

## **Influence Without Reason:**

### **How Religious Identity and Emotion Shape Catholics' Social Conservatism**

#### ABSTRACT

Citizens often feel pressured to adopt the beliefs held by their peers, conforming to the views of the majority even in the absence of rational argument. However, few scholars have investigated the mechanisms underlying this “mindless” conformity to group pressure. Drawing on recent research in psychology, this manuscript puts forward a new theory of group influence called Social-Emotional Influence Theory which states that subjective group identification and self-conscious emotions (e.g., pride and shame) are critical to understanding political conformity. We feel pride when we conform to, and shame when we deviate from, in-group beliefs and behaviors; these emotional reactions motivate conformity. SEI Theory is tested with an experimental study of group influence among Midwestern American Catholics with respect to social conservatism. The evidence supports SEI theory: Identification with other Catholics mediated group influence over participants' conservative views, and self-conscious emotions appeared to play a key role in explaining that influence.

Over a century ago, J.S. Mill described in *On Liberty* ([1859] 1980) a highly troubling phenomenon he called the “tyranny of the majority.” Mill feared not only political oppression at the hands of the majority but also *social* tyranny. He argued:

Society can and does execute its own mandates...it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself. Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them (63).

In the years since *On Liberty*, empirical researchers have confirmed that Mill was correct in his belief that how “the majority” thinks and behaves influences the beliefs and behaviors of others (see Turner 1991 for a review of experimental evidence from psychology). Studies by students of politics make clear that majority influence extends to politically relevant beliefs and behaviors as well (e.g., Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954, chapter 7; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960, chapter 12; Cohen 2003; Fein, Goethals, and Kugler 2007; Mutz 1998; Newcomb 1963; Noelle-Neuman 1993; Walsh 2004).

Moving beyond majority influence, political scientists who study social networks and socialization have successfully demonstrated that conversation partners, family members, and other peers shape one another’s political attitudes and behaviors (Beck 2002; Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002; Fowler 2005; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004;

Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2007; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; McAdam 1986; Mutz 2006; Nickerson 2008; Parker, Parker, and McCann 2008; Stoker and Jennings 2005).

But *why* does influence—whether by the majority or by conversation partners or family members—occur? Despite the great interest in the subject, few scholars have investigated the mechanisms that underlie it. Those who have typically attribute influence to persuasion, i.e., to argumentation and information exchange (Cobb and Kuklinski 1997; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Others simply assume that any social influence that occurs is due to relatively straight-forward attempts at persuasion among peers (Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Parker, Parker, and McCann 2008).

Yet, Mill clearly thought that “the majority” was tyrannical for reasons other than careful argumentation or its ability to share valuable information:

People are accustomed to believe...that their feelings on subjects...are better than reasons and render reasons unnecessary. The practical principle which guides them to their opinions on the regulation of human conduct is the feeling in each person’s mind that everybody should be required to act as he, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like them to act (64).

A century after Mill’s work, experimental psychologists such as Sherif ([1936] 1966) and Asch (1951) examined the phenomenon discussed by Mill—called “group pressure” by Asch—and confirmed that social influence often occurs in *the absence* of meaningful information exchange or logical argumentation. In other words, individuals frequently alter their beliefs in the direction of peers’ after simply learning of peers’ beliefs, nothing more. While some political scientists have incorporated this idea of group pressure into their work in recent decades (e.g., Gerber, Green, and

Larimer 2008; Noelle-Neuman 1993), little progress has been made in understanding *why* this phenomenon, for which standard theories of persuasion cannot account, occurs.

In the pages that follow, I present a new theory, as well as evidence in support of that theory, that solves the puzzle of group pressure. I argue, first, that this phenomenon must be understood within the context of social identity; we can only be “pressured” by individuals who are a part of groups with whom we subjectively identify.<sup>1</sup> Why is identity so critical? The answer to that question brings us to our second key factor in group influence: emotion. We *care* about how our in-group peers judge us, whereas we are relatively indifferent as to how members of out-groups judge us. I argue that we feel pride when we conform to in-group norms, values, and attitudes because we perceive that our peers approve of our conforming views and behaviors; this prideful reaction reinforces and strengthens those behaviors, values, and attitudes that reflect the group’s. On the other hand, we feel embarrassment or shame when we deviate from group norms, values, and attitudes because we perceive that our peers disapprove of our deviant views; this shameful reaction weakens those behaviors, values, and attitudes that are out of step with the group’s. I call this model of influence “social-emotional influence theory” (or “SEI Theory”).

Anecdotes suggestive of social-emotional influence with respect to political views and behaviors abound. For example, polling sites distribute “I voted” stickers on election day to encourage voting; the assumption is that voters who wear the stickers feel proud, reinforcing the act of voting, whereas non-voting friends, neighbors, and colleagues feel somewhat embarrassed when

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<sup>1</sup> Subjective group identification is a sense of closeness or “we feeling” with one’s group (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). I use the terms “identity group” and “in-group”—as well as simply “group” and the more colloquial term “peers”—interchangeably to connote a collective of individuals with which each of those individuals subjectively identifies.

they are caught without one. Or consider that Barack Obama is the candidate of choice on many college campuses; whereas Obama supporters enjoy abundant camaraderie, McCain supporters are met with silence and raised eyebrows. Similar examples are everywhere we turn, from the family to the pews at church. Progressive parents praise children who voice a concern for social justice and frown if they profess an interest in Rush Limbaugh. Pro-life protestors shame women entering abortion clinics with the intent of discouraging them from seeking abortions. Democratic Catholics in conservative parishes cringe at the thought of revealing their party preference to fellow parishioners.

The benefits of SEI Theory are many. From a process perspective, the theory provides an important mechanism of social influence to those who study social networks and socialization, fields in which the exploration of mechanisms has taken a back seat to empirical demonstrations of influence. Understanding this mechanism will allow us to better predict the conditions under which individuals will be influenced by peers. Pinpointing a major mechanism of influence also gives us greater confidence in accounts of social influence, in general, and of political socialization, in particular; research in the latter field has been challenged due to scholars' disappointing record with respect to identifying mechanisms of socialization.

From an "output" perspective, SEI Theory allows us to better understand some puzzling attributes of many political beliefs and behaviors. For example, it helps us to understand how norms and values, in particular, take on a moral character, as well as why individuals sometimes fiercely defend behaviors, values, and attitudes that are out of line with their individual interests. It also provides a window onto the mechanisms underlying *shared* norms and values, phenomena that have stumped scholars (see Chong 2000; Elster 1989a).

I delve into greater detail regarding the literature that informs SEI Theory as well as its benefits to our understanding of the micro-foundations of politics in the next section. In the

empirical section, I describe the results of an experiment conducted earlier this year that was designed to test the key propositions of Social-Emotional Influence Theory. The experiment focuses on social influence over socially conservative views among Catholics living in the Midwestern United States. The findings solidly support the supposition that subjective group identification is critical to group pressure and provide suggestive evidence that pride and shame—called *self-conscious emotions* by psychologists—are its ultimate drivers.

## **GROUP INFLUENCE AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**

Fifty years ago, students of politics seemed quite taken with the idea of majority influence, albeit a refined and more sanguine version than Mill's. They believed that citizens are influenced by the values and attitudes that dominate within their respective social groups. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee argued that “[d]uring a campaign political preferences are ‘contagious’ over the range of personal contacts” (1954, 122). They found that Elmira residents whose social networks mainly included peers with similar views remained the most firm in their vote intentions and that “cross-pressured” individuals—those belonging to two groups with majorities supporting opposite parties—had less stable vote intentions and took longer to make voting decisions (chapter 7). Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes showed that voting preferences of citizens mirrored those of their racial, religious, and union affiliations, even after controlling for characteristics that citizens were likely to share with fellow group members (e.g., income, education, occupation, urban or rural residence). The authors also demonstrated that citizens who highly identified with a particular group were more likely to hold political views in line with that group (chapter 12). Finally, Newcomb (1963) found that the students at liberal Bennington College shifted their political views markedly in the liberal direction over the course of their four years there, a shift which could not be attributed to the general liberalizing effects of a college education or to attrition. For many of Newcomb's participants, the effects of their four years at Bennington lasted decades (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991).

These authors attributed their findings to forces beyond ordinary persuasion. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) argued that political views stemmed from group norms and traditions: “[f]or many voters political preferences may better be considered analogous to cultural tastes,” with origins in ethnic, sectional, class, and family traditions (311). Campbell, Gurin, and Miller proposed “conformity to the group standards of one’s associates” as one of six factors determining citizens’ electoral choices (1954, 86). Similarly, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) wrote:

[I]here remains a sense of norms and values attributed to a generalized “group”: these are the expectations concerning appropriate behavior for [e.g.] the “loyal” Catholic or union member. It is the group standards that are psychologically real and are responsible for influence when it occurs (296).

In sum, when explaining why peer influence occurred, the most prominent voting scholars of the twentieth century appeared to attribute influence not to ordinary persuasion but to a less “rational” type of societal influence like that described by Mill.

Voting scholars were influenced by the findings of experimental psychologists studying group dynamics who, in the preceding decades, had been working to understand a new social influence phenomenon, variously labeled “group pressure,” “conformity,” or “majority influence.” For example, Sherif ([1936] 1966) demonstrated with his “auto-kinetic effect” studies (in which a stable point of light appears to move due to an optical illusion) that a group of previously unacquainted individuals would converge on an estimate of the light’s supposed movement; furthermore, individuals tended to hold to their group’s estimate even when participating a second time apart from the group. He referred to these converging estimates as “group norms.” Asch (1951) asked groups of students to judge which line in a pair was longer; various pairs were

presented, and the correct choice was always obvious. Unbeknownst to his subjects, Asch placed each real subject with a group of confederates who purposefully made errors. The real subjects were persuaded by confederates' errors about one-third of the time, a large percentage given that the errors should have been glaringly obvious.<sup>2</sup> Hundreds of similar experimental studies followed, finding that individuals tended to alter their beliefs in the direction of peers' in response to *simply* learning their peers' beliefs (Fiske 2004; Turner 1991).

However, *why* group norms hold such power over individual group members' beliefs remained a mystery. Perhaps for this reason, group pressure as an account of the influence of social groups largely faded from view in political science. Two notable exceptions are works by Mutz (1998) and Noelle-Neuman (1993), both of which sought to advance explanations for majority influence. Mutz (1998) argues that individuals are often persuaded by the majority's point of view because, in trying to understand why the majority holds the view it does, they draw on available information to conjure up arguments that would explain the majority's view and then persuade themselves in the process. Given its emphasis on the importance of information and argumentation, Mutz's work is best thought of as belonging to more traditional theories of persuasion. Thus, Social-Emotional Influence Theory is complementary to Mutz's view. On the other hand, Noelle-Neuman's *Spiral of Silence* (1993) is reminiscent of Mill's work, arguing that political minorities are

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<sup>2</sup> In response to studies like those conducted by Sherif and Asch, some psychologists argued that such influence was not real, that "normative influence" or "surface compliance" in order to ingratiate oneself with the group at work (Deutsch and Gerard [1955] 1965). But, as Turner (1991) points out, the fact that group influence effects often persist when subjects' judgments remain private and, therefore, unobserved by group members (see Deutsch and Gerard [1955] 1965; Turner 1991), argues against a "surface compliance" explanation.



less likely to voice their opinions due to social discomfort and embarrassment. Because that discomfort increases as members of the opinion minority become less and less vocal, opinion minorities eventually become silent altogether. However, Noelle-Neuman stops short of being able to explain anything more than the dynamics of public discussion. As Nixon reminded us decades ago in his “silent majority” speech, we should not assume that the silent have been persuaded by the more vocal members of society. This said, as we will see in the next section, Noelle-Neuman’s emphasis on citizens’ strong dislike of discord does advance us somewhat in our understanding of group pressure.

### **EXPLAINING GROUP INFLUENCE WITH IDENTITY AND EMOTION**

In recent years, a well-regarded explanation for the “group pressure” or “conformity” effects discovered by Sherif, Asch, and others has finally emerged, thanks largely to the work of psychologist John Turner (1987; 1991). Turner posits that subjective psychological identification with a group is a necessary pre-condition to conformity. Not only do experimental studies show that greater attraction to, or psychological identification with, the group leaves the subject more open to influence (Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, and Turner 1990; Back 1951; Clark and Maass 1998; Kelley 1955; Wood, Pool, Leck, and Purvis 1996), but they *also* show that a lack of identification leads either to a lack of influence or to attitude polarization, i.e., a shift away from the views of out-group members in the direction of pre-existing in-group norms (Clark and Maass 1998; Wood, Pool, Leck, and Purvis 1996).<sup>3</sup> Attitude polarization is most likely to occur in response to the views of out-groups that are derogated by in-group members.

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<sup>3</sup> This line of experimental work has carefully isolated identification as a cause of conformity. In other words, the effects are not confounded with competing causal hypotheses for group-individual

What is it about subjective identification that opens a person up to group influence over his or her values and attitudes? Drawing on Festinger (1950), Turner (1987; 1991) argues that peers provide the individual with helpful “social reality tests”<sup>4</sup> when they indicate whether or not they agree with the individual’s point of view. In other words, people are continually “bouncing ideas off” of one another; the feedback individuals receive constitutes evidence as to whether an idea is right or wrong. Only those with whom one identifies, however, can provide such tests:

In so far as we categorize ourselves as similar to others in the same situation...it is natural and logical to think that we should tend to respond in the same way. In so far as we do, we should experience subjective validity. The perceived, expected or believed agreement of similar others in the same situation implies that our behaviour is a function of the objective world (Turner 1991, 161).

Likewise, in so far as we categorize ourselves as *dissimilar* from others, it is natural and logical to think that we should act differently. In sum, agreeing with in-group members should generate subjective validity; disagreeing with them should generate subjective invalidity. On the other hand, agreeing with *out-group members* should generate subjective *invalidity* and disagreeing with them subjective validity. Turner calls his theory “self-categorization theory” (1987; 1991).<sup>5</sup>

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similarity, such as the fact that people feel a stronger sense of identification with groups with whom they already share values and attitudes.

<sup>4</sup> Social reality tests stand in contrast to “physical reality tests.” With the latter, the individual separates fact from fiction through direct engagement with the physical environmental (e.g., hitting a piece of glass with a hammer to see whether it is breakable).

<sup>5</sup> Turner’s theory is a close cousin of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner [1986] 2004).

Self-categorization theory offers a major step forward in our understanding of conformity or group pressure accounts of social influence. That said, Turner's very cognitive theory leaves out an important player: emotion. How do we know that leaving out emotion constitutes an important oversight? First, recent research on emotions demonstrates that they have an important role to play in shaping political attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Brader 2006; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). Second, we know that encounters with agreeing or disagreeing peers are thick with emotion; opinion disagreements are particularly uncomfortable for all involved (e.g., Asch 1951; Noelle-Neuman 1993). Third, and finally, incorporating emotion into a theory of social influence helps to account for *which* of the many discrepancies between individual and group attitudes the individual sees as problematic and seeks to remedy (Barrett 1995, 47).

Which emotions deserve our attention as we think about group influence over citizens' political behaviors, values, and attitudes? Extant scholarship suggests that a group of emotions called "self-conscious emotions"—especially embarrassment, shame, and pride—deserve our attention in seeking to understand group pressure (e.g., Asch 1951; Elster 1989a, 1989b, 1999; Goffman 1959; Lazarus 1991; Lewis 2000; Milgram 1992; Noelle-Neuman 1993).

Compared to other emotions, self-conscious emotions are cognitively rich. We feel embarrassment or shame<sup>6</sup> when we perceive that important others have judged us harshly because we have not lived up to some ideal standard (Lazarus 1991; see also Lewis 2000 and Mascolo and Fischer 1995). Writes Lazarus: "We feel disgraced or humiliated, especially in the eyes of a parent or parent-substitute....[A]nother person whose approbation is important to us views and presumably is critical of our failure" (Lazarus 1991, 241). On the other hand, we feel pride when we perceive that others have judged us favorably because we have achieved something valuable or measured up to an

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<sup>6</sup> These two negative self-conscious emotions differ mainly in their intensity level.

ideal standard (Lazarus 1991; see also Lewis 2000 and Mascolo and Fischer 1995). While these emotions stem from the perceived evaluations of oneself by important others, the important person or people need not be actually observing us—or even be alive—to cause pride or shame. “It is only necessary that we imagine how [they] would react to what we have done or not done” (Lazarus 1991, 241).

Emotions scholars argue that self-conscious emotions motivate us to conform to societal “standards, rules, and goals” (Lewis 2000). Because pride feels good, we seek others’ approval by acting as they would wish us to act; because embarrassment and shame feel bad, we avoid others’ disapproval by not acting in ways they would condemn. As Scheff (1988), drawing on work by Cooley ([1922] 2006), argues: “Pride and shame make up a subtle and pervasive system of social sanctions. This system leads to experiencing social influence as compelling” (396). While the judgments of our peers are key, again, they need only be imagined to provoke pride or shame. What Scheff calls the “the deference-emotion system” functions continuously, even when we are alone, because we can imagine and anticipate our own and others’ actions in detail (396).

While the literature on self-conscious emotions advances us considerably in our understanding of group pressure or conformity, I argue that it can only form a theory of attitudinal influence by social groups in concert with Turner’s self-categorization theory. First, emotions scholars argue that self-conscious emotions motivate *behavioral* conformity to peers’ expectations; however, *ideological* conformity is overlooked. I propose that the experiences of pride and shame provide a sense of subjective validity and subjective invalidity along the lines Turner describes, making these emotions relevant to conformity of political belief. Second, emotions scholars focus on the role of “important others,” or society in general, in generating pride, embarrassment, and shame. In so doing, they stop short of addressing the importance of social groups. Third, emotions scholars also have little to say about the role of self-conscious emotions in attitude polarization with

respect to out-groups; incorporating Turner's work allows us to make sensible predictions regarding individuals' reactions to the views of out-groups.

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE THEORY**

Putting the pieces together, I introduce a model of social influence over political belief<sup>7</sup> called "social-emotional influence." I argue that we are influenced by group pressure only if we psychologically identify with the group in question. Further, the *reason* for the importance of identification in group conformity is self-conscious emotion. Individuals feel pride when they receive positive feedback from in-group members, and embarrassment or shame when they are derogated by these same peers. Relevant beliefs are colored by these emotional experiences, and belief commitment strengthens or weakens accordingly. Specifically, when pride becomes associated with a belief, it makes that belief feel "good" or "right," i.e., subjectively valid; when shame becomes associated with a belief, it feels "bad" or "wrong," i.e., subjectively invalid. In this way, group beliefs come to be internalized.

These mechanisms can be clarified with a fuller discussion of two examples mentioned earlier. A college student on a liberal campus who announces to his friends that he intends to vote for Barack Obama will likely elicit smiles and other signs of social approval; our college student will likely feel some pride in response, which will strengthen his vote intention. Or consider a teacher who walks into the faculty lounge on election day and discovers that she is one of the few not wearing an "I voted" sticker. Assuming she likes and respects her colleagues, she will feel embarrassed, weakening the belief that it is acceptable to ignore one's civic duty.

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<sup>7</sup> While the theory focuses on political belief, it is of course relevant to political behavior by extension, because beliefs shape our behaviors.

Below, in Figure 1, the theoretical framework being introduced is illustrated with a simplified depiction of the model's two causal paths. Note that pride *and* shame tend to push the individual in the direction of conformity with the group.

[Figure 1 here]

Finally, while Social-Emotional Influence Theory focuses on influence by the in-group, it can be logically extended to explain group polarization as well. Recall that individuals often shift their attitudes away from those of derogated out-groups. This phenomenon can be explained within the social-emotional influence framework: Individuals feel proud of beliefs that differentiate themselves from out-groups that are disliked by peers, reinforcing those beliefs; on the other hand, individuals feel embarrassed or ashamed of beliefs that resemble the out-group's, and these emotions brand those beliefs as suspect.

The contributions of Social-Emotional Influence Theory to social science scholarship are many. Its most obvious contribution is its illumination of a type of social influence relevant to the study of social networks and socialization and the growing number of field studies that focus on social influence over electoral behavior. Currently, such studies of influence in political science are under-theorized, devoting time and resources to demonstrating influence while failing to document *why* influence occurs (e.g., Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002; Fowler 2005; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008; Nickerson 2008).

Developing a better understanding of the mechanisms of influence is important for two reasons. First, it allows scholars to better predict when influence will occur. SEI Theory suggests that citizens who converse about politics with others with whom they do not subjectively identify will be far less likely to accept their viewpoint. This implies, for example, that communication across racial lines is less likely to lead to influence than communication within racial groups. The theory also suggests that groups and individuals who bring emotional pressure to bear on others—praising

those who agree, and condemning those who disagree—will tend to be more successful in their efforts to influence others.

Second, better understanding mechanisms of influence is important for epistemological reasons. Sometimes influence occurs for reasons that defy extant theories. Consider bandwagon effects (Bartels 1988), or the recent study suggesting that obesity is “contagious” (Christakis and Fowler 2007), or the out-sized effect that parents appear to have on their children’s political beliefs (Bengtson, Biblarz, and Roberts 2002; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2007). A failure to understand *why* social influence occurs in these circumstances may lead scholars to doubt that influence *is* occurring. For example, Alford, Funk, and Hibbing’s 2005 article on genetic explanations for political ideology is motivated in part by their belief that the socialization literature has failed to demonstrate mechanisms of parental influence, calling into question socialization as an explanation for parent-child political similarities (see pp. 163-164).<sup>8</sup> SEI Theory provides an account of why families (and other groups) tend to closely resemble one another ideologically, as well as of why bandwagon and similar influence phenomena occur.

Moving from process to outcome, the proposed theory also helps us to understand certain puzzling aspects of values, in particular. For example, it helps us to understand why values tend to be communicated in terms of *oughts* or *shoulds*, as in, “one should never lie,” or, “the government should stay out of people’s bedrooms.” This terminology has proven to be so ambiguous in meaning that some have found it to be more harmful than good in terms of understanding value commitments (e.g., Rokeach 1973). But SEI Theory allows us to understand this aspect of values better. If pride becomes embedded in a certain idea, then that idea becomes an *ought* or a *should*.

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<sup>8</sup> But see Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers (2007) and [citation omitted] for a discussion of persuasive evidence for familial socialization.

One's better or respectable self helps old ladies across the street rather than rushing to one's next appointment. If shame becomes embedded in an idea, then that idea is a *should not*. Watching TV after work instead of going to the polls on election day is a contemptible behavior to avoid.

Social-Emotional Influence Theory also allows us to understand why citizens often hold values and related attitudes that conflict with their self-interest. Consider the working class guy who champions low tax rates for the wealthy because his peers are economically conservative, or the gay man who has been socialized by his family to feel ashamed of homosexual sex, or the woman who has internalized conservative religious ideals that mandate the wearing of cumbersome clothing in the presence of males. Within the framework proposed here, these stances make sense despite their surface "irrationality." If one is a woman living in a conservative Muslim culture, to rebel against society by wearing more comfortable clothing in public *feels* like the wrong thing to do. Going against the group brings with it, among other things, the emotional stress of feeling as though one is doing something morally wrong.

Finally, scholars have had a difficult time understanding why members of social groups seem beholden to shared group norms and values, which do not fit within a traditional rational choice framework (see Chong 2000; Elster 1989a). We can understand this phenomenon better with SEI Theory in mind. Once certain cultural values and norms are adopted by a majority of group members, they are difficult to undo. The majority socializes new group members and reinforces one another's adherence to the dominant viewpoint via pride and shame. The majority also continues to pressure the minority, leading eventually to a super-majority adhering to dominant group beliefs.

### **CATHOLICISM AND SOCIAL CONSERVATISM**

In the context of contemporary U.S. politics, many refer to conservative (or traditional) stands on the cluster of hotly debated social issues revolving around religion, the family, and sexuality as "moral values" or "family values." While colloquial usage of these terms may suggest that they are



little more than labels for bundles of issue positions, citizens' positions on such issues tend to lump together as consistently traditional or progressive, signifying relatively coherent moral visions of how people ought to live (Hunter 1991; Leege, Wald, Krueger, and Mueller 2002).

Traditional moral values, and social conservatism more generally,<sup>9</sup> play an important role in determining citizens' political decisions. Abramowitz found that a moral issues scale made up of items concerning abortion and gay rights had a stronger influence on candidate choice in the 1992 presidential election than any other variable in his model except partisanship (1997, 220). In a similar analysis, Mulligan (2008) found that moral traditionalism played a key role in presidential vote choice in 2004. While the political import of "moral values" has at times been overstated, especially with respect to the 2004 election,<sup>10</sup> the influence of socially conservative values on political choice is real and significant.

Where citizens stand with respect to the cluster of socially conservative issues described above depends to a significant extent on their religious faith (Brewer and Stonecash 2007; Hunter 1991; Kohut, Green, Keeter, and Toth 2000; Leege, Wald, Krueger, and Mueller 2002). In considering religiously informed views, scholars are increasingly thinking about religion from the perspective of social identity (Djupe and Gilbert 2008; Leege 2001; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988). If

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<sup>9</sup> Politically speaking, the popularization of the terms "moral values" and "family values" represents a framing coup for social conservatives, in that the terms suggest that those who disagree with a specific socially conservative point of view are not moral or are anti-family. Academically speaking, the terms are problematic for the same reason. Therefore, I rely on the general term "social conservatism" and on the more specific term "traditional family values" to refer to the range of views having to do with the family and sexuality reflect an underlying socially conservative outlook.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see Langer and Cohen (2005), Schuman (2006), and Mulligan (2008).

religious communities are social groups just as family or ethnic communities are, then, from the perspective of SEI Theory, subjective identification and self-conscious emotions may work together to encourage individuals to conform to their religious community with respect to its views on traditional morality. In this chapter, I test these ideas with an experimental study of American Catholics living in the Midwest.

Things have changed since voting scholars first studied Catholics in the mid-twentieth century (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960). Catholics are no longer dependable Democratic voters. In 2004, Bush enjoyed a 13-point margin of victory among white Catholics (Pew Research Center 2008). In 2008, Catholics are promising to be an important “swing” group in the presidential election. Some of this movement to the political right in recent decades is due to Catholics’ transformation from white, urban “ethnics” to mainstream suburbanites occupying a more elevated position in the socioeconomic order (Prendergast 1999; Wolfe 2006). However, Catholics’ gravitation toward the Republican Party also reflects practicing Catholics’ conservatism on moral issues related to the family and sexuality, especially abortion. As such issues have become more politically salient and the parties have polarized on them, more Catholics have had reason to vote Republican (Brewer and Stonecash 2007; Leege, Wald, Krueger, and Mueller 2002; Prendergast 1999).

This said, there is a notable divide among Catholics. Relative to society as a whole, *committed* Catholics (a category that includes both higher levels of religious practice and religious orthodoxy) are more socially conservative than other Americans. However, less committed Catholics are in fact

*less* socially conservative than other Americans (Kohut, Green, Keeter, and Toth 2000).<sup>11</sup> This difference is reflected in the fact that 57% of committed Catholics say that they are Republican, whereas only 38% of less committed Catholics are Republican (Dionne 2006). Why are committed Catholics so much more socially conservative than less committed Catholics? Is it their greater exposure to traditional Church teachings, unique personal religious experiences, or the fact that they are surrounded by peers who hold traditional values? While each of these factors likely matter, I demonstrate below that Catholics' views are in part influenced by the views of their Catholic peers.

Of course, it is not just the values and attitudes of in-group members that affect our own; the views of out-groups matter as well, albeit in a different fashion. While in some cases political alliances have been formed between orthodox members of various religious groups (see Hunter 1991), dislike among religious groups still exists. Consider the suggestion by the evangelical minister Reverend John Hagee that the Catholic Church is the “great whore” of Revelations, or the prejudice faced by Jews running for public office (Berinsky and Mendelberg 2005). It is not surprising then that group polarization occurs in religion's hallowed sphere of influence. For example, in 1973 the Southern Baptist Convention endorsed *Roe v. Wade* in part because of their distrust of Catholics, who were resolutely anti-abortion (Wolfe 2006). In a similar vein, we expect that Catholics will often distance themselves from the values of perceived out-groups.

## **THE CATHOLIC VALUES STUDY**

An experimental study was conducted during the months of March and April of 2008 with 220 church-going Catholics from five churches in a large Archdiocese in the Midwest. The Archdiocese

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<sup>11</sup> This “committed” versus “not committed” categorization scheme is somewhat problematic in that it fails to distinguish between level of devotion and level of orthodoxy. While most devoted Catholics do also have more orthodox views, not all do.

approved the study at the outset, easing the recruitment of individual churches and participants. Participants were recruited via a combination of flyers placed in weekly church bulletins and announcements from the pulpit. Participants were asked to take part in a short, anonymous, on-line study of Catholic opinion being conducted by University of Michigan researchers in return for a \$5 donation to their church and a \$5 donation to a Catholic charity of their choice. Participants had to be at least 18 years of age, and only one person was allowed to participate per household.

It was presumed at the outset that participating parishioners would be more devoted Catholics than non-participating parishioners for two reasons. First, most participants, having been recruited in church on Sunday morning, are regular church-goers. Second, it is likely that those most motivated to take part in a study of Catholic opinion, especially when participation yields donations to Catholic organizations, are those who are more committed to the Church. Participants' high level of commitment to Catholicism is confirmed by their answer to the question "How important is being Catholic to you?" Thirty-four percent said "very important," and 44% said "extremely important." For the purposes of comparison, a recent Pew study found that 55% of Midwestern Catholics described religion as "very important" (the top commitment category) in their lives.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of political ideology, the sample is roughly equivalent to the national Catholic average, identifying as somewhere between moderate and slightly conservative on average. With respect to traditional family values specifically, 71% of participants indicated in the pre-test that they

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<sup>12</sup> Most of the statistics related to Catholics in the Midwest and nationally were taken from the Pew report "A Portrait of American Catholics on the Eve of Pope Benedict's Visit" (2008). The information on political ideology was taken from the Pew Research Center for the People & The Press 2006 Values Update Survey.

agreed with traditional church teachings on abortion, divorce, and homosexuality.<sup>13</sup> With regard to demographics, the sample is racially homogeneous, with 98% of participants identifying as white. The age range for the study is 18-84, with a median age of 54, older than the national Catholic median of 46. The majority of the sample is female (69%). These age and gender characteristics reflect the relative religiosity on the part of participants (see Pew 2008). The sample is also more upper-income than Catholics generally, with 50% calling themselves middle class and 40% upper-middle class.

Participants began the on-line study by filling out a pre-test that addressed Catholic identity and basic political views and demographic characteristics. Afterward, participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group. The experiment had a simple 1x4 design. The primary goal of the experiment was to demonstrate that psychological identification plays a key causal role in group influence among Catholics. Given that the “gold standard” in demonstrating causation in social science is the exogenous manipulation of a cause in a random experiment, I sought to experimentally vary identity by exposing some participants to the views of the Catholic in-group and other participants to the views of a religious out-group, Evangelicals.<sup>14</sup>

More specifically, those in the “Catholics conservative” treatment condition learned that a majority of American Catholics shun divorce, oppose abortion, and oppose gay marriage. Those in the “Catholics progressive” treatment condition learned that, to the contrary, most Catholics believe that one can be a good Catholic without following Church teachings on divorce, abortion, and gay

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<sup>13</sup> Participants were asked: “To what extent would you say you agree with traditional Church teachings on issues like marriage, abortion, homosexuality, etc.?”

<sup>14</sup> Only a small percentage of Catholics refer to themselves as Evangelicals. Among participants in the Catholic Values Study, only one participant referred to him or herself as Evangelical.

marriage. Finally, those in the “Evangelicals conservative” condition learned that most Evangelicals share the Catholic Church’s socially conservative views on divorce, abortion, and gay marriage.

Those in the control group received no such information.

[Table 1 here]

To increase the external validity of the experimental stimuli, as well as to reduce the extent to which participants were misled during the course of the study, all of the public opinion information presented to participants was taken from reputable public opinion surveys.<sup>15</sup> The “Catholics socially conservative” / “Catholics socially progressive” contrast was achieved by presenting the results of different survey questions to participants. The various stimuli are available in the Appendix.

Following the stimulus, participants filled out a post-test that included questions on their emotions and social and political values and attitudes. After completing the study, they were debriefed regarding the study goals and experimental manipulations.

## **HYPOTHESES**

We can investigate four hypotheses relevant to the Social-Emotional Influence model with data from the Catholic Values Study.

The first two hypotheses stress the role of subjective identity in group influence (and polarization). First, *whereas participants’ values will “move” in the direction of the perceived values of their identity group (Catholics), they will move away from the values of an out-group (Evangelicals)* (H1). This hypothesis depends on three distinct sub-hypotheses. Compared to the control group: participants who learn

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<sup>15</sup> Information on Catholics’ traditional family values was taken from the General Social Survey.

Information on Catholics’ progressive values was taken from a Gallup poll of American Catholics presented in D’Antonio (2007). Information on Evangelicals’ values was taken from a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center.

that Catholics hold traditional family values will express greater conservatism with respect to these values; participants who learn that Catholics hold progressive stances on traditional family values will express less social conservatism; and, finally, participants who learn that Evangelicals are in favor of traditional family values will *also* express less social conservatism.

The second hypothesis (H2) takes advantage of the Catholic Identity Scale (see Appendix) to propose a secondary test of identity's critical role in influence: *The group influence and polarization observed in response to the stimuli will be stronger for those who identify more closely with other Catholics.*

The next set of two hypotheses involves the role of self-conscious emotions in group influence. Our first expectation with respect to emotion (H3) is that those whose values reflect dominant group values tend to feel proud as a result. Specifically, *more conservative Catholics will feel more pride in their values on average than more progressive Catholics.* The second emotion hypothesis (H4) suggests that patterns of pride and shame in reaction to the opinion stimuli will reveal evidence of emotional mediation of opinion change. In particular, *participants will feel more pride (and less shame) when they learn that other Catholics share their traditional values, and participants will feel more shame (and less pride) when they learn both that other Catholics hold more progressive values and Evangelicals more conservative ones.*

## **DATA ANALYSES**

We first examine the two identity hypotheses. Figure 2 displays the means for the different experimental groups with respect to traditional family values. These values were measured with an additive, balanced scale that tapped socially conservative views on six themes associated with Catholicism—divorce, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, sexuality and teens, working mothers, and abortion. (See the Appendix for details.) The scale ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 representing the most conservative response. As expected, participants who learned that other Catholics are less supportive of traditional family values shifted in the progressive direction, and participants who learned that Evangelicals support family values also shifted in the progressive direction (i.e., *away* from the out-

group). On the other hand, the fact that participants in the “Catholics conservative” condition *also* appeared to shift in the progressive direction is unexpected.

[Figure 2 here]

A regression analysis allows us to test whether these differences are statistically significant. The Traditional Family Values Scale was regressed onto dummy variables representing the three treatment groups; the control group was excluded so that it could act as a comparison group. The model is as follows: Family Values =  $\beta_0 + \beta_1$ Catholics Conservative +  $\beta_2$ Catholics Progressive +  $\beta_3$ Evangelicals Conservative +  $\epsilon$ .<sup>16</sup> Regression results are in Table 2.

What we find is that, while all of the coefficients are negative, only those with respect to the “Catholics progressive” and “Evangelicals conservative” conditions are significant ( $b_2 = -.08$ ,  $b_3 = -.07$ ;  $p \leq .10$ ).

[Table 2 here]

The overall pattern of results supports H1: While participants moved in the direction of Catholic peers in the “Catholics progressive” condition, they moved *away* from the views of the Evangelical out-group.<sup>17</sup> The “Catholics conservative” condition had no effect.

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<sup>16</sup> I checked whether randomization failed with respect to several key variables, including social conservatism and general support for traditional Catholic Church teachings, across the four experimental groups, paying special attention to the all-important control (or comparison) group. Randomization was unproblematic and, therefore, no control variables are needed in the analysis.

<sup>17</sup> A post-test feeling thermometer measure confirms that, on average, Catholic participants were not fond of Evangelicals. Participants consistently rated Evangelicals approximately 25 points lower than Catholics on the 100-point scale, whereas Christians in general were rated only 5 points lower.

Ratings did not depend in any way on which experimental stimulus participants had received. The



In order to test H2—whether group influence is more evident among strong Catholic identifiers—the above equation was re-estimated with each of the variables representing the experimental stimuli also interacted with a dummy variable representing strong versus weak Catholic identity.<sup>18</sup> This second model is as follows: Family Values =  $\beta_0$  +  $\beta_1$ Catholics Conservative +  $\beta_2$ Catholics Progressive +  $\beta_3$ Evangelicals Conservative +  $\beta_4$ Identity +  $\beta_5$ Catholics Conservative x Identity +  $\beta_6$ Catholics Progressive x Identity +  $\beta_7$ Evangelicals Conservative x Identity +  $\epsilon$ . The coefficients on the interaction terms with respect to the “Catholics progressive” and “Evangelicals conservative” conditions approached, but did not reach, standard levels of statistical significance ( $b_6 = -.10, p = .17; b_7 = -.09, p = .23$ ). However, the coefficients imply stronger experimental results for strong as compared to weak identifiers.

If we re-run the original regression equation separately for strong and weak identifiers, the results reveal that it is the strong identifiers who are driving the original experimental results. See Table 2. Those with strong Catholic identities were influenced by the “Catholics progressive” and “Evangelicals conservative” stimuli as expected ( $b_2 = -.14, b_3 = -.12; p \leq .05$ ). However, weak identifiers showed no evidence of having been influenced by these two sets of stimuli. (The coefficient representing the “Catholics conservative” stimulus group was non-significant for both

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25-point difference is just slightly less than conservatives’ and liberals’ average dislike for one another.

<sup>18</sup> Strong identifiers were those who scored above the Catholic Identity Scale median, and weak identifiers those who scored at or below the scale median. Those above the scale median chose the fourth or fifth response option on a 5-point scale for each of the four identity questions (see Appendix). E.g., in response to the question “When talking about Catholics, how often do you say ‘we’ instead of ‘they?’” strong identifiers answered “most of the time” or “all of the time.”

weak and strong identifiers.) Overall, the evidence supports the idea that group influence—both conformity to the in-group, and deviation from the out-group—is mediated by identity.

We turn next to the two emotion hypotheses. Because we expect that most participants understand traditional stands on family values to be dominant among Catholics, we expect that those participants with more traditional, or orthodox, views will feel prouder of their values overall (H3). Pride was measured with an additive scale that tapped the extent to which participants felt proud of their socially conservative or progressive views. (See Appendix for details.) Restricting our analysis to participants in the control group (to avoid any contamination of the Pride-in-Values measure by the stimuli), we find a very strong, positive correlation between participants' conservatism on traditional family values and how proud they are of their values (.43,  $p \leq .01$ ).

Our final stop in testing the mechanisms of Social-Emotional Influence Theory is the examination of emotional patterns in response to the experimental stimuli (H4). Emotional responses were gathered at the end of the study with two questions that asked participants whether they felt pride or shame in response to the stimuli. Recall that, at least at the outset of the study, our sample was relatively social conservative, with 71% saying that they agreed with traditional church teachings on abortion, divorce, and homosexuality. Therefore, we expect that participants will feel the most proud, and the least ashamed, in the “Catholics conservative” condition, as they reflect on the fact that their values are in line with a majority of American Catholics. On the other hand, we expect that participants will feel less proud, and more ashamed, in the other two conditions: in response to the “Catholics progressive” stimulus (because participants' values are out-of-step with a progressive majority) and the “Evangelicals conservative” stimulus (because their values are in sync with a disliked out-group). See Figure 3.

[Figure 3 here]

This is indeed what we find. Study participants felt more pride when they perceived that other Catholics are socially conservative and more shame when they learned either that Catholics are socially progressive *or* that Evangelicals are socially conservative. The differences in mean pride and shame between the “Catholics conservative” group and the other two groups are statistically significant ( $p \leq .10$ ).<sup>19</sup>

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Overall, the pattern of results observed largely reflect expectations: Catholics who learned that other Catholics hold “progressive family values” themselves moved in a progressive direction when compared to the control group. And Catholics who learned that Evangelicals (a religious out-group) hold traditional family values *also* moved in a progressive direction, polarizing away from Evangelicals’ views. As expected, the above findings were sharpened among those who strongly identified as Catholics and were not evident among those who weakly identified as Catholics. These findings are especially compelling when we consider that most practicing Catholics are deeply respectful of a conservative Church hierarchy and, thus, perhaps less open to socially progressive peer influence than others. Taken together, these findings strongly support the contention of SEI Theory that subjective identification is an important mediator of influence.

It is also worth noting that the group influence and polarization described above occurred in a sample with a median age of 54. These were not impressionable youth. In fact, according to

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<sup>19</sup> The total N for the analysis is 46, less than expected because many participants skipped these questions, which appeared at the end of the study and were preceded by a screening question that many participants found to be confusing. The original intent was to use these questions in a statistical mediation analysis, i.e., to test whether Catholic influence over participants’ values was mediated by emotion; but such a test was not possible given the small number of responses.

theories of political socialization, much of the sample is at an age when their values and attitudes are at their most stable (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991; Sears and Levy 2003).

This said, the group influence aspect of the experiment did not go *exactly* as expected. One sub-hypothesis was not supported: that participants would become more socially conservative with respect to traditional family values when they perceived other Catholics to be supportive of those values. Why this particular disjuncture? A helpful line of inquiry leads us back to the Catholic participants' recruitment. Participants were recruited in church and, in some cases, were encouraged to participate by their parish priests; prospective participants read in the recruitment materials that the study was approved by their Archdiocese. With these facts in mind, one might guess that participants began the study on their best Catholic behavior. In other words, there likely existed an unseen, unspoken influence in addition to the experimental stimuli—the parish priest, the Church itself—that affected all participants, including those in the control, or comparison, group. Under such a scenario, it is likely difficult to get participants to move further toward traditional Church points of view.

With respect to the emotion hypotheses, patterns of participants' self-conscious emotions support the idea that these emotions play an important role in group influence. First, the strong relationship between feeling proud of one's values and holding conservative values (i.e., values in line with the Catholic community) suggests that pride—again, a positive emotion stemming from the approval of important others—is tightly wrapped up with Catholics' views on traditional family values. This correlation suggests that if we dislodge participants' perceptions of what views garner others' approval, then we will dislodge the views as well.

Second, study participants, most of whom expressed support for traditional family values at the outset of the study, felt the most proud and the least ashamed when they learned that most Catholics support traditional family values; by contrast, they felt the least proud and the most

ashamed when they learned that most Catholics oppose traditional family values or, notably, that most Evangelicals support family values. These patterns do not prove emotional mediation of the observed influence, but they strongly suggest that self-conscious emotions played a role.

While there is much to appreciate in the Catholic Family Values study, it raises one important question as well: What about the relevance of social-emotional influence to citizens' vote intentions? Drawing on additional data available from the post-test of the experiment, I find that, in line with previous analyses (e.g., Abramowitz 1997; Mulligan 2008), traditional family values are indeed closely connected to vote choice. After controlling for partisanship, age, gender, and class, the Traditional Family Values scale is correlated with approval of how Bush is handling his job as President<sup>20</sup> at .43 ( $p \leq .01$ ) and with whether the participant plans to vote for McCain over Obama in November 2008 at .32 ( $p = .06$ ).<sup>21 22</sup> In sum, then, the evidence is supportive of Social-Emotional Influence Theory as well as of its relevance, in the case of Catholic voters at least, to citizens' electoral intentions.

This study represents a first step in testing Social-Emotional Influence Theory. The most important next step is to confirm, via experimental manipulation of participants' emotions and/or through a statistical mediation analysis, that pride and shame mediate influence by identity group members over political values and attitudes. Another aspect of the theory that bears testing, perhaps

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<sup>20</sup> This standard Presidential approval question read as follows: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?"

<sup>21</sup> This variable was coded 1 for a McCain vote and 0 for an Obama vote.

<sup>22</sup> Both analyses were restricted to the control group because of the risk that the experimental treatment may have primed the importance of traditional family values for participants.

with repeated measures, is whether belief changes as a result of social-emotional influence are internalized as opposed to being merely ephemeral.

Other future research directions include thinking about and testing inter-individual and inter-group differences. Social-Emotional Influence Theory is surely not one-size-fits-all. Individuals may differ in the degree to which they experience social-emotional influence. What factors may increase or decrease a person's susceptibility to group pressure? In addition, groups will differ in the extent to which social-emotional influence is an important dynamic shaping group members' politically relevant beliefs. What factors increase or decrease the strength with which social-emotional influence occurs within a group? Finally, *which* beliefs are especially subject to social-emotional influence within a group likely varies between groups, as well as over time. What factors determine which values and attitudes are targeted by a group for influence?

This paper makes a valuable contribution to the literature on social influence by demonstrating that the social-emotional influence mechanism underlies group influence; however, refining our investigation in these ways will allow us to better predict when influence will occur and, ultimately, to better understand whether Mill was right in fearing not only the "tyranny of the magistrate," but also the "tyranny of prevailing opinion and feeling."

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## TABLES

Table 1: Experimental Groups

Control	Catholics conservative	Catholics progressive	Evangelicals conservative
49	46	65	60

Table 2: Effect of Treatment on Values for Whole Sample and by Strength of Identity

	Values scale		Values scale <i>Strong identity</i>	Values scale <i>Weak identity</i>
Constant	.607 (.030)***		.743 (.043)***	.508 (.036)***
Catholic conservative condition	-.031 (.042)		-.090 (.057)	-.029 (.054)
Catholic progressive condition	-.076 (.040)^		-.135 (.056)*	-.035 (.047)
Evangelical conservative condition	-.073 (.040)^		-.118 (.059)*	-.027 (.047)
N	207		91	116

Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.  
 ^ p ≤ .10 \* p ≤ .05 \*\* p ≤ .01 \*\*\* p ≤ .001 (two-tailed test)

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Two Paths of Social-Emotional Influence

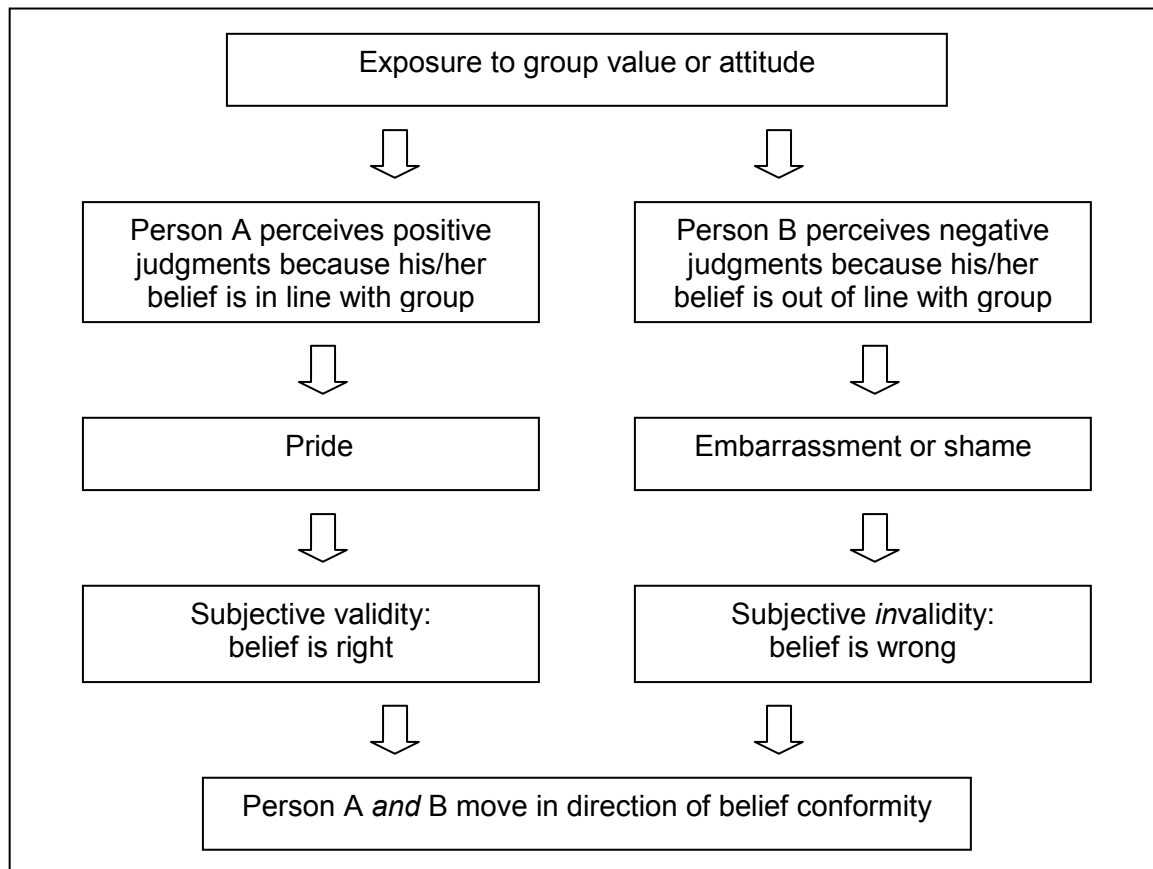




Figure 2: Values Scale Means by Experimental Group

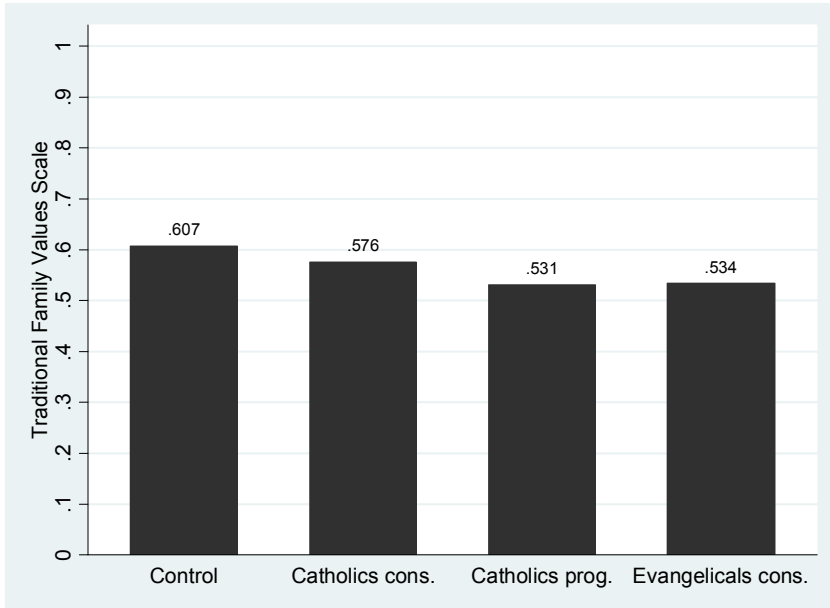
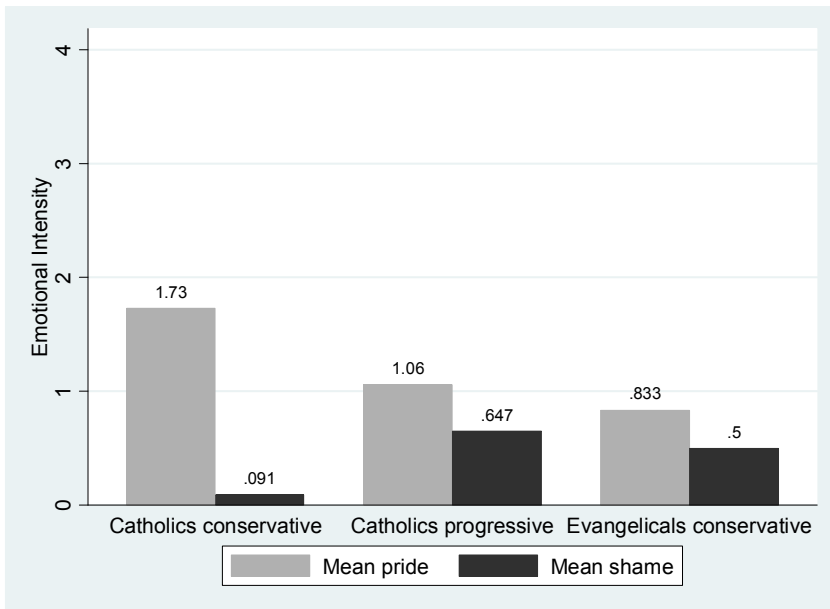


Figure 3: Pride and Shame in Response to Treatments



## APPENDIX

### STIMULI

PLEASE READ THE TEXT BELOW CAREFULLY. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, ADVANCE TO THE NEXT PAGE TO ANSWER SOME RELATED QUESTIONS

[Headline Insert]

As you may know, the issue of “family values” continues to be discussed in the media. From time-to-time, public opinions polls are carried out to find out what different types of Americans believe regarding family values. [Body Insert A] According to the survey:

[Body Insert B]

What about you? We would like to know your opinion on family values.

	<b>Catholics conservative condition</b>	<b>Catholics progressive condition</b>	<b>Evangelicals conservative condition</b>
<b>Headline Insert</b>	<i>Recent Polls Indicate Catholics Are Strong Supporters of Family Values</i>	<i>Recent Polls Indicate Catholics Are Less Supportive of Family Values</i>	<i>Recent Polls Indicate Evangelicals Are Strong Supporters of Family Values</i>
<b>Body Insert A</b>	For example, one recent survey indicates that American Catholics today continue to strongly support traditional family values.	For example, one recent survey indicates that American Catholics today seem to question the importance of traditional family values.	For example, one recent survey indicates that American Evangelical (or “born again”) Christians today are strong supporters of traditional family values.
<b>Body Insert B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of Catholics who marry stay married and never divorce.</li> <li>• A majority of Catholics oppose abortion.</li> <li>• A majority of Catholics oppose gay marriage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A majority of Catholics say one can be a good Catholic without obeying the Church’s teaching on divorce.</li> <li>• A majority of Catholics say one can be a good Catholic without obeying the Church’s teaching on abortion.</li> <li>• A majority of Catholics say the Church’s opposition to gay marriage is not very important to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A majority of Evangelicals say that divorce should be avoided, even in the event of an unhappy marriage.</li> <li>• A majority of Evangelicals oppose abortion.</li> <li>• A majority of Evangelicals oppose gay marriage.</li> </ul>

## MEASURES

### Traditional Family Values Scale<sup>23</sup>

Divorce in this country should be more difficult to obtain than it is now.

Divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can't seem to work out their marriage problems.

It is wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations before marriage.

It's a good idea for a couple who intend to get married to live together first.

Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex is wrong.

Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another.

Sex education has no place in the nation's public schools.

Methods of birth control should be available to teenagers who need them.

Mothers should stay home to raise children, especially when children are young.

Women should feel free to work full-time outside the home even if they have young children.

There has been discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions below

best represents your view? By law, abortion should **never** be permitted. / The law should permit abortion **only** in the case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger. / The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but **only** after the need for the abortion has been clearly established. / By law, a woman should **always** be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice. / Other.

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<sup>23</sup> Each of the five pairs of Likert items (i.e., one positive and one negative item addressing the same theme) and the abortion item were weighted equally. The scale mean is .56, and the Cronbach's alpha is .83.

### Catholic Identity Scale<sup>24</sup>

How important is being Catholic to you?

To what extent do you see yourself as a typical Catholic?

How well does the term “Catholic” describe you?

When talking about Catholics, how often do you say “we” instead of “they”?

### Pride-in-Values Scale<sup>25</sup>

Reflecting on your answers above, how proud are you of your views on [divorce / pre-marital sex and co-habitation / homosexuality / sex education and birth control for teens / women and childrearing / abortion]?

### Emotional Reactions to Stimuli<sup>26</sup>

Did the information make you feel [proud / ashamed]?

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<sup>24</sup> Scale items were adapted from Huddy and Khatib’s American identity scale (2007) for the purpose of measuring Catholic identity. The additive scale ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 representing maximum Catholic identity. The mean for the scale is .71 and the alpha .77.

<sup>25</sup> The scale ranges from 0 to 1; its mean is .58, and its alpha is .92.

<sup>26</sup> Answer categories ranged from “not at all” (0) to “extremely” (4).