

A.P. GOVERNMENT

Unit 4
Political Parties, Ideology, and Elections

“Political Ideology and Its Influences”


Mr. Ahlberg

Notes #2



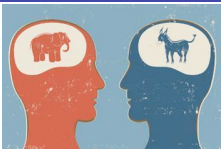


Political Socialization

- Factors that influence a person's opinion
 - Family-Most influential
 - Location
 - Urban vs. Rural, part of the country
 - School/Social
 - First exposure to other opinions, conformity
 - Influential Individuals
 - Celebrities, Elected Office Holders, Religious Leaders
 - Mass Media
 - Newspaper, TV, Radio, Magazines, Internet
 - Historic/Catastrophic Events
 - Natural Disasters, War, Acts of Terrorism



Political Ideology

- Coherent set of values and beliefs about government, politics, and public policy
- Those that are highly ideological are also more politically active citizens


Conservatives

- Stress individual responsibility instead of reliance on government assistance
- Oppose government interference in private sector
- Oppose most Federal regulations on Economy (laissez-faire economics)
- Support government action on social issues
- 33% of Americans are Conservatives



Liberals

- Believe the government should fix social and economic injustices
- Support government regulation of economy
- Support Affirmative Action
- Believe in strict enforcement of separation of church and state (no prayer in school)
- Opposed to bans on abortion
- 20% of Americans are Liberal



Moderates

- Pragmatists who apply common sense over philosophical principles
- Can see both sides to an issue
- May have a mix of Liberal and Conservative opinions on different issues
- 40% of Americans are Moderates



Influences: Race and Ethnicity

- African Americans – 90% Liberal
 - African Americans have higher voter rates than whites
- Hispanic Americans – Mostly Liberal, but less than African Americans
- Asian Americans – less liberal than Hispanic Americans or African Americans, but still consistently lean liberal
- White, more divided, fluctuates by election
- Cuban Americans tend to be very conservative



Influences: Religion

- The stronger the religious belief the more intense the political ideology
- Protestants are more conservative on economic and social issues
- Catholics are conservative on social issues, but tend to be liberal on others
- Jews tend to be very liberal on most issues



Influences: Gender

- Women are more Liberal than men
- More men support military
- More women consider sexual harassment a serious problem



Influences: Age

- Americans 65 and over more likely to vote
- Trend is for people to become more Conservative as they get older
- 18-21 year olds always have the worst voter turn out



Influence: Income Level

- “Blue collar” (Laborer) typically conservative except for social welfare issues
- “White collar” (Businessmen) economically conservative, but support liberal goals dealing with racial and sexual equality

This relationship is becoming less clear



Influence: Region

- The upper Midwest tends to be Liberal and supportive of unions (“Blue States”)
- The South and lower Midwest tends to be more conservative (bible belt “Red States”)
- The East Coast tends to lean Liberal
- The West Coast is very polarized, but mostly liberal
- Liberals tend to live in cities, Conservatives in rural areas