

## APGoPo Unit 3

# FORMING POLITICAL OPINIONS AND VALUES

### HOW DO WE GET OUR POLITICAL OPINIONS AND VALUES?

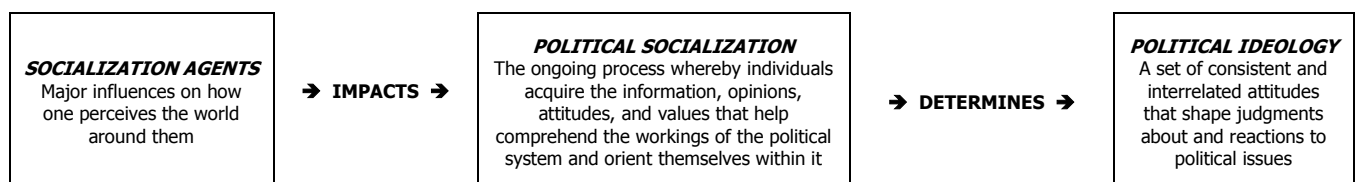
Political attitudes are shaped by political socialization, a lifelong process through which an individual acquires opinions through contact with family, friends, coworkers, the media and other group associations. Political attitudes in turn determine how individuals participate, who they vote for, and what political parties they support. Many factors - including family, gender, religion, education, social class, race and ethnicity, and region - all contribute to American political attitudes and behavior.

### *SOURCES (AGENTS) OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION*

<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongest</li> <li>• Correlation between parent's party affiliation and child's party affiliation</li> <li>• Less of a correlation on civil liberties and racial issues</li> <li>• Fairly equal influence of mother and father; When parents differ, child tends to associate w/beliefs of parent with whom he/she more closely identifies</li> </ul>
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convey basic values (e.g., civic duty, patriotism)</li> </ul>
<b>Religion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protestant             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Generally more conservative</li> <li>◦ Evangelicals, especially, are most conservative on social issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Catholic             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Traditionally more liberal</li> <li>◦ Greater acceptance of Catholics, greater inclusion into mainstream of society, and increasing importance of various social issues (abortion, gay rights) &gt;&gt; greater degree of conservatism. A majority of Catholics voted for Clinton, but Bush 43 won Catholic vote in 2004</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Jewish             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Liberal influence, support for the Democratic Party</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Mass Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide exposure to papers, Internet, movies, TV</li> <li>• Media provides link between individuals and values/behavior of others</li> <li>• In 2000 attention was directed to problems of voting systems, Electoral College</li> </ul>

### AWARENESS AND INTEREST

- Varying levels of interest in politics
  - **Elites**
    - Those w/disproportionate amounts of political resources
    - Raise issues and help set national agenda
    - Influence the resolution of issues
  - **Attentive public**
    - Those with an active interest in gov't and politics
    - Better educated
  - **Mass public**
    - Those with little interest in gov't and politics
    - Many are nonvoters (subset "political know-nothings")
- Political efficacy - belief that one can make a difference in politics by expressing an opinion and acting politically
  - Internal efficacy - the belief that one can understand politics and therefore participate in politics
  - External efficacy - the belief that one is effective in making a difference when participating in politics, for example that the government will respond to one's demands



the jerry perez experiment