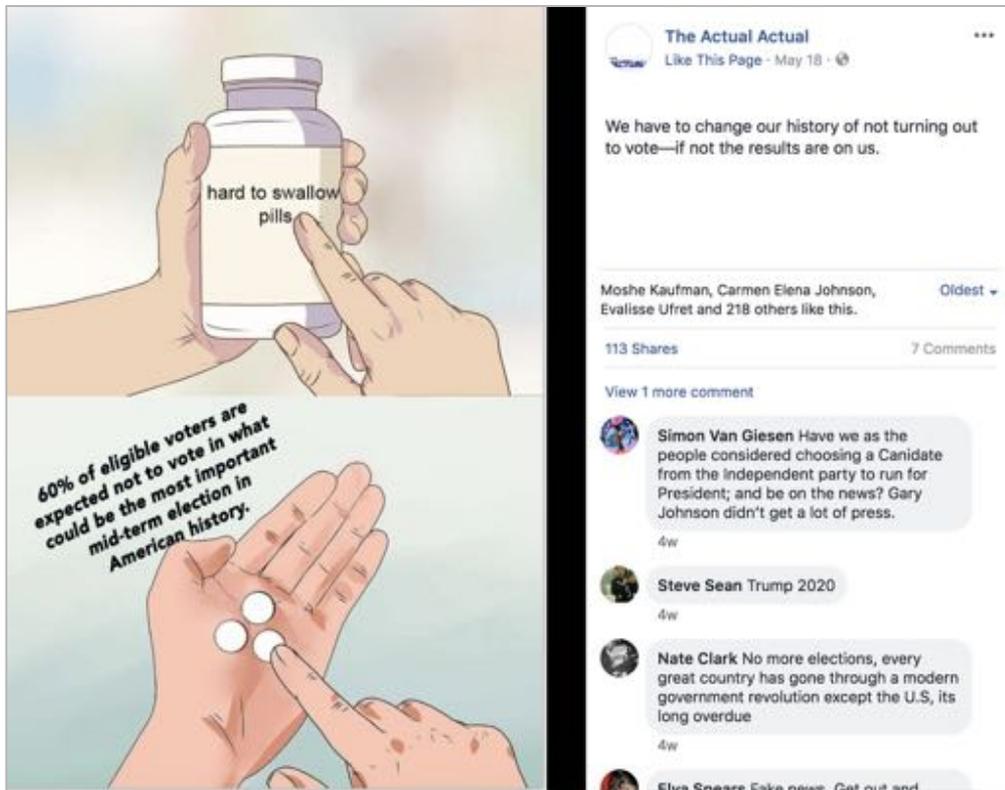
This post was shared more than 110 times and reached over 4,700 users with only \$20 of boosting behind it.

Highly-engaging post: “Change” for Sub. Women



This post was shared more than 86 times and reached over 3,800 users. All engagement and growth was organic as “bullshit” got the boost denied.

Highly-engaging post: “Change” for Urban Youth



This post was shared more than 110 times and reached over 8,400 users with \$20 of boosting.

#2: Humor was an element in all of the top-performing posts for the urban youth audience, and most of the top-performing for suburban women. (The SW audience seemed to like their humor mildly racy, with light swearing.)

#3: Informational content worked as a style for suburban women, who engaged on educational charts and graphs.

#4: Timeliness was critical to both groups. If we could add to a conversation the community was already having (about the Royal Wedding or the Kanye meltdown), we would see higher engagement.

#5: Recognizable, of-the-moment memes were most popular among the Urban Youth audience — more so than with the Suburban Women.

#6: Message *flexibility* matters: the simplicity and resulting extensibility of “change” and “rigged” helped them capture attention.

#7: Since we were imitating organic media production –wider-reaching but lighter-touch on message – our **persuasion effects were relatively small.** (Though significant!)

#8: We did all testing **before the family-separation story** broke. It's unclear whether "Communities under attack" would be spiking now, or whether a "Change" or "Rigged" approach to this (horrific) story would still connect more with folks?

#9: Facebook changed its rules in the middle of this experiment. We adapted by toning down our content's political-ness dramatically — making cultural markers even more important.

#10: Compared to video developed in previous Meme Factories, this audience-targeted visual content proved much **more shareable**.