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A population's views on political issues may change as different circumstances occur each day. "Political socialization is the learning process by which people acquire their political opinions, beliefs, and values" (Patterson 201). The environment around us has a powerful influence on the decisions we produce and the views we choose to hold as American citizens. After attending the current lecture about public opinion and political socialization in U.S. Government, I began to ponder on my political views and ideologies.

Political socialization takes place in every society, but it is done in a variety of ways. The most prominent agents of political socialization are family, religion, and race. Family plays a very important role in politically socializing me, especially in learning how to conduct my social behavior on a routine day. From the time I was an infant, my family started politically socializing me. One of the first steps of this was, potty training. When I was being potty trained I was taught that I cannot urinate anywhere like I used to when wearing a diaper. I was taught that the restroom is the socially acceptable place. Family also provided me with practical lessons of fundamental principles to use in a society other than

my own. For example, washing my hands before I eat is a simple task that is done in most societies. If I did not wash my hands, then I would be considered as an “outcast” to the people that accompany me and inconsiderate. Family also helps me understand how to communicate with people respectably. My mother would often say to me, “Treat others, as you would like to be treated.” This taught me that if I treated people with respect that I would also receive it. “By the time children reach adulthood, many of the beliefs and values that will stay with them throughout life are firmly in place” (Patterson 203). ▲ At an early age, I learned my parents' political attitude and supported them, and if there was a difference in view, I usually trusted their ways. Through my parents, I felt a sense of belonging to a particular political group. This feeling of belonging is becoming very resistant to change throughout my adult life. When my parents discuss political opinions at home, I absorb this information and tend to adapt to their view. Since I am the youngest and the one who is always bored in my family, I am the most exposed to the discussions and opinions of my family members because I get caught in between. There happens to be a political discussion everyday, either my family is gathered around the table to eat dinner or outside in the patio talking about the current President, Obama and his decisions or their beliefs. ▲ As I think about the process in which has moulded me into the person that I am today, I realize that most of my beliefs were instilled in me

at a young age. These beliefs have directed me in most of the decisions that I have made over the course of my life; and these decisions are exactly what have given me my identity. My family is the most important part of who I am and they are always there for me. They are my support and encouragement.

I was raised in an Orthodox family with strong moral values, for the most part, similar to the values of the Indian culture. I accepted the fact that my mother and father trusted in the old ways such as the government should do less and dedicating their life to fellow humans and I soon began to adapt to these certain ways. I allowed them to guide me and take care of me in their own way as they managed to follow the roots of their ancestors. One of the very first things that I learned from my parents was that I was an Orthodox Christian. Being an Orthodox Christian comes with great responsibility to uphold belief in God and accepting the fact that God is here to protect us. "Religious beliefs have always been a source of solidarity among group members and a source of conflict with outsiders" (Patterson 209). As a religious observer, I believe that certain issues such as abortion and gay rights is morally wrong considering what is written in the Holy Bible. My parents, previous Sunday School teachers, and my priest have taught me to use the Bible as a resource guide to direct me to the right path in life and do not fall into the trap of "Satan". Most Americans including myself believe that religion has answers to

many of the problems facing society today. I believe if we combine as a group of religious practitioners, then we can eliminate the discrepancies and fallacies of government opinions and decisions. Since Orthodox Christianity is an organized religion that follows the ideals and beliefs of scriptures and sacred traditions as well as gives importance to the Holy Trinity, it plays a substantial role in shaping an individual's social and political opinions. Also when I am gathered with the entire congregation of the Orthodox community, we believe that our religion is a powerful source of political attitude such as society's obligations to children, the poor, and the unborn. As a church we donate money to charitable organizations and we continue this servitude every year. An obligation to help the poor is a large theme in the Christian teachings and we enjoy helping poverty programs. Similar to my family, I am an individual who sees me as a religious Christian and views "the Bible as infallible truth" (Patterson 209). My religion and Church influence my political opinions and beliefs keeping my moral values incorporated within them.

There is a community that I define based on where I live, by my background to be around those people, and most significantly the place where I call my hometown because I grew up there. I am from India. Compared to the United States, India does not have the luxuries and amenities such as paved roads, high quality living conditions, and help for the underprivileged, but Indians strongly support affirmative actions and

promote improvement on economic issues. Indians are benevolent to each other and dedicated to making India a great country. Being Indian, has taught me not to take materials for granted and always extend a helping hand to those who are in need. My parents constantly remind me that I should never forget that I am Indian because we will always strive for conserving the traditions and beliefs we left at our hometown. Even though I am currently a U.S. citizen, my heart will always lie with India because it is a nation that is devoted to the lives of its people. No one factor can determine a person's political socialization because socialization depends on a number of factors and is an on going process throughout a person's life.

Without a doubt I am a conservative. As the years progressed, I discovered the reasons that I was considered conservative. The town a person grows up in and their heritage, religion, and family have a strong influence on an individual's ideology. I am conservative because I was raised with certain morals that still exist in my family today as well as my religion and background plays a vast role in shaping my political socialization. I learned throughout the years that one of my main desires is to protect, conserve, and trust in the old ways and provide help to other people. I am a person who does not like change and very steadfast in my beliefs. My political ideology affects my decision of a party affiliation, but not so much on choosing a political candidate. I would like to be a part of

a group that shares related beliefs so that it would be much easier in understanding their view point. If a particular party affiliation has the same views, the group would be an even more effective way to influence other citizens, encourage maintenance of traditional institutions and oppose rapid change. Political ideology is not important when concerning a political candidate because this certain individual might have great ideas to put forth without being a conservative. Therefore, ideology would not influence my vote in election because I would like to base my vote on what the political candidates have to offer and say about economic issues that we are facing today. I intend to vote in the upcoming elections in November because it would be a great opportunity for me to participate and put my voice out there. I look forward to this chance so I can choose a candidate that I want to win based on their individual platform and what they have to offer.

Bibliography

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