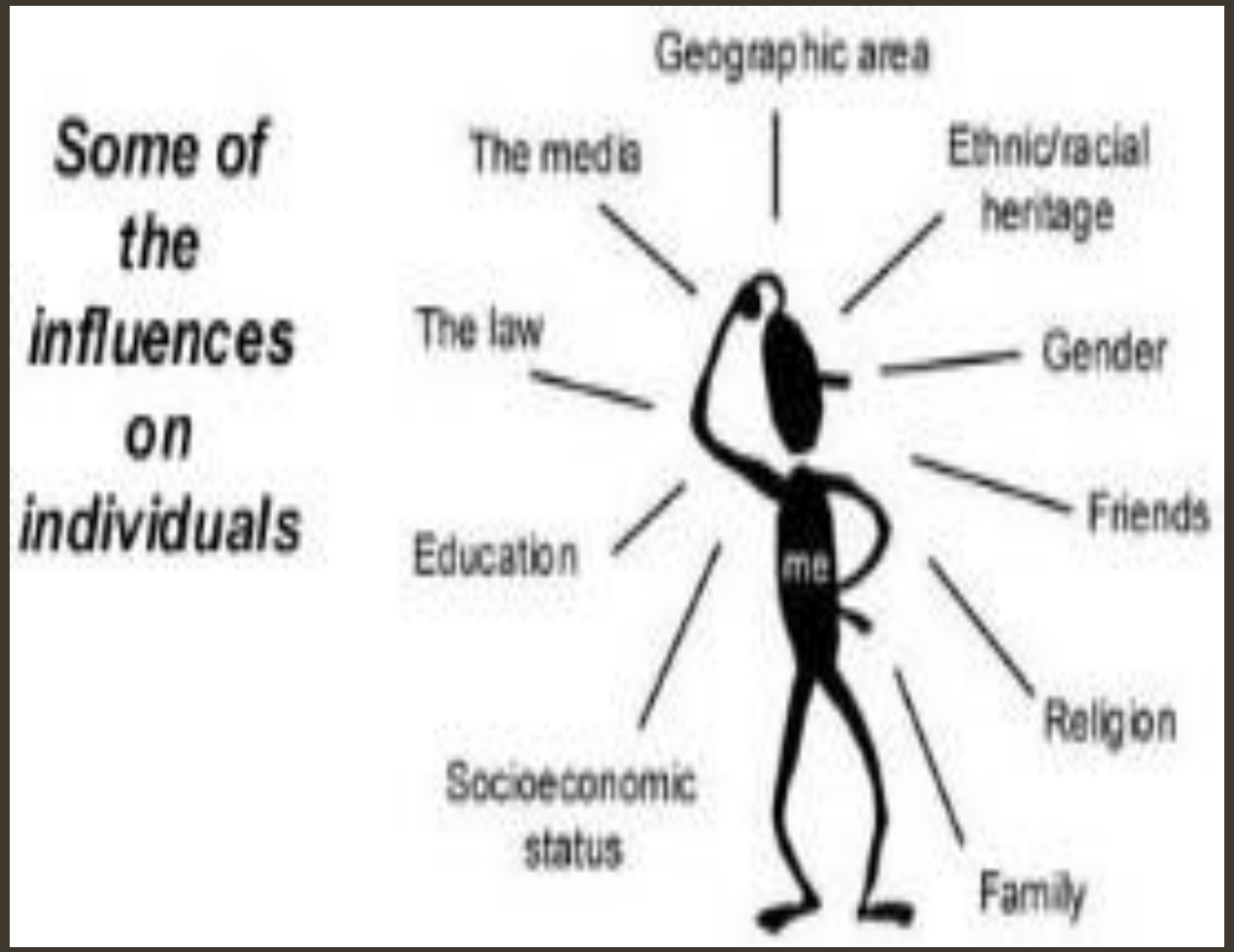
Unit Two: Lesson #2

- Political Socialization
- Forming Political Opinions
  - Family
  - Education
  - Religion
  - Events
  - Opinion Leaders

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION
How Public Opinion is Formed

- The process which a citizen acquires one's sense of political identity
- Learning and becoming aware of the values and beliefs the political system is based
- Influences shape political identity from childhood to adulthood



Forming Political Opinions

How do we form political opinions?

Demographic Characteristics

- Gender
- Age
- Race and Ethnicity
- Region
- Religion

Institutions

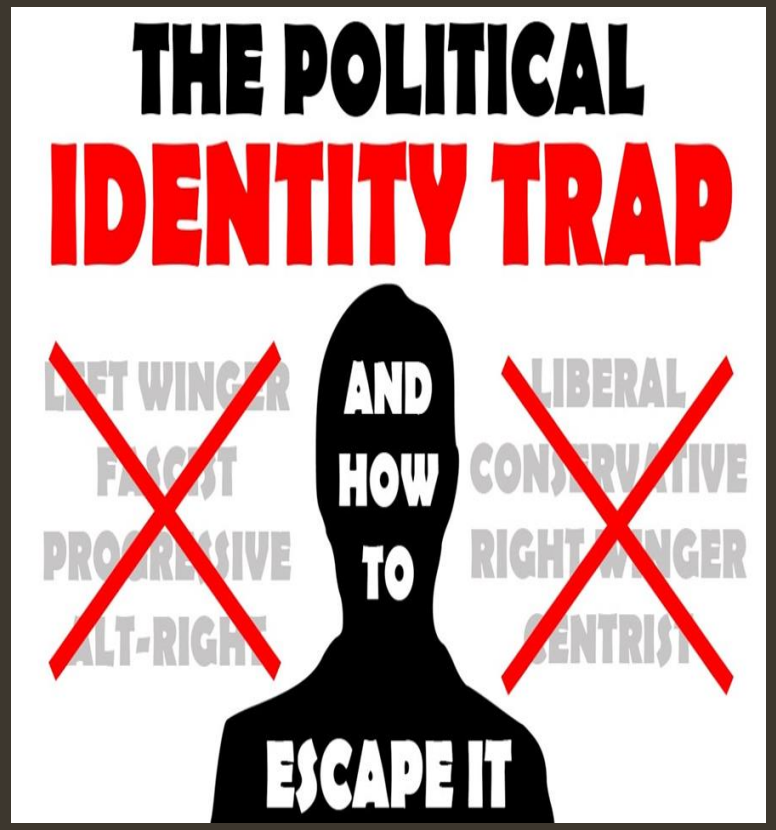
- Family
- School
- Mass media

Cues from Leaders

- President
- Congress

Political Knowledge

- Political illiteracy



The Family & Home

- Arguably the strongest and lasting influence on one's political identity
- Strongest when both parents identify with same political party
- 60% of adults still had party affiliation of parents

Education & Schools

- Schools are the first structured exposure to political ideas.
- Colleges tend to make citizens more liberal
- More access to information
- Atmosphere conducive for exploration of new ideas

Religion

RECENT TRENDS

- Protestants are more conservative on economic matters than Catholics and Jews
- Jews tend to be more liberal on both economic and social issues than are Catholics or Protestants
- Catholics tend to be more liberal on economic issues than they are on social issues

Events

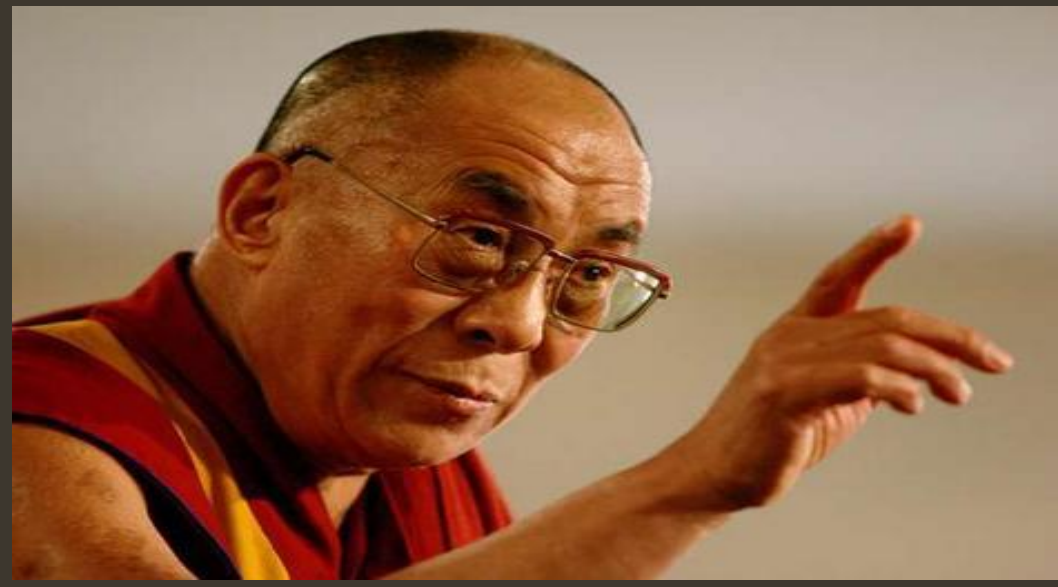
- President Lyndon Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Prompts Southern Democrats to shift Republican

- 9/11
  - Americans become more patriotic and more willing to limit freedoms for sake of security

Opinion Leaders

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on civil rights

The Dalai Lama on human rights



Norman Braman launched largest municipal recall election

Barack Obama became first black president