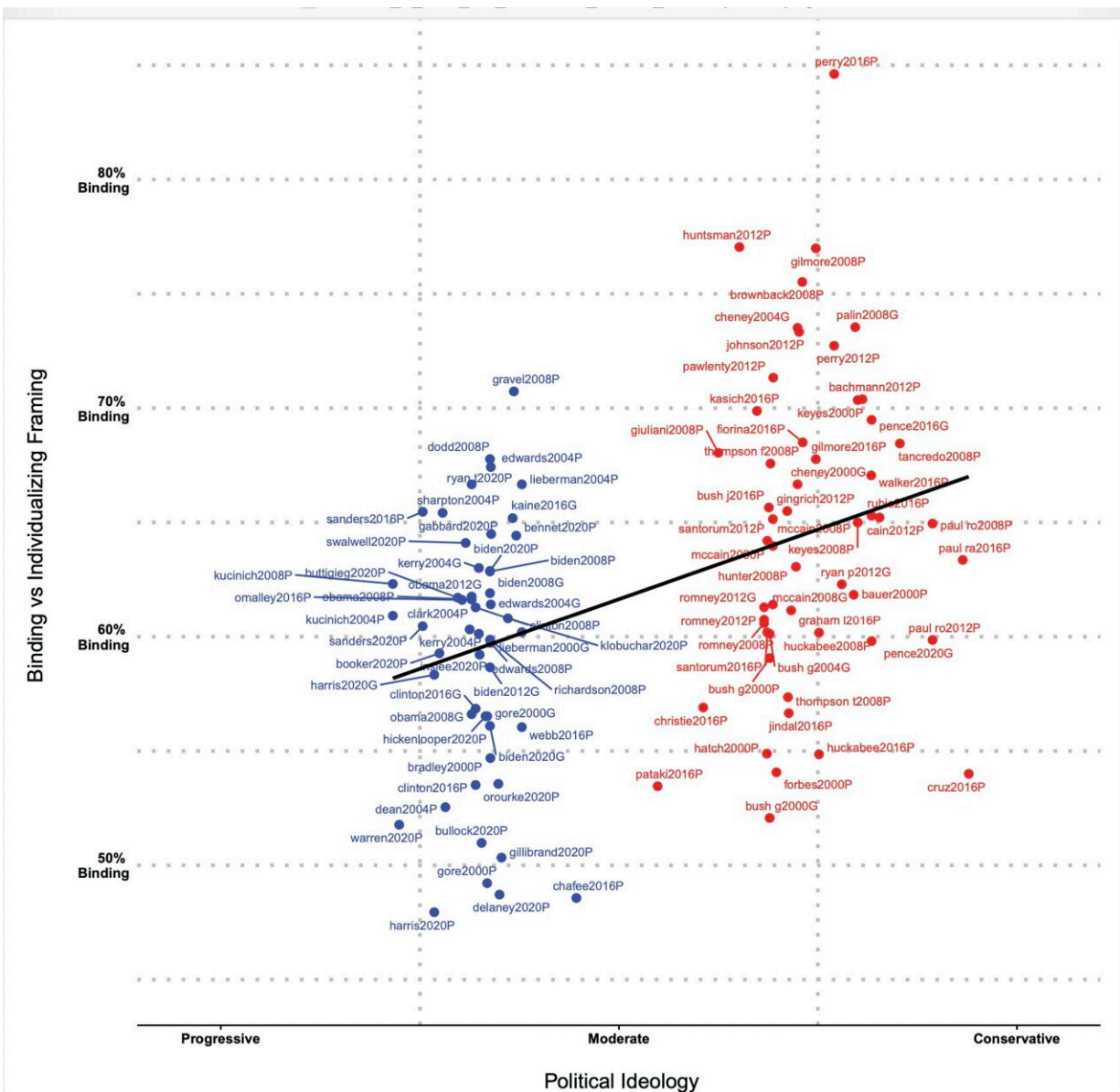


Moral reframing increases support for economically progressive candidates: Study

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Relationship between US Presidential Candidates' Political Ideology and Value Framing. The figure shows a scatterplot. The measure of political ideology ranged from -1 (most progressive) to 1 (most conservative). The measure of binding vs individualizing framing ranged from 0 (0% binding framing, 100% individualizing framing) to 100 (100% binding framing, 0% individualizing framing). Sample size: $n = 104$. Credit: Voelkel et al.

Economically progressive candidates may fare better in US elections when delivering their message in terms of "binding values" such as patriotism, family, and respect for tradition, according to a study published in *PNAS Nexus*.

Although large majorities of Americans favor increasing economic equality in the United States, candidates who promote policies intended to reduce [economic inequality](#), such as raising the [minimum wage](#) or increasing access to health care, often fare poorly at the ballot box. One reason for their under-performance may be that many ideologically conservative Americans are put off by the values espoused by progressive candidates, such as equality and social justice.

Jan Voelkel and colleagues investigated whether presenting the same [economic policies](#) with a different set of values—namely family, patriotism, and tradition—would make progressive candidates more competitive.

After a preliminary study with an online convenience sample supporting their hypothesis, the authors conducted a preregistered experiment on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,695 Americans. The authors found that framing progressive policies with binding values increased support among conservatives and moderates and did not significantly change support among liberals.

Across the entire sample, the binding values message increased support for a candidate by four points, on a scale from zero to 100. Among conservative participants, the binding values message caused a 10-point increase of support. However, an analysis of 144 [presidential debates](#) using word frequency found that progressive candidates rely less on binding value framing than more conservative candidates. According to the authors, the findings suggest that progressive candidates should consider reframing their message to build broader support for redistributive policies.

More information: Jan G Voelkel et al, Moral reframing increases support for economically progressive candidates, *PNAS Nexus* (2023). DOI: [10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad154](https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad154)

Provided by PNAS Nexus

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