

# **Religion and Core Values: A Reformulation of the Funnel of Causality\***

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## **Abstract**

This study reformulates the classic funnel of causality proposed in *The American Voter*. Where *The American Voter* suggests that group affiliation and values are equally influential in candidate choice, the foundational sociological literature suggest that values are derived from group affiliation, and therefore *The American Voter* has misconceptualized the ordering of these influences. We concur with the sociological literature, which suggests that values are more proximate to that decision than is group affiliation. Examining data from a 2002 statewide survey of Florida residents, and using religious affiliation as a measure of group affiliation, we explore the effects of political core values, such as egalitarianism and moral traditionalism, and religious affiliation on support for Florida Governor Jeb Bush and vote intentions. We employ ordered logistical models to test our *Proximity Hypothesis*, finding support for the contention that in the process of forming an attitude about a political candidate, core values are more proximate to the final attitude than is group affiliation. This finding is an important contribution to the debate in political behavior over the relative influence of individual belief systems and groups.

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In this study, we examine the effects of core values on vote intentions and on individual-level approval of Jeb Bush, the sitting governor of Florida, asking whether the effects of religious affiliation, long seen as a strong predictor of vote choice (Glantz 1959; Campbell et al 1960; Lijphart 1979; Wald and Shye 1995; Layman 1997; Powers and Cox. 1997; Conway 2000), are as reliable a predictor of support for political candidates as are political core values. Examining data from a 2002 statewide survey of Florida voters and using religious affiliation as a measure of group affiliation, we contribute to the debate in political behavior over the relative influence of individual belief systems or values and groups. Our findings show that while groups do matter, more of the variance in candidate evaluation can be explained by the values of egalitarianism and moral traditionalism.

Our theory is derived from the seminal work *The American Voter* (Campbell et al 1960). In this work, the authors propose the funnel of causality to explain vote choice. In their model, group influence and individual values are equally proximate. By proximate, we mean that voters are equally likely to reference both group loyalty and individual values when making their vote choice. The problem with this model is that it does not sufficiently take into account a great deal of sociological research that finds it is the group that works to shape the values of the individual; therefore, the ordering of the influences within the funnel of causality is not accurate.

This ties into the larger debate over whether group or individual factors are more influential in the formation of individual perspectives (Weber 1963; Durkheim 1965; Wildavsky 1987). While Campbell and his coauthors focus on explaining vote choice, we contend that the basic framework of the funnel of causality can be used to explain

candidate evaluations as well. The literature that focuses on the psychology of political attitudes suggests that cognitive frameworks, or schemas, function in the formation of attitudes the same way described by the funnel of causality (Conover and Feldman 1984; Dalton 1988). Therefore, our contention is that it is reasonable to apply this theory to both vote choice and candidate evaluations. Voting and candidate evaluations are simply polls taken on different days, albeit voting is a much more permanent act, but polls focused on vote choice and political evaluations seem to be just as unstable implying that they are related.<sup>1</sup> We alter the ordering of the original model, and in so doing offer evidence suggesting that while group still serves as the foundation of attitudes, values are more proximate to the evaluation of candidates.

### **The Influence of Religious Affiliation - Yes, But . . .**

The question of what forces motivate individual behavior is one that is basic to the social sciences. Whether people act in accord with their surrounding environment, or act by interpreting information through a filter of core values, how people make political decisions determines what decisions they make. An understanding of this process is important if social scientists are to have any hope of devising models that explain and (hopefully) predict those decisions. This problem is not a new one. Max Weber and Emile Durkheim proposed different understandings of the influence of organizations on individual behavior as far back as the 1800's. In the Weberian view, people have a host of personal preferences that shape their behavior and these personal preferences, collectivized, shape societies (Weber 1963; see also Wald and Smidt 1993). Concerning the influence of religion, Weber saw individuals acting "on the basis of their beliefs and ideas, and the ways in which they conduct themselves follow from the religious and

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<sup>1</sup> See Zaller (1992) for complete description of attitude instability and survey response.

political conceptions to which they subscribe” (Hughes et al 1995, p. 90), while on the other hand, Durkheim theorized that societies and the various organizations within societies created individual preferences and structured human behavior (Durkheim 1965; see also Pals 1996). Geertz continued this perspective, arguing that culture is a cognitive template from which we view the world, and that religion is a part of this framework (Geertz 1973).

In the body of contemporary literature, Wildavsky (1987) has extended the earlier arguments, contending that the social norms of the group serve as a better predictor of preferences than schemas or ideologies, and that these preferences emerge from social interactions. According to this long history of sociological literature,<sup>2</sup> individual preferences come from living in a community that encourages a shared set of values; these values then turn around and legitimate the very culture from which they come, as well as the groups that exist in that society. In this way, culture guides preferences and these preferences reinforce the culture. Further, individual identity is developed through culture. As far as religion is concerned, these value cultures may be reinforced by religious organizations that exemplify the value identity and value conflict which lead to individual identity.

This debate is especially pertinent to the study of the influence of religious affiliation on individual members, since religion and religious institutions have been important to virtually every society in human history, and religion has always played a major role in the lives of individuals. Religions address central questions of human existence and of what it means to be an individual in a society. By offering answers to

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<sup>2</sup> The debate over the relative influence of groups and individual factors has continued beyond Wildavsky. For more contemporary references see Kawakami (2003) and Lockhart (2001).

these questions, religious institutions have had a strong effect on individual behavior (Glantz 1959; Wald and Shye 1995; Harris 1994), both public and private. Religion's effect holds in the world of modern politics as well, where it has been demonstrated that religious values have an impact on individual political attitudes (Leege and Welch 1989; Miller and Wattenberg 1984).

There are, of course, a wide variety of religious traditions. Each tradition embodies within its creed and practices a certain idea of how the world works and of the place of the individual within the world, commonly called a worldview (Smart 1983). Differences between religious worldviews can be broad, such as the differing views between Christianity and Hinduism on the afterlife, or can be comparatively minor, such as the differences between the Catholic and Orthodox churches on which way one crosses oneself, right to left or left to right. Minor or not, the differences do matter to adherents; some things simply matter more than others. People who adhere to one particular religious tradition tend, of course, to hold broadly similar views on theological matters, and these beliefs may even be consistent across denominational affiliation (see Longino, Jr. and Hadden 1976). But, it has also been found that people who share a common religious affiliation often share political beliefs (Campbell et al 1960; Wald et al 1988) and often vote in a similar fashion (Conway 2000). The question is whether it is the religious affiliation that directs the vote choice of the individual believer, or whether it is the believer, socialized into society long before consciously choosing a particular denomination, who selects a church that matches her political views, or, thirdly, whether there is some combination of factors such that religious affiliation plays a role in the

formation of an attitude about candidates, but this role is guided by individual values. It is this last possibility that we suggest here.

Does religious affiliation influence how people evaluate candidates? Yes, but ... values can explain variance within the group with regards to candidate evaluations. Although religious affiliation, our measure of *The American Voter's* group affiliation, does play an important role in candidate preference, core values are more proximate in the funnel of causality to the final candidate evaluation. We turn now to a discussion of what core values are and why they matter so much in the process of forming attitudes about political candidates.

### **How Do Core Values Matter?**

Core values are overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship, and society. These overarching values help to facilitate position-taking in more concrete domains by serving as general focal points in an otherwise confusing political environment (McCann 1997). Until the 1960's, political science operated on the idea that the structure of people's belief systems was determined by individual ideology. The work done in Michigan (Campbell et al 1960), along with other studies, led Converse (1964) to conclude that despite the fact that voters do not really think through or rationalize their vote choice, there still seemed to be form of belief system that structured their issue positions. We contend that this belief system is a system of core values that may include authoritarianism, individualism, egalitarianism, and moral traditionalism, among others. The core values of importance to our study here are: *egalitarianism* and *moral traditionalism*, but all of the above-mentioned values are examples of core values that people might use to sort out their positions on issues and to

judge candidates for elections (McCann 1997; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; also see Jacoby 2002; McClosky and Zaller 1984).

To illustrate the concept of core values, consider the example of two children, one born into poverty and one born into wealth. Imagine that as she grows, the poor child sees how governmental assistance helps her mother put food on the table, and that later in life she uses a government-guaranteed loan to go to college. We might imagine that this child will develop sympathetic attitudes towards governmental programs. The rich child, on the other hand, grows up hearing her father complain about governmental assistance to the poor as a waste of taxpayer dollars, and spends her summers working at her father's company in order to help pay for her tuition. She is likely to learn different lessons about the government than is the first child. Now imagine that both children grow up to be successful members of the business community; each becomes wealthy, they both buy houses in upper-class areas, and join the same churches. Even though they are in parallel adult circumstances, it is likely that the now-rich adult who grew up in poverty will be more inclined to view governmental assistance to the poor as a good thing than will the adult who began life as a rich child, and that the former is still more likely to support government assistance to the needy than the latter. Surveying both of their views, the first is more likely to have egalitarian values, and the second less likely. Despite their similar social circumstances and group identifications as adults, their different childhood circumstances have instilled in them different core values, values that place them in opposition to each other on one particular issue of the day.

As previously mentioned, before Converse's (1964) seminal paper on mass belief systems, political scientists believed that the structure of these systems was determined

by individual ideology; following Converse (1964), however, this perspective waned (Feldman 1988). While Converse contended that the mass public was largely incapable of demonstrating ideological constraint (the ability to appropriately place issue positions on a left/right liberal/conservative continuum), he did contend that constraint may be based on “some superordinate value or posture toward man and society, involving premises about the nature of social justice, social change, ‘natural law,’ and the like” (p. 211). The implication is that there may be an underlying core value or set of core values that structure an individual’s attitudes or preferences about a set of political issues.

All of the research done in light of Converse has shown that an individual does not need a sophisticated ideology to determine her political preferences because they may be based on how well policies or political actions match certain beliefs held by an individual (Feldman 1988). In the case of politicians and vote choice, for instance, political actors may be judged favorably or unfavorably based on how well they represent their constituents’ deeply held values (see Rokeach 1973). While political actors and their constituents may not consciously conceptualize their belief systems as thought-out hierarchical structures of values, political scientists may empirically classify them this way.

Feldman (1988) found that core values centered on equality of opportunity, economic individualism, and attitudes towards free enterprise contributed significantly to the structuring of political evaluations (see also Jacoby 2002). Survey research has also demonstrated the link between an individual’s views on social welfare policy and that individuals’ beliefs regarding individualism, humanitarianism, the proper role of government, and other abstract values and principles (Feldman and Zaller 1992). Other

research on core values has found that both individualism and authoritarianism are important in shaping Americans' racial attitudes (Sniderman and Piazza 1993), and that core values related to militarism and authoritarianism are associated with attitudes on foreign and defense policy issues (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987).

The general consensus of the core value literature is that core values serve as a framework that structures attitudes. Understanding the way in which core values are structured is, therefore, the key to understanding how these values influence attitudes. (see Rokeach 1973; also, Schwartz and Bilsky 1987; Schwartz 1992). This implies that there is some hierarchical ordering of considerations (Rokeach 1973). While this study does not explore this question, it is important to consider both the attitudinal influence of values as well as the actual structure of values as a theoretical backdrop that illuminates why values would even fit into the funnel of causality.

### **The Funnel of Causality, Religious Affiliation, and Core Values**

As a result of the shortcomings of research that relied on a more sociological approach to explaining behavior and attitudes, the authors of *The American Voter* proposed a funnel of causality that incorporated sociological and psychological factors (Campbell et al 1960). All of these factors are incorporated into the funnel, ordered by their level of influence in determining the final outcome, which, for the Michigan researchers, was vote choice. Those factors that are most influential are most proximate to the exiting end of the funnel. The funnel of causality holds that when making the final vote choice, individuals are more influenced by issue opinions, candidate images, and party attachments. Party attachment is a product of group loyalties and value orientations which come from economic structure, social divisions, and historical patterns. In this

funnel, the *American Voter* team suggests that group loyalties (which include church affiliation) hold the same position as value orientations.

Our study takes the concept of the funnel of causality and examines the influence of core values and the influence of religious affiliation on an individual's evaluation of a political candidate. While the influence of religious affiliation on vote choice has been documented (Wald and Shye 1995; Wald et al 1988; Conway 2000), in this paper we look at the relationship of religious affiliation to support for a political candidate in the context of value orientations. Specifically, we examine the influence of religious affiliation on vote intentions and on the level of support held by voters for incumbent Gov. Jeb Bush during the 2002 Florida gubernatorial race, examining how these effects hold up when considered in the context of individual value orientations such as egalitarianism and moral traditionalism. Florida is appropriate for such a study because it is a large, diverse state, with both large, heterogeneous metropolitan areas and more sparsely populated rural areas with agricultural economies. Like the rest of the United States, Florida has substantial minority populations in its urban areas. Some of these areas consist of suburbs of white professionals surrounding cities with large minority populations, and there are cities and suburbs that are divided more by class than race. Non-urban areas are largely farming communities, some of which are dominated by one crop, such as sugar or citrus (Citrus county, for example), while other rural areas consist of smaller, independent farmers and a variety of crops. In short, the state is very diverse, and while generalizability is limited, this diversity allows us to make reasonable inferences.

Our primary purpose is to test what we have named the *Proximity Hypothesis*. Using the funnel of causality and the concept of core values, we examine the proximity of core values and religious affiliation to support for Jeb Bush in relationship to each other. We expect religious affiliation to play a role in support for Jeb Bush because he has repeatedly campaigned on a platform that supports faith-based initiatives, but we expect that while religion may be an important part of the formation of an attitude, an individual's core values are more likely to be accessed when making the final choice. The *Proximity Hypothesis* is as follows: *Individual core values are more proximate to support for political candidates than is group affiliation.* Translated to this study, the *Proximity Hypothesis* states that individual levels of moral traditionalism and egalitarianism are better predictors of support for Jeb Bush than is religious affiliation.

Initially, when looking only at the effects of religious affiliation, we expect that Evangelical Protestants and Traditional Protestants will support Bush strongly, and we expect mixed support among Catholics, as Catholics have become less beholden to the Democratic Party over recent years (Stanley and Niemi 1994). In the United States, Hispanics are mostly Catholic (U.S. Census). Cubans are the largest single Hispanic population in Florida (U.S. Census), and are mostly Republican (Hill 2001). Given this, and the fact that there is mixed party identification among other Latinos, we expect support for Bush to vary. After the influence of core values are considered, however, the *Proximity Hypothesis* contends that religious affiliation will not be as strong an indicator of support for Bush as are core values.

## **Data and Methodology**

The data in this study come from a telephone poll of 601 Florida residents conducted in June 2002 by the *Florida Voter* survey organization. The sampling frame was drawn using a random-digit-dialing (RDD) procedure. Each respondent was further qualified to ensure that he or she was at least eighteen years of age and a permanent resident of the state.<sup>3</sup> Generalizability is limited because these data are at the state level, rather than national, but this also allows us to demonstrate that similar phenomena are happening at the state level.<sup>4</sup> Further, the tests employed here can easily be replicated using a national dataset. The strength of using state-level data to look at a potentially national phenomenon is that the theory can be evidenced at multiple levels.

A series of logistical regression models are employed to test the *Proximity Hypothesis*. The first set of models tests for the effects of religious affiliation on approval for Jeb Bush (ordered logistical) and on vote intention (binary logistical), when controlling for party identification, religiosity, race, gender, education, and attentiveness to government affairs. The next set of models examines the relationship between moral traditionalism, egalitarian values, and religious affiliation with approval of Jeb Bush, employing all of the same controls. A comparison of these models offers a test of the *Proximity Hypothesis*. If the effects of religious approval of Jeb Bush significantly drop out when controlling for levels of moral traditionalism and egalitarian values and these values are significant, it can be inferred that these values are more proximate to approval

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<sup>3</sup> Additional information about the survey can be obtained from *Florida Voter* directly (954-584-0204), or from the Graduate Program in Political Campaigning in the Political Science Department at the University of Florida (352-392-0262).

<sup>4</sup> The reliability of the state-level data used here was confirmed by assuring that the value indicators in the 2000 American National Election Studies (ANES) significantly correlated in the same direction with similar outcomes in the state-level data.

of Jeb Bush than is religious affiliation. Because we control for a host of alternative explanations of approval ratings and vote intentions we can assume that the religious affiliation effects are not spurious. Therefore, if the effects of religious affiliation dissipate when adding values to the model we can infer that religious affiliation matters but values explain more of the variance and are therefore are more proximate to the outcome.

If religious affiliation matters, but values explain variance of attitudes within the group, then we would expect some interaction effects between group identification and values when explaining approval ratings and vote intentions. To test for these effects a series of ordered-logistical regressions are employed that test for the significance of every possible interaction between religious affiliation and values that these data offer.

### ***Outcome Variables***

Our outcome variables are *Approval of Jeb Bush* and *Vote Intentions* for the next general election. Approval of Jeb Bush is measured using the following indicator: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jeb Bush is handling his job as governor?” [*“Do you approve/disapprove strongly or not so strongly?”*] The responses were recoded to a 1-5 scale, with 1 as strongly disapprove, 2 as not so strongly disapprove, 3 as mixed/in-between, 4 as not so strongly approve, and 5 as strongly approve. Vote intentions are measured with the following indicator: “In the next general election, do you plan to vote for more Republican or Democratic candidates?” The responses were recoded into a (0,1) dummy variable where 0 indicates intention to vote Democratic, and 1 indicates a Republican vote intention. While approval of Jeb Bush differs from vote choice, and the funnel of causality focuses on vote choice, we contend that the principles of the funnel

are consistent for both outcomes because vote intentions for the Republican Party and approval of Bush are correlated ( $r = .327, p < .001$ ).

### ***Explanatory Variables***

*Religious Affiliation* is measured using a two-stage process that first uses the following survey item: "Is your religious affiliation Traditional Protestant, Evangelical Christian, Catholic, Jewish, or something else?" Next, the respondents who replied "something else" were probed and if they said they were Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregational, Lutheran, Presbyterian, 7th Day Adventist, Baptist, and the like were classified as Traditional Protestant. Those who classified themselves as either Evangelical or Fundamentalist were classified as Evangelical Christians. Orthodox Christians were included with Catholics because of the demographic similarities between the two groups. This classification scheme conforms to previous studies (see Wald 1993; also see American National Election Studies). Any respondents who were not affiliated or who identified themselves as a member of another religion (such as Islam) were excluded from the analysis as a reference category. Dummy variables were created for each of the four affiliations in the analysis.

Principal components factor analysis indicated that given this survey's indicators, there were two dimensions of moral traditionalism, which are apparent in *Table 1*. Values over .5 indicate that the item reliably loads on that factor, and the higher the correlation the more that individual item groups on that factor. We call the first dimension *Traditional Lifestyles Values*, and it was created using an index scale consisting of three items: (TL<sub>1</sub>) "This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties", (TL<sub>2</sub>) "The newer lifestyles are

contributing to the breakdown of our society." (TL<sub>3</sub>) "The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes." These Likert-type scaled responses ("strongly disagree" through "strongly agree") were coded from -2 through +2 with higher values representing more traditional outlooks, except for TL<sub>3</sub> where strong disagreement with the statement indicated a more morally traditional outlook. This response was recoded to have a correlated substantive direction. Reliability analysis indicators adequately correlate ( $\alpha = .489$ ) to create a scale.

Table 1 about here

We call the other dimension of moral traditionalism Traditional Marriage Values, and created an index with the following items: (TM<sub>1</sub>) "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job", (TM<sub>2</sub>) "It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself", and (TM<sub>3</sub>) "A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family" ( $\alpha = .647$ ). Respondents were again asked to state how strongly they agreed with these statements on a Likert-type scale where higher scores represented a more traditional outlook. All responses were again coded on a scale from -2 to +2, and then summed. Although these two indices (TM and TL) are positively correlated ( $r = .37, p < .001$ ), the results of a principal components factor analysis suggest that they capture different value dimensions. We expect a positive relationship between these values indicators and approval of Bush because moral traditionalism is associated with religiosity (Traditional Lifestyles  $r = .31, p < .001$ , Traditional Marriage Values  $r = .17, p < .001$ ), and religiosity is positively correlated with approval of Jeb Bush ( $r = .13, p < .01$ ). We expect the same relationship for Republican vote intentions.

The *Egalitarianism* measure we adopt is based on responses to the following items, measured using a Likert scale: (E<sub>1</sub>) "We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country", (E<sub>2</sub>) "This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are", and (E<sub>3</sub>) "If people were treated more equally in this country, we would have many fewer problems." An additive index was created from these items ( $\alpha =$  a barely acceptable .483) by the same process as the moral traditionalism indices. As egalitarian values are positively correlated with liberal identification (7 point scale,  $r = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and liberal identification is negatively correlated with approval of Bush ( $r = -.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and positively correlated with Republican vote intentions ( $r = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), we expect a negative relationship between egalitarian values and approval of Bush and Republican vote intentions.

### ***Control Variables***

*Party Identification* is coded as a dichotomous variable that includes Democrats and Republicans (Republicans = 0, Democrats= 1). Independents were excluded from the analysis as a reference category. *Race* is measured using two dummy variables for black and Hispanic identification, and white identification was excluded as a reference category. *Gender* is recoded as a dummy variable (0 = male, 1 = female). Race and gender are included as controls because previous research has indicated that each is related to Democratic Party support (Tate 1993; Clark and Clark 1999,2000; Dolan 1998), and therefore, support for Jeb Bush, a Republican, may be influenced by both race and gender. *Attentiveness to Government Affairs* is intended to gauge the degree to which respondents pay attention to government. Since it should be expected that those who do not follow governmental affairs will not have the information available to

cognitively evaluate Jeb Bush based on the basis of their religious affiliation and values, the indicator is operationalized using the following question: “Some people seem to follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there’s an election going on or not. Others aren’t that interested. Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?”

Layman and Carmines (1997) see a more cognitive voter than the religious group literature suggests, contending that religiosity serves as a consistent predictor of vote choice in the United States. Other studies have also demonstrated the power of religiosity as a predictor of both political attitudes and vote choice (Wald and Shye 1995; Welch and Legee 1991). Therefore it is important to control for religiosity. This variable is measured using an index of the following items: (R<sub>1</sub>) “How often do you attend religious services – every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?”, (R<sub>2</sub>) “Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible: One, the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word; or, Two, the Bible is the word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word; or Three, the Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God”, (R<sub>3</sub>) “Do you consider religion to be an important part of your life, or not?”, (R<sub>4</sub>) “Would you say your religion provides some guidance in your day-to-day living, quite a bit of guidance, or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day life?” The responses were coded so that higher numbers indicated higher religiosity or attendance and then summed ( $\alpha = .700$ ).

Table 2 about here

## **Findings**

Before addressing the effects of religious affiliation and values on vote intentions and approval of Jeb Bush, it is both important and revealing to examine the variation of values by religious affiliation. Previous research has demonstrated variation in values across religious traditions (see Cohen 1989; Cohen and Liebman 1997; Glaser 1997; Lerner et al 1989; see also, Wald et al 1990, 1988), but previous research has not adequately explored variation within each tradition. *Table 2* exhibits this variation both across and within traditions. If we accept the premise that values drive attitudes and we know that there should be some value heterogeneity within each religious tradition, then we should expect differences in attitudes among those who share an affiliation. Referring to *Table 2*, it is apparent that there is variation of values within each of the affiliations used in this analysis (standard deviation is near or above 1 unit within each tradition).

The strength of values within each tradition is as expected. Evangelical Protestants are generally more morally traditional than Traditional Protestants, Traditional Protestants are generally more morally traditional than Catholics (with the exception of traditional marriage values), and Jews are the most egalitarian. It is important to note that we do not contend that increased strength of values increases the likelihood of using these values in forming an opinion but rather that the extremity of the opinion will be determined by the strength of the value. Therefore, individuals across religious traditions may use the same values to produce differing attitudes.

Figure 1 about here

Looking at the level of support for Jeb Bush among the different denominations, as *Figure 1* demonstrates, the mean approval for Bush is clearly positive across all

Christian affiliations in this study (Traditional Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and Catholic). Considering that the mean approval of Jeb Bush exceeds three across each category (with 5 signifying perfect support among all members of the denomination), and that the midpoint of the indicator is three, it can be stated that these groups have positive feelings about Bush. Referring to *Figure 2*, Catholics, who showed slightly higher levels of approval of Bush's job performance than either Traditional or Evangelical Protestants, were nonetheless slightly less likely to show an intention to vote Republican. Interestingly, and perhaps unique to Florida, Catholic both approval of Bush and intention to vote Republican is extremely high. This is most likely the result of the large Cuban population that lives in South Florida. Cubans are generally Catholic, but are also, unlike other Hispanics (Conway 2000), generally Republican. Unfortunately, the race measure in this survey instrument does not allow us to separate Cubans from other Hispanics.

Figure 2 about here

Previous research has demonstrated positive relationships between fundamentalist Christian support for the Republican Party and candidates (Bolce and de Maio 1999; Green et al 1993; Green and Guth 1988). Therefore, it should be expected that Evangelicals would most likely vote Republican. This relationship is confirmed in *Figure 1*. Traditional Protestants come in second, with Catholics next, and finally the likelihood of Jews voting Republican is significantly lower. This confirms the reliability of these data, because the expected relationships exist.

Table 3 about here

While these graphical displays and descriptive statistics help to lay the foundation for the models, they do not offer a test of the *Proximity Hypothesis*. The logistical regression models in *Table 3*, however, do lend support to the contention that values are more proximate to both approval of Jeb Bush and Republican vote intentions. While the evidence is more convincing in approval models, the vote intention models also lend support to the hypothesis. The coefficient to standard error ratio reported in *Model 1* indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between Traditional Protestant and Evangelical Protestant identification and approval of Bush, as well as Republican vote intentions. As expected there is not much of a relationship between Catholic identification, vote intentions, and approval of Bush (perhaps as a result of large Cuban population). Jewish identification is negatively correlated with both approval of Bush and Republican vote intentions, but is not significant in the vote intentions model (approaches .10). Overall religious affiliation seems to predict these attitudes fairly well (5 of 8 are reliable). The power of these findings is that they hold up when controlling for alternative explanations. These effects hold up even when party identification, race, gender, and religiosity are held constant. Again, it is important to remember that if values are more proximate to the final outcomes in the model but religious affiliation still matters then religious affiliation must be significant when controlling for alternative explanations other than values.

As expected, both party identification and African American identification are significantly related to Republican vote intentions and approval of Jeb Bush. Republicans are more likely to feel favorable toward Bush and vote Republican, while the converse relationship exists for Democrats and African Americans. The magnitude of

the effects of party identification and race is greater than any other variables in the model consistent with theory. This magnitude makes the significance of religious affiliation more meaningful because it still explains some of the variance in the face of the strength of these other predictors. Further, the variance explained by including religious affiliation in *Model 1* improves from .097 when religious affiliation is not included to .134 (Nagelkerke Pseudo-  $R^2$ )<sup>5</sup> when it is included, and from .154 to .198 in the vote intentions model. It is also interesting that increased attention to public affairs is negatively correlated with Republican vote intentions. Perhaps this is a result of a greater magnitude of negative media coverage of Republicans in Florida simply because the government is overwhelmingly Republican at all levels of state government.

*Models 2* and *4* offer direct tests of the *Proximity Hypothesis*. As expected, the effects of religious affiliation drop significantly when the values indicators are included. The Evangelical effect remains significant in the vote intentions model but is reduced in magnitude (1.16 to .932) and reliability. The magnitude of the effects of religious affiliation across all three Christian categories decreases by roughly 25 to 40 percent, and the significance of Jewish identification drops out when controlling for values. The amount of variance explained by including the values indicators improves from .134 to .192 in the approval models (1 and 2) and from .198 to .243 in the vote intentions models (3 and 4) (Nagelkerke Pseudo-  $R^2$ ). The direction of the relationship between the values indicators and approval of Bush is in the expected directions. Both of the moral traditionalism indicators are positively related to approval of Bush and Republican vote

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the mathematical computation of pseudo  $R^2$  leads to lower values than a traditional  $R^2$ , so the values reported here are relatively high.

intentions, and egalitarian values are negatively related to approval of Bush and not significantly related to vote intentions.

The same controls are significant in across both models. The lack of significance among the other controls indicates that the values indicators, along with party identification and being African American, can explain the majority of variance. Regardless, it is important that they are all included for both substantive and theoretical reasons. Substantively, they must be included because they have either been previously shown or demonstrated in this study to be relevant to evaluations of government officials. Theoretically, they must be included to provide support for the *Proximity Hypothesis*. The two models must control for the same factors if the effects of each are to be separated. Further, by including the controls in *Models 2* and *4*, the variation explained increases from .139 to .198 for the approval model, and from .121 to .243 for the vote intentions model (Nagelkerke Pseudo-  $R^2$ ).

Overall, these findings indicate that in the funnel of causality values are more proximate to vote intentions and individual approval of Jeb Bush<sup>6</sup>. The fact that religious affiliation was significant before controlling for values indicates that this relationship is meaningful but that variance within groups can be explained by values. Further evidence of this effect is offered with the interactive models. Again, because we contend that religious affiliation matters but variation of attitudes within each tradition can be explained by value differences, we would expect some interactive effects.

Table 4 about here

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<sup>6</sup> Models were also ran testing the effects of values alone on support for Jeb Bush nad vote intentions. As expected the removal of the religious affiliation indicators did not significantly change the effects of the value indicators. The magnitude of their effect did slightly improve but by less than 0.07 across all indicators. Significance did not change and the Nagelkerke Pseudo-  $R^2$  is .181 and .215 respectively.

While the interactive effects are limited (*Table 4*), it is worth noting some of these effects. Perhaps the most interesting finding is the consistent negative relationship between Christian traditions interacted with traditional marriage values and approval of Bush (and to a lesser degree Republican vote intentions). It is also worth noting that Jews seem to use these values to produce the opposite results. This is probably a result of differing interpretation among Jews of how marriage values relate to political goals. The egalitarian effects are as expected. The Catholic interaction in the approval model, predicts that as Catholics' egalitarian values increase, they are less likely to approve of Bush. The other models that had positive significant egalitarian interactions may be a result of people utilizing the same values to produce differing results. This is evidenced because the relationships were all in the expected direction in the non-interactive models. Regardless of the direction of these interactions, it appears that there is some variance across groups with regard to how values are used to make judgments. Overall, the interactive models lend further support to the contention that group affiliation matters but values are more proximate to final evaluations.

### **Discussion**

The effects of core values are apparent, but how they are acquired is not. Religions, like other institutions in society, instill certain core values into individuals. Whether or not it is the core values picked up from religious institutions themselves that affect an individual's later vote choice is not clear, and we make no claims regarding this question here. It also needs to be noted that our findings do not say anything about individual church congregations, or about the influence of church leaders, but only about affiliational influence. Individual church leaders may have an effect on vote choice, but

religious affiliation by itself does not have as great an effect overall as do an individual's core values.

Our tests provide substantial support for the *Proximity Hypothesis*. As the models show, including the core values of egalitarianism, support for traditional lifestyles, and support for traditional values significantly diminishes the effects of religious affiliation on respondents' support for Jeb Bush. These results provide evidence that value orientations are more proximate to approval of Jeb Bush in the funnel of causality than is religious affiliation. Although our study uses recent data, the results actually agree with a century of sociological literature that has always maintained that individuals are products of entire societies. If, as Durkheim asserted, individuals have values instilled in them by societies and the organizations within societies, then one would expect there to be some lack of congruence between members of any one organization because all the members will have been socialized into the society at large, and not just into that organization. Even self-selection of members into religious denominations will produce members who will bring their core values, values instilled by society, to their evaluations of candidates and their vote preferences.

There is both a wealth of voting behavior literature and a long debate over the relative influence of the group versus the individual in the formation of preferences. This study makes a small contribution to that debate. While we certainly make no claims to have fully answered this question, and feel that further research along these lines is strongly merited, our work does raise the question of whether one of the fundamental models of voting behavior literature, *The American Voter's* funnel of causality, might not

be slightly refined to show the importance of an individual's values as compared to that individual's social grouping.

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**Table 1- Factor Analysis of Moral Traditionalism Indicators**

	Factor 1 Lifestyles	Factor 2 Marriage
Family Ties	<b>.722</b>	-.041
Newer Lifestyles	<b>.759</b>	.057
Husband Earns	<b>.507</b>	<b>.577</b>
Adjust Our View	-.307	<b>.532</b>
Family Life Suffers	<b>.604</b>	.152
Wife Should Help	.247	<b>.772</b>
Eigenvalue	2.09	1.03
Percent variance explained	34.78	51.89

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Loadings above .5 are shown in bold.

**Table 2- Variation of Values Across and Within Each Religious Affiliation**

	Trad/Lifestyles		Trad/Marriage		Egalitarian	
	Mean	(S.D.)	Mean	(S.D.)	Mean	(S.D.)
Evangelical Protestant (n = 90)	.752	.982	-.090	1.24	.163	1.06
Traditional Protestant (n = 198)	.726	1.03	-.221	1.17	.206	1.71
Catholic (n = 141)	.584	1.07	-.110	1.33	.263	1.07
Jewish (n = 26)	.000	1.11	-1.03	.984	1.00	1.15

Source: Telephone poll of 601 Florida residents conducted in June 2002 by the *Florida Voter* survey organization.

Notes: (S.D.) standard deviation. Missing values for the indices were replaced using mean imputation to address cases where respondents did not answer all of the index items, which would have inflated the missing values and resulted in the loss of data.

**Table 3- A Test of the Proximity Hypothesis**

<b>Explanatory Variables</b>	<b>Model 1 Bush Approval</b>	<b>Model 2 Bush Approval</b>	<b>Model 3 Republican Vote</b>	<b>Model 4 Republican Vote</b>
Evangelical Protestant	.676* (.295)	.368 (.303)	1.16** (.373)	.932* (.384)
Traditional Protestant	.498* (.245)	.220 (.254)	.696* (.322)	.521 (.331)
Catholic	.306 (.263)	.050 (.270)	.476 (.345)	.303 (.355)
Jewish	-1.01* (.443)	-.843 (.445)	-1.25 (.800)	-1.05 (.813)
Traditional Lifestyles	--	.206* (.086)	--	.255* (.111)
Traditional Marriage	--	.223** (.078)	--	.208* (.094)
Egalitarian	--	-.216** (.082)	--	-.139 (.103)
<b><u>Controls</u></b>				
Party Identification	-.924** (.268)	-.840** (.272)	-3.35** (1.01)	-3.23** (1.02)
Black	-1.16** (.244)	-1.03** (.248)	-1.49** (.377)	-1.33** (.382)
Hispanic	.260 (.285)	.269 (.290)	-.496 (.341)	-.492 (.351)
Female	-.107 (.167)	-.060 (.172)	.120 (.204)	.170 (.211)
Education	-.060 (.032)	-.051 (.032)	.032 (.038)	.045 (.039)
Government Attentiveness	.099 (.077)	.103 (.098)	-.315** (.121)	-.289* (.122)
Religiosity	.103* (.052)	.041 (.054)	.057 (.062)	-.010 (.065)
X <sup>2</sup>	68.019	103.936	81.428	102.022
df	11	14	11	14
Nagelkerke Pseudo- R <sup>2</sup>	.134	.198	.198	.243
N valid	504			

Source: Telephone poll of 601 Florida residents conducted in June 2002 by the *Florida Voter* survey organization.

Notes: Coefficients for Bush approval models are derived using ordered-logistical regression and the vote intention models employ a binary logistic regression. Missing values for the indices were replaced using mean imputation to address cases where respondents did not answer all of the index items, which would have inflated the missing values and resulted in the loss of data.

Standard errors are in parentheses. \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$

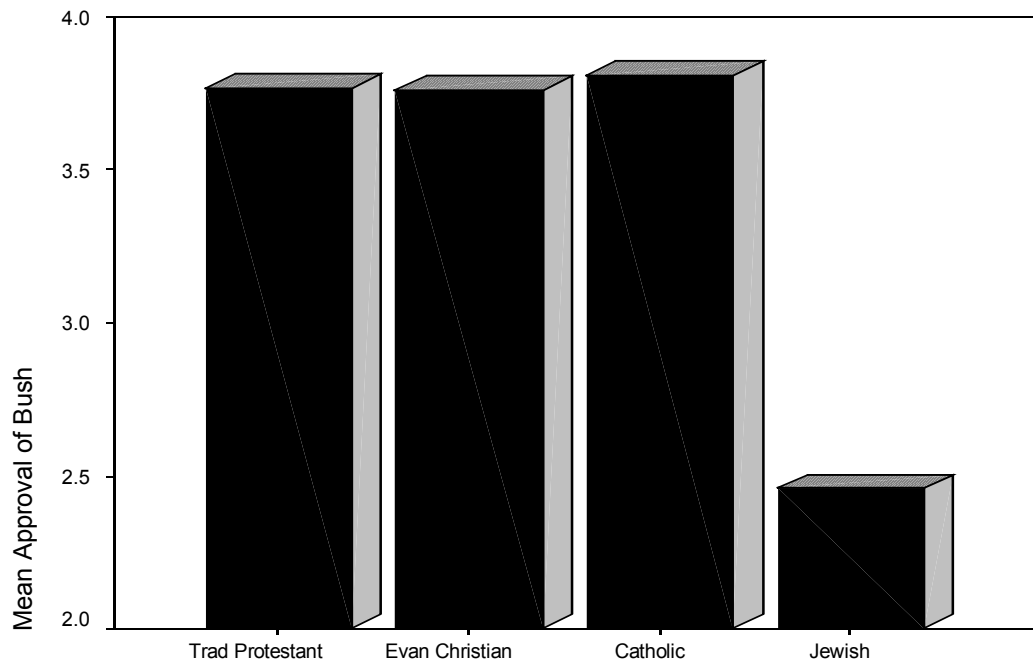
**Table 4- Interactive Effects of Religious Affiliation and Value Judgments**

	<b>Egalitarian Values Bush Approval</b>	<b>Trad/Marriage Values Bush Approval</b>	<b>Egalitarian Values Republican Vote</b>	<b>Trad/Marriage Values Republican Vote</b>
Evangelical	.884** (.283)	-.324** (.143)	-- --	-- --
Protestant	-- --	-- --	.732*** (.201)	-1.49*** (.284)
Catholic	-.232** (.102)	-.157* (.092)	-- --	-- --
Jewish	-- --	.297* (.171)	-- --	-- --

**Source:** Telephone poll of 601 Florida residents conducted in June 2002 by the *Florida Voter* survey organization.

**Notes:** Coefficients are derived using ordered logit and logit estimation. Separate models were run for each possible interaction of the value indices and religious tradition to avoid multicollinearity issues. The same controls contained in table 1 were used. The insignificant interactions are excluded from this table. There were no significant interactions with traditional lifestyles values. Standard errors are in parentheses. \*  $p \leq .10$ , \*\*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ . Missing values for the indices were replaced using mean imputation to address cases where respondents did not answer all of the index items, which would have inflated the missing values and resulted in the loss of data.

**Figure 1- Approval of Jeb Bush by Religious Affiliation**



**Figure 2- Vote Intention by Religious Affiliation**

