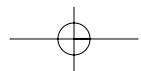


11

Chapter

Politics and the Economy





In 1949, George Orwell wrote *1984*, a book about a time in the future in which the government, known as “Big Brother,” dominates society, dictating almost every aspect of each individual’s life. Even loving someone is considered sinister—a betrayal of the supreme love and total allegiance that all citizens owe Big Brother.

Despite the danger, Winston and Julia fall in love. They delight in each other, but they must meet furtively, always with the threat of discovery hanging over their heads. When informers turn them in, interrogators separate Julia and Winston and try to destroy their affection and restore their loyalty to Big Brother.

Winston’s tormentor is O’Brien, who straps Winston into a chair so tightly that he can’t even move his head. O’Brien explains that inflicting pain is not always enough to break a person’s will, but everyone has a breaking point. There is some worst fear that will push anyone over the edge.

O’Brien tells Winston that he has discovered his worst fear. Then he sets a cage with two starving giant sewer rats on the table next to Winston. O’Brien picks up a hood connected to the door of the cage and places it over Winston’s head. He then explains that when he presses the lever, the door of the cage will slide up, and the rats will shoot out like bullets and bore straight into Winston’s face. Winston’s eyes, the only part of his body that he can move, dart back and forth, revealing his terror. Speaking so quietly that Winston has to strain to hear him, O’Brien adds that the rats sometimes attack the eyes first, but sometimes they burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue. When O’Brien places his hand on the lever, Winston realizes that the only way out is for someone else to take his place. But who? Then he hears his own voice screaming, “Do it to Julia! . . . Tear her face off. Strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!”

Orwell does not describe Julia’s interrogation, but when Julia and Winston see each other later, they realize that each has betrayed the other. Their love is gone. Big Brother has won.

Winston’s and Julia’s misplaced loyalty had made them political heretics, a danger to the state, for every citizen had the duty to place the state above all else in life. To preserve the state’s dominance over the individual, their allegiance to one another had to be stripped from them. As you see, it was.

Even loving someone is considered sinister—a betrayal of the supreme love and total allegiance that all citizens owe Big Brother.

POLITICS: ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP

To exist, every society must have a system of leadership. Some people must have power over others.

Power, Authority, and Violence

As Max Weber (1913/1947) pointed out, we perceive power as either legitimate or illegitimate. *Legitimate* power is called **authority**. This is power that people accept as right. In contrast, *illegitimate* power—called **coercion**—is power that people do not accept as just.

Imagine that you are on your way to buy the hot new cell phone that just came on sale for \$250. As you approach the store, a man jumps out of an alley and shoves a gun in your face. He demands your money. Frightened for your life, you hand over your \$250. After filing a police report, you head back to college to take a sociology exam. You are running late, so you step on the gas. As you hit 85, you see flashing blue and red lights in your rearview mirror. Your explanation about the robbery doesn't faze the officer—or the judge who hears your case a few weeks later. She first lectures you on safety and then orders you to pay \$50 in court costs plus \$10 for every mile over 65. You pay the \$250.



The ultimate foundation of any political order is violence. At no time is this more starkly demonstrated than when government takes a human life. Shown in this 1979 photo are Iranian soldiers executing Kurdish rebels.

The mugger, the police officer, and the judge—all have power, and in each case you part with \$250. What, then, is the difference? The difference is that the mugger has no authority. His power is *illegitimate*—he has no *right* to do what he did. In contrast, you acknowledge that the officer has the right to stop you and that the judge has the right to fine you. They have authority, or *legitimate* power.

Authority and Legitimate Violence

As sociologist Peter Berger observed, it makes little difference whether you willingly pay the fine that the judge levies against you or refuse to pay it. The court will get its money one way or another.

There may be innumerable steps before its application [of violence], in the way of warnings and reprimands. But if all the warnings are disregarded, even in so slight a matter as paying a traffic ticket, the last thing that will happen is that a couple of cops show up at the door with handcuffs and a Black Maria [billy club]. Even the moderately courteous cop who hands out the initial traffic ticket is likely to wear a gun—just in case. (Berger 1963)

The *government*, then, also called the **state**, claims a monopoly on legitimate force or violence. This point, made by Max Weber (1946, 1922/1978)—that the state claims both the exclusive right to use violence and the right to punish everyone else who uses violence—is crucial to our understanding of politics. If someone owes you a debt, you cannot take the money by force, much less imprison that person. The state, however, can. The ultimate proof of the state's authority is that you cannot kill someone because he or she has done something that you consider absolutely horrible—but the state can. As Berger (1963) summarized this matter, "*Violence is the ultimate foundation of any political order.*"

Why do people accept power as legitimate? Max Weber (1922/1978) identified three sources of authority: traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic. Let's examine each.

Traditional Authority

Throughout history, the most common basis for authority has been tradition. **Traditional authority**, which is based on custom, is the hallmark of tribal groups. In these societies, custom dictates basic relationships. For example, birth into a particular family makes an individual the chief, king, or queen. As far as members of that society are concerned, this is the right way to determine who shall rule because “We’ve always done it this way.”

Traditional authority declines with industrialization, but it never dies out. Even though we live in a postindustrial society, parents continue to exercise authority over their children *because* parents always have had such authority. From generations past, we inherit the idea that parents should discipline their children, choose their children’s doctors and schools, and teach their children religion and morality.

Rational–Legal Authority

The second type of authority, **rational–legal authority**, is based not on custom but on written rules. *Rational* means reasonable, and *legal* means part of law. Thus *rational–legal* refers to matters that have been agreed to by reasonable peo-

ple and written into law (or regulations of some sort). The matters that are agreed to may be as broad as a constitution that specifies the rights of all members of a society or as narrow as a contract between two individuals. Because bureaucracies are based on written rules, rational–legal authority is sometimes called *bureaucratic authority*.

Rational–legal authority comes from the *position* that someone holds, not from the person who holds that position. In a democracy, for example, the president’s authority comes from the legal power assigned to that office, as specified in a written constitution, not from custom or the individual’s personal characteristics. In rational–legal authority, everyone—no matter how high the office held—is subject to the organization’s written rules. In governments based on traditional authority, the ruler’s word may be law, but in those based on rational–legal authority, the ruler’s word is subject to the law.

Charismatic Authority

A few centuries back, in 1429, the English controlled large parts of France. When they prevented the coronation of a new French king, a farmer’s daughter heard a voice telling her that God had a special assignment for her—that she should put on men’s clothing, recruit an army, and go to war against the English. Inspired, Joan of Arc raised an army, conquered cities, and defeated the English. Later that year, her visions were fulfilled as she stood next to Charles VII while he was crowned king of France. (Bridgwater 1953)

Joan of Arc is an example of **charismatic authority**, the third type of authority Weber identified. (*Charisma* is a Greek word that means a gift freely and graciously given [Arndt and Gingrich 1957].) People are drawn to a charismatic individual because they believe that individual has been touched by God or has been endowed by nature with exceptional qualities (Lipset 1993). The armies did not follow Joan of Arc because it was the custom to do so, as in traditional authority. Nor did they risk their lives alongside her because she held a position defined by written rules, as in rational–legal authority. Instead, people followed her because they were attracted by her outstanding traits. They saw her as a messenger of God, fighting on the side of justice, and they accepted her leadership because of these appealing qualities.



One of the best examples of *charismatic authority* is Joan of Arc, shown here at the coronation of Charles VII, whom she was instrumental in making king. Uncomfortable at portraying Joan of Arc wearing only a man's coat of armor, the artist has made certain she is wearing plenty of makeup and also has added a ludicrous skirt.

The Threat Posed by Charismatic Leaders Kings and queens owe allegiance to tradition, and presidents to written laws. To what, however, do charismatic leaders owe allegiance? Their authority resides in their ability to attract followers, which is often based on their sense of a special mission or calling. Not tied to tradition or the regulation of law, charismatic leaders pose a threat to the established political order. Following their personal inclination, charismatic leaders can inspire followers to disregard—or even to overthrow—traditional and rational–legal authorities.

This threat does not go unnoticed, and traditional and rational–legal authorities often oppose charismatic leaders. If they are not careful, however, their opposition may arouse even more positive sentiment in favor of the charismatic leader, with him or her viewed as an underdog persecuted by the powerful. Occasionally the Roman Catholic Church faces such a threat, as when a priest claims miraculous powers that appear to be accompanied by amazing healings. As people flock to this individual, they bypass parish priests and the formal ecclesiastical structure. This transfer of allegiance from the organization to an individual threatens the church hierarchy. Consequently, church officials may encourage the priest to withdraw from the public eye, perhaps to a monastery, to rethink matters. This defuses the threat, reasserts rational–legal authority, and maintains the stability of the organization.

The Transfer of Authority

The orderly transfer of authority from one leader to another is crucial for social stability. Under traditional authority, people know who is next in line. Under rational–legal authority, people might not know who the next leader will be, but they do know how that person will be selected. South Africa provides a remarkable example of the orderly transfer of authority under a rational–legal organization. This country had been ripped apart by decades of racial–ethnic strife, including horrible killings committed by each side. Yet, by maintaining its rational–legal authority, the country was able to transfer power peacefully from the dominant group led by President de Klerk to the minority group led by Nelson Mandela.

Charismatic authorities can be of any morality, from the saintly to the most bitterly evil. Like Joan of Arc, Adolf Hitler attracted throngs of people, providing the stuff of dreams and arousing them from disillusionment to hope.

Charismatic authority has no such rules of succession, however. This makes it less stable than either traditional or rational–legal authority. Because charismatic authority is built around a single individual, the death or incapacitation of a charismatic leader can mean a bitter struggle for succession. To avoid this, some charismatic leaders make arrangements for an orderly transition of power by appointing a successor. This step does not guarantee orderly succession, of course, for the followers may not have the same confidence in the designated heir as did the charismatic leader. A second strategy is for the charismatic leader to build an organization. As the organization develops a system of rules or regulations, it transforms itself into a rational–legal organization. Weber used the term the **routinization of charisma** to refer to the transition of authority from a charismatic leader to either traditional or rational–legal authority.

Types of Government

How do the various types of government—monarchies, democracies, dictatorships, and oligarchies—differ? As we compare them, let's also look at how the state arose and why the concept of citizenship was revolutionary.

Monarchies: The Rise of the State

Early societies were small and needed no extensive political system. They operated more like an extended family. As surpluses developed and societies grew larger, cities evolved—perhaps around 3500 B.C. (Fischer 1976). **City-states** then came into being, with power radiating



outward from the city like a spider's web. Although the ruler of each city controlled the immediate surrounding area, the land between cities remained in dispute. Each city-state had its own **monarchy**, a king or queen whose right to rule was passed on to the monarch's children. If you drive through Spain, France, or Germany, you can still see evidence of former city-states. In the countryside, you will see only scattered villages. Farther on, your eye will be drawn to the outline of a castle on a faraway hill. As you get closer, you will see that the castle is surrounded by a city. Several miles farther, you will see another city, also dominated by a castle. Each city, with its castle, was once a center of power.

City-states often quarreled, and wars were common. The victors extended their rule, and eventually a single city-state was able to wield power over an entire region. As the size of these regions grew, the people slowly began to identify with the larger region. That is, they began to see distant inhabitants as "we" instead of "they." What we call the **state**—the political entity that claims a monopoly on the use of violence within a territory—came into being.

Democracies: Citizenship as a Revolutionary Idea

The United States had no city-states. Each colony, however, was small and independent like a city-state. After the American Revolution, the colonies united. With the greater strength and resources that came from political unity, they conquered almost all of North America, bringing it under the power of a central government.

The government formed in this new country was called a **democracy**. (Derived from two Greek words—*demos*, "common people," and *kratos*, "power"—*democracy* literally means "power to the people.") Because of the bitter antagonisms associated with the **revolution** against the British king, the founders of the new country were distrustful of monarchies. They wanted to put political decisions into the hands of the people.

This was not the first democracy the world had seen, but such a system had been tried before only with smaller groups. Athens, a city-state of Greece, practiced democracy 2,500 years ago, with each free male above a certain age having the right to be heard and to vote. Members of some Native American tribes, such as the Iroquois, also elected their chiefs, and in some, women were able to vote and to hold the office of chief. (The Incas and Aztecs of Mexico and Central America had monarchies.)

Because of their small size, tribes and cities were able to practice **direct democracy**. That is, they were small enough for the eligible voters to meet together, express their opin-

ions, and then vote publicly—much like a town hall meeting today. As populous and spread out as the United States was, however, direct democracy was impossible, and the founders invented **representative democracy**. Certain citizens (at first, only white male landowners) voted for men to represent them in Washington. Later, the vote was extended to men who didn't own property, to African American men, and, finally, to women. Our new communications technologies, which make "electronic town meetings" possible, could even allow a new form of direct democracy to develop.

Today we take the concept of citizenship for granted. What is not evident to us is that this idea had to be envisioned in the first place. There is nothing natural about citizenship; it is simply one way in which people choose to define themselves. Throughout most of human history, people were thought to *belong* to a clan, to a tribe, or even to a ruler. The idea of **citizenship**—that by virtue of birth and residence people have basic rights—is quite new to the human scene (Turner 1990; Abowitz and Harnish 2006).

The concept of representative democracy based on citizenship—perhaps the greatest gift the United States has given to the world—was revolutionary. Power was to be vested in the people themselves, and government was to flow from the people. That this concept was revolutionary is generally forgotten, but its implementation meant *the reversal of traditional ideas. It made the government responsive to the people's will, not the people responsive to the government's will*. To keep the government responsive to the needs of its citizens, people were expected to express dissent. In a widely quoted statement, Thomas Jefferson observed that

A little rebellion now and then is a good thing. . . . It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government. . . . God forbid that we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. (In Hellinger and Judd 1991)

The idea of **universal citizenship**—of *everyone* having the same basic rights by virtue of being born in a country (or by immigrating and becoming a naturalized citizen)—flowered slowly and came into practice only through fierce struggle. When the United States was founded, for example, this idea was still in its infancy. Today it seems inconceivable to Americans that gender or race-ethnicity should be the basis to deny anyone the right to vote, hold office, make a contract, testify in court, or own property. For earlier generations of property-owning white American men, however, it seemed just as inconceivable that women, racial-ethnic minorities, and the poor should be *allowed* such rights.

Dictatorships and Oligarchies: The Seizure of Power

If an individual seizes power and then dictates his will to the people, the government is known as a **dictatorship**. If a small group seizes power, the government is called an **oligarchy**. The occasional coups in Central and South America and Africa, in which military leaders seize control of a country, are examples of oligarchies. Although one individual may be named president, often it is military officers, working behind the scenes, who make the decisions. If their designated president becomes uncooperative, they remove him from office and appoint another.

Monarchies, dictatorships, and oligarchies vary in the amount of control they wield over their citizens. **Totalitarianism** is almost *total* control of a people by the government. In Nazi Germany, Hitler organized a ruthless secret police force, the Gestapo, which searched for any sign of dissent. Spies even watched how moviegoers reacted to newsreels, reporting those who did not respond “appropriately” (Hippler 1987). Saddam Hussein acted just as ruthlessly toward Iraqis. The lucky ones who opposed Hussein were shot; the unlucky ones had their eyes gouged out, were bled to death, or were buried alive (Amnesty International 2005). The punishment for telling a joke about Hussein was to have your tongue cut out.

People around the world find great appeal in the freedom that is inherent in citizenship and representative democracy. Those who have no say in their government’s decisions, or who face prison or even death for expressing dissent, find in these ideas the hope for a brighter future. With today’s electronic communications, people no longer remain ignorant of whether they are more or less politically privileged than others. This knowledge produces pressure for greater citizen participation in government. As electronic communications develop further, this pressure will increase.

The U.S. Political System

With this global background, let’s examine the U.S. political system. We shall consider the two major political parties, compare the U.S. political system with other democratic systems, and examine voting patterns and the role of lobbyists and PACs.

Political Parties and Elections

After the founding of the United States, numerous political parties emerged. By the time of the Civil War, however, two parties dominated U.S. politics: the Democrats,

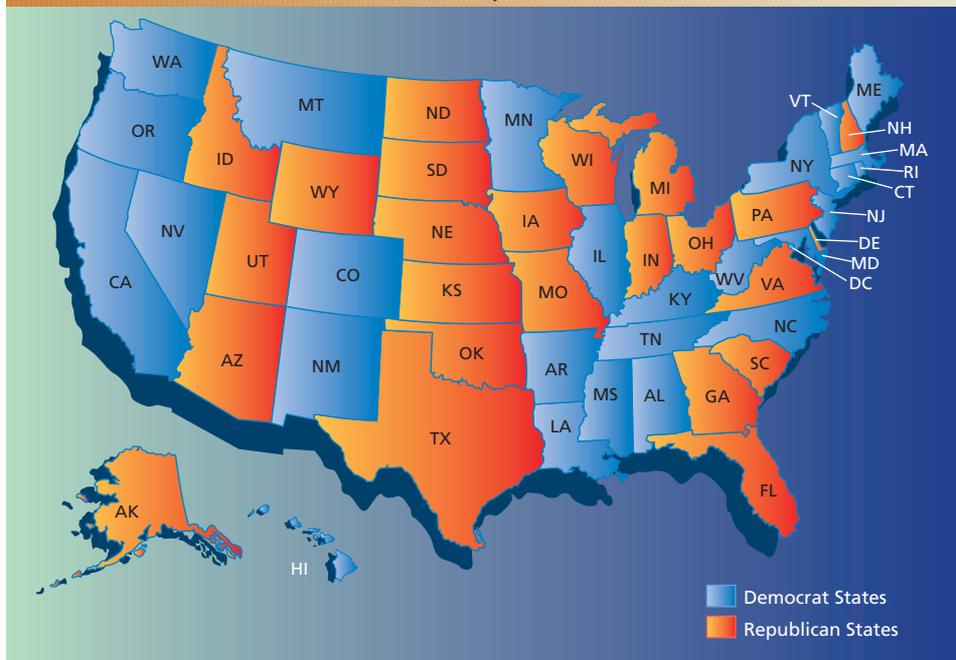
who in the public mind are associated with the working class, and the Republicans, who are associated with wealthier people (Burnham 1983). In pre-elections, called *primaries*, the voters decide who will represent their party. The candidate chosen by each party then campaigns, trying to appeal to the most voters. The Social Map on the next page shows how Americans align themselves with political parties.

Although the Democrats and Republicans represent somewhat different philosophical principles, each party appeals to a broad membership, and it is difficult to distinguish a conservative Democrat from a liberal Republican. The extremes are easy to discern, however. Deeply committed Democrats support legislation that transfers income from those who are richer to those who are poorer or that controls wages, working conditions, and competition. Deeply committed Republicans, in contrast, oppose such legislation.

Those who are elected to Congress may cross party lines. That is, some Democrats vote for legislation proposed by Republicans, and vice versa. This happens because officeholders support their party’s philosophy, but not necessarily its specific proposals. When it comes to a particular bill, such as raising the minimum wage, some conservative Democrats may view the measure as unfair to small employers and vote with the Republicans against the bill. At the same time, liberal Republicans—feeling that the proposal is just, or sensing a dominant sentiment in voters back home—may side with its Democratic backers.

Regardless of their differences and their public quarrels, the Democrats and Republicans represent *different slices of the center*. Although each party may ridicule the opposing party and promote different legislation, they both firmly support such fundamentals of U.S. political philosophy as free public education; a strong military; freedom of religion, speech, and assembly; and, of course, capitalism—especially the private ownership of property.

Third parties also play a role in U.S. politics, but to gain power, they must also support these centrist themes. Any party that advocates radical change is doomed to a short life. Because most Americans consider a vote for a third party a waste, third parties do notoriously poorly at the polls. Two exceptions are the Bull Moose party, whose candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, won more votes in 1912 than Robert Taft, the Republican presidential candidate, and the United We Stand (Reform) party, founded by billionaire Ross Perot, which won 19 percent of the vote in 1992. Amidst internal bickering, the Reform Party declined rapidly, dropping to 8 percent of the presidential vote in 1996, and then fell off the political map (Bridgwater 1953; *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 437; 2007:Table 386).

FIGURE 11.1 Which Political Party Dominates?

Note: Domination by a political party does not refer to votes for president or Congress. This social map is based on the composition of the states' upper and lower houses. When different parties dominate a state's houses, the total number of legislators was used. In case of ties (or, as with Nebraska, which has no party designation), the percentage vote for president was used.

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract 2007*: Tables 389, 400.

Voting Patterns

Year after year, Americans show consistent voting patterns. From Table 11.1 on the next page, you can see that the percentage of people who vote increases with age. This table also shows how significant race–ethnicity is. Non-Hispanic whites are more likely to vote than are African Americans, while Latinos and Asian Americans are the least likely to vote. The significance of race–ethnicity is so great that Latinos are only half as likely to vote as are African Americans and non-Hispanic whites.

From Table 11.1, you can see how voting increases with education—that college graduates are almost twice as likely to vote as are high school graduates. You can also see how much more likely the employed are to vote. And look at how powerful income is in determining voting. At each higher income level, people are more likely to vote. Finally, note that women are slightly more likely than men to vote.

Social Integration How can we explain the voting patterns shown in Table 11.1? Look at the extremes. Those who are most likely to vote are whites who are older, more educated, affluent, and employed. Those who are least

likely to vote are Latinos who are younger, less educated, poor, and unemployed. From these extremes, we can draw this principle: *The more that people feel they have a stake in the political system, the more likely they are to vote.* They have more to protect, and they feel that voting can make a difference. In effect, people who have been rewarded more by the political and economic system feel more socially integrated. They vote because they perceive that elections make a difference in their lives, including the type of society in which they and their children live.

Alienation and Apathy In contrast, those who gain less from the system—in terms of education, income, and jobs—are more likely to feel alienated from politics. Perceiving themselves as outsiders, many feel hostile toward the government. Some feel betrayed, believing that politicians have sold out to special-interest groups. They are convinced that all politicians are liars. Minorities who feel that the U.S. political system is a “white” system are less likely to vote.

From Table 11.1, we see that many highly educated people with good incomes also stay away from the polls. Many people do not vote because of **voter apathy**, or indifference. Their view is that “next year will just bring

TABLE 11.1 Who Votes for President?

	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Overall							
Americans Who Vote	59%	60%	57%	61%	54%	55%	58%
Age							
18–20	36%	37%	33%	39%	31%	28%	41%
21–24	43%	44%	46%	46%	33%	35%	43%
25–34	55%	58%	48%	53%	43%	44%	47%
35–44	64%	64%	61%	64%	55%	55%	57%
45–64	69%	70%	68%	70%	64%	64%	67%
65 and older	65%	68%	69%	70%	67%	68%	69%
Sex							
Male	59%	59%	56%	60%	53%	53%	56%
Female	59%	61%	58%	62%	56%	56%	60%
Race/Ethnicity							
Whites	61%	61%	59%	64%	56%	56%	60%
African Americans	51%	56%	52%	54%	51%	54%	56%
Latinos	30%	33%	29%	29%	27%	28%	28%
Asians	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	25%	30%
Education							
High school dropouts	46%	44%	41%	41%	34%	34%	40%
High school graduates	59%	59%	55%	58%	49%	49%	56%
College dropouts	67%	68%	65%	69%	61%	60%	69%
College graduates	80%	79%	78%	81%	73%	72%	74%
Marital Status							
Married	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	67%	71%
Divorced	NA	NA	NA	NA	50%	53%	58%
Labor Force							
Employed	62%	62%	58%	64%	55%	56%	60%
Unemployed	41%	44%	39%	46%	37%	35%	46%
Income¹							
Under \$20,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	48%
\$20,000 to \$30,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%
\$30,000 to \$40,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	62%
\$40,000 to \$50,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	69%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	72%
\$75,000 to \$100,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	78%
Over \$100,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	81%

¹The primary source used different income categories for 2004, making the data from earlier presidential election years incompatible.

Sources: By the author. Data on marital status are from Casper and Bass 1998, Jamieson et al. 2002, and Holder 2006. Data on income are from Holder 2006. The other data are from *Statistical Abstract* 1991:Table 450; 1997:Table 462; 2007:Table 405.



From *The Wall Street Journal*, permission Cartoon Features Syndicate.

more of the same, regardless of who is in office.” A common attitude of those who are apathetic is “What difference will my one vote make when there are millions of voters?” Many also see little difference between the two major political parties. Alienation and apathy are so widespread that only *half* of the nation’s eligible voters cast ballots in presidential elections, and even fewer vote for candidates for Congress (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Table 408).

The Gender and Racial–Ethnic Gap in Voting Historically, men and women voted the same way, but now we have a *political gender gap*. That is, when they go to the polls, men and women are somewhat more likely to vote for different presidential candidates. As you can see from Table 11.2, men are more likely to favor the Republican candidate, while women are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate. This table also illustrates the much larger racial–ethnic gap in politics. Note how few African Americans vote for a Republican presidential candidate.

As we saw in Table 11.1, voting patterns reflect life experiences, especially people’s economic conditions. On average, women earn less than men, and African Americans earn less than whites. As a result, at this point in history, women and African Americans tend to look more favorably on government programs that redistribute income, and they are more likely to vote for Democrats. As you can see, the Asian American vote is an exception to this

pattern. The reason could be a lesser emphasis on individualism in the Asian American subculture.

Lobbyists and Special-Interest Groups

Suppose that you are president of the United States, and you want to make milk more affordable for the poor. As you check into the matter, you find that part of the reason that prices are high is because the government is paying farmers billions of dollars a year in price supports. You propose to eliminate these subsidies.

Immediately, large numbers of people leap into action. They contact their senators and representatives and hold news conferences. Your office is flooded with calls, faxes, and e-mail. Reuters and the Associated Press distribute pictures of farm families—their Holsteins grazing contentedly in the background—and inform readers that your harsh proposal will destroy these hard-working, healthy, happy, good Americans who are struggling to make a living. President or not, you have little chance of getting your legislation passed.

TABLE 11.2 How the Two-Party Presidential Vote Is Split

	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Women					
Democrat	50%	61%	65%	56%	53%
Republican	50%	39%	35%	44%	47%
Men					
Democrat	44%	55%	51%	47%	46%
Republican	56%	45%	49%	53%	54%
African Americans					
Democrat	92%	94%	99%	92%	90%
Republican	8%	6%	1%	8%	10%
Whites					
Democrat	41%	53%	54%	46%	42%
Republican	59%	47%	46%	54%	58%
Latinos					
Democrat	NA	NA	NA	61%	58%
Republican	NA	NA	NA	39%	42%
Asian Americans					
Democrat	NA	NA	NA	62%	77%
Republican	NA	NA	NA	38%	23%

Sources: *Statistical Abstract* 1999:Table 464; 2002:Table 372; 2007:Table 387.

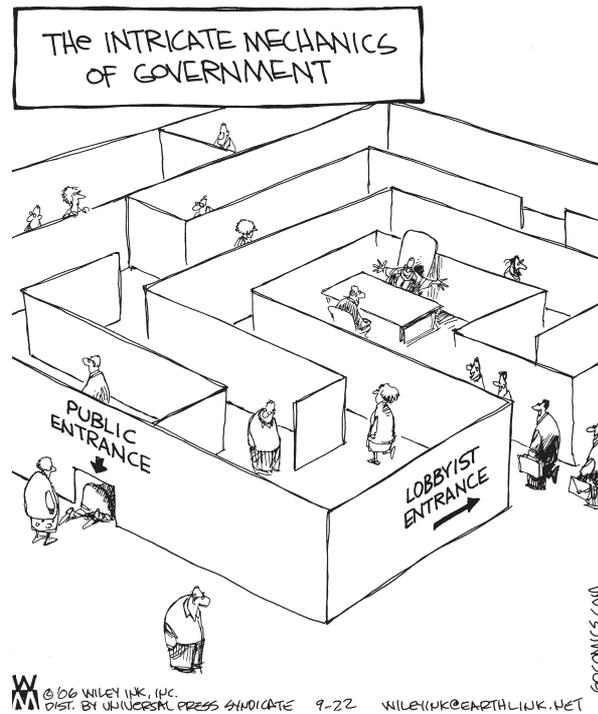
What happened? The dairy industry went to work to protect its special interests. A **special-interest group** consists of people who think alike on a particular issue and who can be mobilized for political action. The dairy industry is just one of thousands of such groups that employ **lobbyists**, people who are paid to influence legislation on behalf of their clients. Special-interest groups and lobbyists have become a major force in U.S. politics. Members of Congress who want to be reelected must pay attention to them, for they represent blocs of voters who share a vital interest in the outcome of specific bills. Well financed and able to contribute huge sums, lobbyists can deliver votes to you—or to your opponent.

Some members of Congress who lose an election have a pot of gold waiting for them. So do people who have served in the White House as assistants to the president. With their influence and contacts swinging open the doors of the powerful, they are sought after as lobbyists (Revkin and Wald 2007). Some can demand \$2 million a year (Shane 2004). *Half* of the top one hundred White House officials go to work for or advise the very companies that they regulated while they worked for the president (Ismail 2003).

To reduce the influence of special-interest groups on legislation, Congress passed a law that limits the amount of money that any individual, corporation, or special-interest group can donate to a candidate. This law also requires all contributions over \$1,000 to be reported. To get around this law, special-interest groups form **political action committees (PACs)**. These organizations solicit contributions from many donors—each contribution being within the legal limit—and then use the large total to influence legislation.

PACs are powerful, for they bankroll lobbyists and legislators. To influence politics, about 4,000 PACs shell out hundreds of millions of dollars a year directly to their candidates (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Tables 409, 410, 414). PACs also contribute millions in indirect ways. Some give “honoraria” (a gift of money) to senators who agree to say a few words at a breakfast. A few PACs represent broad social interests such as environmental protection. Most, however, represent the financial interests of specific groups, such as the banking, dairy, defense, and oil industries.

Criticism of Lobbyists and PACs The major criticism leveled against lobbyists and PACs is that their money, in effect, buys votes. Rather than representing the people who elected them, legislators support the special interests of groups that have the ability to help them stay in power. The PACs that have the most clout in terms of money and votes



gain the ear of Congress. To politicians, the sound of money talking apparently sounds like the voice of the people.

Even if the United States were to outlaw PACs, special-interest groups would not disappear from U.S. politics. Lobbyists walked the corridors of the Senate long before PACs, and since the time of Alexander Graham Bell they have carried the unlisted numbers of members of Congress. For good or for ill, lobbyists play an essential role in the U.S. political system.

Who Rules the United States?

With lobbyists and PACs wielding such influence, just whom do U.S. senators and representatives really represent? This question has led to a lively debate among sociologists.

The Functionalist Perspective: Pluralism

Functionalists view the state as having arisen out of the basic needs of the social group. To protect themselves from

oppressors, people formed a government and gave it the monopoly on violence. The risk is that the state can turn that force against its own citizens. To return to the example used earlier, states have a tendency to become muggers. Thus, people must find a balance between having no government—which would lead to **anarchy**, a condition of disorder and violence—and having a government that protects them from violence, but also may turn against them. When functioning well, then, the state is a balanced system that protects its citizens both from one another *and* from government.

What keeps the U.S. government from turning against its citizens? Functionalists say that **pluralism**, a diffusion of power among many special-interest groups, prevents any one group from gaining control of the government and using it to oppress the people (Polsby 1959; Dahl 1961, 1982; Newman 2006). To keep the government from coming under the control of any one group, the founders of the United States set up three branches of government: the executive branch (the president), the judiciary branch (the courts), and the legislative branch (the Senate and House of Representatives). Each is sworn to uphold the Constitution, which guarantees rights to citizens, and each can nullify the actions of the other two. This system, known as **checks and balances**, was designed to ensure that no one branch of government dominates the others.

Our pluralist society has many parts—women, men, racial-ethnic groups, farmers, factory and office workers, religious organizations, bankers, bosses, the unemployed, the retired—as well as such broad categories as the rich, middle class, and poor. No group dominates. Rather, as each group pursues its own interests, it is balanced by other groups that are pursuing theirs. To attain their goals, groups must negotiate with one another and make compromises. This minimizes conflict. Because these groups have political muscle to flex at the polls, politicians try to design policies that please as many groups as they can. This, say functionalists, makes the political system responsive to the people, and no one group rules.

The Conflict Perspective: The Power Elite

If you focus on the lobbyists scurrying around Washington, stress conflict theorists, you get a blurred image of superficial activities. What really counts is the big picture, not its fragments. The important question is, Who holds the power that determines the country's overarching policies? For example, who determines interest rates—and

their impact on the price of our homes? Who sets policies that encourage the transfer of jobs from the United States to countries where labor costs less? And the ultimate question of power: Who is behind the decision to go to war?

Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1956) took the position that the country's most important matters are decided not by lobbyists or even by Congress. Rather, the decisions that have the greatest impact on the lives of Americans—and people across the globe—are made by a **power elite**. As depicted in Figure 11.2, the power elite consists of the top leaders of the largest corporations, the most powerful generals and admirals of the armed forces, and certain elite politicians—the president, the president's cabinet, and senior members of Congress who chair the major committees. It is they who wield power, who make the decisions that direct the country and shake the world.

Are the three groups that make up the power elite—the top business, political, and military leaders—equal in power? Mills said that they were not, but he didn't point to the president and his staff or even to the generals and admirals as the most powerful. The most powerful, he said, are the corporate leaders. Because all three segments of the power elite view capitalism as essential to the welfare of the country, Mills said that business interests take center stage in setting national policy.

FIGURE 11.2 Power in the United States:
The Model Proposed by C. Wright Mills



Source: Based on Mills 1956.

Sociologist William Domhoff (1990, 2006) uses the term **ruling class** to refer to the power elite. He focuses on the 1 percent of Americans who belong to the super-rich, the powerful capitalist class analyzed in Chapter 8 (pages 207–208). Members of this class control our top corporations and foundations, even the boards that oversee our major universities. It is no accident, says Domhoff, that from this group come most members of the president’s cabinet and the ambassadors to the most powerful countries of the world.

Conflict theorists point out that we should not think of the power elite (or ruling class) as some secret group that meets to agree on specific matters. Rather, the group’s unity springs from the similarity of its members’ backgrounds and orientations to life. All have attended prestigious private schools, belong to exclusive clubs, and are millionaires many times over. Their behavior stems not from some grand conspiracy to control the country but from a mutual interest in solving the problems that face big business (Useem 1984). With political connections extending to the highest centers of power, this elite determines the economic and political conditions under which the rest of the country operates (Domhoff 1990, 1998).

Which View Is Right?

The functionalist and conflict views of power in U.S. society cannot be reconciled. Either competing interests block any single group from being dominant, as functionalists assert, or a power elite oversees the major decisions of the United States, as conflict theorists maintain. The answer may have to do with the level you look at. Perhaps at the middle level of power depicted in Figure 11.2, the competing groups do keep each other at bay, and none is able to dominate. If so, the functionalist view would apply to this level. But which level holds the key to U.S. power? Perhaps the functionalists have not looked high enough, and activities at the peak remain invisible to them. On that level, does an elite dominate? To protect its mutual interests, does a small group make the major decisions of the United States?

Sociologists passionately argue this issue, but with mixed data, we don’t yet know the answer. We await further research.

War and Terrorism: Implementing Political Objectives

As we have noted, an essential characteristic of the state is that it claims a monopoly on violence. At times, a state

may direct that violence against other nations. **War**, armed conflict between nations (or politically distinct groups), is often part of national policy. Let’s look at this aspect of politics.

War

Why do nations choose war as a means to handle disputes? Sociologists answer this question not by focusing on factors *within* humans, such as aggressive impulses, but by looking for *social* causes—conditions in society that encourage or discourage combat between nations.

Sociologist Nicholas Timasheff (1965) identified three essential conditions of war. The first is an antagonistic situation in which two or more states confront incompatible objectives. For example, each may want the same land or resources. The second is a cultural tradition of war. Because their nation has fought wars in the past, the leaders of a group see war as an option for dealing with serious disputes with other nations. The third is a “fuel” that heats the antagonistic situation to a boiling point, so that politicians cross the line from thinking about war to actually waging it.

Timasheff identified seven such “fuels.” He found that war is likely if a country’s leaders see the antagonistic situation as an opportunity to achieve one or more of these objectives:

1. *Revenge*: settling “old scores” from earlier conflicts
2. *Power*: dominating a weaker nation
3. *Prestige*: defending the nation’s “honor”
4. *Unity*: uniting rival groups within their country
5. *Position*: protecting the leaders’ positions
6. *Ethnicity*: bringing under their rule “our people” who are living in another country
7. *Beliefs*: forcibly converting others to religious or political beliefs

Timasheff’s analysis is excellent, and you can use these three essential conditions and seven fuels to analyze any war. They will help you understand why politicians at that time chose this political action.

Dehumanization During War

Proud of his techniques, the U.S. trainer was demonstrating to the South American soldiers how to torture a prisoner. As the victim screamed in anguish, the trainer was interrupted by a phone call from his wife. His students could hear him say, “A dinner and a movie sound nice. I’ll see you right after work.” Hanging up the phone, he then continued the lesson. (Stockwell 1989)

War exacts many costs in addition to killing people and destroying property. One of the most remarkable is its effect



The hatred and vengeance of adults becomes the children's heritage. The headband on this 4-year old Palestinian boy reads "Friends of Martyrs."

on morality. Exposure to brutality and killing often causes **dehumanization**, the process of reducing people to objects that do not deserve to be treated as humans. From the quote on the previous page, you can see how people's conscience can become numb, allowing them to participate in acts they would ordinarily condemn. To help understand how this occurs, read the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next two pages.

Terrorism

Mustafa Jabbar in Najaf, Iraq, is proud of his first born, a baby boy, but he said, "I will put mines in the baby and blow him up." (Sengupta 2004)

How can feelings run so deep that a father would sacrifice his only son? Such hatred is nourished by groups endlessly recounting the atrocities committed by their archenemy. Nurtured in such a cauldron of bitterness, hatred spans generations, sometimes continuing for centuries. Such bitter antagonisms encourage **terrorism**, the use of violence to create fear in an effort to bring about political objectives. Stronger groups use terrorism "just because they can." They delight to see the suffering of their opponents. Terrorism, however, is most often used by weaker groups, for if a weaker group wants to attack a more powerful group, terrorism is one of its few options. It cannot meet its enemy on the battlefield, but it can use terror as a weapon—even if that means blowing up one's only child.

Suicide terrorism, a weapon sometimes chosen by the weaker group, captures headlines around the world. Among the groups that have used suicide terrorism effectively are the Palestinians against the Israelis and the Iraqis against the U.S.-led occupation. The most dramatic example of suicide terrorism, of course, was the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon under the direction of Osama bin Laden.

The suicide attacks on New York and Washington were tiny in comparison with the real danger: that of biological, nuclear, and chemical weapons. Unleashed against a civilian population, such weapons could cause millions of deaths. In 2001, Americans caught a glimpse of how easily such weapons can be unleashed when anthrax powder was mailed to a few select victims. When the Soviet empire broke up, its nuclear weapons were no longer secure. The interception of enriched uranium as it was being smuggled out of a former Soviet republic foreshadowed the chilling possibility of terrorism on U.S. soil so great that it could dwarf the 9/11 attacks (Sheets and Broad 2007a, b).

It is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between war and terrorism. This is especially the case in civil wars, when the opposing sides don't wear uniforms, and they often attack civilian populations. Africa is embroiled in such wars. One of the unfortunate developments arising from this situation is that of child soldiers, a topic discussed in the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on page 312.

In Sum: Some students wonder why I include war and terrorism as subtopics of politics. The reason is that war and terrorism are tools used to try to accomplish political goals. The Prussian military analyst Carl von Clausewitz, who entered the military at the age of twelve and rose to the rank of Major-General, put it best when he said: "War is merely a continuation of politics by other means."

THE ECONOMY: WORK IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

If you are like most students, you are wondering how changes in the economy are going to affect your chances of getting a good job. Let's see if we can shed some light on this question. We'll begin with this story:

The sound of her alarm rang in Kim's ears. "Not Monday already," she groaned. "There must be a better way of starting

the week.” She pressed the snooze button on the clock (from Germany) to sneak another ten minutes’ sleep. In what seemed like just thirty seconds, the alarm shrilly insisted that she get up and face the week.

Still bleary-eyed after her shower, Kim peered into her closet and picked out a silk blouse (from China), a plaid wool skirt (from Scotland), and leather shoes (from Italy). She nodded, satisfied, as she added a pair of simulated pearls (from Taiwan). Running late, she hurriedly ran a brush (from Mexico) through her hair. As Kim wolfed down a bowl of cereal (from the United States) topped with milk (from the United States), bananas (from Costa Rica), and sugar (from the Dominican Republic), she turned on her kitchen television (from Korea) to listen to the weather forecast.

Gulping the last of her coffee (from Brazil), Kim grabbed her briefcase (from India), purse (from Spain), and jacket (from Malaysia), left her house, and quickly climbed into her car (from Japan). As she glanced at her watch (from Switzerland), she hoped that the traffic would be in her favor. She muttered to herself as she pulled up at a stoplight (from Great Britain) and eyed her gas gauge. She muttered again when she pulled into a station and paid for gas (from Saudi Arabia), for the price had risen over the weekend. “My paycheck never keeps up with prices,” she moaned.

When Kim arrived at work, she found the office abuzz. Six months ago, New York headquarters had put the company up for sale, but there had been no takers. The big news was that both a German company and a Canadian

Down-to-Earth Sociology

How Can “Good” People Torture Others?

When the Nuremberg Trials revealed the crimes of the Nazis to the world, people wondered what kind of abnormal, bizarre humans did those horrific acts. The trials, however, revealed that the officials who authorized the torture and murder of Jews and the soldiers who followed those orders were ordinary, “good” people (Hughes 1962/2005). This revelation came as a shock to the world.

Later, we learned that in Rwanda Hutus hacked their Tutsi neighbors to death. Some Hutu teachers even killed their Tutsi students. Similar revelations of “good” people torturing prisoners have come from all over the world—Iraq, Afghanistan, Mexico. We have also learned that when the torturers finish their “work,” they go home to their families, where they are ordinary fathers and husbands.

Let’s try to understand how “good, ordinary people” can torture prisoners and still feel good about themselves. Consider the four main characteristics of dehumanization (Bernard et al. 1971):

1. *Increased emotional distance from others.* People stop identifying with others, no longer seeing them as having qualities similar to themselves. They perceive

them as “the enemy,” or as objects of some sort. Sometimes they think of their opponents as less than human or even not as people at all.

2. *Emphasis on following orders.* The individual clothes acts of brutality in patriotic language: To follow orders is “a soldier’s duty.” Torture is viewed as a tool that helps soldiers do their duty. People are likely to say, “I don’t like doing this, but I have to follow orders—and someone has to do the ‘dirty work.’”
3. *Inability to resist pressures.* Ideas of morality take a back seat to fears of losing one’s job, losing the respect of peers, or having one’s integrity and loyalty questioned.
4. *A diminished sense of personal responsibility.* People come to see themselves as only small cogs in a large machine. The higher-ups who give the orders are thought to have more complete or even secret information that justifies the torture. The thinking becomes, “Those who make the decisions are responsible, for they are in a position to judge what is right and wrong. In my low place in the system, who am I to question these acts?”

Sociologist Martha Huggins (2004) interviewed Brazilian police who used torture to extract confessions. She identified a fifth method that torturers sometimes use: They *blame the victim*. “He was just stupid. If he had confessed in the first place, he wouldn’t have been tortured.”

This technique removes the blame from the torturer—who is just doing a job—and places it on the victim.

There is a sixth technique of neutralization, a favorite of U.S. government officials who have authorized the torture of terrorists. Their technique of neutralization is to say that what they have authorized is *not* torture. A fair summary of their many statements on this topic would be: “What we have authorized is a harsh, but necessary, method of interrogation, selectively used on designated individuals, to extract information to protect Americans.” In one of these approved interrogation methods, called *waterboarding*, the interrogators force a prisoner’s head backward and pour water over his or her face. This produces a gag reflex, forcing the prisoner to inhale water. The prisoner experiences the intense sensation of drowning. When the interrogators stop pouring the water, they ask their questions again. If they don’t get a satisfactory answer, they continue the procedure.

In several contexts in this book, I have emphasized how important labels are in social life. Notice how powerful they are in this extreme situation. By calling waterboarding “not torture,” it becomes “not torture” for those who authorize and practice it. This protects the conscience, allowing the individuals who authorize and practice torture to retain the sense of a “good” self.

One of my students, a Vietnam veteran, who read this section, told me, “You missed the major one we used. We killed kids. Our dehumanizing technique was this saying, ‘The little ones are the soldiers of tomorrow.’”

company had put in bids over the weekend. No one got much work done that day, as the whole office speculated about how things might change.

As Kim walked to the parking lot after work, she saw a tattered “Buy American” bumper sticker on the car next to hers. “That’s right,” she said to herself. “If people were more like me, this country would be in better shape.”

The Transformation of Economic Systems

Although this vignette may be slightly exaggerated, many of us are like Kim: We use a multitude of products from around the world, and yet we’re concerned about our country’s ability to compete in global markets. Today’s



“Not torture—just a way to get information”—so said U.S. officials. Shown here are human rights activists as they demonstrate waterboarding on a volunteer outside the Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

Such sentiments may be more common than we suppose—and the torturers’ uniforms don’t have to display swastikas.

For Your Consideration

Do you think you could torture people? Instead of just saying, “Of course not!” think about this: If “good, ordinary” people can become torturers, why not you? Aren’t you a “good, ordinary” person? To answer this question properly, then, let’s rephrase it: Based on what you read here, what conditions could get you to cooperate in the torture of prisoners?

economy—our system of producing and distributing goods and services—differs radically from past economies. The products that Kim uses make it apparent that today’s economy knows no national boundaries. To better understand how global forces affect the U.S. economy—and your life—let’s begin by summarizing the sweeping historical changes we reviewed in Chapter 4 (pages 91–96).

Preindustrial Societies: The Birth of Inequality

The earliest human groups, *hunting and gathering societies*, had a **subsistence economy**. In small groups of about twenty-five to forty, people lived off the land. They gathered plants and hunted animals in one location and then moved to another place as these sources of food ran low.

Down-to-Earth Sociology

Child Soldiers

When rebels entered 12-year-old Ishmael Beah's village in Sierra Leone, they lined up the boys (Beah 2007). One of the rebels said, "We are going to initiate you by killing these people. We will show you blood and make you strong."

Before the rebels could do the killing, shots rang out and the rebels took cover. In the confusion, Ishmael escaped into the jungle. When he returned, he found his family dead and his village burned.

With no place to go and rebels attacking the villages, killing, looting, and raping, Ishmael continued to hide in the jungle. As he peered out at a village one day, he saw a rebel carrying the head of a man, which he held by the hair. With blood dripping from where the neck had been, Ishmael said that the head looked as though it were still feeling its hair being pulled.

Months later, government soldiers found Ishmael. The "rescue" meant that he had to become a soldier—on their side, of course.

Ishmael's indoctrination was short but to the point. Hatred is a strong motivator.

"You can revenge the death of your family, and make sure that more children do not lose their parents," the lieutenant said. "The rebels cut people's heads off. They cut open pregnant women's stomachs and take the babies out and kill them. They force sons to have sex with their mothers. Such people do not deserve to live. This is why we must kill every single one of them. Think of it as destroying a great evil. It is the highest service you can perform for your country."

Along with thirty other boys, most of whom were ages 13 to 16, with two just 7 and 11, Ishmael was trained to shoot and clean an AK-47.

Banana trees served for bayonet practice. With thoughts of disemboweling evil rebels, the boys would slash at the leaves.

The things that Ishmael had seen, he did.

Killing was difficult at first, but after a while, as Ishmael says, "killing became as easy as drinking water."

The corporal thought that the boys were sloppy with their bayonets. To improve their performance, he held a contest. He chose five boys. Placing opposite each boy a prisoner with his hands tied, he told the boys to slice the



Child soldiers in El Salvador.

men's throats on his command. The boy whose prisoner died the quickest would win the contest.

"I stared at my prisoner," said Ishmael. "He was just another rebel who was responsible for the death of my family. The corporal gave the signal with a pistol shot, and I grabbed the man's head and sliced his throat in one fluid motion. His eyes rolled up, and he looked me straight in the eyes before [his eyes] suddenly stopped in a frightful glance. I dropped him on the ground and wiped my bayonet on him. I reported to the corporal who was holding a timer. I was proclaimed the winner. The other boys clapped at my achievement."

"No longer was I running away from the war," adds Ishmael. "I was in it. I would scout for villages that had food, drugs, ammunition, and the gasoline we needed. I would report my findings to the corporal, and the entire squad would attack the village. We would kill everyone."

Ishmael was one of the lucky ones. Of the approximately 300,000 child soldiers worldwide, Ishmael is one of the few who has been rescued and given counseling at a UNICEF rehabilitation center. Ishmael has also had the remarkable turn of fate of graduating from college in the United States and becoming a permanent U.S. resident.

Note: The quotations are summaries.

For Your Consideration

1. Why are there child soldiers?
2. What can be done to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers? Why don't we just pass a law that requires a minimum age to serve in the military?
3. How can child soldiers be helped? What agencies can take what action?

Because these people had few possessions, they did little trading with one another. With no excess to accumulate, as was mentioned in Chapter 4, everybody owned as much (or, really, as little) as everyone else.

Then people discovered how to breed animals and cultivate plants. The more dependable food supply in what became *pastoral and horticultural societies* allowed humans to settle down in a single place. Human groups grew larger, and for the first time in history, it was no longer necessary for everyone to work at producing food. Some people became leather workers, others weapon makers, and so on. This new division of labor produced a surplus, and groups traded items with one another. The primary sociological significance of surplus and trade is this: They fostered *social inequality*, for some people accumulated more possessions than others. The effects of that change remain with us today.

The plow brought the next major change, ushering in *agricultural societies*. Plowed land was much more productive, allowing even more people to specialize in activities other than producing food. More specialized divisions of labor followed, and trade expanded. Trading centers then developed, which turned into cities. As power passed from the heads of families and clans to a ruling elite, social, political, and economic inequalities grew.

Industrial Societies: The Birth of the Machine

The steam engine, invented in 1765, ushered in *industrial societies*. Based on machines powered by fuels, these societies created a surplus unlike anything the world had seen. This, too, stimulated trade among nations and brought even greater social inequality. A handful of individuals opened factories and exploited the labor of many.

Then came more efficient machines. As the surpluses grew even greater, the emphasis gradually changed—from producing goods to consuming them. In 1912, sociologist Thorstein Veblen coined the term **conspicuous consumption** to describe this fundamental change in people's orientations. By this term, Veblen meant that the Protestant ethic identified by Weber—an emphasis on hard work, savings, and a concern for salvation (discussed on pages 379 and 382)—was being replaced by an eagerness to show off wealth by the “elaborate consumption of goods.”

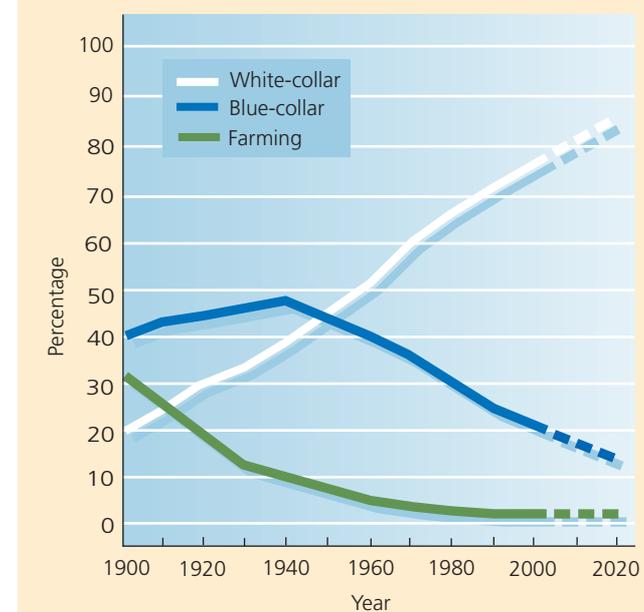
Postindustrial Societies: The Birth of the Information Age

In 1973, sociologist Daniel Bell noted that *a new type of society was emerging*. This new society, which he called the

postindustrial society, has six characteristics: (1) a service sector so large that *most* people work in it; (2) a vast surplus of goods; (3) even more extensive trade among nations; (4) a wider variety and quantity of goods available to the average person; (5) an information explosion; and (6) a *global village*—that is, the world's nations are linked by fast communications, transportation, and trade.

Look at Figure 11.3, which illustrates how work changed as we made our transition to the postindustrial society. In the 1800s, most U.S. workers were farmers. Today, farmers make up only about 2 percent of the workforce. We need so few farmers because of changes in technology. With the farming tools of the 1800s, a typical farmer produced enough food for only five people. With today's machinery and hybrid seeds, a typical farmer now feeds about eighty. In 1940, as you can see, about half of U.S. workers wore a blue collar. As changing technology shrank the market for blue-collar jobs, white-collar work continued its ascent, reaching the dominant position it holds today.

FIGURE 11.3 The Revolutionary Change in the U.S. Workforce



Note: From 1900 to 1940, “workers” refers to people age 14 and over; from 1970 to people age 16 and over. Broken lines are the author’s projections. The totals shown here are broadly accurate only, as there is disagreement on how to classify some jobs. Agriculture, for example, includes forestry, fishing, and hunting. Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract*, various years, and 2007: Tables 602, 1341.

Biotech Societies: The Merger of Biology and Economics

We may be on the verge of yet another new type of society. This one is being ushered in by advances in biology, especially the deciphering of the human genome system. While the specifics of this new society have yet to unfold, the marriage of biology and economics should yield even greater surpluses and more extensive trade. The global village will continue to expand. The technological advances that will emerge in this new society may also allow us to lead longer and healthier lives. As history is our guide, it also may create even greater inequality between the rich and poor nations.

Implications for Your Life

The broad changes in societies that I just sketched may seem to be abstract matters, but they are far from irrelevant to your life. Whenever society changes, so do our lives. Consider the information explosion. When you graduate from college, you will most likely do some form of “knowledge work.” Instead of working in a factory, you will manage information or design, sell, or service products. The type of work you do has profound implications for your life. It produces social networks, nurtures attitudes, and even affects how you view yourself and the world. To better understand this, consider how vastly different your perspectives on life would be if you were one of the children discussed in the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

It is the same with the global village. Think of the globe as being divided into three neighborhoods—the three worlds of industrialization and postindustrialization that we reviewed in Chapter 7. Some nations are located in the poor part of the village. Their citizens do menial work and barely eke out a living. Life is so precarious that some even starve to death, while their fellow villagers in the rich neighborhood feast on the best that the globe has to offer. It’s the same village, but what a difference the neighborhood makes.

Now visualize any one of the three neighborhoods. Again you will see gross inequalities. Not everyone who lives in the poor neighborhood is poor, and some areas of the rich neighborhood are packed with poor people. Because the United States is the global economic leader, occupying the most luxurious mansion in the best neighborhood, and is spearheading the new biotech society, let’s look at U.S. trends.

Ominous Trends in the United States

Suppose that you own a business manufacturing widgets. You are paying your workers an average of \$20 an hour

(including their fringe benefits, vacation pay, sick pay, unemployment benefits, Social Security, and so on). Widgets similar to yours are being manufactured in Thailand, where workers are paid \$8 a day. Those imported widgets are being sold in the same stores that feature your widgets.

How long do you think you can stay in business? Even if your workers were willing to drop their pay in half—which they aren’t willing to do—you would still be undersold.

What do you do? Your choices are simple. You can continue as you are and go broke, try to find some other product to manufacture (which, if successful, will soon be made in Thailand or India or China)—or you can close up your plants here and manufacture your widgets in Thailand.

The globalization of capitalism is bringing many changes, including these stark choices facing many U.S. manufacturers. And for workers? One disruption after another. No matter how productive they are, how can they compete with people who work for peanuts? The transfer of jobs overseas and the closing of U.S. plants have brought a special challenge to small towns, which were already suffering severe losses because of urbanization. We explore this disruption in the photo essay on pages 316–317.

Stagnant Paychecks U.S. workers are some of the most productive in the world (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Table 1361). One might think, therefore, that their pay would be increasing. This brings us to a disturbing trend.

Look at Figure 11.4 on page 318. The gold bars show current dollars. These are the dollars the average worker finds in his or her paycheck. You can see that since 1970 the average pay of U.S. workers has soared from just over \$3 an hour to almost \$17 an hour. Workers today are bringing home *five* times as many dollars as workers used to.

But let’s strip away the illusion. Look at the green bars, which show the dollars adjusted for inflation, the *buying power* of those paychecks. You can see how inflation has whittled away the value of the dollars that workers earn. Today’s workers, with their \$17 an hour, can buy only the same amount of goods as workers in 1970 could with their “measly” \$3 an hour. The question is not “How could workers live on just \$3 an hour back then?” but, rather, “*How can workers get by on a 21-cent-an-hour raise that it took 36 years to get?*” Incredibly, despite higher education and technical training of workers, the use of computers, and increased productivity, this is how much the average worker’s purchasing power has increased from 1970 to 2006.

The growing gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” of our society reveals a related ominous trend. Look



Cultural Diversity around the World

The Child Workers

Nine-year-old Alone Banda works in an abandoned quarry in Zambia. Using a bolt, he breaks rocks into powder. In a week, he makes enough powder to fill half a cement bag. Alone gets \$3 for the half bag. The amount is pitiful, but without it he and his grandmother would starve to death.

It is still a slow death for Alone. Robbed of his childhood and breathing rock dust continuously, Alone is likely to come down with what the quarry workers call a “heavy chest,” an early sign of silicosis.

Some of the children who work at the quarry are only 7 years old. As one mother said, “If I feel pity for them, what are they going to eat?” (Wines 2006a).

In Ghana, 6-year-old Mark Kwadwo, who weighs about 30 pounds, works for a fisherman. For up to fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, he paddles a boat and takes fish out of nets. Exhausted, he falls asleep at night in a mud hut that he shares with five other boys. If Mark doesn’t paddle hard enough, or pull in the fish from a net fast enough, Takyi hits him on the head with a paddle.

Mark is too little to dive, but he knows what is coming when he is older. His fear is that he will dive to free a tangled net—and never resurface.

“I prefer to have my boy home with me,” says the mother of Kwabena, whom she leased to the fisherman four years ago when Kwabena was 7, “but I need the money to survive.” Kwabena’s

mother has received \$66 for the four years’ work (LaFraniere 2006).

Around the world, children are forced to work. Some work in construction (see the photo on page 175). Others work as miners, pesticide sprayers, street vendors, and household servants. Children weave carpets in India, race camels in the Middle East, and, all over the world, work as prostitutes. Their parents, too, say that they don’t like it, but they need the money to survive.

The underlying cause of children working is poverty so severe that the few dollars the children bring in can make the difference between life and death. In Ghana, where Mark works on the fishing boat, two out of three people live on less than \$1 a day (LaFraniere 2006).

Then, too, there is the cultural factor. In many parts of the world, people view children differently than we do in the West. The idea that children have the right to be educated and to be spared from adult burdens is fairly new. When prosperity comes, so will this perspective.

For Your Consideration

How do you think the wealthier nations can help alleviate the suffering of child workers? Before industrialization, and for a period afterwards, having children work was also common in the West. Just because our economic system has changed, bringing with it different ideas of childhood and of the rights of children, what right do we have to impose our changed ideas on other nations?



Child labor is common in the early stages of industrialization. This photo was taken in the Pennsylvania coal mines in the 1800s.



A four-year old quarry worker in West Bengal.

THROUGH THE AUTHOR'S LENS

Small Town USA

Struggling to Survive

all across the nation, small towns are struggling to survive. Parents and town officials are concerned because so few young adults remain in their home town. There is little to keep them there, and when they graduate from high school, most move to the city. With young people leaving and old ones dying, the small towns are shriveling.

How can small towns contend with cutthroat global competition when workers in some countries are paid a couple of dollars a day? Even if you open a store down

the road, Wal-Mart sells the same products for about what you pay for them—and offers much greater variety.

There are exceptions: Some small towns are located close to a city, and they receive the city's spillover: A few possess a rare treasure—some unique historical event or a natural attraction—that draws visitors with money to spend. Most of the others, though, are drying up, left in a time warp as history shifts around them. This photo essay tells the story.



The small towns are filled with places like this—small businesses, locally owned, that have enough clientele for the owner and family to eke out a living. They have to offer low prices because there is a fast-food chain down the road. Fixing the sign? That's one of those "I'll get-to-its."



People do whatever they can to survive. This enterprising proprietor uses the building for an unusual combination of purposes: a "plant world," along with the sale of milk, eggs, bread, and, in a quaint southern touch, cracking pecans.

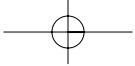


I was struck by the grandiosity of people's dreams, at least as reflected in the names that some small-towners give their businesses. Donut Palace has a nice ring to it—inspiring thoughts of wealth and royalty (note the crowns). Unfortunately, like so many others, this business didn't make it.



In striking contrast to the grandiosity of some small town business names is the utter simplicity of others. Cafe tells everyone that some type of food and drinks are served here. Everyone in this small town knows the details.

© James M. Henslin, all photos



One of the few buildings consistently in good repair in the small towns is the U.S. Post Office. Although its importance has declined in the face of telecommunications, for "small towners" the post office still provides a vital link with the outside world.



There is no global competition for this home-grown business. Shirley has located her sign on a main highway just outside Niceville, Florida. By the looks of the building, business could be better.



With little work available, it is difficult to afford adequate housing. This house, although cobbled together and in disrepair, is a family's residence.



This is a successful business. The store goes back to the early 1900s, and the proprietors have capitalized on the "old timey" atmosphere.



This general store used to be the main business in the area; it even has a walk-in safe. It has been owned by the same family since the 1920s, but is no longer successful. To get into the building, I had to find out where the owner (shown here) lived, knock on her door, and then wait while she called around to find out who had the keys.

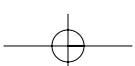
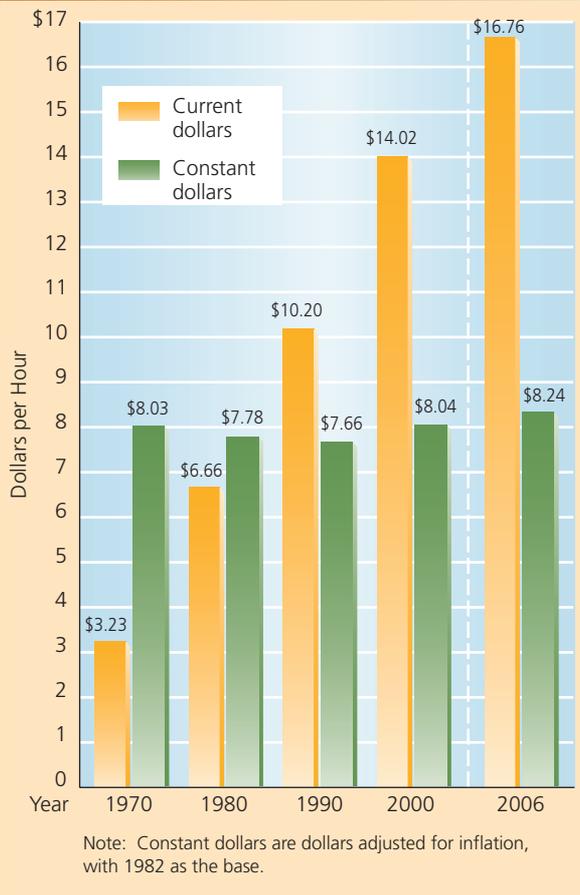


FIGURE 11.4 Average Hourly Earnings of U.S. Workers in Current and Constant (1982) Dollars



Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1992:Table 650; 1999:Table 698; 2008:Table 623.

at Figure 11.5. Each rectangle on the left represents a fifth of the U.S. population, about 60 million people. The rectangles of the inverted pyramid on the right show the percentage of the nation’s income that goes to each fifth of the population. You can see that half—50 percent—of the entire country’s income goes to the richest fifth of Americans; only 3 percent goes to the poorest fifth. This gap is now greater than it has been in generations. Rather than bringing equality, then, the postindustrial economy has perpetuated and enlarged the income inequalities of the industrial economy. What implications for our future do you see from Figure 11.5?

World Economic Systems

Now that we have sketched the main historical changes in economic systems, let’s compare capitalism and socialism, the two main economic systems in force today. This will help us to understand where the United States stands in the world economic order.

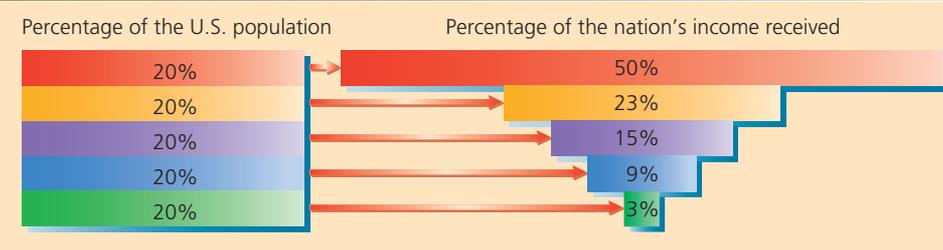
Capitalism

People who live in a capitalist society may not understand its basic tenets, even though they see them reflected in their local shopping malls and fast-food chains. Table 11.3 distills the many businesses of the United States down to their basic components. As you can see, **capitalism** has three essential features: (1) *private ownership of the means of production* (individuals own the land, machines, and factories); (2) *market competition* (competing with one another, the owners decide what to produce and set the prices for their products); and (3) *the pursuit of profit* (the owners try to sell their products for more than what they cost).

Some people believe that the United States is an example of pure capitalism. Pure capitalism, however, known as

laissez-faire capitalism (literally “hands off” capitalism), means that the government doesn’t interfere in the market. Such is not the case in the United States. The current form of U.S. capitalism is **welfare** or **state capitalism**. Private citizens own the means of production and pursue profits, but they do so within a vast system of laws designed to protect the welfare of the population.

FIGURE 11.5 The Inverted Income Pyramid: The Proportion of Income Received by Each Fifth of the U.S. Population



Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 2008:Table 675.

TABLE 11.3 Comparing Capitalism and Socialism

Capitalism	Socialism
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individuals own the means of production. 2. Based on competition, the owners determine production and set prices. 3. The pursuit of profit is the reason for distributing goods and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The public owns the means of production. 2. Central committees plan production and set prices; there is no competition. 3. There is no profit motive in the distribution of goods and services.

Consider this example:

Suppose that you discover what you think is a miracle tonic: It will grow hair, erase wrinkles, and dissolve excess fat. If your product works, you will become an overnight sensation—not only a multimillionaire, but also the toast of television talk shows and the darling of Hollywood.

But don't count on your money or fame yet. You still have to reckon with market restraints, the laws and regulations of welfare capitalism that limit your capacity to produce and sell. First, you must comply with local and state rules. You must obtain a business license and a state tax number that allows you to buy your ingredients without paying sales taxes. Then come the federal regulations. You cannot simply take your product to local stores and ask them to sell it; you first must seek approval from federal agencies that monitor compliance with the Pure Food and Drug Act. This means that you must prove that your product will not cause harm to the public. Your manufacturing process is also subject to federal, state, and local laws concerning fraud, hygiene, and the disposal of hazardous wastes.

Suppose that you overcome these obstacles, and your business prospers. Other federal agencies will monitor your compliance with laws concerning racial, sexual, and disability discrimination; minimum wages; and Social Security taxes. State agencies will examine your records to see whether you have paid unemployment taxes and sales taxes. Finally, the Internal Revenue Service will look over your shoulder and demand a share of your profits (about 35 percent).

In short, the U.S. economic system is highly regulated and is far from an example of laissez-faire capitalism.

Socialism

As Table 11.3 shows, **socialism** also has three essential components: (1) public ownership of the means of production;

(2) central planning; and (3) the distribution of goods without a profit motive.

In socialist economies, the government owns the means of production—not only the factories but also the land, railroads, oil wells, and gold mines. Unlike capitalism, in which **market forces**—supply and demand—determine both what will be produced and the prices that will be charged, a central committee decides that the country needs X number of toothbrushes, Y toilets, and Z shoes. The committee decides how many of each will be produced, which factories will produce them, what price will be charged for the items, and where they will be distributed.

Socialism is designed to eliminate competition, for goods are sold at predetermined prices regardless of the demand for an item or the cost of producing it. The goal is not to make a profit, nor is it to encourage the consumption of goods that are in low demand (by lowering the price) or to limit the consumption of hard-to-get goods (by raising the price). Rather, the goal is to produce goods for the general welfare and to distribute them according to people's needs, not their ability to pay.

In a socialist economy *everyone* in the economic chain works for the government. The members of the central committee who set production goals are government employees, as are the supervisors who implement their plans, the factory workers who produce the merchandise, the truck drivers who move it, and the clerks who sell it. Those who buy the items may work at different jobs—in offices, on farms, or in day care centers—but they, too, are government employees.

Just as capitalism does not exist in a pure form, neither does socialism. Although the ideology of socialism calls for resources to be distributed according to need and not the ability to pay, socialist countries found it necessary to pay higher salaries for some jobs in order to entice people to take on greater responsibilities. For example, in socialist countries factory managers always earned more than factory workers. These differences in pay follow the functionalist argument of social stratification presented in Chapter 7 (page 179). By narrowing the huge pay gaps that characterize capitalist nations, however, socialist nations established considerably greater equality of income.

Dissatisfied with the greed and exploitation of capitalism and the lack of freedom and individuality of socialism, Sweden and Denmark developed **democratic socialism** (also called *welfare socialism*). In this form of socialism, both the state and individuals produce and distribute goods and services. The government owns and runs the

This advertisement from 1885 represents an early stage of capitalism when individuals were free to manufacture and market products with little or no interference from the government. Today, the production and marketing of goods take place under detailed, complicated government laws and regulations.

steel, mining, forestry, and energy concerns, as well as the country's telephones, television stations, and airlines. Remaining in private hands are the retail stores, farms, factories, and most service industries.

Ideologies of Capitalism and Socialism

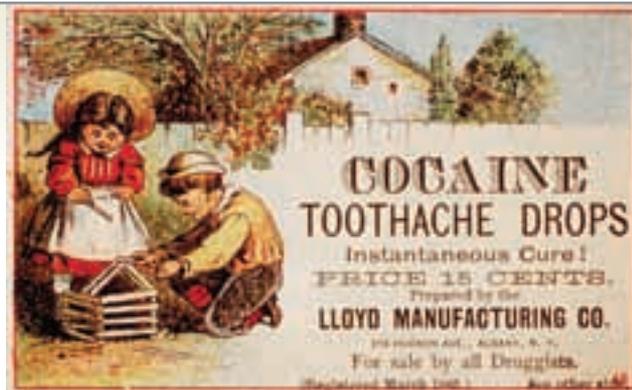
Not only do capitalism and socialism have different approaches to producing and distributing goods but they also represent opposing belief systems. *Capitalists* believe that market forces should determine both products and prices. They also believe that profits are good for humanity. Striving for profit stimulates people to produce and distribute goods efficiently, as well as to develop new products. This benefits society, bringing a more abundant supply of goods at cheaper prices.

Socialists, in contrast, consider profit to be immoral. Karl Marx said that an item's value is based on the work that goes into it. The only way there can be profit, he stressed, is by paying workers less than the value of their labor. Profit, then, is the *excess value* that has been withheld from workers. Socialists believe that the government should protect workers from this exploitation. To do so, the government should own the means of production, using them not to generate profit but to produce items that match people's needs, not their ability to pay.

Adherents to these ideologies paint each other in such stark colors that *each perceives the other system as one of exploitation*. Capitalists believe that socialists violate the basic human rights of freedom of decision and opportunity. Socialists believe that capitalists violate the basic human right of freedom from poverty. With each side claiming moral superiority while viewing the other as a threat to its very existence, the last century witnessed the world split into two main blocs. In what was known as the *Cold War*, the West armed itself to defend and promote capitalism, the East to defend and promote socialism.

Criticisms of Capitalism and Socialism

The primary criticism leveled against capitalism is that it leads to social inequality. Capitalism, say its critics, produces a tiny top layer of wealthy, powerful people who exploit an immense bottom layer of poorly paid workers.



Another criticism is that the tiny top layer wields vast political power. Those few who own the means of production reap huge profits, accrue power, and get legislation passed that goes against the public good.

The primary criticism leveled against socialism is that it does not respect individual rights (Berger 1991). Others (in the form of some government body) control people's lives. They decide where people will live, work, and go to school. In China, they even decide how many children women may bear (Mosher 1983, 2006). Critics also argue that central planning is grossly inefficient and that socialism is not capable of producing much wealth. They say that its greater equality really amounts to giving almost everyone an equal chance to be poor.

The Convergence of Capitalism and Socialism

Regardless of the validity of these mutual criticisms, as nations industrialize they come to resemble one another. They urbanize, produce similar divisions of labor (such as professionals and skilled technicians), and encourage higher education. Even similar values emerge (Kerr 1983). By itself, this tendency would make capitalist and socialist nations grow more alike, but another factor also brings them closer to one another (Form 1979): Despite their incompatible ideologies, both capitalist and socialist systems have adopted certain of each other's features.

That capitalism and socialism are growing similar is known as **convergence theory**. This view points to a coming hybrid, or mixed, economy. Fundamental changes in socialist countries give evidence for convergence theory. The people of Russia and China suffered from the production of shoddy goods, they were plagued by shortages, and their standard of living lagged severely behind that of the West. To try to catch up, in the 1980s and 1990s, the governments of Russia and China reinstated



The success of the Barbie doll, bringing in over a billion dollars a year, has spawned numerous competitors. After 40 years as the top seller, Barbie has been outsold—by the brash, “street smart” Flava dolls. What changes do you think this reflects in U.S. culture?

Capitalism in a Global Economy

Corporate Capitalism Capitalism is driving today’s global interdependence. Its triumph as the world’s dominant economic force can be traced to a social invention called the corporation. A **corporation** is a business that is treated legally as a person. A corporation can make contracts, incur debts, sue and be sued. Its liabilities and obligations, however, are separate from those of its owners. For example, each shareholder of Ford Motor Company—whether he or she has 1 or 100,000 shares—owns a portion of the company. However, Ford, not its individual owners, is responsible for fulfilling its contracts and paying its debts. To indicate how corporations have come to dominate the economy, sociologists use the term **corporate capitalism**.

Separation of Ownership and Management One of the most surprising aspects of corporations is their *separation of ownership and management*. Unlike most businesses, it is not the owners—those who own the company’s stock—who run the day-to-day affairs of the company (Walters 1995; Sklair 2001). Instead, managers run the corporation, and they are able to treat it *as though it were their own*. The result is the “ownership of wealth without appreciable control, and control of wealth without appreciable ownership” (Berle and Means 1932). Sociologist Michael Useem (1984) put it this way:

When few owners held all or most of a corporation’s stock, they readily dominated its board of directors, which in turn selected top management and ran the corporation. Now that a firm’s stock [is] dispersed among many unrelated owners, each holding a tiny fraction of the total equity, the resulting power vacuum allow[s] management to select the board of directors; thus management [becomes] self-perpetuating and thereby acquire[s] de facto control over the corporation.

Because of this power vacuum, at their annual meetings the stockholders ordinarily rubber-stamp management’s recommendations. It is so unusual for this *not* to happen that these rare cases are called a **stockholders’ revolt**. The irony of this term is generally lost, but remember

market forces. They made the private ownership of property legal, and they auctioned off many of their state-owned industries. Making a profit—which had been a crime—was encouraged. In China, capitalists were even invited to join the Communist party (Kahn 2002). Even Vietnam, whose communism the United States was so concerned about, has embraced capitalism (Mydans 2006).

Changes in capitalism also support this theory. The United States has adopted many socialist practices. One of the most obvious is extracting money from some individuals to pay for the benefits it gives to others. Examples include unemployment compensation (taxes paid by workers are distributed to those who no longer produce a profit); subsidized housing (shelter, paid for by the many, is given to the poor and elderly, with no motive of profit); welfare (taxes from the many are distributed to the needy); a minimum wage (the government, not the employer, determines the minimum that workers receive); and Social Security (the retired do not receive what they paid into the system but, rather, receive money that the government collects from current workers). Such an embrace of socialist principles indicates that the United States has produced its own version of a mixed economy.

Perhaps, then, convergence is unfolding before our very eyes. On the one hand, capitalists have assumed, reluctantly, that their system should provide workers with at least minimal support during unemployment, extended illness, and old age. On the other hand, socialist leaders have admitted, reluctantly, that profit and private ownership do motivate people to work harder.

that in such cases it is not the workers who are rebelling at the control of the owners but the owners who are rebelling at the control of the workers!

Interlocking Directorates and the Concentration of Power

Conflict theorists stress how the wealthy expand their power through **interlocking directorates**; that is, they serve on the board of directors of several companies. Their fellow members on those boards also sit on the boards of other companies, and so on. Like a spider's web that starts at the center and then fans out in all directions, the top companies are interlocked into a network (Mintz and Schwartz 1985; Davis 2003). The chief executive officer of a firm in England, who sits on the board of directors of half a dozen other companies, said:

If you serve on, say, six outside boards, each of which has, say, ten directors, and let's say out of the ten directors, five are experts in one or another subject, you have a built-in panel of thirty friends who are experts who you meet regularly, automatically each month, and you really have great access to ideas and information. You're joining a club, a very good club. (Useem 1984)

This concentration of power reduces competition, for a director is not going to approve a plan that will be harmful to another company in which he or she (mostly he) has a stake. The top executives of the top U.S. companies are part of the powerful capitalist class described on pages 207–208. They even get together in recreational settings, where they renew their sense of solidarity, purpose, and destiny (Domhoff 1999b, 2002, 2006).

Multinational Corporations and Global Investing

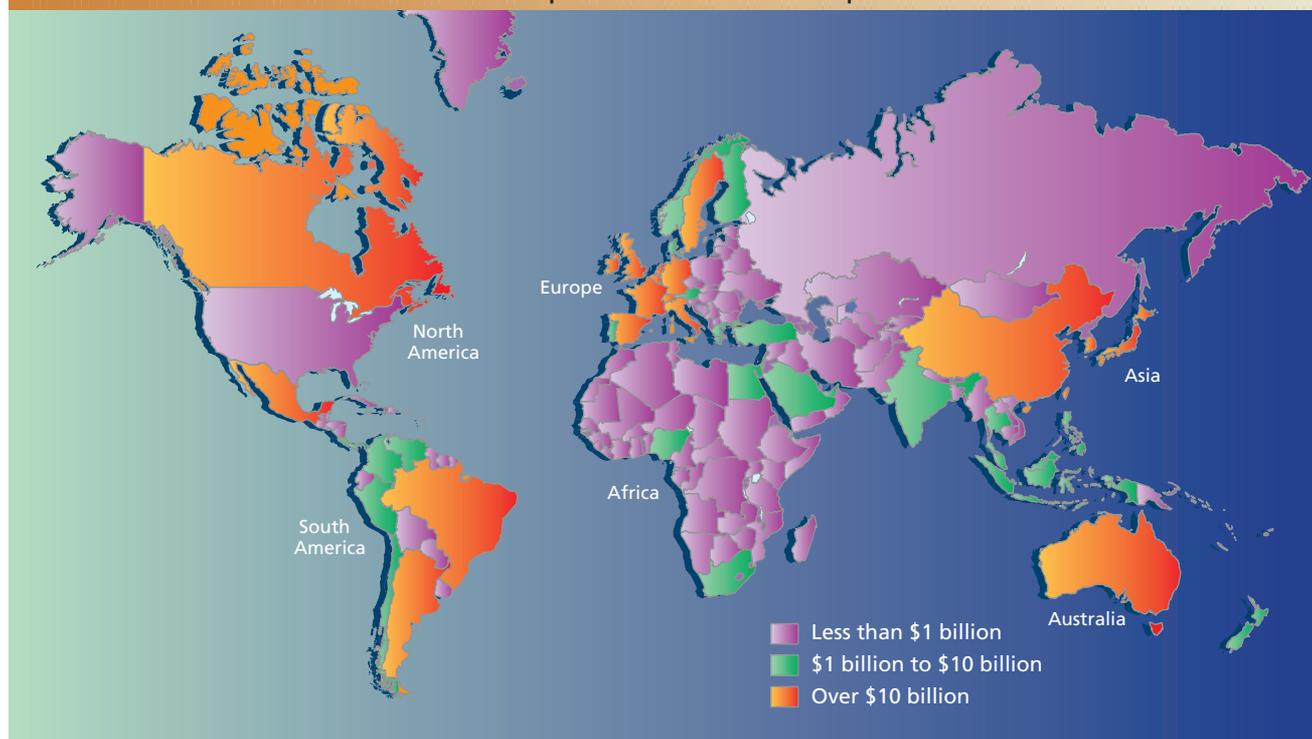
“This Bud is for you!”—Thanks to InBev, a Belgian brewer.

“Fill up at Shell!”—Thanks to a Dutch refinery.

“Tums for your tummy!”—Thanks to Beecham Group, a British corporation.

Corporations have outgrown their national boundaries, as illustrated by the Social Map below and on the next page. Cross-border investments have become so extensive

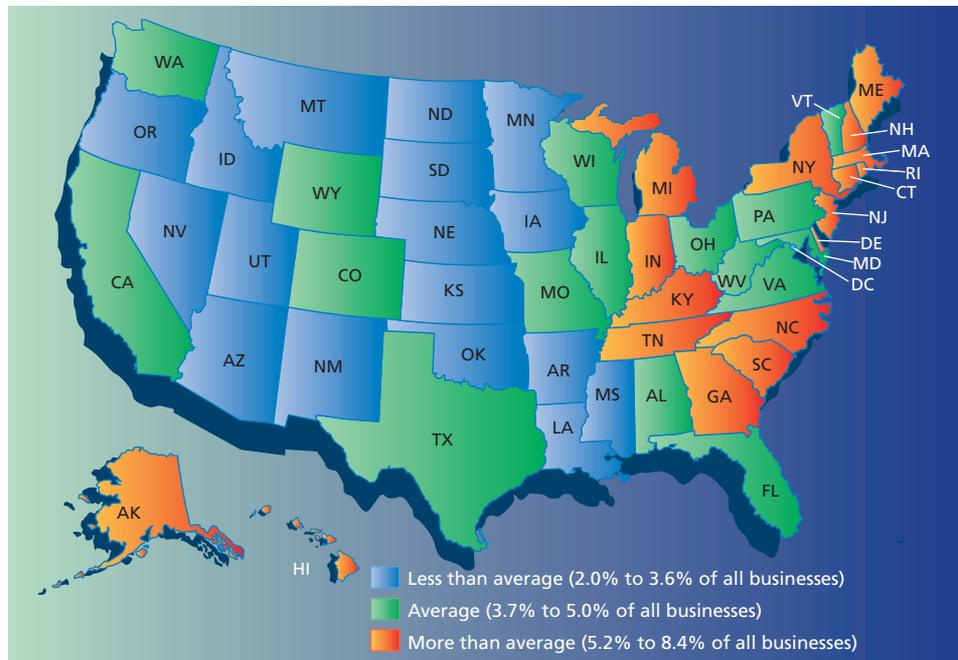
FIGURE 11.6 The Globalization of Capitalism: U.S. Ownership in Other Countries



Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract 2007*:Table 1288.

FIGURE 11.7 The Globalization of Capitalism: Foreign Ownership of U.S. Business

Businesses in which at least 10 percent of the voting interest is controlled by a non-U.S. owner:



Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract 2007*:Table 1275.

that about 1 of every 20 U.S. businesses—employing over 5 million workers—is now owned by people in other countries (*Statistical Abstract 2008*:Table 1275).

Although we take multinational corporations for granted—as well as their cornucopia of products—their power and presence are new to the world scene. As **multinational corporations**—corporations that operate across national borders—do business, they tend to become detached from the interests and values of their country of origin. A U.S. executive made this revealing statement: “The United States does not have an automatic call on our resources. There is no mindset that puts the country first” (Greider 2001). These global giants move investments and production from one part of the globe to another—with no concern for consequences other than profits. How opening or closing factories affects workers is of no concern to them. With profit as their moral guide, the conscience of multinational corporations is written in dollar signs. As they soar past geographical barriers in the attempt to conquer markets, the road is not without bumps. As discussed in the Cultural Diversity box on the next page, this can lead to humorous situations.

This primary allegiance to profits and market share, rather than to their workers or to any country, accompanied by a web of interconnections around the globe, is of high sociological significance. The shift in orientation and organization is so new, however, that we don’t yet know its implications. But we can consider two stark contrasts. The first: Removed from tribal loyalties and needing easy access across national boundaries, the global interconnections of the multinational corporations may be a force for global peace. The second: They could create a New World Order dominated by a handful of corporate leaders. If so, we all may find ourselves at the mercy of a global elite in a system of interconnected societies, directed by the heads of the world’s corporate giants.

Let’s consider this possibility.

Global Trade: Inequalities and Conflict

The giant multinational corporations are carving up the world into major trading blocs and pushing for the reduction or elimination of tariffs. As a result, we can expect trade among nations to increase beyond anything the



Cultural Diversity around the World

Doing Business in the Global Village

The globalization of capitalism means that business people face cultural hurdles as they sell products in other countries. Some of the cultural mistakes they make as they try to clear these hurdles are downright humorous.

In trying to reach Spanish-speaking Americans and Mexico's growing middle class, some companies have stumbled over their Spanish. Parker Pen was using a slogan "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." The translation, however, came out as "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant." Frank Perdue's cute chicken slogan "It takes a strong man to make a tender chicken" didn't fare any better. It came out as "It takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate." And when American Airlines launched a "Fly in Leather" campaign to promote its leather seats in first class, the Mexican campaign stumbled just a bit. "Fly in Leather" (*vuela en cuero*), while literally correct, came out as "Fly Naked." I suppose that slogan did appeal to some (Archbold and Harmon 2001).

The Spanish-speaking market is so huge that it keeps enticing more companies to run marketing campaigns to reach it. The American Dairy Association made a hit in the United States with its humorous campaign, "Got Milk?" In Mexico, though, the Spanish translation read "Are you lactating?" All those mouths with white milk on them suddenly took on new meaning. Coors didn't fare any better. Their slogan, "Turn It Loose," was a hit in the United States, but in Spanish it came out as "Get Diarrhea."

Then there is Hershey's new candy bar, *Cajeta Elegancita*, marketed to Spanish-speaking customers. While *cajeta* can mean nougat, its most common meaning is "little box." The literal translation of *cajeta elegancita* is elegant or fancy little box. Some customers are snickering about this one, too, for *cajeta* is also slang for an intimate part of the female anatomy ("Winner . . ." 2006).

It isn't only Spanish that has given U.S. companies problems. Vicks decided to sell its cough drops in Germany. In



United States



Japan

German, the "v" is pronounced "f." Unfortunately, this made Vicks sound like the "f" word in English, which is just what ficks means in German.

Cultural mistakes are a two-way street, of course. Electrolux is a vacuum cleaner made in Sweden. Their cute slogan reads just fine in Swedish, but the translation for their U.S. ads came out as "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."

Some businesspeople have managed to avoid such problems. They have seized profit opportunities in cultural differences. For example, Japanese women are embarrassed by the sounds they make in public toilets. To drown out the offensive sounds, they flush the toilet an average of 2.7 times a visit (Lori 1988). This wastes a lot of water, of course. Seeing this cultural trait as an opportunity, a U.S. entrepreneur developed

a battery-powered device that is mounted in the toilet stall. When a woman activates the device, it emits a 25-second flushing sound. A toilet-sound duplicator may be useless in our culture, but the Japanese have bought thousands of them.

To be accepted in another culture, some items have to be changed. In a process called *transcreation*, cartoons designed originally for U.S. audiences are modified to match the tastes of an audience in another culture. The illustration in this box shows this process. At the top is the U.S. version of the Powerpuff Girls; at the bottom is how the Powerpuff Girls appear on Japanese television. It turns out that portraying Blossom, Buttercup, and Bubbles as leggy and dressed in skimpy outfits has broadened their appeal: Not only do little girls look forward to this cartoon on Saturday mornings, but so do many adult Japanese men (Fowler and Chozick 2007).

For Your Consideration

1. Why do you think that it is often difficult to do business across cultures?
2. How can businesspeople avoid cross-cultural mistakes?
3. If a company offends a culture in which it is trying to do business, what should it do?

world has ever seen. U.S. corporations will continue to support an expansion of global trade, for world markets have become crucial for their success.

Not all nations will benefit equally, of course. The Most Industrialized Nations (even as they transition to their postindustrial phase) will continue to garner the lion's share of the world's wealth.

If economic inequality between the richer and the poorer nations increases, it spells trouble. The growing wealth of the nations that control global trade does not sit easily with the Least Industrialized Nations. Their poverty and powerlessness—illuminated and reinforced by televised images of wealth and privilege beamed from the Most Industrialized Nations—breed discontent. So do growing pressures on their limited resources from their mushrooming populations. All this provides fertile ground for the recruitment of terrorists, who, if able, will vent their frustrations against those nations that they perceive as exploiting them.

A New World Order?

Today, the world's nations are almost frantically embracing capitalism. With nations forming coalitions of trading partners, national borders are becoming increasingly insignificant. The United States, Canada, and Mexico have formed a North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). We also have CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Association. Eventually, all of North and South America may belong to such an organization. Ten Asian countries with a combined population of a half billion people have formed a regional trading partnership called ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). Struggling for dominance is an even more encompassing group called the *World Trade Organization*.

The European Union (EU) may point to this unifying future. Transcending their national boundaries, twenty-seven European countries (with a combined population of 450 million) formed this economic and political unit. These nations have adopted a single, cross-national currency, the Euro, which has replaced their marks, francs, liras, lats, and pesetas. The EU has also established a military staff in Brussels, Belgium (Mardell 2007).

Could this process continue until there is just one state or empire that envelops the earth? The major trend is

heading in this direction. The United Nations is striving to become the legislative body of the world, wanting its decisions to supersede those of any individual nation. The UN operates a World Court (formally titled the International Court of Justice). It also has a rudimentary army and has sent "peacekeeping" troops to several nations.

Although we can identify the trend toward a single worldwide government—forged through increasingly encompassing trade organizations—we are unlikely to see its conclusion during our lifetimes. National boundaries, national patriotism, and ethnic loyalties die only hard deaths. The EU is not as united as it appears to be on the surface. In 2005 France and Holland rejected a proposed constitution, and in 2008 Ireland scuttled a proposed treaty that would have given the EU a single foreign minister. The United Nations, too, is divided by power inequality: Any one of the five nations that are the permanent members of its Security Council (Russian Federation, China, France, Great Britain, and the United States) can veto any action decided by the entire United Nations.

Despite occasional obstacles, the broad historical trend is toward increasingly broader, cross-national units. We occasionally catch a glimpse of what is going on behind the scenes. When Russia was struggling to join the capitalist club, its communist background made it an object of suspicion. When Russia was finally acknowledged as "capitalist enough" to be accepted into NATO, its prime minister made this remarkable statement: "We must now together build the New World Order" (Purdum 2002).

It is fascinating to speculate on the type of government that might emerge if global political and economic unity were to come about. Certainly a New World Order holds potential benefits for human welfare. It could bring global peace. And if we had a benevolent government, our lives and participation in politics could be satisfying. But we must be mindful of Hitler. If his conquests had resulted in world domination, we not only would be speaking German but we also would be living under a single dictator in a global totalitarian regime based on racial identification. If the world's resources and people come under the control of a dictatorship or an oligarchy, then the future for humanity could be bleak. We could end up with living under a government like that of Winston and Julia in our opening vignette.

SUMMARY *and* REVIEW

Power, Authority, and Violence

How are authority and coercion related to power?

Authority is **power** that people view as legitimately exercised over them, while **coercion** is power they consider unjust. The **state** is a political entity that claims a monopoly on violence over some territory. If enough people consider a state's power illegitimate, **revolution** is possible. P. 298.

What kinds of authority are there?

Max Weber identified three types of authority. In **traditional authority**, power is derived from custom—patterns set down in the past serve as rules for the present. In **rational–legal authority** (also called *bureaucratic authority*), power is based on law and written procedures. In **charismatic authority**, power is derived from loyalty to an individual to whom people are attracted. Charismatic authority, which undermines traditional and rational–legal authority, has built-in problems in transferring authority to a new leader. Pp. 299–300.

Types of Government

How are the types of government related to power?

In a **monarchy**, power is based on hereditary rule; in a **democracy**, power is given to the ruler by citizens; in a **dictatorship**, power is seized by an individual; and in an **oligarchy**, power is seized by a small group. Pp. 300–302.

The U.S. Political System

What are the main characteristics of the U.S. political system?

The U.S. political system is dominated by the Democratic and Republican parties, which represent slightly different centralist positions. The differences are most obvious in those who take extreme positions. P. 302.

Voter turnout is higher among people who are more socially integrated—those who sense a greater stake in the outcome of elections, such as the more educated and well-to-do. **Lobbyists** and **special-interest groups**, such as **political action committees** (PACs), play a significant role in U.S. politics. Pp. 303–306.

Who Rules the United States?

Is the United States controlled by a ruling class?

In a view known as **pluralism**, functionalists say that no one group holds power, that the country's many competing interest groups balance one another. Conflict theorists, who focus on the top level of power, say that the United States is governed by a **power elite**, a **ruling class** made up of the top corporate, political, and military leaders. At this point, the matter is not settled. Pp. 306–308.

War and Terrorism: Implementing Political Objectives

How are war and terrorism related to politics?

War and **terrorism** are both means of attempting to accomplish political objectives. Timasheff identified three essential conditions of war and seven fuels that bring about war. His analysis can be applied to terrorism. Nuclear, biological, and chemical terrorism are major threats. One of the chief costs of war and terrorism is **dehumanization**. Pp. 308–309.

The Transformation of Economic Systems

How are economic systems linked to types of societies?

In the earliest societies (hunting and gathering), small groups lived off the land and produced little or no surplus. Economic systems grew more complex as people discovered how to domesticate animals and grow plants (pastoral and horticultural societies), farm (agricultural societies), and manufacture (industrial societies). As people produced a *surplus*, trade developed. Trade, in turn, brought social inequality as some people accumulated more than others. Service industries dominate the post-industrial societies. If a biotech society is emerging, it is too early to know its consequences. Pp. 309–318.

World Economic Systems

How do the major economic systems differ?

The world's two major economic systems are capitalism and socialism. In **capitalism**, private citizens own the means of production and pursue profits. In **socialism**, the state owns the means of production and has no goal of profit. Adherents of each have developed ideologies that defend their own systems and paint the other as harmful or even evil. As expected from **convergence theory**, each system has adopted features of the other. Pp. 318–321.

Capitalism in a Global Economy

What is the role of corporations in global capitalism?

The term **corporate capitalism** indicates that giant corporations dominate capitalism. The profit goal of **multinational corporations** removes their allegiance from any particular nation. Pp. 321–323.

Is humanity headed toward a world political system?

The globalization of capitalism and the trend toward regional economic and political unions may indicate that a world political system is developing. If a New World Order develops, the possible consequences for human welfare range from excellent to calamitous. Pp. 323–325.

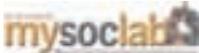
THINKING CRITICALLY *about* Chapter 11

1. What are the three sources of authority, and how do they differ from one another?
2. Apply the three essential conditions of war and its seven fuels to a recent war that the United States has been a part of.
3. What global forces are affecting the U.S. economy? What consequences are they having? How might they affect your own life?

BY THE NUMBERS: Changes Over Time

- Percentage of college graduates who voted in the 1980 presidential election: **80%**
- Percentage of college graduates who voted in the 2004 presidential election: **73%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that were farmers in 1900: **30%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that are farmers today: **2%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that were white-collar workers in 1900: **20%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that are white-collar workers today: **78%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that were blue-collar workers in 1940: **46%**
- Percentage of U.S. workforce that are blue-collar workers today: **20%**
- The typical U.S. farmer produced enough food to feed this number of people in the 1800s: **5**
- The typical U.S. farmer produces enough food to feed this number of people today: **80**
- Average hourly earnings, in current U.S. dollars, received by workers in 1970: **\$3.23**
- Average hourly earnings, in current U.S. dollars, received by workers today: **\$16.76**
- Average hourly earnings, in constant (1982) U.S. dollars, received by workers in 1970: **\$8.03**
- Average hourly earnings, in constant (1982) U.S. dollars, received by workers today: **\$8.24**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What can you find in MySocLab?  www.mysoclab.com

- **Complete Ebook**
- **Practice Tests and Video and Audio activities**
- **Mapping and Data Analysis exercises**
- **Sociology in the News**
- **Classic Readings in Sociology**
- **Research and Writing advice**

Where Can I Read More on This Topic?

Suggested readings for this chapter are listed at the back of this book.