Framing Debate to Lift Children Out of the Political Divide

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience in the Graduate School of Duke University

2017
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Many cost-effective, evidence-based developmental programs (EBPs) remain inaccessible to children in need. To improve access to care, this dissertation theoretically and then empirically examines different approaches to advocating for dissemination funding in a polarized political context. Section 1 describes recent advances in the use of morally framed messaging to change attitudes. Section 2 reviews research on political polarization with an emphasis on how polarization affects online message processing. Section 3 describes a theoretically informed EBP advocacy strategy that seeks to tailor and target advocacy messages to promote bipartisan support for EBP dissemination.

Sections 4, 5, and 6 describe three studies designed to test whether motivated social cognition (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003) or moral foundations theory (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009) may be used to tailor message frames to speak to the distinct needs of Liberals and Conservatives. In Section 7, results and limitations are discussed. Although the three studies provide limited support for the hypothesis that theory can be used to design persuasive, tailored messages, message frames were consistently overwhelmed by competition from partisan cues and ideological arguments. The dissertation concludes by arguing that, in order to generate bipartisan support for EBP dissemination, implementation funding and structures that are already
highly prioritized by Liberals need to be designed to appeal to Conservatives’ substantive policy preferences.
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This work was completed with the financial support of Duke University’s Graduate School, the Sulzberger Family, Dan Levitan, and The Center for Child and Family Policy. This work was guided (with warmth) by an esteemed committee composed of Kenneth A. Dodge, Philip J. Cook, Rick H. Hoyle, and Timothy J. Strauman. Kenneth A. Dodge deserves a special thanks for his years of patient support. Ken is more than a mentor; he is a model of scholarly excellence. His life demonstrates how students can conduct research – with conscientious generosity – to improve the lives of those in need.
1. Introduction

What if I told you that we could enrich developmental environments, improve parent-child relationships, keep children safer, and save money in the process? Would you say that offer is too good to be true? After all, good outcomes are supposed to cost money. Nonetheless, that is what effective maternal-child visiting programs do. For example, Duke researchers recently conducted a randomized clinical trial of Family Connects, a brief, universal, post-partum nurse home visiting service (Dodge, Goodman, Murphy, O'Donnell, & Sato, 2013a, 2013b; Dodge et al., 2014). As part of this trial, nurses were sent to visit parents at home to help them identify and meet their family’s growing needs. When children reached 1 year in age, a separate team of evaluators went back to see if the visits made a difference. These evaluators found that visited mothers were warmer parents and less anxious than their non-visited peers. Visited fathers were more engaged with their children. Visited families provided home environments that were more stimulating, selected higher quality daycare programs, and accessed more of the social services they required. Most importantly, visited infants required less emergency medical care. And for every dollar spent sending nurses to visit families, $3.00 were saved by preventing infant emergency room visits and hospital-overnights. Those dollars add up. Over visited infants’ first 6 months of life, Durham County residents netted $4,500,000 in health care savings.
Now, what if I told you that providing 3- and 4-year-olds preschool education prepares children to enter school while saving money? Again, that sounds like the policy equivalent of alchemy. Nonetheless, in the short term, high quality early childhood education significantly improves language, literacy, and mathematics skills (Barnett, 2011). And in the long term, preschool improves high-school graduation rates and lifetime earnings while reducing crime rates and teen pregnancies (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). These long-term effects produce significant savings, equal to somewhere between $3.00 and $7.00 for every $1.00 spent educating children (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010; Reynolds, Temple, White, Ou, & Robertson, 2011; Temple & Reynolds, 2007; Yoshikawa et al., 2013).

Based on the evidence, there should be broad support for investment in home visitation and early childhood education and, unsurprisingly, when you describe these policy opportunities to the public, people respond favorably. In a 2014 poll, over 70% of respondents were for a federal bill that would expand home visitation services and fund preschool programs for low- and middle-income families (First Five Years Fund, 2014). However, when Senator Harkin introduced a bill, Strong Start for America’s Children (S. 1697, 2013; S. 2452, 2014), to fund these same services, it landed with a resounding thud on the Republican side of the aisle.
The fate of Senator Harkin’s bill indicated that the developmental science community must turn to face a new challenge. After decades of research, scholars have identified a pool of evidence-based developmental programs (EBPs), yet these programs remain largely unavailable to children in need and unknown to the public at large. If child advocates generate public support for specific programs, they might be adopted by legislative allies. These legislative allies might then introduce bills that fund dissemination and implementation. However, in the polarized political environment, only 2-3% of Congressional bills are enacted as law (Tauberer, 2016). Given the composition of and pronounced ideological conflict in Congress, developmental policy scholars must consider how we are to generate bipartisan commitment to translate science into services.

1.1 Targeted Messaging

There is mounting empirical evidence that political identity and behavior are the product of elective affinities, or the match between the psychological traits of an individual (or group) and the tenets of a belief system (Amodio, Jost, Master, & Yee, 2007; Douglas et al., 2008; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, & Ha, 2010; Johnston & Wronski, 2013; Jost & Amodio, 2012; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Jost et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2007; Mondak, 2010; Mondak & Canache, 2014; Smith, Oxley, Hibbing, Alford, & Hibbing, 2011; Thórisdóttir & Jost, 2011). Consistent with theory, if one is to advocate
effectively for developmental policy change, one must identify a constituency’s psychological traits, then use those traits to frame and target policy arguments (Cohen, 2003).

Environmental conservation researchers have recently experimented with psychologically targeted advocacy using moral foundations theory (MFT; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011; Haidt, 2007) as a guide. According to MFT, people commonly subscribe to five cross-cultural morals that load on two distinct liberal and conservative clusters (Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Liberals tend to exhibit a preference for the *individualizing* cluster (or foundation) comprised of two morals. First, Liberals are committed to fairness and reciprocity (fairness). Second, Liberals value caring for people and preventing them from suffering harm (care). These morals grow out of a social narrative that defines progress as incremental liberation of the individual from coercive social structures (Haidt, 2008). There is, therefore, an affinity between liberal morals and neo-liberal preferences for autonomy, individual welfare, and egalitarianism.

Conservatives tend to exhibit a preference for three morals that load on a *binding* foundation (Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011) concerning community, spirituality, and religiosity. First, Conservatives are committed to serving and showing
loyalty to their in-groups (in-group). Second, Conservatives show deference to authority and respect for community institutions (authority). Third, Conservatives are devoted to maintaining purity and preserving the sacred (purity). These preferences flow from a social narrative that sees culture as devolving from an idealized past (Haidt, 2008). This perceived devolution drives the desire to preserve valued cultural institutions (Haidt, 2008). There is, therefore, an affinity between conservative morals and neo-traditional preferences for loyalty, obedience, strong communities, stable institutions, spirituality, and freedom from contamination.

A message is *framed* by selectively emphasizing specific attributes to shape the audience’s response (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). Feinberg and Willer (2013) observed that most conservation messages are framed in terms of care themed moral arguments that resonate with Liberals but not Conservatives. Feinberg and Willer then experimented by framing two competing pro-conservation advocacy messages in the form of opinion-editorials. One message frame selectively emphasized a liberal caring theme, while the other emphasized a conservative purity theme (i.e., conservation was presented as a way to restore environmental purity). Consistent with real world party platforms, they found that Liberals endorsed more favorable conservation attitudes than Conservatives when exposed to the typical caring themed editorial; but they found no between group differences amongst participants exposed to the purity themed editorial.
Feinberg and Willer theorized that polarized partisan positions in environmental stewardship stem in part from the failure to conceptualize and articulate pro-conservation arguments that match Conservatives’ needs and motivations.

1.2 Contrasting Persuasion and Entrenchment

Day, Fiske, Downing, and Trail (2014) sought to examine two competing hypotheses related to the persuasive power of moral framing. First, Day et al. proposed the limited entrenching hypothesis. According to the entrenching hypothesis, framing effects (i.e., attitude change in the direction advocated by the framed message) would be observed only to the extent that recipients were exposed to appropriately matched frames advocating for attitude consistent positions. Entrenchment would, for example, be observed if a Conservative audience expressed more positive attitudes about increased school choice (a common conservative priority) after being exposed to a purity framed message arguing that the sanctity of the parent-child relationship is violated when governments choose where children attend school. Second, Day et al. proposed the more extreme persuasion hypothesis. According to the persuasion hypothesis, framing effects would be observed whenever recipients were exposed to appropriately matched frames, even when the target group held adverse pre-exposure attitudes. Persuasion would, for example, be observed if a Conservative audience expressed positive (or less negative) attitudes about raising taxes to modernize school buildings.
after being exposed to an in-group framed message arguing that we need to provide
American children better educations than Chinese and Russian children.

Day et al. (2014) conducted an experiment in which the five moral foundations
were used to frame ten distinct positions across five policy domains (e.g., education,
immigration, economic markets). Of these ten positions, five advocated prototypically
conservative stances, and five advocated prototypically liberal stances. In connection
with both sets of stances, Day et al. found evidence of entrenchment. When
Conservatives were exposed to authority and purity framed messages advocating
conservative positions, they endorsed more favorable attitudes than equally
conservative controls not exposed to advocacy messages. This pattern did not hold for
in-group framed messages. Similarly, when Liberals were exposed to fairness and
caring framed messages advocating liberal positions, they endorsed more favorable
attitudes than equally liberal controls not exposed to advocacy messages. Interestingly,
when exposed to in-group, authority, and purity framed messages advocating liberal
positions, both Liberals and Conservatives endorsed more favorable attitudes than
corresponding controls, which provides limited support for the persuasion hypothesis.

1.3 Moderating and Mediating Mechanisms of Moral Framing

Wolsko, Ariceaga, and Seiden (2016) returned to the issue of environmental
regulation to replicate and extend Feinberg and Willer ’s (2013) data. In Study 1, Wolsko
et al. (2016) found that when participants were exposed to no argument or an individualizing themed argument, participants endorsed prototypically partisan views on climate change and conservation intentions. In other words, when asked to care for the environment as a way to care for people and animals, Conservatives expressed negative attitudes while Liberals expressed positive attitudes. Conversely, after exposure to a binding themed message that framed conservation in terms of in-group loyalty, authority, and purity, there was no statistically significant difference between Liberals’ and Conservatives’ positions. Once again, this finding provides some support for the persuasion hypothesis.

In follow up experiments, Wolsko et al. (2016) replicated their initial results and found evidence that speaker effects (experiment 2) and argument strength (experiment 3) mediated persuasion effects. Framing was persuasive to the extent the recipient attributed the message to a speaker who shared their group identity. Similarly, framing influenced attitudes to the extent that recipients perceived the message argument to be strong. Conservatives rated the binding argument significantly stronger than Liberals, while Liberals rated the individualizing argument significantly stronger than Conservatives. Thus, moderated mediation was observed. The match between frame and recipient orientation predicted perceived message strength, while perceived message strength predicted post-exposure conservation attitudes.
1.4 Limitations in Existing Research on Moral Framing

Together, these studies provide proof of concept that moral foundations theory can be used to design targeted message frames that influence the attitudes of partisans. There are, however, significant limits to the data. First, although Day et al. (2014) carefully probed the applicability of moral frames to five distinct policy domains, it is unclear whether their efficacy would extend to EBP advocacy. EBP outcomes tend to be measured in terms of caring (e.g., improved positive parenting, reduced incidents of reported abuse) and fairness (e.g., reduced health disparities). As a result, there may be a more natural resonance between EBP outcomes and individualizing moral frames than binding moral frames. It is, therefore, unclear as to whether binding framed messages could be designed to promote favorable attitudes about EBPs amongst Conservatives.

Second, whereas Feinberg and Willer (2013) used experimental materials in the style of opinion-editorials, Wolsko et al. (2016) and Day et al. (2014) used very brief messages designed for internal validity. The ecologically validity of their messages was, as a result, somewhat questionable. It is unclear as to whether individuals would encounter equivalent message types as they negotiate the media environment. And if these messages were encountered in a short form medium (e.g., Twitter), would recipients learn anything about outcomes that would justify action? It is therefore an
open question as to whether the same pattern of entrenchment and persuasion effects would be observed if participants were exposed to naturalistic materials.

Third, the existing research does not examine the impact of moral framing effects in a competitive media environment. The proof of concept research examines the impact of framing effects by exposing participants to a brief message with a single viewpoint originating from an anonymous speaker. In the real world, message recipients receive multiple messages with contrasting viewpoints from varied speakers associated with divisive group identities. It is unclear as to whether moral framing effects would be observed when recipients are exposed to competing frames, competing ideological arguments, and competing partisan cues, as recipients commonly are when, for example, they read a mainstream newspaper article that seeks to present a balanced summary of competing policy alternatives. Similarly, as Wolsko et al. (2016) found that framing effects were mediated by recipients’ perception that they shared the speaker’s group identity, it is unclear whether elites could effectively persuade out-group partisans by framing policy proposals to appeal to the out-group’s moral preferences.

1.5 Outline

In an effort to extend the literature by probing the boundaries of framing effects, three experiments were conducted. Study 1 tested the efficacy of using Jost et al.’s (2003) model of motivated social cognition to guide the design of value frames. Study 2 sought
to replicate moral framing research in the domain of EBP advocacy. Study 3 probed the degree to which moral framing effects are robust to competing partisan cues and ideological arguments.

As this program of research seeks to consider how moral frames operate in a competitive, polarized media environment, Section 2 reviews existing literature on polarization and partisan message processing. Thereafter, in Section 3, an advocacy model is proposed. In Sections 4, 5, and 6, the methods and results of the three aforementioned studies are presented. And, in Section 7, results are discussed in terms of their implications for the proposed advocacy model.
2. Polarization and Partisan Messaging

This Section begins by providing background about the current state of polarization, then describes how polarization distorts cognitive processes and contributes to legislative stagnation. Three conclusions are drawn. First, elite polarization drives partisan constituents to adopt polarized positions in specific policy domains, including positions that conflict with individuals’ substantive preferences. Second, the current use of polarizing value frames inhibits policy change by burying debate about narrow policy proposals under irreconcilable ideological conflict. Third, public polarization incentivizes Congressmen to sculpt a polarized legislative agenda that leaves little room for consensus.

2.1 Defining Polarization

Polarization is a multidimensional construct (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). Four components merit deconstruction herein. First, polarization may be measured in terms of the distance between or extremity of competing groups’ positions. There is little evidence that the American population has, over the last few decades, trended toward more extreme positions (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). There is, however, ample evidence that partisan (i.e., Democrats’ and Republicans’; self-identified Liberals’ and Conservatives’) preferences have diverged (Layman, Carsey, & Horowitz, 2006; Pew Research, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2014b).
Second, the attitudes of partisans and partisan groups have grown more ideologically coherent (see Converse, 1964). The polarization literature often defines ideology broadly to include social values (e.g., religiosity), domain specific preferences (e.g., those relating to immigration), and general political philosophy (e.g., proper scope of government; Pew Research, 2012). Individuals who endorse liberal or conservative attitudes in one domain (e.g., foreign policy) are increasingly likely to endorse corresponding ideological attitudes across issues (e.g., those concerning welfare, environmental regulation, homosexuality, the proper scope of government; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008; Pew Research, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2014b).

Third, partisan groups have consolidated, which is to say that the correlation between demographic attributes and ideologies has grown (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008).

Fourth, as groups have grown more similar in their beliefs and individual attributes, affective polarization has occurred (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012). Simply put, Democrats and Republicans have come to dislike one another more (Iyengar et al., 2012; Pew Research Center, 2014b).

### 2.2 Elite Polarization Causes Public Polarization

The trend toward elite polarization (Layman et al., 2006; McCarty, 2006) has invigorated interest in the role that political elites and political parties play in defining voter attitudes. Scholars have been particularly focused on the impact of polarizing cues
on the processing of political information. Findings reveal that polarization cues cause reflexive party adherence that limits the ability of strong leaders to promote broad consensus.

2.2.1 Party influence on attitudes.

Over the last decade, political psychologists and political scientists have compared the relative persuasiveness of political elites’ message arguments and message cues in order to quantify the impact that party affiliation has on the formation of political attitudes. Within dual-process models of persuasion (Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997), the term message argument is used to refer to the substantive content of a message, while the term message cue is used to refer to secondary aspects of a message that may impact the message’s persuasive appeal (e.g., the attractiveness of a speaker or authoritativeness of delivery). According to dual-process models, when a message recipient is motivated and able to process a message, the elaboration likelihood is high, which means the recipient is likely to appraise the message based on its argument (e.g., by providing low- and middle-income children access to preschool, Strong Start will promote egalitarianism). Whereas, if the message recipient lacks motivation or capacity, the elaboration likelihood is low and the recipient is likely to react to message cues or employ heuristics to appraise the message (e.g., I usually agree with Democrats and the Democratic
speaker supports Strong Start). Methodologically, researchers employ factorial designs in which they systematically vary message arguments (e.g., policy content, argument strength) and message cues (e.g., communicator party affiliation, communicator identity) to tease apart their relative impact on attitudes.

The picture that emerges from this line of research is complex in that there is wide ranging variation in the data. What is clear is that party cues consistently attenuate the relation between ideological preferences, policy content, and attitudes (Bullock, 2011). For example, Cohen (2003) provides support for the extreme proposition that partisan elites have the power to define the attitudes of partisan voters through party cues. Cohen exposed participants to messages describing stringent and generous welfare policy proposals. When party cues were absent, individual attitudes about the policies reflected participants' ideological preferences, i.e., Liberals preferred a generous welfare policy while Conservatives preferred a stringent policy. However, when party cues were embedded in the description of policy content, the relation between policy content and attitudes was reduced to non-significance. That means that when participants were informed that 95% of House Democrats and 10% of Republicans (or vice versa) were in favor of a policy, they followed their party’s platform and failed to evaluate the policy based on its merits. Party cues were so powerful that they caused preference reversals. An endorsement by House Democrats caused Liberals to favor a
stringent welfare policy, while an endorsement by House Republicans caused Conservatives to support a generous policy. Contrary to what may be predicted by the dual-processing literature, these effects were not mediated by changes in depth of processing as message cues did not significantly impact participants’ ability to recall policy content. Rather, party cues triggered partisan processing, and partisan processing produced partisan attitudes, even when those attitudes conflicted with participants’ ideological preferences.

Bullock (2011) provides support for the comparatively moderate proposition that political elites have the power to influence but not define the attitudes of partisans. When exposed to both substantive policy content and party cues, Bullock’s participants responded to both forms of persuasive information, but there was variation between groups in terms of the relative impact of arguments and cues. Democrats were more responsive to policy content than message cues, while the reverse was true for Republicans. Again, these effects were not explained by the message’s elaboration likelihood. The availability of partisan cues did not change depth of processing as measured in terms of the time participants spent reading messages, participants’ ability to recall policy content, and the correlation between participant attitudes and a positive thought index related to the policy proposal.
2.2.2 Polarization amplifies party influence on attitudes.

In an attempt to explain the variation between studies, scholars have sought to identify moderators that clarify the conditions under which attitudes are more responsive to substantive arguments than partisan cues. In the most germane study, Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus (2013) examined the impact of polarization on partisans’ appraisal of competing arguments and found that polarization amplifies the impact of party cues on attitudes. The researchers provided participants information about competing policy positions relating to oil drilling and immigration reform while manipulating two orthogonal variables, argument strength and polarization. Objective argument strength was measured through a pilot-test. Based on the pilot-test, the team created four message argument conditions. Two conditions advanced balanced (strong-pro/strong-con; weak-pro/weak-con) message arguments, while two advanced imbalanced (strong-pro/weak-con; weak-pro/strong-con) arguments. Message cues were used to create three levels of polarization. In a no-polarization condition, no party cues were provided. In a low-polarization condition, participants were informed that the “partisan divide is not stark, as the parties [Democrats and Republicans] are not too far apart. Also, while Republicans tend to be in favor and Democrats opposed, members of both parties can be found on both sides of the issue.” In a high-polarization condition, participants were informed that the “partisan divide is stark, as the parties are
far apart. Also, not only do Republicans tend to be in favor and Democrats opposed, but most members of each party are on the same side as the rest of their party.” Druckman et al. observed that, in the low–polarization condition, participant attitudes favored message arguments over party cues, such that when competing arguments were imbalanced, participants preferred the policy recommended by the objectively stronger argument. However, in high-polarization conditions, party cues ruled; partisans consistently preferred their party’s policy, even when their party articulated a comparatively weak rationalization for their position. Absent party cues, participants appraised argument strength accurately, but in high-polarization conditions, partisans consistently rated their party’s argument to be stronger than that advanced by the opposition party. Druckman et al. concluded that polarization cues cause partisans to adopt their party’s position and employ motivated processing strategies to defend it, even when that position is objectively weaker (Druckman et al., 2013; Kunda, 1990; Taber, Cann, & Kucsova, 2009; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Discouragingly, Druckman et al. also found that polarization caused participants to attach greater importance to their attitudes. Polarization, therefore, causes people to value those attitudes that are most biased.

Nicholson (2012) used the highly polarized 2008 presidential election to examine the impact of persistent polarization cues on the processing of political messages and
identified a surprising contradiction between party and candidate endorsements. On the one hand, in-group party endorsements help party members form opinions on issues about which they are uncertain. For example, a cue that Republicans support an immigration reform bill increased the number of Republicans who supported the bill and reduced the number of Republicans who were unsure about their position. On the other hand, endorsements by in-group exemplars did not generate increased support amongst their party’s voters. Rather, out-group party exemplars increased opposition to policies. For example, if President Obama endorsed a bill designed to cultivate a private market for health insurance, Republicans would be more likely to oppose it while Democrats would be no more likely to support it. Using social identity theory (Tajfel, 2010) as a guide, Nicholson explained this contrast in terms of the motivation to bolster group identities by maintaining “optimal distinctiveness” (M. B. Brewer, 1991) between groups. Thus, when a cue oriented participants to a salient group characteristic in the form of a policy preference, in-group members were motivated to adopt that characteristic. Whereas, when a cue oriented participants to a single, vivid exemplar, out-group participants were motivated to dissociate themselves by opposing the exemplar’s position.

To summarize, polarizing cues encourage blind party adherence and bias the processing of substantive message arguments (Druckman et al., 2013; Taber et al., 2009;
Taber & Lodge, 2006), while persistent polarization limits iconic leaders’ ability to generate consensus amongst allies even as it turns them into lightening rods that galvanize the opposition (Nicholson, 2012).

### 2.2.3 Value frames and value cues.

Political elites seek to advance their substantive policy preferences by using messaging to sway public opinion (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Lakoff, 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Elites frame messages to recommend a particular evaluation of a policy or issue by selectively emphasizing one or more of its many attributes (Nelson et al., 1997). *Value frames* are a particularly common subtype of frame that characterize a policy in terms of its implications for a specific value (P. R. Brewer, 2001, p. 46). For example, in proposing Strong Start, Senator Harkin emphasized the bill’s impact on egalitarianism: “No child should be denied this [educational] opportunity because of family income or where they live” (Harkin, 2013). Value frames are effective because members of the public commonly fail to connect their political preferences to abstract values (Kinder, 1998). Political elites therefore invoke values in rhetoric to establish the relationship between shared values and policy alternatives.

In the current political environment, elites persistently deploy value frames that orient the public to a policy’s ideological implications. For example, consider Representatives John Kline’s (R-MN 2nd District) and Todd Rokita’s (R-IN 4th District)
framing of the Student Success Act (H.R. 5, 2013, 2015). The Student Success Act would have eliminated many components of the No Child Left Behind Act (20 U.S.C. § 6319, 2008), including mandates related to the so-called Common Core. Representative Kline (2013) sponsored the bill to “restore local control, support effective teachers, reduce the federal footprint, and empower parents.” Todd Rokita argued:

> No Washington bureaucrat cares more about a child than a parent does. And no one in Washington knows what is better for an Indiana school than Indiana families do. That is why the Student Success Act puts an end to the administration’s National School Board by putting state and local school districts back in charge of their own schools (Education & The Workforce Committee, 2013).

Rather than orienting voters to measurable education outcomes, Representatives Kline and Rokita framed the Student Success Act by highlighting the bill’s implications for Federalism. Unsurprisingly, as the Senate was controlled by Democrats and the House was controlled by Republicans, the Student Success Act died in the 114th Congress, while a bipartisan alternative, the Every Student Succeeds Act S. 1177 (2015), was enacted as law.

Although many Americans fail to identify the ideological implications of a policy spontaneously, they do respond to the ideological arguments of elites (e.g., Kam & Mikos, 2007). Problematically, numerous studies demonstrate that Americans know little about policy content and express low levels of opinionation (Kinder, 1998). A skeptic might therefore describe value frames as
bridges between elite and lay discourse (Nelson et al., 1997) used to sway public opinion by helping the public see connections between values they do not perceive to be relevant and policy alternatives they know little about.

2.2.3.1 Value reputations as value cues.

As political parties cultivate polarization through value based rhetoric, they build brands or value reputations (Petersen, Slothuus, & Togeby, 2010). To the extent that one or more parties have established a value reputation in a domain, voters may use party positions to make inferences about the value implications of a given policy. For example, in the U.S., if the Democratic party supports the expansion of a child-welfare program, like Early-Head Start, that Republicans oppose, a conservative voter may infer the policy is fiscally irresponsible or encourages dependence. Thus, political parties facilitate ideologically coherent voting behavior by allowing individuals who lack issue-specific knowledge to derive the value implications of policy alternatives through partisan heuristics. Further, by acting on party cues, citizens lacking substantive policy information can, without making explicit inferences, take positions that appear consistent with their values (Petersen et al., 2010).

2.2.3.2 Value arguments and party cues, different entrances to the same highway.

As described above, depth of processing appears unrelated to the relative persuasiveness of policy arguments and party cues (Bullock, 2011; Cohen, 2003). As
such, the data do not support the dual processing model’s elaboration likelihood hypotheses. Specifically, the relative persuasiveness of message arguments and message cues appears unrelated to the message’s level of elaboration. Kruglanski and Thompson (1999a, 1999b) proposed a simplifying single-process model of persuasion that collapses arguments and cues into a single category of persuasive evidence. According to their conceptualization, persuasive evidence is probative when it satisfies both the major and minor premises of a syllogism. The major premise represents a pre-existing conditional if-then belief that makes the persuasive evidence categorically relevant (e.g., if the Democrats support a policy, then there is an 85% chance that it promotes egalitarianism). The minor premise demonstrates that the major premise is applicable in the specified context (e.g., “Democrats support Strong Start.”). Pursuant to the single-process model, “the distinction between cues and message arguments…represent[s] a difference in contents of evidence relevant to a conclusion, rather than a qualitative difference in the persuasive process” (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999b, p. 90).

Consistent with Kruglanski and Thompson’s argument, value arguments (i.e., value frames) and value cues (i.e., value reputations) function as different forms of persuasive evidence. Value arguments explicitly describe a policy’s value implications. Value cues allow the general public to act based on the elite’s, or his or her party’s, value reputation, or the inferences drawn about the policy based on the relevant reputation.
Regardless of the type of argument or complexity of processing employed, when forced to choose between policy alternatives, value frames and value cues can help citizens make choices that align with their individual preferences.

2.3 Public Polarization Causes Elite Polarization

The two prior Sections examined the impact of elite polarization on the voting public, i.e., the “top-down” effects of polarization. This Section focuses on the impact of public polarization on congressional behavior and the congressional agenda, i.e., the “bottom-up” effects of polarization.

Political engagement is directly related to polarization (Pew Research Center, 2014a, 2014b). People who endorse either high levels of affective polarization or ideological coherence are more likely to vote (Pew Research Center, 2014a), make political donations, volunteer for campaigns, attend rallies, and contact elites (Pew Research Center, 2014b). Accordingly, polarization changes electoral strategies. Rather than campaigning for the support of moderate swing-voters, candidates now focus on mobilizing their political base (Fiorina, 1999), particularly during ideologically skewed primaries (Jacobson, 2012). That means that the most polarized partisans are the most politically powerful constituents insofar as elites are reliant upon their support (Fiorina, 2013).
By focusing upon partisan engagement, legislators exacerbate the principle-agent dilemma inherent in a representative democracy. Since the preferences of partisan activists continue to diverge from those of the Moderates, legislators are often incentivized to take positions that conflict with those favored by the majority of their constituents. To illustrate the implications of this principle-agent dilemma for those working to promote child welfare, consider the legislative posture of Strong Start. In a May/June 2014 poll, 71% of a nationally representative panel of registered voters supported the policies promoted by Strong Start, including 60% of Republicans (First Five Years Fund, 2014). Congressmen publically declare their support for a piece of legislation through co-sponsorship. By August 1, 2014 (the start of the mid-term recess), 32 Senators (31 Democrats, 1 Independent) and 138 Representatives (135 Democrats, 3 Republicans) were identified as Strong Start cosponsors. That means 1% of Republican congressmen expressed support for a bill substantively favored by 60% of their party members and 71% of American constituents. Numbers like these suggest that polarization drives a wedge not only between parties but between leaders and their constituents.

Partisan co-sponsorship behavior matters for three reasons. First, co-sponsorship is highly predictive of voting behavior (Aleman, Calvo, Jones, & Kaplan, 2009). Second, legislators use co-sponsoring as a tool to advance substantive policy change by
communicating support for bills they feel should be placed on the legislative agenda (Koger, 2003). The composition of co-sponsorship coalitions provides committee and party leaders information about the breadth and depth of support for a bill. A partisan co-sponsorship coalition, like Smart Start’s, indicates that a bill is polarizing and carries substantial administrative and political cost. Conversely, a large, bipartisan co-sponsorship coalition informs party leaders that a bill is uncontroversial, high-quality, and may be passed with minimal cost.

Third, congressmen use co-sponsorship to inform constituents about their positions on bills that are less likely to receive a vote during the current session (Koger, 2003). Thus, while roll-call votes and co-sponsorship activity are correlated (Aleman et al., 2009), co-sponsorship often reflects electoral posturing (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011). Those politically engaged partisans upon whom legislators are dependent prefer representatives who vote as partisans, i.e., representatives who consistently support only their party’s agenda (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011). Legislators are therefore incentivized to take partisan positions through co-sponsorship. As legislators with more polarized voting records co-sponsor more bills than moderates and attach themselves as co-sponsors earlier in the life courses of bills (Kessler & Krehbiel, 1996), a disproportionate number of trajectory defining intra-legislative signals are sent by the most partisan legislators.
As intra-legislative signals sculpt the legislative agenda, there are unintended consequences when legislators use co-sponsorship to communicate with partisan constituents. While using co-sponsorship as an extra-legislative signaling tool, Congressmen may simultaneously push the legislative agenda in directions that frustrate their constituents’ and party members’ preferences. Remember that the policies advanced by Smart Start were supported by 60% of Republicans and 71% of voters, while only 1% of Republican members expressed support for the bill via co-sponsorship. Problematic partisan positioning of this sort should be most frequent for Congresspersons elected in polarized districts. There is, in fact, evidence that legislators from districts that decisively support one party in presidential elections are less likely to co-sponsor bipartisan legislation than those from centrist, competitive districts (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011). That means that legislators from partisan districts are less likely to co-sponsor those bills that are most likely to gain wide support. In the aggregate, partisan positioning makes it less likely for popular, centrist bills, like Smart Start, to be calendared for a vote.

In effect, public polarization creates an incentive for Congressmen to polarize the Congressional agenda; and the same mechanisms that polarize the Congressional agenda polarize Congressional voting. As a result, roll-call votes have, since the 1970s, become progressively partisan (DeSilver, 2014b; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008; Fiorina &
Levendusky, 2008). So, Congress is less able to pass substantive legislation today than it has in the past (DeSilver, 2014a) because polarization creates the incentive for members to craft a partisan agenda then vote along party lines.

2.4 Summary: Polarization Cascades, Values Drift, and Legislation Stagnates

Polarization cues attenuate the relations between individual preferences, policy content, and policy attitudes. Polarization cues signal that a policy presents an interparty value conflict, which, given the general public’s limited policy expertise, highlights the decisional weight of competing parties’ value reputations. By highlighting the weight of value reputations, polarizing cues cause partisans to adopt motivated processing strategies that bias message appraisal in favor of their party’s position. At times, motivated processing paradoxically causes individuals to endorse attitudes adverse to their preferences.

Problematically, polarization has the tendency to cascade through a self-reinforcing feedback-loop. Bottom-up processes cause politicians to stake policies endorsed by a narrow band of highly active partisan constituents. Reciprocally, in trying to mobilize this partisan base, politicians trigger top-down processes. By employing polarizing value frames that explicitly or implicitly emphasize the value conflict between parties, an elite may induce their moderate party members to adopt party positions, including those that run contrary to centrist preferences. To the extent
media agents and constituents accept the frame presented, peer elites will redeploy the same frame (Entman, 2003, 2004) in order to curry favor with their political base. As rhetoric cycles from political elites to the general public and back again, specific value frames become entrenched, and the preferences of a minority come to define the values perceived to be at stake by the majority.

Through this cascading process, debate about a specific bill like Strong Start or the Student Success Act mutates. Congressional votes on narrow policy initiatives (e.g., funding preschool for children of low- and middle-income families) become referenda on irreconcilable value conflicts, such as the relative benefit of egalitarianism on the one hand and Federalism and limited government on the other. This elevation of concrete issues to abstract ideology binds legislators to party-line votes as Congressmen cannot afford to alienate their partisan base by embracing effective policies associated with out-group preferences. Partisan ideological framing thereby contributes to legislative stagnation.
3. Using Elective Affinities to Target Messages

Given their preference for small government, it is difficult to persuade Republicans to support the expansion of child services. Advocates commonly default to soliciting the support of progressive Democrats, who favor generous social service programs, and pragmatic Moderates, who are willing to invest strategically in effective programs. This approach is consistent with the finding that people who hold more extreme beliefs tend to be more certain about those beliefs (Toner, Leary, Asher, & Jongman-Sereno, 2013) and are therefore less amenable to persuasive appeals. Yet, given the political incentives to cater to more extreme partisans, pursuing the support of Moderates may prove ineffective as advocates seek to translate public support into legislative action. Further, given the composition of and partisan voting patterns in Congress, there will be no major developmental policy reform in the near term without Republican support. Child advocates must, therefore, adopt a new advocacy strategy.

One alternative is to use an ideological pincer movement to cultivate bilateral support for developmental policy reform. By articulating competing value frames – one targeting Democratic partisans, the other Republican partisans – advocates may free representatives from both sides of the aisle to co-sponsor and vote for the expansion of cost-effective developmental services. In other words, rather than waging a “culture-
war” by trying to convince Moderates to adopt liberal or conservative attitudes about developmental policy, one might accept polarization and generate bipartisan consensus on narrow developmental policy initiatives by accepting the legitimacy of, and speaking to, each party’s preferences. In order to pursue this strategy, one must first identify theories that may be used to guide the design of ideologically targeted messaging campaigns.

3.1 Elective Affinities

As a reminder, elective affinities are the product of the match between the psychological traits of an individual (or group) and the tenets of a belief system (Jost et al., 2009). Affinity frames are used herein to described messages designed to appeal to the psychological traits of political groups. In Section 1, literature on moral framing was reviewed. The existing data demonstrate that individualizing moral frames resonate with Liberals while binding moral frames resonate with Conservatives (Day et al., 2014; Feinberg & Willer, 2013; Graham et al., 2009; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011; Haidt, 2007; Wolsko et al., 2016). Jost et al.’s (2003) model describing political behavior as motivated social cognition (MSC) may prove similarly useful in guiding the design of affinity framed messages.

According to MSC, individuals at the poles of a left-right or liberal-conservative dimension champion competing goals. Those leaning toward the liberal endpoint focus
on promoting equality and social change (Jost et al., 2009). Those leaning toward the conservative endpoint focus on preserving social stability (Jost et al., 2009). Individual orientation toward one end of the liberal-conservative dimension flows from an array of epistemic, existential and relational motives, which are, in turn, the product of dispositional and situational needs (Jost et al., 2003). As compared to Liberals, Conservatives exhibit high levels of “death anxiety, [fear of] system instability, fear of threat and loss, dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, and personal needs for order, structure and closure” (Jost et al., 2009, p. 311). There is, therefore, an affinity or “especially good fit between [conservative] needs to reduce uncertainty and threat, on the one hand, and resistance to change and acceptance of inequality, on the other, insofar as preserving the status quo allows one to maintain what is familiar and known while rejecting the risky, uncertain prospect of social change” (Jost et al., 2007, p. 990).

As compared to Conservatives, Liberals exhibit high levels of “openness to new experiences, cognitive complexity, tolerance of uncertainty, and (to a small extent), self-esteem” (Jost et al., 2009, p. 311). There is, therefore, an affinity between liberal traits and liberal goals, insofar as progressive and egalitarian social policy requires one to attend to and integrate information about inequality and ineffective social structures, then surrender what is safe and familiar in order to effect desired social change.
3.2 Do Affinity Framed Messages Entrench or Persuade Positive Attitudes About EBPs

There is evidence that affinity framed messages targeting the distinct moral preferences of Liberals and Conservatives entrench each groups’ pre-existing policy attitudes (Day et al., 2014). There is also evidence that moral framing can be used to persuade Conservatives to adopt prototypically liberal policy positions (Day et al., 2014; Feinberg & Willer, 2013; Wolsko et al., 2016). It remains an empirical question as to whether moral framing may be used to promote favorable attitudes about EBPs. Furthermore, there is a question as to whether Jost’s MSC model may be used to guide the design of affinity framed messages to promote favorable attitudes about EBPs. To address these questions, three experiments were conducted.

Studies 1 and 2 tested the viability of using affinity framed messages to promote positive attitudes about EBPs, specifically, the Family Connects program. Family Connects has been found in two randomized controlled trials and a quasi-field experiment to produce positive impacts on parents and health care costs during the first year of an infant’s life. In both Studies 1 and 2, messages describing Family Connects’ outcomes were affinity framed. In each experiment, two messages were designed to link Family Connects’ outcomes to the distinct needs and motivations of Liberals and Conservatives. The focal analyses tested whether the match (or mismatch) between affinity frames and individual differences associated with political behavior moderated...
the persuasive (or entrenching) appeal of messages. Study 3 was designed to test whether affinity frame effects are robust to competition from value arguments and value cues.
4. Study 1 – Personological Affinities

Study 1 sought to establish proof of concept that the personological affinities described in MSC can be used to design and target affinity framed messages that promote positive attitudes about EBPs. Based on Jost et al.’s (2007) findings, it was hypothesized that the match between randomly assigned affinity frames and individual personality traits associated with political behavior would moderate the persuasiveness of messaging, as measured by participants’ post-exposure attitudes about Family Connects (hypothesis 1). It was hypothesized that individuals demonstrating higher levels of threat sensitivity and need for certainty and security would adopt favorable attitudes about EBPs in response to affinity frames emphasizing EBPs’ ability to promote social stability (hypothesis 2). Conversely, it was hypothesized that individuals demonstrating lower levels of threat sensitivity and need for certainty and security would adopt favorable attitudes about EBPs in response to affinity frames linking EBP outcomes to increased equality (hypothesis 3).

4.1 Method

Individuals registered to vote as Democrats, Independents, or Republicans were recruited using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) service. Once recruited, participants were redirected to a set of experimental surveys administered via Qualtrics.
To compensate participants for approximately 30 minutes of time, they were paid a $1.50 fee. The relative proportion of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans was partially controlled through the use of sampling quotas. Of the 210 respondents, 12 were excluded from analyses because they failed to spend at least 30 seconds reviewing advocacy messages, and 30 others were excluded because they failed to complete essential survey items. The resulting sample (N = 168) included meaningful diversity across demographic variables including gender (51.8% female, 0.6% transgender), ethnicity (19.0% self-identified as an ethnic minority), and political party affiliation (44.0% Democrat, 32.1% Independent, 23.8% Republican). The sample age (M_{age} = 35.15, SD = 10.21) was close to the 2015 census national average (M_{age} = 37.8). The sample was relatively well educated (M_{ed} = 4.20, SD = 1.34, on a seven-point scale ranging from 1, some high school, to 7, terminal doctorate) with 51.8% of participants holding a bachelor’s or graduate degree. There was a high level of diversity in terms of family income (M_{income} = US$95,696.56, SD = US$95,465.77). Table 1 provides more detailed characteristics for the sample included in analyses.

4.1.1 Procedure and materials.

Study 1 utilized a two-way factorial design. Registered Democrats, Independents, and Republicans were randomly assigned to read one of two experimental opinion editorials (or op-ed; Appendix A) describing Family Connects.
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants by Sample and Condition for Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counts (Percentages)</th>
<th>Sample (N = 168)</th>
<th>Liberal Condition (n = 89)</th>
<th>Conservative Condition (n = 79)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87 (51.8%)</td>
<td>48 (28.6%)</td>
<td>39 (23.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>80 (47.6%)</td>
<td>41 (24.4%)</td>
<td>39 (23.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority</td>
<td>32 (19.0%)</td>
<td>18 (10.7%)</td>
<td>14 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>74 (44.0%)</td>
<td>39 (23.2%)</td>
<td>35 (20.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>54 (32.1%)</td>
<td>26 (15.5%)</td>
<td>28 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>40 (23.8%)</td>
<td>24 (14.3%)</td>
<td>16 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means (SD)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>35.15 (10.21)</td>
<td>35.30 (10.76)</td>
<td>34.99 (9.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.20 (1.34)</td>
<td>4.30 (1.28)</td>
<td>4.09 (1.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Identity</td>
<td>4.23 (2.41)</td>
<td>4.20 (2.41)</td>
<td>4.25 (2.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Government</td>
<td>2.07 (0.54)</td>
<td>2.12 (0.60)a</td>
<td>2.01 (0.47)b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income (USD)</td>
<td>95,696.56 (95,465.77)</td>
<td>87,813.03 (90,461.27)</td>
<td>104,578.00 (100,645.49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Condition means in the same row that do not share the same superscript vary to a statistically significant degree at the p < .05 level.

(Dodge et al., 2013a, 2013b; Dodge et al., 2014). In a conservative condition, a conservative affinity framed op-ed was designed to resonate with the need for certainty and security.

In a liberal condition, a liberal affinity framed op-ed was designed to resonate with the desire for egalitarianism. The two op-eds were similar in length and shared identical paragraphs describing Family Connects’ outcomes. The op-eds were piloted using a brief MTurk/Qualtrics survey that compared their respective readability (i.e., “how readable was the op-ed,” -4, very difficult, to 4, very easy) and no statistically significant difference was observed (t(45) = 0.61, p = .543).
After reading the assigned op-ed, participants were asked to complete four attitude measures using slider scales. Each scale’s endpoints are provided in parentheses. Individuals’ general attitude about Family Connects was gauged by a single item “how would you feel about a proposal to provide Family Connects services in your county” (−4, strongly oppose, +4 strongly in-favor). Individuals’ health behavior attitude about Family Connects was measured by a single item, “if your family were expecting a child, how likely would you be to accept a Family Connects visitor? (−4 extremely unlikely, +4 extremely likely). Individuals’ political attitude about Family Connects was measured by asking “if a political leader proposed providing Family Connects services in your county, would you be more or less likely to vote for them in the next election” (−4 much less likely, +4 much more likely). Individuals’ willingness to fund Family Connects was measured by a single item “how much should taxpayers be willing to pay to provide Family Connects to a family” ($0, $350, $700, $1,050, $1,400, $1,750, $2,100, $2,450, $2,800+). Anchors in multiples of $350 were selected for the willingness to fund scale because the per-family implementation cost of Family Connects is estimated to be $700, while the per-family savings is estimated to be $2,100. The administration order of attitude questions was randomized.

After participants’ attitudes about Family Connects were assessed, participants completed demographic profiles (gender, ethnicity, education, income, and political
party affiliation) and a series of personality measures. Variation in the need for certainty and security was measured via the Need for Closure Scale—Short Version (NCS; Roets & Van Hiel, 2011a; Roets & Van Hiel, 2011b) and the Openness Facet of the NEO-FFI-R (OFS; McCrae & Costa, 2004). Variation in threat sensitivity was measured via the Sensation-Seeking facet of the Impulsivity and Sensation-Seeking Scale (SSF; Harden & Tucker-Drob, 2011), an augmented form of the Dangerous World Measure (DWM; Altemeyer, 1988; Duckitt, Wagner, Du Plessis, & Birum, 2002), and a portion of the Death Attitude Profile-Revised (DAP; Reker, Gesser, & Wong, 1994). Ideological identity was assessed by one item, “Do you think of yourself as” (1- liberal, 5- moderate, 9- conservative). Political identity was assessed by one item, “Do you think of yourself as a” (1- Democrat, 5- Independent, 9- Republican). Party affiliation was assessed by one item, “Are you registered to vote as a Democrat, Independent, Republican, Other, or I’m not registered.” Trust in government was assessed by one item taken from the Gallup Poll, “How much of the time do you think you can trust government in Washington to do what is right?” (never, only some of the time, most of the time, always).

4.2 Results

To test the three hypotheses outlined above, the following independent and dependent variables were constructed.
4.2.1 Independent variables.

A political personality summary score was calculated in a multistep process. First, Certainty and security scores were generated in a two-step process. NCS and OFS scores were transformed into z-scores. Then individual certainty and security scores were calculated as the mean of NCS and OFS z-scores. Threat sensitivity scores were then generated in a two-step process. SSF, DWM, and DAP scores were converted into z-scores. Thereafter, individual threat sensitivity scores were calculated as the mean of SSF, DWM, and DAP z-scores. Finally, the political personality summary score was calculated as the mean of individual certainty and security and threat sensitivity scores. Higher political personality scores reflected higher levels of conservative traits. There was a high level of internal consistency across items from the five personality measures (α = .82). Correlation analyses indicated statistically significant relations between the political personality variable and the ideological identity (r = .31, p < .001) and political identity (r = .23, p < .01) variables. The size and direction of these correlations support the inference that the political personality score taps into a construct that is meaningfully related to but distinct from self-identified ideological and political identity.

Frame (liberal affinity frame = 0), minority status (Caucasian = 0), and gender (female = 0), were dummy coded, while the education, family income, and trust in government variables were converted to z-scores, such that higher scores indicated more
education, higher income, and greater trust. Finally, a Frame x Personality interaction term was calculated as the product of the frame and political personality variables.

### 4.2.2 Dependent variables.

*Family Connects attitude* scores were calculated as the mean of the general, health behavior, and political attitude variables. As the distribution of the willingness to fund variable was non-parametric, scores were dichotomized using $700 (Family Connects’ projected per family implementation cost) as the cut-point ($<700 = 0).

### 4.2.3 Analysis of Family Connects attitudes.

To test the three focal hypotheses, two sets of regression analyses were conducted. Two-step, linear multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the degree to which the match between affinity frames and political personality moderated persuasion (and entrenchment) as measured by Family Connects attitudes. In the first step, Family Connects attitudes were regressed on frame, minority status, gender, education, income, trust in government, and political personality scores. In the second step, Family Connects attitudes were regressed on the Frame x Personality interaction. Results from the analyses are presented in Table 2. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the effect of random assignment to frame condition would be conditional on political personality. As the additional variance explained by the second step of the regression model was insignificant ($F(8, 159) = 0.00, p = .99, \Delta R^2 = .00$), participants’ reaction to message frames
Table 2. Regression Models Examining the Impact of Frame on Family Connects Attitudes in Study 1 (N = 168)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B      SE  β    B CI (95%)</td>
<td>B      SE  β    B CI (95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.65*** 0.27</td>
<td>1.11, 2.19 01.65 0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority(a)</td>
<td>0.07    0.40  0.01 -0.72, 0.86 0.07</td>
<td>0.40  0.01 -0.72, 0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender(b)</td>
<td>-0.59†  0.31 -0.15 -1.21, 0.03 -0.59† 0.32 -0.15 -1.22, 0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education(c)</td>
<td>-0.01   0.16  0.00 -0.32, 0.30 -0.01 0.16  0.00 -0.32, 0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income(c)</td>
<td>0.36*   0.16  0.18 0.05, 0.67 0.36* 0.16  0.18 0.04, 0.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Gov(c)</td>
<td>0.31†  0.16  0.15 0.00, 0.62 0.31† 0.16  0.15 0.00, 0.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame(d)</td>
<td>0.09    0.31  0.02 -0.53, 0.71 0.09 0.32  0.02 -0.54, 0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol Per</td>
<td>-0.28   0.24 -0.09 -0.76, 0.20 -0.28 0.36 -0.09 -0.99, 0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Pol Pers</td>
<td>-0.01  0.49  0.00 -0.97, 0.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- \(a\) Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified ethnic minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1.
- \(b\) Self-identified female and transgender participants scored 0.
- \(c\) Converted to z-score.
- \(d\) Exposure to liberal framed message scored 0.

\(† p < .10, * p < .05, *** p < .001.\)

did not vary as a function of political personality to a statistically significant degree.

That indicates that none of the three hypotheses were supported when persuasion (and entrenchment) were measured by the Family Connects attitudes variable.

4.2.4 Analysis of willingness to fund Family Connects.

Two-step, logistic regression analysis was employed to examine the degree to which the match between affinity frames and political personality moderated persuasion (and entrenchment) as measured by willingness to fund. Willingness to fund was
regressed on the same two sets of independent variables described in Section 4.2.3.

Results from the analyses are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Regression Models Examining the Impact of Frame on Willingness to Fund in Study 1 (N = 168)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.92*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority*</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderb</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educationc</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomec</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Govc</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framed</td>
<td>0.56†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol Pers</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Pol Pers</td>
<td>-0.99†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.06</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.061†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


a Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified ethnic minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1. b Self-identified female and transgender participants scored 0.

c Converted to $z$-score.

d Exposure to liberal framed message scored 0.

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$ level.

The additional variance explained by the second step was marginally significant ($X^2(1) = 3.50, p = .061$, Cox and Snell $\Delta R^2 = .02$), indicating that, with respect to participants’ willingness to fund Family Connects, the appeal of affinity framed messages trended toward differing across levels of political personality ($\beta = -0.99$, Wald $X^2(1) = 3.39, p = .066$). This marginally significant interaction provides marginal support for hypothesis 1.
To test hypotheses 2 and 3, Process v.2.16 (Hayes, 2013) model 1 was used to probe the marginally significant two-way interaction and generate the visualization data presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 illustrates the impact of frame condition at the mean level of political personality, as well as one standard deviation above and below the mean. Significant conditional effects should be interpreted as the mean difference resulting from exposure to the conservative affinity frame as compared to the liberal affinity frame, at the specified level of political personality, controlling for the specified covariates.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that those who scored high on political personality would endorse significantly greater willingness to fund after reviewing the conservative affinity framed message, however, the data revealed no significant relation between frame condition and willingness to fund amongst participants with a conservative political personality ($b = -0.11, z = -0.23, p = .819, [-1.07, 0.85])$.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that those who scored low on political personality would endorse significantly greater willingness to fund after reviewing the liberal affinity framed message. The data revealed the opposite relation between frame condition and willingness to fund amongst participants with a liberal political personality ($b = 1.18, z = 2.44, p = .015, [0.23, 2.13]$). Random assignment to the conservative affinity framed message induced significantly greater willingness fund to amongst Liberals.
4.3 Discussion of Study 1

It had been hypothesized that affinity framed messages would promote positive attitudes about Family Connect when they appropriately matched the political personalities of participants. Participants were exposed to one of two affinity framed messages. In both messages, participants read the same description of Family Connects and its outcomes. These outcomes were however framed in two different ways. The liberal affinity framed message was designed to target Liberals’ drive for egalitarianism. This message highlighted economic inequality and presented Family Connects as a way
to promote fairness by assuring that all infants’ basic needs are met. The conservative affinity framed message was designed to target Conservatives’ threat sensitivity and need for certainty and security. This message highlighted global instability and then presented Family Connects as a way to promote strong communities capable of defending themselves against global instability.

Regardless of the frame employed, individuals across the spectrum of political personality endorsed similar attitudes about Family Connects when those attitudes were measured in relatively abstract ways (e.g., “How would you feel about a proposal to provide Family Connects services in your county?”). When participants’ attitudes about Family Connects were measured in concrete economic terms (“How much should taxpayers be willing to pay to provide Family Connects to a family?”), those with more Liberal political personalities were more willing to fund dissemination after reading a conservative themed message arguing that programs like Family Connects will promote the economic growth required to defend against global insecurity. This result is contrary to what was predicted by hypothesis 3.

There are three potential explanations for these counterintuitive results. First, it is possible that the underlying theory is wrong. The traits and needs associated with the political personality construct may not be susceptible to targeted messaging. Second, it is possible that targeted messaging triggers a paradoxical effect amongst Conservatives.
By priming conservative needs, one may also prime conservative behavior and preferences that extend beyond those relevant to the immediate issue. Once activated, Conservatives may respond adversely to any question related to taxpayer spending.

Third, the affinity frames may have failed to tap into the targeted constructs or inadvertently tapped into conflicting constructs. In trying to target Conservatives’ traits and needs, the conservative frame sought to trigger threat sensitivity associated with a dangerous worldview. The message then pivoted to argue that Family Connects’ outcomes promote certainty and security. As Family Connects is not designed to protect people from a dangerous world, a series of logical arguments were made linking developmental policy to national defense policy. The complexity of the distal relation between developmental and defense policies may have been more persuasive for Liberals than Conservatives, as Liberals tend to think more analytically (Talhelm et al., 2015), and evidence greater tolerance for cognitive complexity (Eidelman, Crandall, Goodman, & Blanchar, 2012; Jost et al., 2003). Alternatively, it is possible that the conservative affinity framed argument was construed as a liberal big government policy alternative when participants were forced to consider their willingness to fund visitation through taxpayer spending. Thus, it is possible that an effective affinity frame was overwhelmed by a competing ideological argument.
Given the ambiguous results of Study 1, Study 2 shifted focus toward replicating results from research on moral framing. Study 2 also sought to extend research on moral frames by testing them in the context of child developmental policy.
5. Study 2 - Moral Affinities

Study 2 sought to establish proof of concept that moral affinities can be used to design and target value framed messages that promote positive attitudes about EBPs. It was hypothesized that participants’ responses to morally framed messages would vary as a function of individual moral preferences (hypothesis 1). Specifically, it was hypothesized that individuals who gravitate toward the binding foundation would endorse favorable attitudes about EBPs in response to affinity frames emphasizing their ability to strengthen institutions, promote social cohesion, and preserve the sacred (hypothesis 2). Conversely, it was hypothesized that individuals who gravitate toward the individualizing foundation would endorse favorable attitudes about EBPs in response to affinity frames emphasizing their ability to promote fairness by caring for individuals (hypothesis 3).

5.1 Method

Recruitment and administration procedures were identical to those employed in Study 1. Of the 241 participants, 27 were excluded from analyses because they failed to spend at least 30 seconds reviewing advocacy messages, and 10 more were excluded because they failed to complete essential survey items. The resulting sample ($N = 204$) included meaningful diversity across demographic variables including gender (49%
female, 0.0% transgender), ethnicity (20.7% self-identified with at least one ethnic minority), and political party affiliation (37.3% Democrat, 28.9% Independent, 33.8% Republican). The sample age ($M_{age} = 34.95, SD = 10.96$) was close to the 2015 census national average ($M_{age} = 37.8$). The sample was relatively well educated ($M_{ed} = 4.19, SD = 1.30$, on a seven-point scale ranging from 1, some high school, to 7, terminal doctorate) with 50.5% of participants holding a bachelor’s or graduate degree. There was a high level of diversity in terms of family income ($M_{income} = US$83,139.98 $SD = US$85,532.59$). Table 4 provides more detailed characteristics for the sample included in final analyses.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics by Sample and Condition for Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTS (PERCENTAGES)</th>
<th>Sample ($N = 204$)</th>
<th>Fairness Condition ($n = 96$)</th>
<th>Purity Condition ($n = 108$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100 (49.0%)</td>
<td>51 (25.0%)</td>
<td>49 (24.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>104 (51.0%)</td>
<td>45 (22.1%)</td>
<td>59 (28.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority</td>
<td>42 (20.7%)</td>
<td>16 (7.9%)</td>
<td>26 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>76 (37.3%)</td>
<td>37 (18.1%)</td>
<td>39 (19.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>59 (28.9%)</td>
<td>27 (13.2%)</td>
<td>32 (15.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>69 (33.8%)</td>
<td>32 (15.7%)</td>
<td>37 (18.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEANS (SD)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>$34.95$ ($10.96$)</td>
<td>$34.80$ ($10.72$)</td>
<td>$35.07$ ($11.21$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.19 (1.30)</td>
<td>4.22 (1.31)</td>
<td>4.17 (1.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Identity</td>
<td>4.38 (2.62)</td>
<td>4.50 (2.53)</td>
<td>4.27 (2.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust In Government</td>
<td>2.13 (0.55)</td>
<td>2.19 (0.55)</td>
<td>2.08 (0.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income (USD)</td>
<td>83,139.98 ($85,5532.59$)</td>
<td>80,296.67 ($79,839.80$)</td>
<td>85,667.36 ($90,588.88$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. No statistically significant differences were observed across groups ($p > .05$).
5.1.1 Procedure and materials.

Procedure and materials were identical to those employed in Study 1, except as follows. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two experimental op-eds (Appendix B) describing Family Connects (Dodge et al., 2013a, 2013b; Dodge et al., 2014). In a binding condition, a binding affinity framed op-ed was designed to resonate with the conservative drive to maintain purity. In an individualizing condition, an individualizing affinity framed op-ed was designed to resonate with the liberal drive to promote fairness. The two op-eds were similar in length and shared identical paragraphs describing outcomes associated with Family Connects. The op-eds were piloted using a brief MTurk/Qualtrics survey that compared their respective readability (i.e., “how readable was the op-ed,” -4, very difficult, to 4, very easy) and no statistically significant difference was observed (t(47) = 0.38, p = .708). After participants’ attitudes about Family Connects were assessed, participants completed the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ30; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Spassena, et al., 2011) rather than the personality measures used to compute the political personality variable described in Study 1. The MFQ30 measures the five universal morals described in Section 1. These moral facets load on two superordinate individualizing and binding foundations.
5.2 Results

To test the three hypotheses outlined above, the same independent and dependent variables employed in Study 1 were used in Study 2, except as follows. The political personality variable was replaced by two moral foundation scores. A single binding score was calculated as the mean of MFQ30 in-group, authority, and purity facet scores. A Frame x Binding interaction term was calculated as the product of the frame and binding scores. A single individualizing score was calculated as the mean of MFQ30 care and fairness facets. A Frame x Individualizing interaction term was calculated as the product of the frame and individualizing scores. Correlation analyses indicated statistically significant relations between the individualizing variable and the ideological identity ($r = -0.32, p < 0.001$) and political identity ($r = -0.20, p < 0.01$) variables. Correlation analyses also indicated statistically significant relations between the binding variable and the ideological identity ($r = 0.60, p < 0.001$) and political identity ($r = 0.51, p < 0.001$) variables. These correlations support the inference that the moral foundation scores tap into constructs that are meaningfully related to but distinct from self-identified ideological and political identity.

5.2.1 Analysis of Family Connects attitudes.

To test the focal hypotheses, two sets of regression analyses were conducted. Two-step, linear multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the degree to
which the match between moral frames and moral preferences moderated persuasion (and entrenchment) as measured by Family Connects attitudes. In the first step, Family Connects attitudes were regressed on frame, minority status, gender, education, income, trust in government, individualizing, and binding scores. In the second step, Family Connects attitudes were regressed on the Frame x Individualizing and Frame x Binding interactions. Results from the analyses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Models Examining the Impact of Frame on Family Connects Attitudes in Study 2 (N = 204)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>-0.52 (.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minority</strong></td>
<td>0.29 (.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>-0.21 (0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>0.03 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>0.09 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust in Government</strong></td>
<td>0.31* (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frame</strong></td>
<td>0.03 (.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualizing</strong></td>
<td>0.31** (.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binding</strong></td>
<td>-0.31* (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frame x Indiv</strong></td>
<td>-0.18 (.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frame x Binding</strong></td>
<td>-0.36† (0.19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Indiv = Individualizing.

*a* Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified ethnic minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1.

*b* Self-identified female scored 0.

*c* Converted to z-score.

*d* Exposure to liberal framed message scored 0.

† p < .10, * p < .05 level, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Hypothesis 1 predicted that the effect of random assignment to frame condition would be conditional on individual moral preferences. The additional variance attributed to the second step was negligible ($F(2, 193) = 0.19, p = .828, \Delta R^2 = .00$) indicating that neither the Frame x Individualizing nor the Frame x Binding interactions improved model fit to a statistically significant degree. As participants’ response to message frames did not vary as a function of their moral preference, none of the three hypotheses were supported by the data.

The reduced main-effects only model indicated statistically significant main effects ($F(8, 195) = 4.42, p < .001, R^2 = .15$) for both individualizing ($\beta = 0.76, p < .001$) and binding ($\beta = -0.31, p < .05$) moral preferences.

**5.2.2 Analysis of willingness to fund Family Connects.**

Two-step, logistic linear multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the degree to which the match between moral frames and moral preferences moderated persuasion (and entrenchment) as measured by willingness to fund. Willingness to fund was regressed on the same two sets of independent variables described in Section 5.2.1. Results from the analyses are presented in Table 6.

The additional variance explained by the second step of the regression model was negligible ($X^2(2) = 1.06, p = .589$, Cox and Snell $\Delta R^2 = .01$), indicating that neither the Frame x Individualizing nor the Frame x Binding interactions improved model fit to a
statistically significant degree. As participants’ response to message frames did not vary as a function of their moral preference, none of the three hypotheses were supported by the data.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Models Examining the Impact of Frame on Willingness to Fund in Study 2 (N = 204)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority(^a)</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.97, 3.92</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender(^b)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.73, 2.43</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education(^c)</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.79, 1.40</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income(^c)</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.71, 1.27</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Govt(^c)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.82, 1.46</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame(^d)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.58, 1.82</td>
<td>-2.14</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualizing</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.72, 1.84</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding</td>
<td>-0.32(^*)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.53, 0.99</td>
<td>-0.43(^†)</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Indiv</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Bind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell R(^2)</th>
<th>x(^2)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Cox &amp; Snell R(^2)</th>
<th>ΔR(^2)</th>
<th>x(^2)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio. Indiv = Individualizing. Bind = Binding.

\(^a\) Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified Ethnic Minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1. \(^b\) Self-identified female scored 0.

\(^c\) Converted to z-score.

\(^d\) Exposure to liberal framed message scored 0.

\(^†\) p < .10, \(^*\) p < .05 level.

Although there was a significant main effect for binding (β = -0.32, p < .05) in the simplified model, overall model fit was poor (X\(^2\)(8) = 9.37, p = .312), Cox and Snell R\(^2\) = .05).
5.3 Discussion of Study 2

It had been hypothesized that morally framed messages would promote positive attitudes about Family Connects when they matched the moral preferences of participants. Participants were exposed to one of two affinity framed messages. In both messages, participants read the same description of Family Connects and its outcomes. These outcomes were, however, framed in two different ways. A fairness affinity framed message was designed to target Liberals’ moral preference for fairness. As a reminder, the individualizing moral foundation is composed of two facets, caring and fairness. As Family Connects outcomes already speak to caring (e.g., promoting positive maternal care), a fairness frame was selected to extend Family Connects’ moral appeal for Liberals. This fairness frame emphasized the ill effects of economic inequality on children born into poverty, then described how Family Connects would mitigate the burden of childhood poverty. A purity affinity framed message was designed to target Conservatives’ moral preference for maintaining purity and preserving of the sacred. This purity frame emphasized the way in which childhood innocence is stained by the instability of poverty, then described how Family Connects preserves childhood innocence by helping all children feel safe. There was, however, no significant main effect or interactions associated with random assignment to frames.
When measured in terms of Family Connects attitudes, participants’ support for the program varied according to their individual moral preferences. Higher individualizing foundation scores predicted more favorable Family Connects attitudes, whereas higher binding foundation scores predicted less favorable Family Connects attitudes. When measured in terms of willingness to fund, higher binding foundation scores predicted less willingness to pay for dissemination, however, there was no relation observed between individualizing foundation scores and willingness to pay.

These findings conflict with results from earlier studies in which appropriately matched morally framed messages promoted attitude change. There are three potential explanations for these counterintuitive results. First, it is possible that the underlying theory is wrong. The traits and needs associated with moral preferences may not be susceptible to targeted messaging. As there are data to support the conclusion that appropriately matched, morally framed messages facilitate attitude change, this first explanation is relatively unpersuasive.

Second, it is possible the experimental manipulation was too weak. Day et al. (2014) and Wolsko et al. (2016) used brief frames to support brief arguments, typically no more than a few sentences in length. Moreover, these research teams used framed messages that exposed participants to completely different arguments. This study focused on improving both ecological and internal validity. Ecological validity was
improved by providing detailed arguments similar to those commonly found in newspaper opinion-editorials. Internal validity was improved by exposing all participants to the same underlying outcome data. The ratio of frame relevant words to frame irrelevant words was, therefore, relatively low and the moral frames may have been overwhelmed by competing information.

Third, the experimental materials may have failed to tap into the intended constructs. In an attempt to impose internal validity, the two op-eds were written to be as close to identical as possible. The two op-eds shared the same core structure, which oriented participants to the effect of poverty on early childhood experience. The effect of poverty was then framed in terms of its impact on purity (i.e., stained innocence) or fairness (i.e., the poor are disadvantaged compared to the wealthy). The core structure (i.e., the comparison between children born into poor and wealthy families) may have implicitly primed questions of fairness, and this question of fairness may have thematically overwhelmed the purity frame. Moreover, Family Connects outcomes (e.g., increased daycare quality and access to social services) revolve around caring for children. Thus, the main effect of frame condition may have been insignificant because it was testing for minimal differences between two individualizing themed (i.e., fairness/caring themed) messages.
None of these explanations, however, account for the different pattern of main effects observed between dependent variables. When participants’ attitudes were measured in terms of abstract beliefs (e.g., “How would you feel about a proposal to provide Family Connects services in your county?”) and low demand behaviors (e.g., “If a political leader proposed providing Family Connects services in your county, would you be more or less likely to vote for them in the next election?”), higher individualizing and lower binding scores predicted more positive attitudes. When measured by a relatively concrete willingness to fund item, only lower binding scores predicted greater willingness to pay for dissemination. As willingness to pay is measured by a single dichotomized outcome, it is a less stable and powerful dependent variable than the Family Connects attitudes variable, which is derived as the mean of three continuously scored items. In addition, by asking participants “How much should taxpayers be willing to pay to provide Family Connects to a family,” the item may conflate a contingent valuation of Family Connects with individual beliefs about taxation and distributive justice. Together, the variable’s statistical properties and its tendency to pull for conservative ideological preferences may explain why the binding moral foundation predicted willingness to fund when the individualizing foundation did not.
6. Study 3 – Competing Morals, Cues and Ideologies

Having failed to generate support for hypothesized framing effects in Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 was designed to improve internal validity and address a number of empirical questions highlighted by prior results.

6.1 Do Liberals and Conservatives Disagree About the Value of EBP Outcomes?

In the discussion of Study 2, it was argued that framing effects were not found because the two frames inadvertently invoked liberal moral preferences. In the context of EBP framing, this is an inherent challenge as EBPs are designed to nurture child development (e.g., universal pre-K), protect children from harm (e.g., Triple P), and address disparities (e.g., Head Start). On their face, EBP outcomes appear to resonate with the individualizing foundation (i.e., care and fairness).

Lewandowsky and Oberauer (2016) theorized that Conservatives often reject scientific evidence not because of a relative inability to understand data, but because science more frequently conflicts with the conservative worldview than it does the liberal worldview. Therefore, the cognitive biases that promote the rejection of science are triggered more frequently in Conservatives than Liberals. To test whether motivated rejection is a relevant concern, Study 3 examined whether the response to EBP
outcome data varied as a function of individual moral preferences. To test this question, Study 3 included a control condition in which participants were exposed to unframed outcome data. It was hypothesized that the effect of random assignment to the control condition would vary as a function of participants’ individual moral preferences (hypothesis 1).

As an added benefit, the inclusion of an unframed control condition improved the internal validity of Study 3 as it allowed models to tease apart the effects of exposure to moral affinity frames and outcome data. In contrast to Study 2, it was hypothesized that framing effects would emerge in Study 3 after models controlled for the impact of exposure to outcome data.

6.2 Competition from Arguments and Cues

Study 3 was designed to test whether moral framing is efficacious within the polarized political context. The advocacy strategy outlined in Section 3 requires those working in the domain of child policy to identify and articulate both liberal and conservative themed arguments. In the discussion of Study 1, it was proposed that those with liberal political personalities trended toward increased willingness to pay for dissemination in response to a conservative affinity framed message because the message linked Family Connects to a liberal ideological preference. The conservative affinity frame sought to trigger Conservatives’ threat sensitivity and then offer Family
Connects as a policy option that satisfied Conservatives’ need for certainty and security. But, in order to satisfy their need for certainty and security, participants were asked to support Federal stimulus spending (i.e., it was argued that funding programs like Family Connects would promote the population and economic growth required to maintain military strength), and Conservatives tend to prefer a small role for government. The results highlight a question that is central to this line of research. Are affinity framing effects robust to competing ideological arguments?

Similarly, one must ask, are affinity frames robust to partisan cues. Polarizing cues bias message appraisal by causing participants to reflexively adopt their party’s platform, then defend it through biased appraisal of message arguments (Druckman et al., 2013; Taber et al., 2009; Taber & Lodge, 2006). There are also situations when party cues cause individuals, not to adopt their party’s position, but to reject the opposition party’s position (Nicholson, 2012). Party cues operate by biasing participant’s perception of argument strength (Druckman et al., 2013). Moral framing effects are partially mediated by the perception that the speaker shares the recipient’s values (Wolsko et al., 2016). In the context of multi- and cross-party advocacy, the question that emerges is whether binding frames are efficacious when invoked by Liberals, and whether individualizing frames are efficacious when invoked by Conservatives.
It was hypothesized that the impact of morally framed messages on participant attitudes would vary according to participants’ moral preferences. However, it was also hypothesized that when participants were exposed to competing moral frames and polarizing arguments/cues, polarizing arguments/cues would overwhelm the impact of affinity frames; therefore it was predicted that the strength and/or direction of the relation between message frames and participants’ moral preferences would be governed by polarization. In sum, a moderated moderation model was hypothesized whereby the presence/absence of polarizing message elements would moderate the interactive effect of affinity frames and individual moral preferences on participants’ post-exposure attitudes about Family Connects (hypothesis 2).

Absent polarizing signals, it was hypothesized that persuasion (and entrenchment) would be moderated by the match between randomly assigned moral affinity frames and individual moral preferences (hypothesis 3). Based on the political posture of recent legislative items, nurse visitation was deemed a liberal policy option. It was, therefore, hypothesized that those endorsing liberal moral preferences would exhibit entrenchment (i.e., report significantly more favorable attitudes about Family Connects) when randomized to a message frame emphasizing individualizing themes (hypothesis 4), while those endorsing conservative moral preferences would exhibit
persuasion (i.e., report significantly more favorable attitudes about Family Connects) when randomized to a message emphasizing binding themes (hypothesis 5).

When participants are exposed to competing moral frames and ideological arguments/party cues, it was hypothesized that ideological arguments and party cues would overwhelm framing effects (hypothesis 6). Petersen et al. (2010) demonstrated that, by acting on party cues, citizens lacking relevant information can take positions that appear to reflect their values. Based on Petersen’s data, it was hypothesized that polarizing message elements would reverse the direction of the relation between affinity framed messages and individual moral preferences. Specifically, it was hypothesized that those endorsing liberal moral preferences would exhibit entrenchment when randomized to a binding themed message that contained a liberal ideological argument and Democratic Party endorsement (hypothesis 7). Conversely, it was hypothesized that those endorsing conservative moral preferences would exhibit persuasion when randomized to a fairness themed message that contained a conservative ideological argument and Republican Party endorsement (hypothesis 8). To summarize hypotheses 2-8, it was predicted that the level of polarization presented would control the direction of the interaction between affinity frames and individual moral preferences.

In contrast to Petersen et al.’s (2010) data (which was collected in a multi-party parliamentary system), Cohen (2003) and Bullock (2011) observed that partisan
cues/ideological arguments attenuate the relation between individual ideological preferences and post-exposure attitudes in Americans. According to Cohen’s data, polarizing message elements may define the significance of the relation between individual moral preferences and post-exposure policy attitudes. In contrast to what was predicted in hypotheses 2-8, it is possible that, in the context of polarizing ideological arguments and party cues, participants’ responses to framed message may not appear to reflect their moral preferences at all. In this event, consistent with Nicholson (2012), it was hypothesized that participants’ post-exposure attitudes would be influenced by the match (or mismatch) between participants’ political identity (i.e., their party affiliation) and the political party proposing or opposing the dissemination of Family Connects (hypothesis 9). No hypotheses were made as to whether participants would weigh in-party endorsements or in-party objections more heavily.

6.3 Methods
Recruitment procedures were identical to those employed in Study 2. Of the 642 participants, 22 were excluded from analyses because they failed to complete the survey, 53 were excluded from analyses because they failed to spend at least 45 seconds reviewing advocacy messages, and 27 were excluded from analyses because they failed to spend at least 30 seconds completing the MFQ30. The resulting sample (N = 540) included meaningful diversity across demographic variables including gender (64.4%
female, 0.0% transgender), ethnicity (21.5% self-identified with at least one ethnic minority), and political party affiliation (34.1% Democrat, 32.4% Independent, 33.5% Republican). The sample age ($M_{\text{age}} = 36.65, SD = 11.37$) was close to the 2015 census national average ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.8$). The sample was relatively well educated ($M_{\text{ed}} = 4.28, SD = 1.31$, on a seven-point scale ranging from 1, some high school, to 7, terminal doctorate) with 53.7% of participants holding a bachelor's or graduate degree. There was a high level of diversity in terms of family income ($M_{\text{income}} = \text{US}\$96,539.00, SD = \text{US}\$99,837.79$). Table 7 provides more detailed characteristics for the sample included in analyses.

**Table 7. Demographic Characteristics of Participants by Sample and Condition, Study 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY (PERCENTAGES)</th>
<th>Sample ($N = 540$)</th>
<th>Baseline ($n = 109$)</th>
<th>Fairness ($n = 110$)</th>
<th>Community ($n = 106$)</th>
<th>Fairness ($n = 110$)</th>
<th>Community ($n = 111$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>348 (64.4%)</td>
<td>77a (14.3%)</td>
<td>74ab (13.7%)</td>
<td>66ab (12.2%)</td>
<td>60b (11.1%)</td>
<td>71ab (13.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>192 (35.6%)</td>
<td>32a (5.9%)</td>
<td>36ab (6.7%)</td>
<td>40ab (7.4%)</td>
<td>44b (8.1%)</td>
<td>40ab (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority</td>
<td>116 (21.5%)</td>
<td>26 (4.8%)</td>
<td>27 (5.0%)</td>
<td>19 (3.5%)</td>
<td>17 (3.1%)</td>
<td>27 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>184 (34.1%)</td>
<td>37 (6.9%)</td>
<td>36 (6.7%)</td>
<td>36 (6.7%)</td>
<td>36 (6.7%)</td>
<td>39 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>175 (32.4%)</td>
<td>35 (6.5%)</td>
<td>35 (6.5%)</td>
<td>34 (6.3%)</td>
<td>36 (6.7%)</td>
<td>35 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>181 (33.5%)</td>
<td>37 (6.9%)</td>
<td>39 (7.2%)</td>
<td>36 (6.7%)</td>
<td>32 (5.9%)</td>
<td>37 (6.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEANS (SD)</td>
<td>36.65 (11.37)</td>
<td>36.17 (10.48)</td>
<td>36.15 (11.54)</td>
<td>36.88 (11.55)</td>
<td>36.91 (11.37)</td>
<td>37.15 (12.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>4.28 (1.31)</td>
<td>4.30 (1.32)</td>
<td>4.08 (1.24)</td>
<td>4.41 (1.32)</td>
<td>4.39 (1.26)</td>
<td>4.23 (1.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Identity</td>
<td>4.76 (2.47)</td>
<td>4.44 (2.45)</td>
<td>4.78 (2.73)</td>
<td>4.97 (2.34)</td>
<td>4.75 (2.48)</td>
<td>4.86 (2.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust In Gov</td>
<td>2.03 (0.56)</td>
<td>2.01 (0.56)</td>
<td>2.03 (0.58)</td>
<td>2.03 (0.53)</td>
<td>2.07 (0.56)</td>
<td>2.02 (0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Incomec</td>
<td>96,539.00</td>
<td>103,767.41</td>
<td>94,690.34</td>
<td>91,965.62</td>
<td>88,471.29</td>
<td>103,199.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(99,837.79)</td>
<td>(108,596.86)</td>
<td>(103,097.29)</td>
<td>(100,674.46)</td>
<td>(80,934.64)</td>
<td>(103,634.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Gov = Government. Condition frequencies in the same row that do not share the same superscript vary to a statistically significant degree at the $p < .05$ level.

c In U.S. Dollars.
6.3.1 Procedure and materials.

Procedure and materials were identical to those employed in Study 2, except as follows. Study 3 was designed with a partially orthogonalized 3 x 2 factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of five experimental op-eds (Appendix C) describing Family Connects (Dodge et al., 2013a, 2013b; Dodge et al., 2014). These op-eds varied by frame and level of polarization. In a control condition, participants read an abbreviated op-ed with the same description of Family Connects’ outcomes used in Studies 1 and 2. No effort was made to frame the control condition op-ed. The remaining four conditions were orthogonalized across two dimensions, frame and level of polarization. In terms of frame, two distinct op-eds were designed. In two community conditions, participants read an op-ed designed to resonate with the conservative drive to return to the safety of an idealized past. The opening integrated MSC themes (threat sensitivity) and MFT binding themes (in-group loyalty and deference to authority), while the end linked Family Connects outcomes to the conservative drive to protect the community (Janoff-Bulman, 2009) and maintain its institutions. In two fairness conditions, participants read an opening orienting readers to the way in which socioeconomic disparities impact development while the end showed readers how Family Connects outcomes promote fairness and equality.
Polarization varied by level. In two non-partisan conditions, participants first read a community or fairness framed opening. Thereafter, participants read the following bridge:

A large bi-partisan Congressional coalition introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. While many Democrats and Republicans publicly support the initiative, many members of both parties publicly oppose it.

After this non-partisan bridge, participants read the same description of Family Connects used in the control condition. Finally, participants read frame specific conclusions.

In two polarized conditions, participants read the same op-eds used in the non-partisan conditions, with two significant changes. In the polarized community condition, participants read the following introduction to Family Connects outcomes:

A large coalition of Democratic Congressmen introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. Many Democratic Congressmen publicly support the initiative while many Republican Congressmen publicly oppose it…

Then, immediately after the description of Family Connects, participants in the polarized community condition read the following ideological arguments:

Democratic Congressmen support the Family Connects bill as one component of a broader program. Generally, Democrats
believe in taxpayer funded spending to promote social welfare. Consistent with this belief, they want to build a comprehensive taxpayer funded childcare industry that would include home visiting, daycare, and early childhood education. Democrats argue that this new childcare infrastructure would create jobs, reduce unemployment, and stimulate the economy.

Republican Congressmen criticize their Democratic counterparts’ focus on expanding the role of government and oppose the Family Connects bill as unnecessary government spending. Generally, Republicans believe social welfare spending encourages dependence and threatens to bankrupt the country. Consistent with this belief, they oppose the Family Connects bill as an opportunity to impose fiscal discipline by reducing taxpayer funded healthcare spending.

Despite the political implications, there are moral reasons for supporting Family Connects...

Finally, participants read the frame specific conclusion.

In the polarized fairness condition, participants read the following introduction to Family Connects outcomes:

A large coalition of Republican Congressmen introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. Many Republican Congressmen publicly support the initiative while many Democratic Congressmen publicly oppose it...

Then, immediately after the description of Family Connects, participants in the polarized fairness condition read the following ideological arguments:

Republican Congressmen support the Family Connects bill to reduce unnecessary government spending. Generally, Republicans believe social welfare spending encourages
dependence and threatens to bankrupt the country. Consistent with this belief, they support the Family Connects bill as an opportunity to impose fiscal discipline by reducing taxpayer funded healthcare spending.

Democratic Congressmen criticize their Republican counterparts’ focus on reducing the scope of government and oppose the Family Connects bill because they see it as too limited. Generally, Democrats believe in taxpayer funded spending to promote social welfare. Consistent with this belief, they want to build a comprehensive taxpayer funded childcare industry that would include home visiting, daycare, and early childhood education. Democrats argue that this new childcare infrastructure would create jobs, reduce unemployment, and stimulate the economy.

Despite the political implications, there are moral reasons for supporting Family Connects...

Finally, participants read the frame specific conclusion.

To summarize, there were five conditions. The first was a control condition that was used to measure the impact of exposure to Family Connects outcome data. Then there were two non-partisan conditions, the non-partisan fairness condition and the non-partisan community condition. Finally, there were two polarized conditions, the polarized fairness and polarized community conditions. The polarized condition op-eds contained party cues and related ideological arguments. These party cues and ideological arguments were designed to be in opposition to the frame. The polarized fairness condition is designed to appeal to liberal, individualizing morals, while the embedded Republican party cue and small government value argument were designed to appeal to Conservatives. The polarized community condition was designed to appeal to
conservative, binding morals, while the embedded Democratic party cue and big
government value argument were designed to appeal to Liberals.

The five op-eds were piloted using a brief MTurk/Qualtrics survey that
compared their respective readability (i.e., “how readable was he op-ed,” -4, very
difficult, to 4, very easy) and no statistically significant difference was observed ($F(4, 98) = 0.29, p = .881$).

6.4 Results

To test the hypotheses outlined above, the same set of independent and
dependent variables used in Study 2 were constructed, except as follows. A control
condition variable was dummy coded (control = 1). A polarization condition variable was
dummy coded (polarization = 1). A proponent match independent variable was dummy
coded (registered Democrats assigned to the polarized community condition and
registered Republicans assigned to the polarized fairness condition = 1). An opponent
match independent variable was dummy coded (registered Republicans assigned to the
polarized community condition and registered Democrats assigned to the polarized
fairness condition = 1). Binding and individualizing scores were collapsed into a single
dimension of progressivism by subtracting binding scores from individualizing scores,
and then standardizing the resulting difference scores through a z-transformation.
Higher progressivism scores indicated more liberal moral preferences. Correlation
analyses indicated statistically significant relations between progressivism scores and the ideological identity \( (r = -0.59, p < 0.001) \) and political identity \( (r = -0.48, p < 0.001) \) variables, which supports the inference that the progressivism score taps into a construct that is meaningfully related to but distinct from self-identified ideological and political identity. Four 2-way interaction variables were created by multiplying the underlying component variables: \textit{Control} \times \textit{Progressivism}, \textit{Progressivism} \times \textit{Frame}, \textit{Progressivism} \times \textit{Polarization}, and \textit{Frame} \times \textit{Polarization}. Finally, a three-way \textit{Frame} \times \textit{Progressivism} \times \textit{Polarization} interaction term was created by multiplying the component variables.

Dependent variables were constructed using the same methodology employed in Study 1, except as follows. To improve construct validity, reliability, and power, a continuously scored \textit{economic attitudes} variable was constructed as the mean of two items (“How much should taxpayers be willing to pay to provide Family Connects to a family?” and “How much should a private foundation, charity, or health insurance company be willing to pay to provide Family Connects to a family?”), each scored on a slider scale (with anchors at $0$, $350$, $700$, $1,050$, $1,400$, $1,750$, $2,100$, $2,450$, $2,800+$).

### 6.4.1 Analysis of Family Connects attitudes.

Linear multiple regression analysis was employed to test the moderated moderation hypothesis that Family Connects attitudes would vary according to a three-way interaction between affinity frames, progressivism, and polarization. Family
Connects attitudes were regressed on the frame, minority status, gender, education, income, trust in government, control, progressivism, proponent match, opponent match, frame, and polarization variables, as well as the two- and three-way interaction terms. Results from the analyses are represented in Table 8. The model explained a statistically significant amount of the variance in participants’ Family Connects attitudes ($F(15, 523) = 5.91, p < .001, R^2 = .15$).

Process v.2.16 (Hayes, 2013) model 3 was used to probe the three-way Frame x Progressivism x Polarization interaction at three levels of progressivism (i.e., the mean, and one standard deviation above and below the mean). Process was also used to generate visualization data for Figure 2. Figure 2 represents the pattern of conditional-conditional moral framing effects at the probed levels of polarization and progressivism. Estimated $b$’s for statistically significant conditional-conditional effects are listed below the corresponding data points. Statistically significant conditional-conditional effects should be interpreted as the mean difference resulting from assigning participants to the fairness frame as compared to the community frame, at the specified levels of progressivism and polarization, controlling for the specified covariates.
Table 8. Effect of moral frames, partisan cues/arguments, and progressivism on Family Connects attitudes in Study 3 (N = 540)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>CI (95%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority(^a)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.31, 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender(^b)</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.72, -0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education(^c)</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.34, -0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income(^c)</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.20, 0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Government(^c)</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.12, 0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control(^d)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.37, 0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressivism(^c)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.07, 0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent Match(^e)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.56, 0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent Match(^f)</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-1.66, -0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame(^g)</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.52, 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarization(^h)</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.76, 0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control x Progressivism</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.41, 0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressivism x Frame</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.05, 0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressivism x Polarization</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.28, 0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Polarization</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.05, 1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame x Progressivism x Polarization</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-1.80, -0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>R(^2)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>16,523</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3-Way Interaction Significance**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>(ΔR^2)</th>
<th>ΔF</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.01</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(^a\) Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified ethnic minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1.  
\(^b\) Self-identified female scored 0. 
\(^c\) Standardized by z-transformation. 
\(^d\) Control outcome information only condition scored 1. All else scored 0. 
\(^e\) Democrats assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Democrats, scored 1. Republicans assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Republicans, scored 1. All else scored 0. 
\(^f\) Democrats assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Republicans, scored 1. Republicans assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Democrats, scored 1. All else scored 0. 
\(^g\) Exposure to community framed message scored 0, fairness framed message scored 1. 
\(^h\) Exposure to non-partisan message scored 0 and polarized message scored 1. 
\(^†\) \(p < .10\), \(^*\) \(p < .05\) level, \(^**\) \(p < .01\), \(^***\) \(p < .001\).
Figure 2. Effect of moral frames, partisan cues/arguments, and progressivism on Family Connects attitudes in Study 3. Big Gov(D) = Big Government Ideological Argument (Democratic Cue) Condition. Small Gov(R) = Small Government Ideological Argument (Republican Cue). Solid lines in the top panel represent non-partisan conditions. Dotted lines in the bottom panel represent polarized conditions. Vertical contrast lines connect data points to highlight the conditions compared. Estimated $b$'s reflect the statistically significant
conditional effects of random assignment to frame condition, at the specified levels of progressivism and polarization, controlling for the specified covariates. Statistically significant parameter estimates are listed below the corresponding contrast line. Brackets contain 95% confidence intervals for the estimated $b$'s. * $p < .05$ level, ** $p < .01$

6.4.1.1 Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 stated that that Liberals and Conservatives would respond to unframed outcome data differently. Contrary to hypothesis 1, the Control x Progressivism interaction was not statistically significant. This result indicates that randomization to the control condition exerted a similar effect on Family Connects attitudes across levels of progressivism.

6.4.1.2 Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the impact of random assignment to moral frames would vary as a function of progressivism and polarization. The additional variance attributed to the Frame x Progressivism x Polarization interaction was statistically significant ($F(1, 523) = 8.49, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .01$), which confirms hypothesis 2. This finding provides evidence of moderated moderation, i.e., that the level of polarization moderated the interactive effect of frame assignment and progressivism on post-exposure attitudes.

6.4.1.3 Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 stated that, in the non-polarized condition, the effect of random frame assignment would vary as a function of progressivism. In the non-partisan
condition, the conditional Frame x Progressivism interaction was marginally significant and positive \((b = 0.43, t = 1.75, p = .082, [-0.05, 0.90])\), which provides marginal support for hypothesis 3.

6.4.1.4 Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4 stated that, in the non-partisan condition, those participants high on progressivism would endorse more favorable Family Connects attitudes after random assignment to the fairness condition. Contrary to hypothesis 4, random assignment to affinity frames within the non-partisan condition did not exert a statistically significant effect on Family Connects attitudes amongst those high on progressivism.

6.4.1.5 Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 5 stated that, in the non-partisan condition, those participants low on progressivism would endorse more favorable Family Connects attitudes after random assignment to the community condition. Contrary to hypothesis 5, random assignment to affinity frames within the non-partisan condition did not exert a statistically significant effect on Family Connects attitudes amongst those low on progressivism.

6.4.1.6 Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 6 stated that, when participants are exposed to competing moral frames and party cues/ideological arguments, party cues and ideological arguments
would overwhelm framing effects. In the polarized condition, the Frame x Progressivism interaction was significant and negative ($b = -0.65$, $t = -2.35$, $p = .019$, [-1.20, -0.11]). The pattern of conditional Frame x Progressivism interactions in the non-partisan and polarized conditions confirms that polarization moderated the relation between frame assignment and progressivism. Consistent with hypothesis 6, the polarization manipulation reversed and amplified the marginally significant, positive Frame x Progressivism interaction observed in the non-partisan condition.

6.4.1.7 Hypothesis 7.

Hypothesis 7 stated that, in the polarized condition, those high on progressivism would endorse more positive Family Connects attitudes after random assignment to the community condition. Contrary to hypothesis 7, random assignment to affinity frames within the polarized condition did not influence Family Connects attitudes to a statistically significant degree amongst those high on progressivism.

6.4.1.8 Hypothesis 8.

Hypothesis 8 stated that, in the polarized condition, those low on progressivism would endorse more positive Family Connects attitudes after random assignment to the fairness condition. Consistent with hypothesis 8, within the polarized condition, random assignment to the fairness frame caused participants low and moderate on
progressivism to report Family Connects attitudes that were, to a statistically significant degree, more favorable.

6.4.1.9 Hypothesis 9.

As there was no support for hypothesis 7, hypothesis 9 was examined. Hypothesis 9 stated that, if participants’ attitudes did not vary as a function of progressivism, they likely adopted and defended their party’s position. As such, participants’ post-exposure attitudes would be influenced by the match (or mismatch) between their political identity and the political party proposing or opposing the dissemination of Family Connects. Consistent with hypothesis 9, the opponent match variable exerted a statistically significant negative main-effect on Family Connects attitudes. Partisan participants endorsed significantly less favorable Family Connects attitudes when informed that their party opposed Family Connects on ideological grounds.

6.4.1.10 Post-hoc analyses.

Post-hoc two-step, multiple regression analyses confirmed that the proponent and opponent match variables explained a significant amount of variance ($F(2, 523) = 7.48, p = .024, \Delta R^2 = .02$); however, post-hoc moderation analyses omitting these two variables yielded the same pattern of conditional-conditional effects, which indicates that results generalize across political affiliations.
Post-hoc analyses were also performed using less restrictive exclusion criteria. Two separate models were run including participants who spent at least 30 seconds completing the MFQ30; and more than 5 (N = 573) or 15 (N = 560) seconds reviewing advocacy messages. These models revealed the same pattern of conditional-conditional effects.

6.4.2 Analysis of economic attitudes.

Linear multiple regression analysis was employed to test the moderated moderation hypothesis that economic attitudes would vary according to a three-way interaction between affinity frames, progressivism, and polarization. Economic attitudes were regressed on the same set of independent variables described in Section 6.4.1. Results from the analyses are presented in Table 9. The model explained a statistically significant amount of the variance in participants’ economic attitudes ($F(16, 523) = 3.44, p < .001, R^2 = .10$). Process v.2.16 (Hayes, 2013) model 3 was used to probe the three-way interaction at same three levels of progressivism probed in Family Connects attitudes models. Process was also used to generate visualization data for Figure 3. Figure 3 represents the pattern of conditional-conditional moral framing effects across the probed levels of polarization and progressivism. Estimated $b$’s for statistically significant conditional-conditional effects are listed below the corresponding data points. Again, statistically significant conditional-conditional effects should be interpreted as the mean
difference resulting from assigning participants to the fairness frame as compared to the community frame, at the specified levels of progressivism and polarization, controlling for the specified covariates.
Table 9. Effect of moral frames, partisan cues/arguments, and progressivism on Family Connects economic attitudes in Study 3 (N = 540).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>CI (95%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>774.28***</td>
<td>61.73</td>
<td></td>
<td>653.02, 895.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>184.52**</td>
<td>63.24</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>60.28, 308.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>97.01†</td>
<td>54.30</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-9.67, 203.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-17.34</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-68.15, 33.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td>25.59</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-33.54, 67.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Government&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>72.31**</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>21.50, 123.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>33.46</td>
<td>81.51</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-126.67, 193.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressivism</td>
<td>-50.70</td>
<td>57.99</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-164.63, 63.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent Match&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-64.77</td>
<td>103.45</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-268.00, 138.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent Match&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>101.46</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-251.96, 146.69</td>
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<tr>
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<td>80.94</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-181.68, 136.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polarization&lt;sup&gt;h&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-76.45</td>
<td>100.24</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-273.37, 120.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control x Progressivism</td>
<td>174.67*</td>
<td>81.13</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>15.29, 334.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressivism x Frame</td>
<td>268.04**</td>
<td>80.28</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>110.33, 425.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressivism x Polarization</td>
<td>192.94*</td>
<td>86.65</td>
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<td>Frame x Polarization</td>
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<td>115.17</td>
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<td>121.77</td>
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<td>-558.06, -79.60</td>
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Model Significance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.31</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>16,523</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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</table>

3-Way Interaction Significance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>ΔF</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  

<sup>a</sup> Self-identified Caucasians scored 0, self-identified ethnic minorities (including participants identifying multiple ethnicities) scored 1.  
<sup>b</sup> Self-identified female scored 0.  
<sup>c</sup> Standardized by z-transformation.  
<sup>d</sup> Control outcome information only condition scored 1. All else scored 0.  
<sup>e</sup> Democrats assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Democrats, scored 1. Republicans assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Republicans, scored 1. All else scored 0.  
<sup>f</sup> Democrats assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Republicans, scored 1. Republicans assigned to the condition in which the Family Connects bill is favored by Democrats, scored 1. All else scored 0.  
<sup>g</sup> Exposure to community framed message scored 0, fairness framed message scored 1.  
<sup>h</sup> Exposure to non-partisan message scored 0 and polarized message scored 1.  
† p < .10, * p < .05 level, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Figure 3. Effect of moral frames, partisan cues/arguments, and progressivism on Family Connects economic attitudes in Study 3. Big Gov(D) = Big Government Ideological Argument (Democratic Cue) Condition. Small Gov(R) = Small Government Ideological Argument (Republican Cue). Solid lines in the top panel represent non-partisan conditions. Dotted lines in the bottom panel represent polarized conditions. Vertical contrast lines connect data points to highlight the conditions compared. Estimated b’s reflect the statistically
significant conditional effects of random assignment to frame condition, at the specified levels of progressivism and polarization, controlling for the specified covariates. Statistically significant parameter estimates are listed below the corresponding contrast line. Brackets contain 95% confidence intervals for the estimated b's.

6.4.2.1 Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 stated that Liberals and Conservatives would respond to unframed outcome data differently. Consistent with hypothesis 1, the Control x Progressivism interaction was statistically significant \( F(1, 523) = 4.64, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .01 \), indicating that the effect of unframed outcome data on economic attitudes varied across levels of progressivism. The conditional effect of the Control x Progressivism interaction was examined at the same three levels of progressivism (i.e., the mean, and one standard deviation above and below the mean). The Control x Progressivism interaction was non-significant and negative amongst those low on progressivism \( (b = -141.22, t = -1.20, p = .232, [-373.09, 90.66]) \); non-significant and positive for those at the mean of progressivism \( (b = 33.46, t = 0.41, p = .682, [-126.67, 193.58]) \); and marginally-significant and positive for those high on progressivism \( (b = 208.13, t = 1.86, p = .063, [-11.68, 427.94]) \). The effect of random assignment to the control condition amplified and reversed direction from negative to positive as spotlight analyses transitioned from low to high levels of progressivism.
6.4.2.2 Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the impact of random assignment to moral frames would vary as a function of progressivism and polarization. The additional variance attributed to the Frame x Progressivism x Polarization interaction was statistically significant ($F(1, 523) = 6.86, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .01$), which indicates support for hypothesis 2. This finding provides evidence of moderated moderation, i.e., that the level of polarization moderated the interactive effect of frame assignment and progressivism on post-exposure attitudes.

6.4.2.3 Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 stated that, in the non-polarized condition, the effect of random frame assignment would vary as a function of progressivism. Consistent with hypothesis 3, the conditional Frame x Progressivism interaction was significant and positive in the non-partisan conditions ($b = 268.04, t = 2.34, p = .001$, [110.33, 425.74]).

6.4.2.4 Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4 stated that, in the non-partisan condition, those participants high on progressivism would endorse higher valuations of Family Connects after random assignment to the fairness condition. Consistent with hypothesis 4, participants high on progressivism endorsed economic attitudes that were, to a statistically significant
degree, more favorable when randomized to the non-partisan fairness condition as compared to the non-partisan community condition.

6.4.2.5 Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 5 stated that, in the non-partisan condition, those participants low on progressivism would endorse higher valuations of Family Connects after random assignment to the community condition. Consistent with hypothesis 5, participants low on progressivism endorsed economic attitudes that were, to a statistically significant degree, more favorable when randomized to the non-partisan community condition as compared to the non-partisan fairness condition.

6.4.2.6 Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 6 stated that, when participants are exposed to competing moral frames and ideological arguments/party cues, ideological arguments and party cues would overwhelm framing effects. In the polarized condition, the Frame x Progressivism interaction was non-significant and negative ($b = -50.79$, $t = -0.56$, $p = .579$, [-230.38, 128.80]). The pattern of conditional interactions across the non-partisan and polarized conditions confirms that polarization moderated the relation between random frame assignment and progressivism. Consistent with hypothesis 6, the polarization manipulation suppressed and reversed the Frame x Progressivism interaction observed in the non-partisan conditions.
6.4.2.7 Hypothesis 7.

Hypothesis 7 stated that, in the polarized condition, those high on progressivism would endorse higher valuations of Family Connects after random assignment to the community condition. Contrary to hypothesis 7, random assignment to affinity frames within the polarized condition did not influence economic attitudes of those high on progressivism to a statistically significant degree.

6.4.2.8 Hypothesis 8.

Hypothesis 8 stated that, in the polarized condition, those low on progressivism would endorse higher valuations of Family Connects after random assignment to the fairness condition. Consistent with hypothesis 8, participants low and moderate on progressivism endorsed economic attitudes that were, to a statistically significant degree, more favorable when randomized to the polarized fairness condition as compared to the polarized community condition.

6.4.2.9 Hypothesis 9.

As there was no support for hypothesis 7, hypothesis 9 was examined. Hypothesis 9 stated that, if participants’ attitudes did not vary as a function of progressivism, they likely adopted and defended their party’s position. As such, participants’ post-exposure attitudes would be influenced by the match (or mismatch) between their political identity and the political party proposing or opposing the
dissemination of Family Connects. Neither the proponent nor opponent match variables exerted a statistically significant main-effect on economic attitudes.

6.4.2.10 Post-hoc analyses.

Post-hoc two-step, multiple regression analyses confirmed that the proponent and opponent match variables did not increase the amount of variance explained ($F(2, 523) = 0.24, p = .791, \Delta R^2 = .00$). Moreover, post-hoc moderation analyses omitting these two variables yielded the same pattern of conditional-conditional effects, which indicates that results generalize across political affiliations.

Post-hoc analyses were also performed using less restrictive exclusion criteria. Two separate models were run including participants who spent at least 30 seconds completing the MFQ30; and more than 5 ($N = 573$) or 15 ($N = 560$) seconds reviewing advocacy messages. These models revealed the same pattern of conditional-conditional effects.

6.5 Discussion of Study 3

Study 3 was designed to answer four primary questions.

6.5.1 Do EBP outcomes resonate with Liberals more than Conservatives?

First, Study 3 examined whether individuals across the spectrum of moral preferences respond to unframed EBP outcome data differently. After exposure to
unframed EBP outcome data, participants’ general attitudes regarding Family Connects did not differ as a function of progressivism, however, their economic attitudes did. When considering willingness to fund Family Connects, EBP outcome data appeared to resonate with liberal moral preferences, and frustrate conservative moral preferences.

### 6.5.2 Do appropriately matched moral frames promote more favorable attitudes about EBPs?

Second, Study 3 sought to establish proof of concept that appropriately matched moral frames can motivate Conservatives and Liberals to support Family Connects. Study 3 provided equivocal support for the persuasion and entrenchment hypotheses. When attitudes were measured in terms of abstract beliefs and low-demand behaviors, the data revealed no evidence of persuasion and entrenchment. When attitudes were measured in terms of willingness to pay for Family Connects, clear support emerged for both the persuasion and entrenchment hypotheses. Absent polarizing content, those low on progressivism endorsed greater willingness to pay when exposed to the community framed argument, while those high on progressivism endorsed greater willingness to pay when exposed to the fairness framed argument. The data indicate that appropriately matched morally framed advocacy messages motivated higher contingent valuations of Family Connects.
6.5.3 Are moral frames robust to competition from ideological arguments and party cues?

Third, Study 3 tested whether the appeal of moral frames is robust to competition from polarizing message arguments and party cues. This question was examined at the level of conditional and conditional-conditional effects. In terms of conditional effects, the Frame x Progressivism interaction was examined in the non-partisan and polarized conditions. The models for both general and economic attitude dependent variables revealed positive conditional Frame x Progressivism interactions in the non-partisan condition and negative conditional interactions in the polarized condition. That means, absent polarization, more progressive morals were associated with more favorable attitudes after randomization to the fairness frame. In contrast, in the context of polarization, more conservative morals were associated with more favorable attitudes after randomization to the fairness frame. This pattern suggests that polarizing ideological arguments and party cues radically changed the public’s perception of the values perceived to be at stake in connection with home visitation.

Conditional-conditional effects were then explored at three levels of progressivism (i.e., the mean, and one standard deviation above and below the mean), that were deemed to correspond to conservative, moderate, and liberal moral preferences. Conservatives and Moderates endorsed more favorable attitudes about, and greater willingness to pay for, Family Connects when assigned to a fairness framed
message that contained a Republican party endorsement and small-government ideological argument. Interestingly, random assignment to frames within the polarized condition did not change Liberals’ attitudes about Family Connects to a statistically significant degree. In this study, when moral frames and partisan cues/arguments were in opposition, only Conservative and Moderate moral preferences gave way to ideological partisanship. The pattern of conditional-conditional framing effects on attitudes across levels of progressivism is consistent with Bullock’s (2011) data. Bullock (2011) showed that Conservatives’ attitudes are more influenced by polarizing cues than values, while the reverse is true for Liberals.

6.5.4 In the context of polarization, do partisans follow party dogmatism?

Fourth, to the extent that participants did not appear to respond to moral frames in the polarized conditions, it was hypothesized that participants would reflexively adopt and defend their party’s position. When asked to rate abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors, participants appeared to follow party cues. Partisans expressed less favorable Family Connects attitudes when they were told their party opposed funding the program on ideological grounds. This main effect was not observed in models examining comparatively concrete economic attitudes.
6.5.5 Post-hoc analyses and considerations.

In comparing results across dependent variables, important contrasts emerge. First, although the polarization manipulation consistently inverted the sign of the observed Frame x Progressivism interaction, its impact on the significance of this interaction varied by dependent variable. When participants’ attitudes were measured in terms of abstract beliefs and low demand behaviors, polarization amplified the relation between frame assignment and individual moral preferences. This finding supports the literature indicating that ideological arguments (e.g., Kam & Mikos, 2007) and partisan cues (Petersen et al., 2010) can help citizens make value-consistent decisions. In contrast, when participants’ attitudes were measured in terms of concrete economic attitudes, polarization suppressed the relation between frame assignment and individual moral preferences. This finding supports the literature indicating that polarizing arguments and cues attenuate the relation between individuals’ ideological preferences and their attitudes about relevant policy options (Bullock, 2011; Cohen, 2003).

Second, moral framing effects were observed in the non-partisan condition when attitudes were measured as willingness to pay. In contrast, no moral framing effects were observed when responses were measured in terms of abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors.
Third, main effects associated with party affiliation varied by dependent variable. In the polarized condition, partisans endorsed more negative abstract attitudes and less willingness to engage in low demand behaviors when they read their political party opposed the program. In contrast, partisans did not assign lower valuations to Family Connects when informed that their political party opposed the program.

The different outcomes observed across dependent variables may be tied to distinctions in the relative salience of the two decision tasks. The abstract attitude and low demand behavior items imposed no cost on participants while the economic attitudes variable emphasized real world costs by forcing participants to allocate public and quasi-public funds in the form of charity, insurance, and taxpayer spending. In connection with low salience decisions, participants may have used low effort heuristics to determine their attitudes. They may have responded to party cues and adopted and defended their party’s position. When asked to make higher cost decisions, participants may have engaged in more effortful processing. This pattern would explain why party cue effects were observed in connection with Family Connects attitudes, while moral framing effects were observed in connection with economic attitudes.

In prior experiments (Bullock, 2011; Cohen, 2003), researchers demonstrated that polarization effects were not explained by dual-process models (Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b), in so far as party cues did not affect depth of
message processing as measured by the time spent reviewing messages, the ability to recall message content, and the correlation between participant attitudes and the valence of spontaneously generated thoughts about the relevant policy. The current results are consistent with these prior findings as differences observed across post-exposure decision tasks would not affect online message processing. If conflicting results across dependent variables can be explained by differing levels of salience, it is in how salience affected the amount or type of processing employed when performing the distinct decision tasks. Based on the data from Study 3, it is hypothesized that when confronted with polarized, low salience decisions, partisans relied on low-effort heuristics and followed party cues; and when confronted with high salience decisions on issues for which they lacked partisan guidance, individuals relied on moral intuition.

This conclusion may seem counter intuitive as partisan cues and ideological arguments amplified the statistical significance of the conditional Frame x Progressivism interaction in the model examining low-salience decisions, and suppressed the statistical significance of the conditional Frame x Progressivism interaction in the model examining high-salience decisions; however, these findings support the conclusion that salience explains the distinct pattern of effects across decision tasks. This research is founded upon Jost et al.’s (2009) theory of elective affinities which states that political ideology, identity, and behavior are in part attributable to the psychological traits,
needs, and drives of individuals and groups. Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al. (2011) observed that moral preferences are related to political identity. And Petersen et al. (2010) demonstrated that those without issue specific knowledge can make decisions that appear value consistent by relying on partisan cues.

Integrating the data, participants making low-salience decisions about Family Connects attitudes appeared to express more value-consistent attitudes in the polarized condition than in the non-partisan condition, because they put little effort into their decisions. As a result, absent party cues, participants’ positions reflected their innate moral preferences to a marginally significant degree; whereas, in the context of polarizing cues, participants adopted and defended their party’s position (or rejected the oppositions position). As party affiliation is related to innate moral preferences, participants’ polarized decisions appeared to reflect moral preferences. Yet, these reflexively adopted positions reflected an inversion of the moral preferences that participants exhibited absent the motivated cognition triggered by polarization. Thus, as described in Section 2, polarizing message elements drove a wedge between partisans’ attitudes and their innate moral preferences.

With respect to participants making high-salience decisions about economic attitudes, participants expressed more value-consistent attitudes in the non-partisan condition than in the polarized condition. In fact, the statistically significant conditional
Frame x Progressivism interaction was rendered non-significant by the introduction of polarizing cues and ideological arguments. Based on results from the non-partisan condition, individuals clearly engaged in moral introspection when estimating a contingent valuation of Family Connects. Moreover, as the proponent and opponent match main effects were insignificant in the economic attitudes models, it is clear that, as a group, participants did not act as though they reflexively adopted and defended their parties’ position. It is hypothesized that two competing processes overwhelmed the relation between affinity frames and individual moral preferences in the polarized condition. On the one hand, participants engaged in moral introspection to estimate a contingent valuation. On the other hand, participants were influenced by polarizing cues and arguments. As the moral frames and polarizing cues/arguments were set in opposition, these opposing persuasive forces attenuated the relation between affinity frames and morals to non-significance.

6.5.6 Limitations.

There are two primary limitations to this study. First, in order to maximize power in testing whether moral framing effects are robust to polarizing cues, ideological arguments and party cues were nested. As a result, it is difficult to disentangle the effects of party cues and ideological arguments. This issue was addressed by creating the proponent and opponent match variables, which examined the impact of partisan
cues by testing the degree to which the match (or mismatch) between proponent and participant political identities affected partisans’ post-exposure attitudes. After controlling for these party effects, it was hypothesized that any remaining variance could be attributed to the impact of ideological arguments on participants who were registered Independents. However, registered Democrats and Republicans do not always follow their party’s platform and may selectively respond to ideological arguments. Moreover, registered Independents can prefer the policies of Democrats or Republicans and may be swayed by party cues. Regardless, the results are unequivocal with respect to one of the core questions. Partisan cues/arguments consistently overwhelmed moral frames. Moreover, as models omitting the proponent and opponent match main effects yielded the same pattern of conditional and conditional-conditional effects, results from the moderated moderation models generalized across party affiliations. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that partisans and independents endorsing similar levels of progressivism, exhibited similar reactions to experimental manipulations.

Second, this study considered only the competitive effect of moral frames and partisan cues/arguments. As Wolsko et al. (2016) found that moral framing effects were mediated by the perceived match between speaker and recipient values, it is possible
that there is a synergistic effect when moral frames, recipient moral preferences, and partisan cues/arguments align.
7. General Discussion

The aim of this program of research is to speed the dissemination of EBPs by identifying arguments that generate support for funding cost-effective programs. Consistent with Rawls’s theory of overlapping moral consensus (1987) and Sunstein’s theory of incompletely theorized agreements (1995), it was hypothesized that, to generate bipartisan support in a polarized political environment, one must identify two distinct arguments for dissemination that appeal to the distinct traits of Liberals and Conservatives. It was hoped that these distinct arguments would allow Liberals and Conservatives to support the same policy options on separate ideological grounds. To test this advocacy model, three studies were conducted. Studies 1 and 2 tested whether two distinct psychological theories could be used to guide advocates in designing affinity framed messages, i.e., messages that targeted the distinct traits and needs of Liberals and Conservatives. Study 3 tested whether moral frames are efficacious and robust to competition from polarizing ideological arguments and party cues.

7.1 Study 1 – Framing EBPs Using Motivated Social Cognition

In Study 1, Jost et al.’s (2003) theory of motivated social cognition was used to design messages to resonate with personality traits related to Liberal and Conservative behavior. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two op-eds describing
Family Connects. These two op-eds contained the same description of Family Connects’ outcomes, however, these outcomes were set in either a liberal or conservative frame. The conservative affinity frame targeted threat sensitivity and the need for certainty and security. The liberal affinity framed targeted tolerance of uncertainty and the drive for equality. Participants’ general attitudes about Family Connects did not vary across frame conditions; however, when measuring participants’ willingness to fund Family Connects, a moderately significant interaction was observed between frame condition and participants’ political personalities. Opposite to what was hypothesized, when participants with a liberal political personality were assigned to the conservative affinity framed op-ed, they trended toward greater willingness to fund Family Connects. Although three potential explanations were proposed, it was hypothesized that Liberals endorsed greater willingness to fund Family Connects after reading the Conservative affinity framed message because that message implicitly advanced a liberal ideological policy. Specifically, it was argued that early childhood programs like Family Connects would stimulate the population and economic growth required to fund a technologically sophisticated military.

7.2 Study 2 – Framing EBPs Using Moral Foundations Theory

Given the results in Study 1, Study 2 shifted focus. Study 2 once again sought to identify two frames that would resonate with the distinct traits and needs of Liberals
and Conservatives. Using moral foundations theory (Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, et al., 2011; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Spassena, et al., 2011; Haidt, 2008) as a guide, two new op-eds were authored. One op-ed was designed to target liberal individualizing morals by focusing on promoting fairness and equality. The other op-ed was designed to target conservative binding morals by focusing on the need to maintain the purity of childhood innocence. Contrary to what was hypothesized, no interaction was observed between frame condition and moral preferences. When measured in terms of abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors, individualizing moral preferences predicted more positive beliefs about Family Connects, while binding moral preferences predicted more negative beliefs. When measured in terms of willingness to fund Family Connects, binding preferences predicted lower contingent valuations. As there is evidence that moral affinity frames have persuasive appeal when appropriately matched to participants (Day et al., 2014; Feinberg & Willer, 2013; Wolsko et al., 2016), it was hypothesized that the binding framed op-ed failed to tap into the binding construct. Further, it was hypothesized that it is easier to tie EBP outcomes to individualizing frames than binding frames as EBPs often advance individualizing preferences by improving care, preventing suffering, and promoting fairness. Therefore, to successfully employ a binding EBP frame, the frame must be robust to competition from individualizing themes.
7.3 Study 3 – Examining Moral Frames in the Context of Polarization

Study 3 employed what was learned in Studies 1 and 2 to test three threshold questions. First, do EBP outcomes naturally appeal to Liberals more than Conservatives? Study 3 provided support for the conclusion that willingness to pay for EBP outcomes varies as a function of progressivism. In contrast, when measured in terms of abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors, participants’ response to EBP outcome data did not vary as a function of progressivism. As such, the data provide limited support for the hypothesis that publicly funded EBPs fit liberal moral preferences more naturally than conservative moral preferences. This result highlights that support for funding dissemination may depend on the developmental community’s ability to frame (or design) interventions to appeal to the substantive moral preferences of conservative constituencies.

Second, can one use moral affinity frames to promote positive attitudes about EBPs? The results of Study 3 demonstrated that appropriately matched moral frames promoted increased willingness to pay for Family Connects. As hypothesized, Liberals endorsed greater willingness to pay in response to a fairness framed message, while Conservatives endorsed greater willingness to pay in response to a community themed message. These affinity frame effects were not observed when outcomes were measured in terms of abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors. As such, Study 3 provides
limited proof of concept that appropriately matched moral frames can promote favorable attitudes about EBP dissemination in both Liberals and Conservatives.

Third, Study 3 asked whether moral affinity frame effects are robust to competition from ideological arguments and party cues? Across dependent variables, polarizing message elements overwhelmed the appeal of affinity frames. Conservatives and Moderates endorsed more favorable attitudes about Family Connects when assigned to the fairness framed message that contained a Republican Party endorsement and small government ideological argument. In contrast, Liberals’ attitudes and contingent valuations did not vary to a statistically significant degree across frames within the polarized condition. Conditional interactions indicate that polarization reversed the relation observed in the non-partisan condition between message frames and moral preferences. This shift reveals that partisan processing is so powerful it can define the moral preferences perceived to be advanced by specific policy alternatives.

Although not central to this program of research, Study 3 demonstrated one notable main effect impacting participants’ abstract attitudes and low-demand behaviors. In contrast to Nicholson’s (2012) findings, partisans did not endorse more favorable attitudes about an EBP when told their party’s Congressmen proposed funding; rather, registered Democrats and Republicans liked the EBP less when they learned their party opposed funding. The conflict between Nicholson’s data and that
from this study may reflect something intrinsically different about the decision tasks employed. Alternatively, the rejection of out-group policy proposals observed in Study 3 may reflect an increase in polarization between 2008 and 2016.

7.4 Limitations and Next Steps

Statistically significant affinity frame effects emerged only in the third of three studies. Moreover, across all three studies, outcomes differed across dependent variables, which makes it hard to draw conclusions from the data. In the discussion of Study 3, it was hypothesized that there are substantive reasons as to why framing effects differ across dependent variables. It was argued that the contingent valuation task used to measure economic attitudes was a more salient decision task. As a result, it was proposed that participants used low effort heuristics and followed-party cues when assessing abstract attitudes and low demand behaviors. In contrast, it was proposed that, when assigning an economic value to Family Connects, participants engaged in more labor-intensive heuristics that relied on moral introspection. The results of Study 1 generally support this hypothesis in so far as there was a marginally significant relation between political personality and frame condition when modeling willingness to fund, and no significant relation between political personality and frame condition when modeling non-economic attitudes. Based on the data, one might speculate that more of participants’ essential traits are reflected in concrete economic decision tasks than
comparatively abstract attitude decision tasks. Regardless, this remains speculative, and inconsistency between studies and dependent variables indicates that results from Study 3 should be interpreted cautiously.

Additionally, in the discussion of Study 3, it was acknowledged that there is evidence that affinity frames operate in part by engendering the perception that the speaker and recipient share common values. Study 3 was designed to test the degree to which affinity frames are robust to competing value cues and arguments. As such, op-eds in the polarized condition emphasized dissonant (rather than consonant) relations between affinity frames and partisan cues/arguments. It is possible a synergistic framing effect would be observed if consonant frames and partisan cues/arguments were employed. Future studies will examine whether results differ across matched and mismatched affinity frames, value cues, and value arguments. Similarly, Study 3 made a limited attempt to disentangle the relative impact of competition from party cues and ideological arguments. Future studies will employ fully orthogonalized designs that will help tease apart the moderating and mediating relations between affinity frames, party cues, and ideological arguments.

7.5 Conclusions

This program of research sought to identify theory driven themes that could be used to design targeted messages that promote favorable attitudes about EBPs. This
theory driven model was intended as an alternative to existing models of developmental policy framing (e.g., Davey, 2009; Manuel, 2009; Manuel & Davey, 2009) that require extensive focus testing. Focus testing is an expensive process. Advocates begin by using qualitative research to identify potentially resonant frames. Advocates then recruit small groups and conduct moderated discussion panels to gauge participants’ reactions to potential frames. The process is repeated until suitable candidate frames emerge. Finally, advocates empirically validate candidate frames through experimental surveys similar to those employed in this program of research. These studies were intended to help researchers present interventions in a way that resonates with a wide audience without the cost and effort associated with empirically validating EBP specific frames.

The present research suggests that it is difficult to employ theory to design effective messages without focus testing. In both Studies 1 and 2, it was hypothesized that messages failed to tap into the intended constructs. Moreover, in Study 1, it was hypothesized that a message inadvertently included an ideological argument that conflicted with the intended affinity frame. Although the additional research steps outlined above would help advocates understand more about when and how message components interact, this knowledge on its own may prove insufficient. Advocates may have to continue testing frames to be sure that theory driven messages exert the intended influence on the intended targets.
Finally, and most significantly, Study 3 suggests three substantive conclusions that lay beyond focal analyses. First, in the context of polarizing cues, partisans treat opposition party bills with great suspicion. In-group opposition to a polarized bill caused partisans to adopt more negative attitudes. This trend was also identifiable qualitatively. For example, in an open-ended field, one participant wrote the following: “I have a profound distrust of republicans doing anything for poor and needy families as there is probably some sort of catch. Like Ronald Reagan ‘helping’ the mentally ill people.” In order to circumvent motivated message rejection, advocates may need to establish bipartisan advocacy coalitions. These bipartisan advocacy coalitions can then arrange for in-group speakers to deliver affinity framed messages.

Second, both Democrats and Republicans endorsed far higher willingness to pay for a charitably or privately funded program than a taxpayer-funded program. This general position was well summarized by two participants. One wrote, “The idea is good, but it should be run by private charities instead of being government run.” While the second opined, “This sounds [like] a good program for low income families, but should not be a burden on tax payers.” The data suggest that there would be wider support for EBPs that are implemented by public-private partnerships, particularly if such partnerships are funded by capturing part of the savings that flow to third party payers. Although not tested explicitly, members of the public who are unwilling to
increase taxes to fund Family Connects may be glad to reallocate tax revenues to disseminate visitation. One participant expressed this sentiment quite clearly: “Money should be reallocated to make a program like this. We shouldn’t be looking to increase taxes for it.” In the aggregate, the findings suggest that rhetoric should be second to substantive policy. To make EBPs more universally appealing, one may have to align the structure of dissemination with the substantive preferences of conservative voters.

Third, although moral frames can be used to shape attitudes, the appeal of moral frames appears insufficient to withstand polarizing cognitive processes. In the current political environment, political ideology appears to trump morality, which suggests a fundamental social problem. Polarized cognitive processes drive a wedge not only between constituents and leaders, but between citizens and their moral intuition. In order to restore the primacy of morality in the public sphere, we must work to attenuate polarization.
Appendix A

Conservative condition: Since the 18th Century, America provided its population with unrivaled opportunity, yet, for the last fifteen years, we have, as a nation, faced overwhelming challenges. Our homeland was violated by terrorists. We have become entangled in far-off wars. Housing and stock markets collapsed. A protracted recession pushed millions into un- and under-employment. We face increasing competition from developing countries like China that play by an unfamiliar set of rules. And new viruses born in far off lands threaten our borders. To make matters worse – from suicide bombers in Europe to North Korean missile tests – we are besieged by visions of a world descending into chaos. Every day I turn on the news, and every day I get a sinking feeling that the world is getting a little worse. This is not merely an abstract feeling or a vague sense that our society is, for the first time, ill equipped to manage a new set of global crises. This fear hits home.

When I say this fear hits home, I mean that literally. As I think of a future filled with uncertainty, I worry that I wont be able to provide my kids the childhood they deserve. For many members of my generation, parenting feels unaffordable. Most families need two incomes, so only one-quarter of married couples rely on a stay-at-home mom or dad. That means we need out-of-home day care. For children under the age of 5, day care costs on average $180 per week, which is out-of-reach for low- and
middle-income families. As a result, so many people in my generation have been forced to delay (or forgo) having children that, by 2013, the birthrate reached a record low – a level too low to sustain our population.

Population growth promotes economic growth, and it is economic growth that allows America to project military power and protect its citizens from global threats -- like the migrant crisis that is bleeding into Europe from the Middle East. The American Family is the farm that feeds the American economy, yet my generation has been run off the family farm.

Before we as individuals can responsibly have children, we need hope for our ability to care for them. To build that hope, we must build communities that welcome families and nurture children as they grow. As a clinical scientist, I’ve searched the literature to identify cost-effective, community-based programs that support growing families. I came across one program – Family Connects – that is particularly promising. Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities, hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visitors at home. Nurse-visitors work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For
example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need a crib to keep their child safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.

Researchers evaluated Family Connects through a randomized clinical trial in Durham, NC. When children reached six months in age, a team returned to families to see if visitation made a difference. These evaluators found that visited mothers were warmer parents and less anxious than their non-visited peers. Visited fathers were more engaged with their children. Visited families provided home environments that were more stimulating, selected higher quality daycare programs, and accessed more of the social services they required. Most importantly, visited infants required less emergency medical care, which means that visited infants were safer, healthier, and received more of the services they needed through routine care.

Although it costs approximately $700 to provide a Family Connects nurse visitor, visited families saved an average of $2,100 dollars by preventing infant emergency room visits and hospital-overnights. In other words, for every dollar spent providing services, three dollars were saved; and those dollars add up. Over the 18-month clinical trial, Durham County residents prevented $6,737,318 of unnecessary emergency medical care. That’s $6,737,318 dollars that can be used to invest in family services like daycare and
preschool programs that promote economic growth by allowing parents to care for children while working to support their families.

We are often presented with a false choice. We are told we can afford to focus on domestic issues or national security, but not both. The truth is, by taking concrete steps to build strong communities we will bolster national security. As I look abroad to instability in the Middle East, increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks, growing conflict with Russia, and a global migration crisis, I worry and I know national security must be our priority. However, without strong economic growth, there will be no way to pay for the technologically sophisticated military needed to defend against evolving foreign threats. The absolute best way to promote national security is to promote economic growth. And the best way to assure economic growth is to rekindle population growth. If we build strong community institutions that nurture young families, we can promote the growth that will finance our security for decades. In other words, if you want to protect the country, start by funding programs like Family Connects that protect babies.

Liberal condition: Income inequality has become the greatest source of inequity in modern America. Between 2009 and 2012, most workers’ incomes fell by 0.5% while the wealthiest one percent’s grew by 36.8%. The bulk of Americans were left behind as the proverbial one percent catapulted toward a new Gilded Age. As income inequality took
root, our country’s leaders debated whether it is time to use policy to close the gap between the haves and have-nots. That debate has increasingly focused on abstract beliefs about success. Those who prefer the status quo argue that the American economy rewards hard work. Those advocating change argue that the “deck is rigged” and individuals succeed because they benefit from advantages (men, for example, often earn more than women performing the same jobs). This debate quickly overshadowed the core dilemma. The issue is not why people are poor; rather, it is that so many of us are poor. The debate about income inequality is not about abstract beliefs; it is a question as to whether we will allow poverty to destroy working class families.

When I refer to poverty destroying families, I mean that literally. As I think of a future filled with uncertainty, I worry that I won’t be able to provide my kids the childhood they deserve. For many members of my generation, parenting feels unaffordable. Most families need two incomes, so only one-quarter of married couples rely on a stay-at-home mom or dad. That means we need out-of-home day care. For children under the age of 5, day care costs on average $180 per week, which is out-of-reach for low- and middle-income families. As a result, so many people in my generation have been forced to delay (or forgo) having children that, by 2013, the birthrate reached a record low.
Population growth promotes economic growth, and it is economic growth that will promote the job and wage growth that young people need before we can begin to plan and support families. As a nation, we are stuck. The American Family is the farm that feeds our economy, yet my generation has been run off the family farm.

Before we as individuals can responsibly have children, we need hope for our ability to care for them. To build that hope, we must build communities that welcome families and nurture children as they grow. As a clinical scientist, I’ve searched the literature to identify cost-effective, community-based programs that support growing families. I came across one program – Family Connects – that is particularly promising. Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities, hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visitors at home. Nurse-visitors work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need a crib to keep their child safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.
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Programs like Family Connects will not change the policies that promote income inequality. Frankly, it is doubtful that our leaders will come together in the current
political climate to change the policies that concentrate wealth and poverty in specific communities. Regardless, smart investment in cost-effective interventions can be used to soften the burden of poverty by removing the barriers that prevent the working poor from enjoying the heart of the American Dream - Family. And investing in the American Family will pay off. Once implemented, cost-effective programs start growth cycles. For example, by investing Family Connects savings in public daycare, young parents, particularly women, would be able to return to the labor force, which would promote gender equality and economic growth. In order to launch growth cycles, we need to step past the polemical debate focusing on the origins of poverty and focus on making decisions that actually help the poor by putting the American Dream back into their reach.
Appendix B

*Fairness condition:* I visited a friend in the maternity ward last week just after his wife gave birth to their first child. Four newborns were lined up in front of the observation window. As my friend cooed and babbled and waved at his son, Nate, I knew he was one of the lucky ones. Two of four American infants are, like Nate, born to parents who earn enough money to comfortably support their children. Nate will be taken from the hospital to a safe community. He will sleep in a colorful bedroom filled with toys and books. Nate’s mother will read to him at night. He will have access to a highly qualified pediatrician and receive immunizations on time. As a toddler, Nate will play in safe parks and eat fresh fruits and vegetables. At three or four, he will start preschool; and at five, he will advance to elementary school having mastered basic literacy skills. His classes will be small and his teachers will use smart boards and computers to hold his attention. Whatever the future may hold, Nate will be given every chance to succeed.

That’s not true for all babies. Two in four American infants are born into low-income families and one in four are born into poverty. So as I looked at Nate and his new friends, I suspected at least one baby would be dealt a losing hand. This child – let’s call her Sara – will travel a chaotic path. Sara’s parents will struggle to pay bills and buy food. Sara is more likely to go hungry and miss well care visits and vaccinations. She is
more likely to get sick and require emergency room visits. Sara will miss out on opportunities that Nate takes for granted. She may not have a safe park to play in. Her parents may not have enough energy to teach her to manage her feelings. She probably won’t attend preschool and, by the time she starts Kindergarten, she’ll have fewer literacy skills than Nate. As Sara’s elementary school will be more crowded than Nate’s, her teachers won’t have time to help her catch up. By the time Sara is five, the contrast between her and Nate will be grim. Odds are that Sara will be less healthy, worse behaved, and lower achieving. Saddest of all, if Sara cannot catch up to Nate, she will – for the rest of her life – be told that it is her fault she isn’t as good. She will be told she hasn’t tried hard enough – or simply isn’t smart enough – to compete.

There are 11 million American children under the age of three. If one in four are born into the instability of poverty, that means there are 2.7 million Sara’s – 2.7 million infants and toddlers who spend all day every day learning that America is a profoundly unfair society.

As a clinical scientist, I’ve searched the literature to identify cost-effective, programs that help all families provide their babies with the childhood they deserve. I came across one program – Family Connects – that is particularly promising. Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities,
hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visitors at home. Nurse-visitors work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need a crib to keep their child safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.

Researchers evaluated Family Connects through a randomized clinical trial in Durham, NC. When children reached six months in age, a team returned to families to see if visitation made a difference. These evaluators found that visited mothers were warmer parents and less anxious than their non-visited peers. Visited fathers were more engaged with their children. Visited families provided home environments that were more stimulating, selected higher quality daycare programs, and accessed more of the social services they required. Most importantly, visited infants required less emergency medical care, which means that visited infants were safer, healthier, and received more of the services they needed through routine care.

Although it costs approximately $700 to provide a Family Connects nurse visitor, visited families saved an average of $2,100 dollars by preventing infant emergency room
visits and hospital-overnights. In other words, for every dollar spent providing services, three dollars were saved; and those dollars add up. Over the 18-month clinical trial, Durham County residents prevented $6,737,318 of unnecessary emergency medical care. That’s $6,737,318 dollars that can be used to invest family services like daycare and preschool programs that help all families meet their children’s needs, particularly those with limited resources.

There will always be disparities in wealth in America; however, we need not punish infants for having the bad luck of being born to poor parents. We can use programs like Family Connects to lessen the burden of poverty in childhood by helping all families provide for their children’s basic needs. We may not level the playing field completely, but we can certainly smooth the surface just enough to help poor children get a solid footing as they take their first steps in life.

_Purity condition:_ I visited a friend in the maternity ward last week just after his wife gave birth to their first child. Four newborns were lined up in front of the observation window. As my friend cooed and babbled and waved at his son, Nate, I knew he would experience a magical childhood. Two of four American infants are, like Nate, born to parents who can afford to make their children feel safe. Nate will be taken from the hospital to a safe community. He will sleep in a colorful bedroom filled with
toys and books. Nate’s mother will read to him at night. He will have access to a highly qualified pediatrician and receive immunizations on time. As a toddler, Nate will play in safe parks and eat fresh fruits and vegetables. At three or four, he will start preschool; and at five, he will advance to elementary school having mastered basic literacy skills. His classes will be small and his teachers will use smart boards and computers to hold his attention. Whatever the future may hold, Nate’s early years will feel predictable and safe.

That’s not true for all babies. Two in four American infants are born into low-income families and one in four are born into poverty. So as I looked at Nate and his new friends, I suspected at least one baby’s childhood would be corrupted. This child – lets call her Sara – will travel a chaotic path. Sara’s parents will struggle to pay bills and buy food. Sara is more likely to go hungry and miss well care visits and vaccinations. She is more likely to get sick and require emergency room visits. Sara will miss out on opportunities that Nate takes for granted. She may not have a safe park to play in. Her parents may not have enough energy to teach her to manage her feelings. She probably won’t attend preschool and, by the time she starts Kindergarten, she’ll have fewer literacy skills than Nate. As Sara’s elementary school will be more crowded than Nate’s, her teachers won’t have time to help her catch up. By the time Sara is five, the contrast between her and Nate will be grim. Odds are that Sara will be less healthy, worse
behaved, and lower achieving. Saddest of all, Sara will have missed an irreplaceable piece of childhood -- safety. As Nate learns that he can rely upon his family to keep him safe, Sara will see that no one can be trusted to protect her from an uncaring world.

There are 11 million American children under the age of three. If one in four are born into the instability of poverty, that means there are 2.7 million Sara’s – 2.7 million infants and toddlers whose innocence is contaminated by poverty.

As a clinical scientist, I’ve searched the literature to identify cost-effective, programs that help all families provide their babies the childhood they deserve. I came across one program – Family Connects – that is particularly promising. Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities, hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visitors at home. Nurse-visitors work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need a crib to keep their child safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.
Researchers evaluated Family Connects through a randomized clinical trial in Durham, NC. When children reached six months in age, a team returned to families to see if visitation made a difference. These evaluators found that visited mothers were warmer parents and less anxious than their non-visited peers. Visited fathers were more engaged with their children. Visited families provided home environments that were more stimulating, selected higher quality daycare programs, and accessed more of the social services they required. Most importantly, visited infants required less emergency medical care, which means that visited infants were safer, healthier, and received more of the services they needed through routine care.

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As Americans, we owe a debt to our children. The magic of childhood – that magic that is so important to keep pure – is teaching children to feel safe trusting in the
goodness of others. We can use programs like Family Connects to protect that magic by helping families meet their children’s basic needs. We may not be able to give every baby a fairy tale beginning but, by helping children feel safe as they take their first steps in life, we can prove they are walking into caring families and moral communities.
Appendix C

Control condition: Family Connects is a cost-effective program that supports young families. Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities, hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visiters at home. Nurse-visiters work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need back-up childcare and a crib to keep their infant safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.

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Non-partisan fairness condition [Polarized fairness condition]: I visited a friend in the maternity ward last week just after his wife gave birth to their first child. Four newborns were lined up in front of the observation window. As my friend cooed and babbled and waved at his son, Nate, I knew he was one of the lucky ones. Two of four American infants are, like Nate, born to parents who earn enough money to comfortably support their children. Nate will be taken from the hospital to a safe community. He will sleep in a colorful bedroom filled with toys and books. Nate’s mother will read to him at night. He will have access to a highly qualified pediatrician and receive immunizations on time. As a toddler, Nate will play in safe parks and eat fresh fruits and vegetables. At three or four, he will start preschool; and at five, he will advance to elementary school having mastered basic literacy skills. His classes will be small and his
teachers will use smart boards and computers to hold his attention. Whatever the future may hold, Nate will be given every chance to succeed.

That’s not true for all babies. Two in four American infants are born into low-income families and one in four are born into poverty. So as I looked at Nate and his new friends, I suspected at least one baby would be dealt a losing hand. This child – let’s call her Sara – will travel a chaotic path. Sara’s parents will struggle to pay bills and buy food. Sara is more likely to go hungry and miss well care visits and vaccinations. She is more likely to get sick and require emergency room visits. Sara will miss out on opportunities that Nate takes for granted. She may not have a safe park to play in. Her parents may not have enough energy to teach her to manage her feelings. She probably won’t attend preschool and, by the time she starts Kindergarten, she’ll have fewer literacy skills than Nate. As Sara’s elementary school will be more crowded than Nate’s, her teachers wont have time to help her catch up. By the time Sara is five, the contrast between her and Nate will be grim. Odds are that Sara will be less healthy, worse behaved, and lower achieving. Saddest of all, if Sara cannot catch up to Nate, she will – for the rest of her life – be told that it is her fault she isn’t as good. She will be told she hasn’t tried hard enough – or simply isn’t smart enough – to compete.

There are 11 million American children under the age of three. If one in four are born into the instability of poverty, that means there are 2.7 million Sara’s – 2.7 million
infants and toddlers who spend all day every day learning that America is a profoundly unfair society.

[A large bi-partisan Congressional coalition has introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. While many Democrats and Republicans publicly support the initiative, many members of both parties publicly oppose it.] [A large coalition of Republican Congressmen has introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. Many Republican Congressmen publicly support the initiative while the many Democratic Congressmen publicly oppose it.] Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities, hospitals, and local social service agencies). These public-private partnerships collaborate to provide families a streamlined, integrated system of care. Second, Family Connects provides families with newborn children the opportunity to receive nurse-visitors at home. Nurse-visitors work with families to identify and fill unmet needs. For example, one family may need information as to how they can sign their child up for health insurance while another may need backup childcare and a crib to keep their infant safe at night. Based on need, nurses can provide services or connect the family to providers in the system of care.
Researchers evaluated Family Connects through a randomized clinical trial in Durham, NC. When children reached six months in age, a team returned to families to see if visitation made a difference. These evaluators found that visited mothers were warmer parents and less anxious than their non-visited peers. Visited fathers were more engaged with their children. Visited families provided home environments that were more stimulating, selected higher quality daycare programs, and accessed more of the social services they required. Most importantly, visited infants required less emergency medical care, which means that visited infants were safer, healthier, and received more of the services they needed through routine care.

Although it costs approximately $700 to provide a Family Connects nurse visitor, visited families saved an average of $2,100 dollars by preventing infant emergency room visits and hospital-overnights. In other words, for every dollar spent providing services, three dollars were saved; and those dollars add up. Over the 18-month clinical trial, Durham County residents prevented $6,737,318 of unnecessary emergency medical care.

[Republican Congressmen support the Family Connects bill to reduce unnecessary government spending. Generally, Republicans believe social welfare spending encourages dependence and threatens to bankrupt the country. Consistent
with this belief, they support the Family Connects bill as an opportunity to impose fiscal discipline by reducing taxpayer funded healthcare spending.

Democratic Congressmen criticize their Republican counterparts’ focus on reducing the scope of government and oppose the Family Connects bill because they see it as too limited. Generally, Democrats believe in taxpayer funded spending to promote social welfare. Consistent with this belief, they want to build a comprehensive taxpayer funded childcare industry that would include home visiting, daycare, and early childhood education. Democrats argue that this new childcare infrastructure would create jobs, reduce unemployment, and stimulate the economy.

Despite the political implications, there are moral reasons for supporting Family Connects. There will always be disparities in wealth in America; however, we need not punish infants for having the bad luck of being born to poor parents. We can use programs like Family Connects to lessen the burden of poverty in childhood by helping all families provide for their children’s basic needs. We may not level the playing field completely, but we can certainly smooth the surface just enough to help poor children get a solid footing as they take their first steps in life.

Non-partisan community condition [Polarized community condition]: As a child, I remember leaning my forehead against the cool glass of our living room window
as I watched for my father’s headlights. At 7:33, Monday through Friday, I would stand post. He would turn into the driveway at 7:35, sometimes 7:36, and I’d run to open the door. As he stepped back into domestic life, he’d sweep me into a hug that left my legs dangling like a marionette’s. After he took off his coat, I’d collect my mother and brother for dinner and, once around the table, our world felt complete. Some might see this routine as boring or dated, but there was a sense of safety in the order. We always knew what came next. And we knew we’d be together.

Togetherness used to be the norm in America. In 1960, 73% of children lived in what some call traditional families, wherein children live with two parents in their first marriage. Around the time I was born in 1980, that number fell to 61%. By 2013, it hit 46%, which means most of today’s children live in families that have or will fall apart. One in three live in single parent homes. One in twenty live with neither parent.

As American families grew less stable, they also drifted away from their communities. This is particularly true for young adults. Over 30% of people in their 20s report moving within the last year. As the average woman births their first child at 25, too many moms and dads don’t know their neighbors today, and have no idea who their neighbors will be tomorrow. To whom can these parents turn when something goes wrong, when a child gets sick or a parent loses a job? From whom can they seek recommendations about daycare or pediatricians? In the past, these families may have
sought parenting advice or emergency assistance from houses of worship. But religious affiliation is also in decline. Only one in four American 20-somethings regularly attend religious services.

Over the last fifty years, the fabric that bound families to strong communities has worn thin, and the typical American family has been left more fragile and isolated than ever before. Sadly, it is fragile, isolated families, stretched to the breaking point by the demands of modern life, that put children most at risk for abuse and neglect. To preserve the innocence of childhood, communities must find new ways to embrace, guide, and support families with young children. They must find new ways to weave families into the fabric of community life.

[A large bi-partisan Congressional coalition has introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. While many Democrats and Republicans publicly support the initiative, many members of both parties publicly oppose it.] [A large coalition of Democratic Congressmen has introduced a Congressional bill to support Family Connects, a cost-effective program that helps growing families. Many Democratic Congressmen publicly support the initiative while the many Republican Congressmen publicly oppose it.] Family Connects works on two fronts. First, Family Connects staff builds community networks from existing public and private resources (e.g., religious organizations, charities,
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[Democratic Congressmen support the Family Connects bill as one component of a broader program. Generally, Democrats believe in taxpayer funded spending to promote social welfare. Consistent with this belief, they want to build a comprehensive taxpayer funded childcare industry that would include home visiting, daycare, and early childhood education. Democrats argue that this new childcare infrastructure would create jobs, reduce unemployment, and stimulate the economy.

Republican Congressmen criticize their Democratic counterparts’ focus on expanding the role of government and oppose the Family Connects bill as unnecessary government spending. Generally, Republicans believe social welfare spending encourages dependence and threatens to bankrupt the country. Consistent with this belief, they oppose the Family Connects bill as an opportunity to impose fiscal discipline by reducing taxpayer funded healthcare spending.

Despite the political implications, there are moral reasons for supporting Family Connects.] By protecting our infants and making them feel safe, we teach them to trust in the goodness of others. And by learning to trust in the goodness of others, we teach children what it means to be valuable members of a community. That is the
transformational magic of childhood. Communities can use programs like Family Connects to protect this transformational period by engaging families and helping them meet their children’s basic needs. We may not be able to give every baby a fairytale beginning but, by helping children feel secure as they take their first steps in life, we can show them that they are walking into strong families and moral communities.
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Biography

Adam Mandel is an attorney, mediator, and, upon completion of this dissertation, clinical psychologist, who focuses his research on the interface between clinical science and advocacy. After completing his undergraduate degree at Duke University, he collected and analyzed evidence of complex labor conspiracies for the New York Construction Industry Strike Force. He then completed his Juris Doctorate at the University of Michigan Law School and began his legal career at Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, where he practiced corporate law. Later, he transitioned to a boutique entertainment law firm, where he represented writers, producers, and directors in film and television finance, production, and distribution.

Adam returned to academia to integrate his interests in psychology, policy, and public discourse. He conducted his doctoral research under Kenneth A. Dodge, at Duke University’s Center for Child and Family Policy. As a student of clinical science, he completed extensive training in cognitive and dialectical behavioral therapies at Duke University and NYU Langone Medical Centers. He completed his predoctoral internship at a Veteran’s Health Administration Medical Center, where he provided trauma and substance abuse treatment to help veterans adjust to civilian life after returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.