

DISSERTATION

The Superhighway to Serfdom:  
How False Social Norms Marketing is Hijacking the American Dream

Volume I

Chapters One Through Six

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

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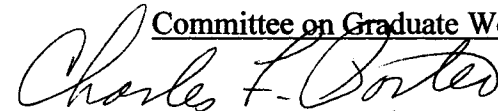
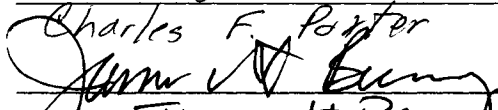
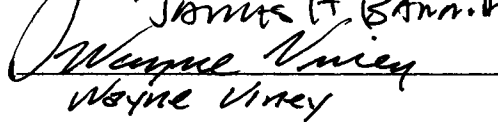
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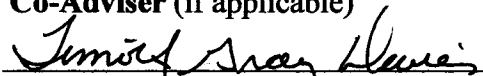
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE SUPERHIGHWAY TO SERFDOM:  
HOW FALSE SOCIAL NORMS MARKETING  
IS HIJACKING THE AMERICAN DREAM

This dissertation is a qualitative meta-analysis of contemporary and historical literature and other media. The findings suggest that Americans in the late 20th and early 21st centuries tend to both overwork and to suffer from their working conditions. This propensity for overwork appears to be driven by a need to overconsume, which is driven in circular fashion by the fear of losing one's job or of positioning one's children to be either underemployed or unemployed – in essence, the fear of failing. The result seems to be that rather than achieving the American Dream, many Americans are caught on an endless treadmill of serfdom while an elite few reap the benefits.

Religious, political, and economic trends are examined as underlying and mutually supporting structures used by the elite to keep people on the treadmill. Chief among the tactics used to achieve this appears to be a process referred to as false social norms marketing. The mechanisms of and the technique for using this process are revealed, followed by an analysis of what a good, decent, free, and just society would be, including suggestions derived from the meta-analysis for positioning America to better fulfill the American Dream.

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## **Chapter One: Background Information and Rationale**

This research used a preliminary qualitative analysis of current and historical films, popular and academic literature, music, television programs, Internet content, and radio broadcasts to determine what work is like for most Americans and its effect. The information gleaned from this analysis led to the following observations that appear to characterize the research problem:

1. More people are seeking jobs than there are jobs available.
2. The jobs that are available are often of lesser pay and stature than what many job seekers previously enjoyed.
3. People who have jobs are often stressed, overworked, overly ill, in significant debt, experiencing family problems related to their work schedule, and sleep deprived.
4. The level of satisfaction in the workplace appears to be far less than what would compensate for the poor working conditions.
5. The external environment seems to exert great pressure to overwork and to endure dysfunctional work situations. People are made to feel inferior and threatened if they do not over-consume and overspend, therefore creating a dependency on overwork and debt. However, the result of prolonged over-consumption and overspending is arguably leading to a number of social, ecological, and economic crises which appear to be culminating in a bifurcation of outcomes that will pre-

clude the persistence of the present state, and will very likely lead to a disastrous future if intervention is not taken quickly.

6. The feelings of threat and inferiority that are cited as creating the need to overwork even in a dissatisfying work environment and accompanied by an unfulfilling lifestyle are, apparently, promoted by the establishment of false social norms which are created using various methods of manipulating popular perception and behavior.
7. Those who perpetrate these false social norms seem to be characterized by a mindset of elite deviance, a worldview in which one is motivated to gain wealth and power regardless of the long term consequences to society, the economy, or the environment. Often this elite deviance is played out in the political, corporate, and religious arenas. Elite deviants justify their position through claiming to be better than others, above the law, keepers of the truth, and often persecuted.

According to the literature, a false social norm is one that creates a false perception of reality by suggesting that certain behaviors and beliefs are normal and true when, in fact, they are not. A review of the literature suggests that false-social-norms marketing is creating and perpetuating an overworked and overspent America. Potential consequences include increased centralization of wealth and power, poverty, stress, burnout, debt, illness, bankruptcy, sleep deprivation, sprawl, over-consumption, relationship breakdown, decline of leisure, use of invasive technology, environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, and general economic decline.

This dissertation expands the preliminary media search to confirm and further articulate the following observations:



1. Work in the United States, if you can get a job, has become more demanding and less fulfilling.
2. This lack of fulfillment and other detrimental consequences are a direct result of an American lifestyle of overwork and over-consumption.
3. Although this lifestyle has not produced the happiness that was promised, it has increased the anxiety and stress of the average American, damaged their overall quality of life, threatened the economy and the environment, and weakening the position of the United States in the global community.
4. Unproductive as it may seem, this climate continues unabated through manipulation and deceit. Foremost among these tactics is the creation and perpetuation of false-social norms, especially in the areas of politics, religion, and economics.
5. Integral to these false norms is a perceived ideological shift towards neoconservative politics and radical fundamentalist religion. This shift, whether real or false, has the perceptual power to cause people to view issues and act in ways that they typically would not, often to their own detriment.
6. This shift, and the deceitful manipulation of social perception, has been manufactured by those who would benefit most, an elite in government, the military, corporations, and others who derive their profit and power from fear, oppression, domination, war, and rumors of war, bolstered by the rabid consumption of a population of hard working, frightened, overwhelmed, distracted, unthinking and misinformed people. This quadrangle of corporations, government, the military, and a revolving door of others such as the media, religious organizations, organ-

ized crime, etc. is a vast extension of the military/industrial complex of which President Eisenhower warned America, and its goal is no less than global economic, military, and political imperialism.

7. The thrust of this effort has already damaged the foundations of the American way of life and hijacked the American dream. If there are ways to stop it, and ways to reclaim the American dream, it may require, among other things, a fundamental return to the civic participation of a population of informed citizens and their willingness to vote with their dollars as well as with their ballot. This will likely not happen, however, without a widespread articulation of real social norms and a significant shift in human values. Other solutions are also indicated.

### *Research Question and Purpose*

The research question emerges in two parts:

1. How did America get to this point? Is there an historical pattern of dynamics that, in aggregate, brought the United States to this point? If so, what is this pattern and how has it contributed to current conditions?
2. Are there historical suggestions or those recently coming to light for strategies to alleviate the problem and is there a common thread of continuity?

The problem for this study is to examine these two unknowns.

The preliminary examination of the problem suggests that there may be at least three strands of dynamics which interplay to influence how America has arrived at its current state. Religious, economic, and political strands appear to interweave to create the fabric upon which people's earning and spending are painted in the United States.

Because evidence suggests that the current situation is bad and prospects for the future worse if no change is made in the process of how Americans earn and spend their money, the purpose of this study is to:

1. Examine the historical path of consumption and earning in America, and the contribution of religion, economics, and socio-political factors, including false-social-norms marketing, that has brought the United States to its current state.
2. Postulate future social, economic, and environmental implications.
3. Identify possible solutions at a strategic personal and systems level that could mitigate the negative effect, if present, of these implications and that could alter how people work, live, and spend in a way that leads to a higher quality of life for the greatest number.

After the relevant media artifacts were gathered to saturation, a thematic framework was established. This framework provides an expanding perspective on the research problem, including quotes and examples, and for the most part organizes the information historically. (To make this dissertation more concise, most quotes and auxiliary support material will be provided in an annotated bibliography upon request.)

At the end of this dissertation appropriate theory and/or theoretical models will be advanced to explain or illustrate the conceptual responses to the research question. Conclusions and synthesis will be discussed and summarized to advance responses to the individual research question and supporting rationale.

Because this dissertation falls under the auspices of human resource development (HR, HRD) it seems important to note that it has long been acknowledged that understanding both psychology and sociology is useful and instructive for modifying the

organization in order to make it more productive, profitable, and satisfying for its members (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002; Straw, 1994; Thompson, 2003). However, the external conditions of a society are generally not part of the day-to-day considerations of an HR professional. Training for HR professionals generally centered on the internal workings of the organization coupled with key relationships with those on the outside, such as customers, suppliers, the local community, local and state government, and the like. Rarely do the much larger issues and aspects of the social, political, and economic environment enter the picture.

Human resource development has historically been composed of organizational development, training and development, and educational assistance (McLagan & Suhadolnik, 1989). These things typically happen within the organization, with occasional forays to events outside of the organization, for the benefit of the organization through providing opportunities for the employee to better their skills, increase their motivation, improve their teamwork, and experience a more positive work-life balance. In the past these activities were generally divided between helping employees be more productive and helping them experience more satisfaction within the context of work. More generous organizations also seemed to care about the extended lives of their employees, including family, health, retirement, and overall quality of life. Hewlett-Packard used to be among these (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982), as an example. (Along with human resources, the other functions typically housed under the general umbrella of personnel services consisted of hiring and staffing, development and enforcement of personnel policies and guidelines, administering healthcare and other benefits, and general compensation.)

Today, however, much if not all of human resource development has been outsourced, handed off to line management, replaced by a company website, or has simply disappeared. Benefits to employees have been diminishing since the halcyon days of the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century and have virtually vanished for many.

On the other hand human capital can be defined as those characteristics an individual brings to the workplace rather than those developed within the workplace (Davenport, 1999). These are the sum of the individual's dreams, aspirations, goals, proclivities, propensities, preferences, aptitudes, skills, knowledge, abilities, emotions, life situations, and experiences. Some human capital development (HCD) can happen within the organization and can result through human resource development activities. Most of the time, however, the larger external environment is responsible for setting the context in which development, or diminishment, occurs. War, politics, religion, family, poverty, wealth, consumption, the environment, media, and social relationships among others have a much more powerful influence on human capital. Because these things can so impact people's performance and satisfaction within the workplace they can be viewed as very important to human development and something of which people in helping professions should be aware. I would also argue that the larger environment is far more influential and profound in its impact than the daily machinations of organizational leadership and development or the innate psychological biases that employees bring with them to the workplace. Therefore, the larger economic, political, social, and spiritual systems in which the employee and organization exist must be brought into perspective and used to change the larger environment, as well as the organization within, for the better.

A strong incentive for this improvement comes from the concern that, from the 1970's forward, productivity at work has continued to increase while general satisfaction with work has been on the decline and compensation has fallen, or at least leveled off, except for the wealthy. This has been due, for the most part, to extra-organizational factors that have brought depression, stress, ill health, sleep deprivation, poor relationships, lost loyalty, lost trust, lost relative pay, lost leisure, lost benefits, and lost jobs to the workplace. Among these external factors are over-consumption, overwork, environmental degradation, resource depletion, and increasing rates of debt and bankruptcy promoted by a false-social-norms marketing campaign that has been perpetrated upon the general populace in order to support economic, military, religious, and political factions that are bent on extending their empire without, apparently, the least thought for fiscal, social, or environmental responsibility. In other words, even though people may have autonomy, freedom, choice, and a voice in the workplace, they are held in bondage by the larger factors in society, factors that diminish or cancel out any advantage people may have within the organization.

This larger servitude is promoted by those who benefit from it. While intuitively obvious in the short term, this benefit may prove to be disastrous in the long run. Many spikes of unsustainable activity in the economy, environment, and society are converging to promote a major, and potentially cataclysmic, bifurcation point at which the larger American system will either escape to a much more functional level of operation, allowing America to provide true global leadership towards a sustainable and improved future, or it will decline rapidly toward catastrophic collapse and assume a far less impressive level of importance in the international community (Ayres, 1999; Diamond, 2004; Ma-

son, 2003). Therefore, those who are currently promoting servitude for short-term personal gain are often motivated by a thought and behavior disorder called elite deviance (Simon, 2002). That is, they feel that others should serve them because they are better than other people and because they are above the law. They believe that God favors the rich and powerful because they are more virtuous, hard working, intelligent, and brave. In short, they are born on third base thinking that they hit a triple and the world owes them an easy walk to home plate. However, this elite deviance often proves to be self defeating over time. The problem is there is not much time left before the bifurcation occurs to direct social evolution in a beneficial direction. Those in servitude must quickly be made aware of the real situation, and elite deviance must be overcome through rapidly bringing spiritual and ethical principles into everyday practice.

This spirituality is not necessarily synonymous with religion (Walsh, 1999). Religion is multivariant in its influence and practice, while spiritual and ethical principles generally tend to hold true across religions and philosophies (H. Smith, 1991). Therefore, spirituality is not necessarily the same as religion, but it is necessary. Currently the evangelical and fundamentalist religious right appears to hold some sway over the political process. But a broader spirituality and ethical influence on politics and economics appears to be lacking. This is truly unfortunate. Perhaps an illustration might help.

Figure 1 proposes a succession of spheres of human behavior according to their ability to influence human experience.

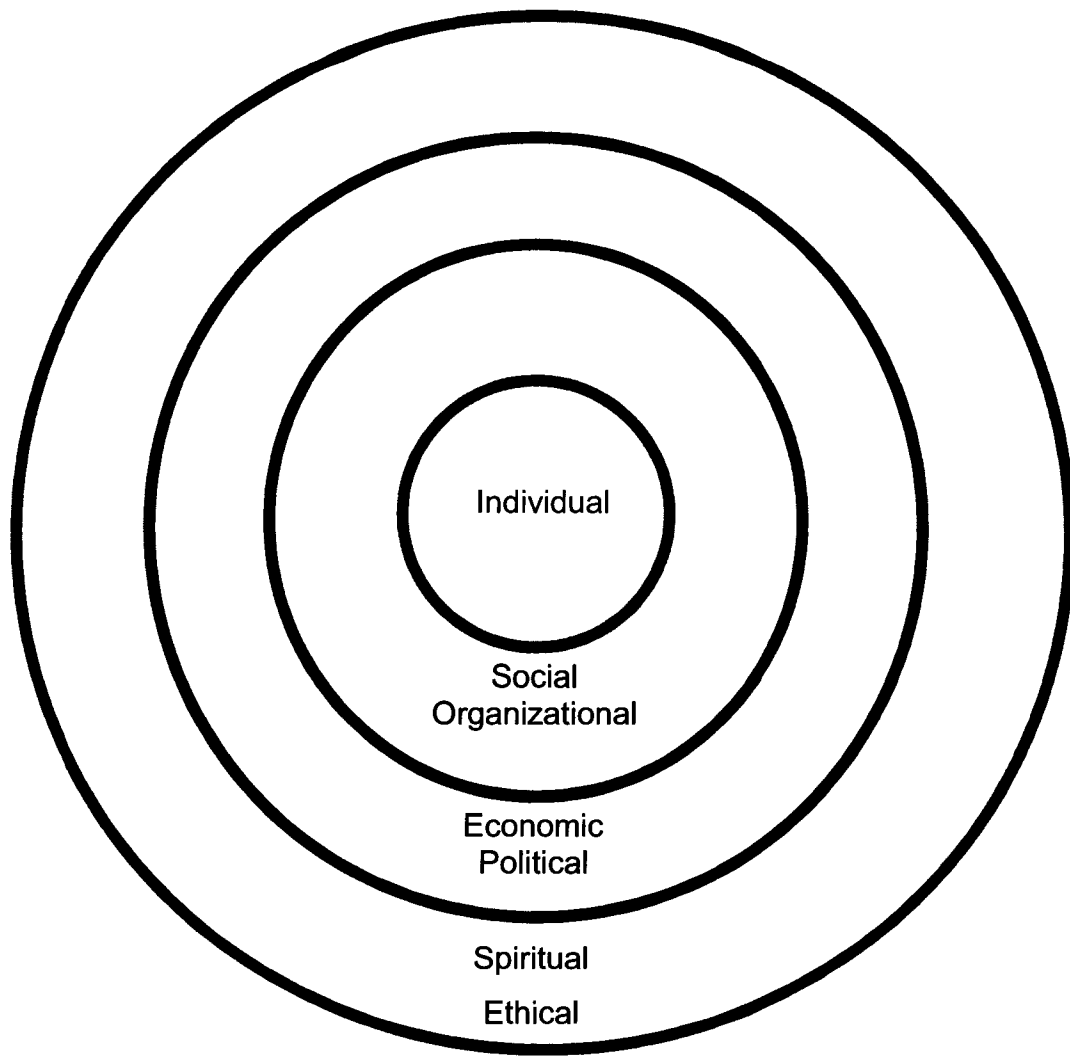


Figure 1. Spheres of human behavior.

Individual behavior occupies the center ring. It can be very complex, but is not necessarily the most influential over anything other than individual experience. The second ring symbolizes social and organizational behavior. Group behavior at this level can, in general, have more impact and influence than individual behavior. The next ring out is composed of political and economic behavior, which generally have an even more powerful influence and are even more broadly descriptive of the collective human psyche. Finally, spirituality and ethical behavior complete the set as the outmost ring and have the



potential to be the more influential and representative than any of the preceding spheres. In my opinion they are, when employed, the higher expression and the more fundamental rationale for functional human behavior and exemplify human potential at a much more advanced and long-term level than any other sphere in this illustration. (Each sphere is interdependent and can influence other spheres. However, the direction and relative degree of influence in general is indicated by the yellow arrow.)

This outer-most ring is very important because a republic operating by the tenets of American free market capitalism, behavior occupying the economic-political ring, is amoral and needs the larger context setting of the spiritual-ethical aspect of human behavior. This does not require an integration of church and state, especially that of any particular religion. However, it does require a method of instituting a spiritual-ethical path, one of moral wealth, let's say, rather than wealth accumulation for its own sake and by its own vice. If spirituality is blocked by forces in the political-economic ring, as I suggest it is, it not only fails to influence politics and economics, it can also fail to influence the social-organizational and personal levels of human behavior. This subsequent lack of ethical and spiritual consideration appears to be at the bottom of most of the individual, corporate, and governmental elite deviance that has been cast resplendent across media of all sorts in the past few years – to the detriment of the common working person.

Therefore, if HR is to fulfill its potential it must be at least as involved in solving extra-organizational problems as it is in managing internal processes. The following illustration may help:

Ask any HR professional that you know the following question:

“If you were the new HR person on a slave galley, what’s the first thing you would do?”

And many would reply:

“Make sure everyone is rowing in the same direction.”

“Make sure the right person is doing the right job.”

“Make sure everyone is rowing at the same time and pace.”

“Make sure everyone is rowing just in time.”

“Make sure everyone is rowing efficiently and effectively.”

“Make sure all rowers are working to improve quality.”

“Make sure all rowers have ownership and give input.”

“Make sure all rowers who need it get rower training.”

“Make sure all rowers get timely performance evaluations.”

“Make sure all of the rowers are healthy and well fed.”

“Make sure the rowers feel personally rewarded.”

“Make sure the rowers all feel part of the team.”

“Make sure the rowers get paid extra for working at night.”

“Sing, ‘row, row, row your boat’ together to improve cohesion.”

“Make sure that there is a succession plan for rowers.”

“Enroll all rowers in the ‘over the side’ retirement plan.”

“Institute affirmative rowing practices.”

And so on...

But the truth is, no matter how much one builds the team, develops leadership, creates a learning organization, prepares for the future, gives one-minute praise or criti-

cism, controls quality, does things just in time, embraces diversity, understands the purpose, paints the vision, implements the plan, sticks to the mission, learns from mistakes, supports creativity, manages conflict, manages time, creates relationships, sees the big picture, uses chaos, pays for performance, innovates, satisfies the customer, offers stress classes, diets classes, and exercise classes, promotes inclusion, offers insurance, gives pensions, improves hiring practices, benchmarks performance, or implements 360 degree evaluation, the ship is still a slave ship and the rowers are still slaves.

The first thing an HR person should do on a slave galley is to cut the chains. And that is why social and political economics, influenced by spiritual ethics, are so important to human resource and organizational development. The biblical prophet Isaiah pointed out the need for basic human development principles even in religious ceremony:

Do you think the fast that I demand this day is to bow down your head like a bul-rush? No! The fast I demand is that you feed the poor, house the homeless, clothe the naked, and break off the handcuffs on your prisoners.

Isaiah 58:6

Living a lifestyle of servile appeasement may be recommended for those individuals who wish to break their shackles but are afraid to leave their jobs (Hochheiser, 1998). But to systematically address the mitigating external factors outside of the workplace is far more important if one truly wishes to eliminate bondage. Adam Smith (1804; 1877) wrote both the Wealth of Nations and the Theory of Moral Sentiments. He believed that self-interest would eventually benefit all people because providers that had to compete for customers would be less likely to cheat them. But he also believed that the affluent would take care of the less advantaged because they would feel uncomfortable in the presence of suffering. Today's elite deviant, however, has created a cocoon of separation, has partitioned and removed themselves from having any real contact with want or

suffering (Omerod, 2006). This combined with the other aspects of elite deviance, such as the belief that one deserves one's station in life, or that God smiles on the rich and frowns on the poor, provides the one-two punch that relegates Moral Sentiments to the trash bin. A consensus of spiritual values, such as making sense before making a profit, might be able to mitigate this cocooning of the conscience. Perhaps, if carried to its natural conclusion, this would constitute a Fifth Great Awakening (Fogel, 2000), or perhaps a Theory of Moral Wealth, and might become part of the handbook for HR professionals.

## **Chapter Two: Method**

### ***Philosophical Foundation***

In the Handbook of Qualitative Research Lincoln and Denzin state that:

A politics of liberation must always begin with the perspective, desires, and dreams of those individuals and groups who have been oppressed by the larger ideological, economic, and political forces of a society or a historical moment.  
(2000, p. 1048)

They also observe that qualitative research is multi-paradigmatic with an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary approach that demonstrates a moral concern regarding democracy, race, gender, class, nation, freedom, and community. In this model qualitative inquiry is viewed as a civic, participatory, collaborative project, with the qualitative researcher held not as an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer, but rather as one that is historically positioned and locally situated.

Therefore, qualitative researchers should also think historically and structurally with careful regard to pertinent interactions in an attempt to identify the prejudices, persuasions, cultural motifs, and people who prevail in a given period of history (Mills, 1959).

As a qualitative meta-analysis, and given the topic, this dissertation called for an interpretive design similar to critical theory and constructivism, perhaps a more Marxist-cultural studies theory paradigm, which allowed the most latitude in accommodating a

critical evaluation of current and historical literature (both academic and secular), newspapers, magazines, film, radio, Internet content, popular culture, and government data.

### *Methods of Inquiry*

Patton (1990) states that qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: interviews, direct observation, and written documents. According to Patton data is typically derived from fieldwork where the researcher spends time in the setting under study. My approach, however, was content analysis intensive. I blended rational connections of many bodies of thought (sociology, psychology, philosophy, medicine, organizational dynamics, economics, political science, mathematics, environmental science, marketing, communication, and theology) with popular media and other content that describe what has and what is happening in the United States, and in some cases the world, and how this relates to the realms of consumption, earning a living, and perceived quality of life.

In general, this study fell within the parameters of grounded theory with a literature search of many fields of inquiry comprising the expert panel. However, my tools of inquiry were drawn from phenomenology, heuristics, symbolic interactionism, ecological psychology, systems theory, non-linear dynamics (near-to-chaos theory), hermeneutics, and most probably an orientational approach as my research involved all levels of social class. I attempted to identify structures and essential characteristics of phenomenon, identify the symbols necessary to derive meaning, note the specific behaviors employed in specific environments, and find the underlying function of the system as a whole and determine its fundamental order or disorder.

The method included an extensive search and analysis of research, archived data, historical materials, contemporary reading, and real-time media. Sources of information include:

- Academic literature (peer reviewed and juried)
- Books
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Government documents
- Films
- Television programs (including commercials)
- Radio broadcasts
- Internet content

As Adorno and Horkheimer observe:

The sociological theory that the loss of the support of objectively established religion, the dissolution of the last remnants of precapitalism, together with technological and social differentiation or specialization, have led to cultural chaos is disproved every day; for culture now impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are on in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system.

(2000, p. 3)

### *Scope*

The scope of this study extended beyond two hundred years of recent history. However, the content increased as the timeline moved toward current events. By the same token, the academic literature became scarcer as the timeline approached current events. Therefore, popular literature and media filled more of the content as the timeline

moved forward. This is somewhat of a paradox as popular media seems to be more vulnerable to vested influence and propaganda. Therefore, I used a comparative meta-analysis with academic literature supplying the bulk of content for historical analysis, and poly-vocal/multi-voice methods providing the analysis for the larger portion of very recent events.

The information covered social, economic, political, religious, and technological factors that directly impacted the perceived norm of how people work, produce, and earn a living, with the subsequent influences on their families, mental and physical health, social position, happiness, communities, environment, and general quality of life including the ability and opportunity to make a meaningful contribution. Problems and solutions were sought with an emphasis on unmasking the underlying mechanism in order to address the issues at their foundation. Argument and counterargument analysis was applied to determine both the cohesiveness and weight of each perspective. From the broadest viewpoint this work was a synthesis, a search for the common channel of thought that combines the many tributaries already extant regarding servitude, its causes and its effects. This has, hopefully, better and more credibly identified issues and mechanisms that have subjugated the spirit of humankind with respect to making a living, and provided a more powerful platform for personal and social action.

### ***Information Interpretation***

In my research I sought to use a scientific knowledge system, rational thought and empirical observation linked by abstraction, to create a more meaningful synthesis of thoughts and ideas gleaned from content analysis. The goal was to produce information



that is available to anyone and that affords power to groups and individuals beyond the vested interest of those who benefit from the servitude of others. My findings are illustrated and synthesized through reflection, matrices, dichotomy, argumentation, and graphic modeling.

### **Chapter Three: Setting the Context**

In the beginning of this research, my focus was the dissatisfaction and dysfunction people in the American workplace were experiencing even as they were working harder and harder to get ahead. I later found that the impact of false social norms on the earning, buying, and consumption behaviors of American people seemed largely to blame. Many ancillary woes can be attributed to these behaviors that diminish the quality of life in America, and the rewards of overwork and over-consumption for many appeared to be general disappointment, disillusionment, dissatisfaction, isolation, and lack of fulfillment. The current social-political-economic system in America seems to benefit from these false social norms and dysfunctional behaviors, but the benefit appears to go to a very few at the expense of the very many. And although it could be argued that a rising tide has lifted all boats, and that America's current standard of poverty might be considered luxurious by many developing countries, in the final analysis this argument is probably both erroneous and insignificant. It appears that it is the relative difference in wealth and wellbeing that matters to people, not the absolute difference. The real key to human motivation seems to be summed up by the phrase, "Compared to what?" In other words, it is one's reference point that appears to mold one's perception. It also seems that if present trends continue the bar will be constantly raised, frustrating and frightening the consumer, making the highest relative standard of living once again unattainable to all but a very few, again at the expense of the many, again at the expense of the environ-

ment, again with a particularly nasty outcome for those in developing countries who provide the natural resources for this kind of voracious consumption. Therefore, keeping Americans pulling on the cart, as it were, in an environment where they will likely never attain the status and wealth that is constantly paraded before them, and may lead to a degradation of their overall quality of life, will continue to benefit the wealthy and powerful for the moment, but by necessity requires ingenious and stealthy tactics.

Although currently more sophisticated and employing the latest technology, most of these tactics are not new have been used historically by those who would cast others into servitude. However, the sweep of this apparent deception fans far more widely than first suspected. It is now apparent that the notion of, “As above, so below,” applies globally as well as locally when applied to the United States and the self-serving manipulations of its powerful elite. Thus, America seems to treat the rest of the world in much the same manner as it does its own people through centralization of wealth, depletion of natural resources, endorsement of needless consumption, usurpation of power, and the promotion of servitude. Many indicators present a compelling argument that this state of affairs can no longer continue. It is difficult to argue against the insidious corruption of social, political, economic, and environmental systems that will likely lead to a bifurcation point, a crossroads of sorts that will escort the United States to a future that is either far better or far worse, but decidedly not to a future that is merely an extension of what already exists.

At the onset of this research I considered myself politically liberal. I now realize that I am much more centrist than I first imagined. However, given the path of this research and its implications, I now see myself orthogonal to the traditional political

parties. The political right has never appealed to me and seems to be behind much of the skullduggery that has created the social, political, and economic mess that future generations will be cleaning up for a long time. The left, however, is currently without any real political teeth and the democratic response to the growing dominance of Republican influence since 1996 has certainly lacked luster, among other things. To paraphrase Will Rogers, I was not a part of any political organization; I was a Democrat. What I would now happily join is a party with legs and teeth and an endocrine system and convictions that are based on making things better for everyone rather than blind loyalty to an ideology or personal greed. Unfortunately, I don't see one.

This state of personal affairs admitted, there still seems to be overwhelming support for the more liberal perspective in academic literature. This has been noted as normal in some of my sources, as often academics are deemed liberal in general. As this dissertation is based on a qualitative survey of academic and popular literature and media, the liberal tendency in academic literature has made justification by saturation and overwhelming evidence quite easy. However, I believe I have given the more conservative perspective a fair shake and have even promoted some of the conservative ideas and ideals in this dissertation. In popular literature the balance between liberal and conservative tomes has been ten or twenty to one depending on which store or source I used and on what particular date. This finding alone lent itself to justification by saturation. In other media the balance between conservative and liberal sources is much more even, but still fervently debated. Talk radio leans overwhelmingly to the right and the Internet is too vast and diverse to call one way or the other. There seems to be a strong perception that the United States has become increasingly polarized politically, thus fomenting abundant

accusations of bias in the media. However, I have found that the liberal resources cited in this paper appear, in general, to be better grounded in data and are of a more reviewed sort than those of a more conservative bent that appear in equal plentitude when one does a Google search. An ancillary problem may be that, at least on television, there is neither a liberal nor conservative bias in general, but rather an overwhelming lack of any pertinent information at all. (It would also appear that the real political debate in America, if there is one, is between those who are socially liberal but conservative fiscally, and those who are socially conservative but fiscally liberal. Traditionally conservatives have been conservative on both social and economic issues, while liberals were liberal on both social and economic issues. It may be that a new kind of political debate, perhaps between neoconservatives and “Clintonian” liberals, is beginning to take the stage.)

Another important finding is that the majority of Americans seem to share an opinion that is not being expressed by the media in general. For the most part, Americans are centrist in many of their views and the wedge issues that are touted in the media as creating a chasm across the nation are not representative of how people really feel but rather appear to be a tool of those who would create the illusion of a country divided.

This division is an example of a false social norm. And although earning and buying behaviors, prompted by real and false social norms, are integral to this dissertation, the true heart of this analysis resides in the bosom of the American Dream.

Historically, most concerns regarding the American Dream address its lack of fulfillment. However, the larger issue is not that the American Dream has been denied. The issue is that it appears to have been hijacked, reformed, resold to the American people – and is now being sold to the rest of the world at an alarming rate. Unfortunately, it is

now a dream not worth having. When polled, people indicate that the most important things are those that are being sacrificed to this false American Dream, such as a better life for their children, time, health, and relationships. Yet, somehow, these people also seem trapped in a system that no longer cares about their fulfillment, if it ever did, and that pervasively and perversely supports dysfunctional behaviors that promise fulfillment, but rarely do. This would be bad enough, but these behaviors, and the systems that support them, are creating a world that, to all appearances, is on the edge of social, economic, and environmental breakdown.

Simply put, there appears to be a group of wealthy and powerful people that requires the rest of America and the world to sacrifice for its benefit, but that is quickly and ultimately ruining things for everyone, even themselves, through the rapid destruction and depletion of limited resources, including the intrinsic resources of humanity, or human capital.

Currently the opinions expressed by many Americans regarding their personal lives and the experience of being citizens of the world's greatest superpower are far from complimentary. Concerns, complaints, and rants abound concerning tax cuts for the rich, the imbalance of income and wealth, globalization, the national debt, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the war in Iraq, potential wars with other countries, environmental deterioration, loss of civil liberties, fixed elections and other dysfunctions at the national and global levels – mostly directed at the current administration. People seem to feel that the American Dream has been corrupted and perverted, if not outright stolen. According to many, serfdom is becoming the national default state. A prime example of

this phenomenon is the opinion expressed in the books by popular writer Michael Moore (2001; 2003; 2004).

There are those who criticize his work as a left-wing, blue-collar, anachronistic, political rant – and it may well be. However, the day after the hijacked passenger jets flew into the World Trade Center in New York the publisher Regan Books (a division of HarperCollins, owned by News Corp and Rupert Murdoch) withheld the first 50,000 copies of “Stupid White Men” from distribution for five months. They insisted that Moore rewrite roughly half of the book and remove anything that they found offensive regarding President George W. Bush. Moore initiated a standoff by refusing to change anything. The publisher then threatened to destroy the books rather than to distribute them to bookstores, claiming that Moore was out of touch with the American people. This impasse was finally broken by a coalition of librarians who flooded Regan Books with complaints about the book being banned.

Regan Books relented and “Stupid White Men” became an overnight bestseller. Within hours of release it went to number one on Amazon. Within five days it had gone into its ninth printing and soon into its fifty-second printing. Michael Moore’s newer book, “Dude, Where’s My Country!” (M. Moore, 2003) became a bestseller almost before it hit the bookstore shelves. On the other hand, “The Leadership Genius of George W. Bush” (Thompson & Ware, 2003) barely made a showing while “Bush’s Brain” (J. Moore & Slater, 2003), an expose of Bush’s apparent inadequacy as presidential material and his reliance on the questionable ethics of his adviser and campaign manager Karl Rove, hit the New York Times bestseller list almost immediately. Unless one argues that only liberal intellectuals read (which doesn’t account for the previously stated blue-collar

reaction to the current social, political, and economic issues), these bestsellers could be much more representative of popular sentiment.

But what, more specifically, is creating this sentiment? From many perspectives there are salient factors that appear to be affecting how Americans live, spend, earn, and consume, while producing a subsequent negative effect on their quality of life.

The following includes some of the factors which are producing the predicaments in which many Americans find themselves. The prose and references are merely indicative of what one can expect in the rest of this dissertation:

- On average, people in the United States are noted as working longer and harder than those in any other developed country. Workaholism seems to have become a socially approved and rewarded behavior in the workplace. Many corporations have installed video devices and use other surveillance techniques to monitor the working habits of employees without the employees' knowledge. Workers have resorted to multitasking, eating lunch at their workstations, and even working unpaid hours at home or the office in order to keep up and/or get ahead. In a nation obsessed with work; time poverty, burnout, and the degradation of life outside of work have become common symptoms (de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2002; Dominguez & Robin, 1992; Fassel, 1990; Gilley, 1998; Graaf, 2003; Greider, 2003; Herman Bryant Maynard, 1993; Hunnicutt, 1984, 1988; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Killinger, 1991; Kiyosaki & Lechter, 2002; Linder, 1970; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Parenti, 2003; Philipson, 2002; Reich, 2002a, 2002b; Reinhold, 1996, 1997; B. E. Robinson, 1989; Robinson, 2003; Schabner, 2001; J. B. Schor, 1993; Sotile & Sotile, 1998; Sussman, 2001).



- Rabid and pathological production and over-consumption appear to have gripped middle-class America by the throat, and the working poor to the extent that they can participate. People not only buy things with which they quickly become dissatisfied, they buy things they do not want because they are afraid of being without them. Keeping up and keeping ahead has become an ersatz method of survival and security. In the midst of this unchecked consumption, sprawl, and waste the environment continues to suffer and our ability to survive within it is diminished (Ackerman, Goodwin, & Kiron, 1997; Appadurai, 1986; Ayres, 1999; Bell, 1976; Benson, 2000; Brown, 2002; Clapp, 1998; Cross, 1993, 2000; de Graaf et al., 2002; Dominguez & Robin, 1992; R. W. Fox & Lears, 1983; Frank, 1999; Galbraith, 1998; Greider, 2003; Holt & Schor, 2000; Hunnicutt, 1988; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2000; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Stanley & Danko, 1996; Wachtel, 1983).
- Whereas a family could live comfortably with a single wage earner in the 1950's and 1960's, most working families now require at least two wage earners in order to get by and for many even this strategy is failing to make ends meet. Those among the working poor seem to be caught in a cycle of poverty that traps them in a life of working multiple part-time jobs with no benefits and precious little time to care for their families. According to the data most Americans are also caught in a debt trap, trying to live lifestyles they deem more acceptable by using credit cards and home equity loans they can ill afford to service. A relatively jobless recovery since 2001 has created a large, relatively hidden, segment of unemployment and has moved many into positions of underemployment and lower paying jobs. All of these factors

have produced stress on the family as well as the individual and decreased overall quality of life (Appelbaum, Bernhardt, & Murnane, 2003; Barrington, 2000; Bernstein, 2003; Bluestone, Murphy, & Stevenson, 1973; *Does a rising tide lift all boats?: America's full-time working poor reap limited gains in the new economy*, 2000; Ehrenreich, 2001; Graaf, 2003; Halpern, 2003; Heyman, 2002; Iceland, 2000; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Kazis & Miller, 2001; Kelley, 1996; Krugman, 2003b; Parenti, 2003; Reich, 2002a; Schiller, 2001; Shlaes, 1999; Shulman, 2003; Sklar, Mykyta, Wefald, & Wilson, 2002; Sotile & Sotile, 1998; Tonelson, 2002a; Warren & Tyagi, 2003).

- Researchers find that people are becoming more isolated and socially estranged. The desire for more connection is coupled with a pronounced need for more meaning, soul, and purpose at the individual level, at the group and family level, and in the workplace (de Graaf et al., 2002; Livingstone, 2002; Putnam, 2000).
- Findings also indicate that the poor and middle-class have been betrayed in concert with the betrayal of the America's social contract. In many cases these people are overly stressed and living in fear. At worst they are completely excluded from having any positive influence over their own lives. There is concern among these people over the accelerated rate of change, there is lack of faith in traditional economics, and there is increasing distrust in the major institutions of society to solve the many problems they face (Barlett & Steele, 1996; Chomsky, 2003a; Chomsky, ; de Graaf et al., 2002; Ehrenreich, 1989; Gilley, 1998; Goff & Fleisher III, 1999; Greider, 1992; Krugman, 2003b; K. S. Newman, 1989; Parenti, 2003; Pyszcznski, Solomon, &

Greenberg, 2003; Quirk & Bridwell, 1992; Shlaes, 1999; Tonelson, 2002a; Warren & Tyagi, 2003; Zunz, Schappa, & Hiwatari, 2002).

- An extreme centralization of wealth appears to be bringing America to the brink of disaster and economic crisis. Debt and bankruptcy are skyrocketing while true upward mobility has been slowed to a near standstill. Income for all but the rich has declined in recent decades and the rollback of the welfare state may be accompanied by a direct attack on Social Security and Medicare. Employee funded retirement, health care, education and other direct investments in employees have become extremely rare while the cost of all of these for the individual continues to rise. Health and general well being, physically, emotionally, and mentally, are at greater risk in the contemporary workplace, while work life for a growing number is taking on similarities to slavery and servitude as many large organizations continue to reap record profits (Angier, 1990; Appelbaum et al., 2003; Ayres, 1999; Bales, 2000; Barlett & Steele, 1996; Bernstein, 2003; Blackburn, 2002; Braun, 1991; Chomsky, 2003a; Cieslewicz, 2002; Cohen, 1995; Cooper & Smith, 1985; Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; de Graaf et al., 2002; Derber, 2002; Droeger, 1987; Fogel, 2000; Goodwin, 2002; Greider, 2003; N. Hertz, 2003; R. Hertz & Marshall, 2001; Kiyosaki, 2000; Kiyosaki & Lechter, 2002; Krugman, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2000; K. S. Newman, 1989; Parenti, 2003; Reinhold, 1996; Sapolsky, 2002; Schiller, 2001; Schlosser, 2001, 2003; J. B. Schor, 1993, 1999; Shiller, 2000; Shlaes, 1999; Tonelson, 2002b; Warren, 2004a, 2004b; Warren & Tyagi, 2003; E. Wolff, 2003; E. N. Wolff, 1996, 1998, 2000a, 2000b).

- Since the 1990's the United States government in general has been observed to be moving towards the conservative right, culminating in the two presidential terms of George W. Bush. This has led to an accelerated national debt and deficit, an overabundance of influence from political consultants, lobbyists, corporations, and other high-level campaign contributors. The result has been a state of permanent campaign that bypasses any opportunity for influence by the common person other than the coterie of extreme religious conservative Bush supporters that is mobilized occasionally to vote on wedge issues. Otherwise those who make the largest campaign contributions, typically corporations, have the most influence on government policy. In addition, human rights violations have been swept under the rug while civil rights for citizens have deteriorated under the guise of national security and fighting terrorism. The apparent neoconservative, and often imperialist, bent of this administration appears, in Bush's second term, to be alienating many Republicans as well as Democrats (Bartlett, 2006; Bell, 2002; Blumenthal, 1980; Brock, 2002; *Choiceless democracy*, 2003; Chomsky, 2003a; Derber, 2000; Dershowitz, 2001; Dubose, Reid, & Cannon, 2003; Falk, 2003; Franken, 2003; Galbraith, 1996; Green & Herrnson, 2002; Greider, 1992; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Hartmann, 2002; Hentoff, 2003; N. Hertz, 2003; Huffington, 2003; Krugman, 2003b; Luntz, 1988; Magleby, Patterson, & Thurber, 2002; McGinniss, 1988; Medvic, 1997, 2001; Mitchell, 1992; Mokhiber & Weissman, 1999; J. Moore & Slater, 2003; M. Moore, 2001, 2003; B. I. Newman, 1999; Ornstein, 2000; Parenti, 2003; Plotke, 2002; Prasch, 2002; Quirk & Bridwell, 1992; Reed, 2002; Shafer, 2002; Shivani, 2003; Sorauf, 2002; Thurber, 1995; Thurber & Nelson, 2000; White, 1969, 1988; Whitman, 2003).

- Researchers note that exposure of the average American to marketing has accelerated while new and more invasive techniques, including psychological manipulation, are used by the media, or in the repression of it, to manipulate the public with respect to consumption behaviors, ideas about reality, personal mores, political voting, and social norms. This decreases critical thinking and exacerbates irrational and innumerate decision making on the part of the average American. The use of manipulating context, reference point, and social rank and influence to intimidate and motivate through fear further promote the objectives of the wealthy and powerful (Alterman, 2003; Austin & Aitchison, 2003; Ayres, 1999; Barsamian & Chomsky, 2001; Berger, 2000; Blumenthal, 1980; Brisard & Dasquie, 2002; Brock, 2002; Cappo, 2003; Chomsky, 1989, 1997, 2003a; Cockburn & Clair, 1999; Conason, 2003; Dawes, 2001; de Graaf et al., 2002; B. Goldberg, 2003; Grady, 1995; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Howe, 1977; Jaques, Gibson, & Isaac, 1978; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1997; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Keller, 2003; Krugman, 2003b; Kuhn, 1970; Livingstone, 2002; Luntz, 1988; McAllister, 1996; McChesney, 2000; McGinniss, 1988; Minow & LaMay, 1995; Mitchell, 1992; J. Moore & Slater, 2003; B. I. Newman, 1999; Nichols, McChesney, & Chomsky, 2002; O'Guinn, 1997; O'Reilly, 2003; Paulos, 1990; Phillips, 2003; Pipher, 1994; Rampton & Stauber, 2003; Ries & Trout, 1986; J. P. Robinson, 1989; Rosoff, Pontell, & Tillman, 1998; J. B. Schor, 2004; Shefrin, 2000; Sherif, 1966; Shiller, 2000; Tedlow, 1990; Thaler, Koval, & Marshall, 2003; Tvede, 2002; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974; Welles, 1986; Wells, 2003; White, 1969, 1988; Zaltman, 2003).

- Americans in general seem to be continuously pummeled by an irresponsible and often criminal social, political, and business environment characterized by deceit, avarice, greed, lawlessness, corruption, and imperialistic egocentrism among the elite. This behavior has been extended to international affairs and is drastically altering America's standing among other nations as well as jeopardizing its ability to be a powerful and respected world player. This elite deviance can be characterized by a spectrum from mild insensitivity to others and a self-centered interest in one's own desires, to intense sociopathic and psychopathic behavior on the part of individuals and institutions (Abraham, 2000; Bandow, 1990; Barlett & Steele, 2002; Berenson, 2003; Blumenthal, 2003; Bowen, 2001; Brewster, 2003; Brock, 2002; Brzezinski, 1997; Bugliosi & Ivins, 2001; Chaudhry, Scheer, & Scheer, 2003; Childs, 2000; Chomsky, 1997, 2003a; Cockburn & Clair, 1999; Corn, 2003; Derber, 2000; Der-showitz, 2001; L. Fox, 2003; Franken, 2003; M. H. Goldberg, 1994; Goodwin, 2002; Greider, 1992; N. Hertz, 2003; Hightower, 2001, 2003; Huffington, 2003; Johnson, 2000, 2004; Kelly, 2001; Kleiner, 2003; Krugman, 2003b; Mailer, 2003; McLean & Elkind, 2003; Mokhiber & Weissman, 1999; J. Moore & Slater, 2003; M. Moore, 2001; Myers, 1995; O'Reilly, 2003; Palast, 2002; Partnoy, 2003; Prestowitz, 2003; Rosoff et al., 1998; Schiller, 2001; Schlosser, 2001, 2003; Simon, 2002; Smith & Emshwiller, 2003; Squires, Smith, McDougall, & Yeack, 2003; Steele & Barlett, 1992; Toffler & Reingold, 2003; Vidal, 2002a, 2002b; Webb & Waters, 1998; Whitman, 2003; Zsolnai & Gasparski, 2002).

Although incomplete, and certainly not exhaustive either within or across topics, the above sentiments express the essence of the frustration many Americans are experi-

encing. In the following chapters I attempt to cast a broader as well as a more intense light on the plight of the American people, while still affording an appropriate amount of academic scrutiny and offering a compilation of suggestions for improvement.

## **Chapter Four: Servitude and Overwork in America**

While slavery is still alive and well in the United States, in general work in America has taken on a new form of servitude. Bearing some resemblance to the slavery of history it is characterized by overwork, dissatisfaction, and lack of fulfillment for many, while the few benefit by the efforts of the many. This chapter is divided into sections on the history of slavery, followed by work and overwork, workplace stress, sleep deprivation, unhappiness, and misuse of technology, all of which help to characterize the new serfdom in America and contribute to dissatisfaction with work life.

### ***Slavery in the New, New Economy***

It has taken humanity a long time to determine that slavery might be a bad thing, and for the majority of humans' time on the planet slavery has been considered part of the natural order (Bradley, 1984; T. R. R. Cobb, 1858; Garnsey, 1996; Genovese, 1974; Glancy, 2002; Harrill, 2006; Swartley, 1983).

It is suspected that the American colonies fought the revolutionary war in some part to protect the institution of slavery, making it round one of the Civil War, and that there was broad hypocrisy demonstrated by the founders regarding their belief in freedom and liberty versus their personal investment in the convenience of slavery (Schama, 2006). Only later in the history of humanity did people consider the idea that the institu-



tion of slavery might be widely damaging, at least under certain circumstances (Bradley, 1984; Ingram, 2005, originally published in 1895).

Fortunately, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries any form of outright slavery or forced labor grew to become, in general, a moral outrage for those living in developed countries (D. B. Davis, 2006; Thoreau, 1906). However, some modern writers have returned to a perspective similar in some ways to earlier times as a counterweight to the progressiveness with which the process of modernization is typically represented in post-modern America (Bush, 2000).

But at the same time people in the United States began to fear servitude of a different sort, either imposed by business or government, or by both. Almost midway through the twentieth century Friedrich Hayek wrote a landmark book entitled, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944). As a response to the stagflation and corruption of Hitler's Germany, and as a warning to the rest of western culture, Hayek sought to illustrate how too much government control over the economy takes freedom away from people and forces them into slavery. He proposes that one intervention invariably leads to another, as the unintended economic distortions derived from one intervention require another to correct them. This dynamic, he claimed, leads society down the road to serfdom. Hayek argued that, in the above interventionist dynamic, liberty is lost piecemeal, one freedom at a time, always in the name of necessity and expediency. He sought to demonstrate how even a well intended attempt to do good can produce great harm, presenting a counterpart to Adam Smith's dictum that self-interest can be the source of great societal good (Smith, 1776). Hayek argued that freedom could only be preserved if it were held as a supreme principle, that there is a self-ordering nature to society, if it is left alone and unregulated,

and that only a truly free market could afford people real freedom while allowing the economy to stabilize naturally.

As Americans begin the twenty-first century, they may find that they have or have not arrived at enslavement in the way that Hayek envisioned. However, according to the literature there is strong evidence to support the perception that wage earners in the United States are, in general, overworked, over-stressed, and over-extended financially in a way that might lead one to think that working America is more similar to being on a superhighway to serfdom rather than on a mere road. Therefore, to clarify the particular types of servitude working Americans are currently experiencing it may be useful to briefly articulate the forms and the continuum of labor under slavery.

As noted before, since the dawn of civilization humanity has been well acquainted with the particular form of servile labor known as slavery (D. B. Davis, 2006; Engerman, 1999; Meltzer, 1993).

Finley (1976) comments that in the context of universal history labor for others was normally performed under compulsion because of the superior force or status of the master or because of debt owed by the laborer. As America came into its own as a new and more democratic form of government slaveholding elites feared it as a threat to the institution of slavery. The heated battles over taxation were rooted the rights of slaveholders to hold human beings as property rather than in debates over personal liberty (Einhorn, 2006).

Engerman (1999) and deVries (1994) argue, however, that <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=25779127> the industrial revolution emerged with both an increased desire for a better quality of life and increased work time and effort in

order to satisfy it. While the idea that people in the industrial revolution may have worked as if in servitude to increase their consumption may be true in part, Young (1772) estimates that not much earlier in history over 95 percent of the inhabitants of the world lived as miserable slaves of despotic tyrants, and many decry the servitude of the industrial nineteenth century (Engels, 1987; Rahkainen, 2004; E. P. Thompson, 1966) including that decreed under the revised poor laws (Driver, 1993).

An exception to the general historical reality of servitude might be found in hunter-gatherer societies that were willing to accept, according to today's standards, a much lower standard of living and whose wants were easily satisfied (Sahlins, 1972). However, from the slavery of ancient Egypt, Rome, and Greece (Toledano, 1988; Westermann, 1955), to the slaves of colonial expansion in the Americas and the antebellum South (W. Johnson, 2001; Littlefield, 1991; Merriam, 1970), to the servitude of the early to mid-nineteenth century European and American sweatshops (Freedgood, 2003; Schor, 1993), to the current servitude of the middle class and working poor in the United States (J. Johnson, 2002; Schor, 1993; Shipler, 2005), servitude seems to have been a part of most people's lives in one form or another.

Though slavery has been so pervasive and extensive, the last two centuries have seen strong attempts to eradicate it. In 1807 the British slave trade was abolished and efforts refocused to eliminate slavery itself. Finally in 1833 the British Parliament made slavery illegal throughout the British Empire and in 1839 the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was created, with Thomas Clarkson as its first president, to pursue absolute abolition. Slavery in America made its debut in 1619, almost simultaneously and certainly ironically with the first true beginnings of self-government (Fehrenbacher,

1981). The British first, at least temporarily, emancipated slaves in the North American colonies during the American Revolution. However, it took until January 1, 1863, after much work and protest by abolitionists (Blue, 2004; Drummond, 1961; Lowance, 2000), for Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, again, in part, an act of war strategy. Much later slavery was accepted as a way of life in countries such as Brazil, either officially or otherwise (Baronov, 2000). But finally in 1927 slavery was made illegal worldwide, at least in theory, at the League of Nations' 1927 Slavery Convention (Devine, Hansen, Wilde, & Poole, 1999).

The upside is that slavery is now against the law in every country. But contrary to conventional wisdom, slavery has not disappeared (K. Bales, 2002a, 2002b; Turley, 2000). In fact, there are now more slaves than ever. Currently there are an estimated 27 million slaves in the world, including those in the United States, exceeding more than twice the total number of people taken from Africa during the 400 years of the Atlantic slave trade. The CIA estimates that 14,500 to 17,000 people are trafficked into America each year, and 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked each year internationally. Nearly 80% are women and children. This lucrative enterprise yields \$9 billion in profit every year in the United States alone.

For an extensive list of these incidents see: (K. Bales, 2000, 2002a; Batstone, 2006; Cockburn, 2003), <http://www.gvnet.com/humantrafficking/>, [http://www.polarisproject.org/polarisproject/trafficking\\_p3/trafficking.htm](http://www.polarisproject.org/polarisproject/trafficking_p3/trafficking.htm), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/33109.htm>, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/>, <http://www.gvnet.com/streetchildren/USA.htm>,

<http://www.gvnet.com/humantrafficking/USA.htm>, and

<http://www.gvnet.com/childprostitution/USA.htm>.

Slavery today, a form of social and economic exploitation, is defined as a socio-economic relationship in which labor without pay is forced using violence or under the threat of violence, exists in many different forms around the world (K. Bales, 2000). But there are two key characteristics that distinguish slavery in the present from slavery in the past: slaves today are both cheap and disposable. In the past a slave master could have legal ownership of the slave, there was a shortage of potential slaves (ethnic difference was very important) so the purchase cost was very high, and the slave had to be maintained over a long period therefore the profit in owning a slave was reduced. Modern slave masters rarely assert legal ownership, enjoy a glut of slaves from which to choose and, therefore, pay very little for slaves, do not concern themselves much with ethnic differences, and have a very short and inexpensive relationship with slaves that are of easy riddance ([http://www.garstangfairtrade.org.uk/slavery\\_today.html](http://www.garstangfairtrade.org.uk/slavery_today.html)).

Four types of modern slavery are common:

1. The type closest to the old form of slavery that prevailed in early American history is called chattel slavery. Chattel slavery occurs when someone is captured, born, or sold into slavery and ownership is claimed by the master. Children of the slave are generally considered property as well. Most often found in North and West Africa and some Arab countries, chattel slaves are now relatively few in number.
2. The most common form of slavery in the modern world is debt bondage or bonded labor, which claims 15 to 20 million victims on average in Southeast Asia

alone. This occurs when one pledges one's labor against a loan, but the length and nature of the work is poorly defined. Typically the work does not reduce the debt, rather it increases it as food and housing is charged to the debtor at inflated interest rates. The debt can often be passed down to later generations, causing them to become enslaved as well. Ownership is generally not asserted, but control over the slave is complete. This type of bondage is most common in the Indian sub-continent.

3. Contract slavery begins when a person is lured by a false contract for labor, often in a workshop or factory but also in domestic and construction work and even as human mine detectors. After the worker arrives at the work site they are typically captured and subsequently enslaved. Under constant threat of violence, the slave has no freedom and receives no pay and usually lives in harsh or hazardous conditions. This is currently the second largest form of slavery and is the one that is growing the most rapidly. Contract slavery is often found in South-east Asia, Africa, some Arab states and some parts of India.
4. Sex slavery forces women and children into prostitution, an estimated two million every year. Much like those tricked by contract slavery, sex slaves are lured by false offers of a good job and then are beaten and forced to work in brothels. In Southeast Asia, women are often coerced by their own husbands, fathers, and brothers to earn money. In other cases, victims pay tens of thousands of dollars to get to another country in order to find work or their family and are then forced into prostitution in order to pay off their debts (Grey, 2000). All too often, women or children are simply kidnapped (Barnitz, 1998; Kristof, 2004; Malarek, 2004).

The sex slavery trade thrives in Central and Eastern Europe and in North America. Although trafficking in the sex trade is nothing new (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001), this particular and heinous form of slavery (Farley, 2003) is more ubiquitous and lucrative in the contemporary world than drug smuggling (Altink, 1995; Farr, 2004; McGill, 2003; Skrobanek, Boonpakdi, & Janthakeero, 1997), and sadly appears to be supported by some American corporations and members of congress (Franken, 2005; Hougan, 1978).

(See [http://www.iabolish.org/slavery\\_today/primer/index.html](http://www.iabolish.org/slavery_today/primer/index.html), <http://www.antislavery.org/> for a description of the four types of slavery. There are other contemporary forms of slavery such as domestic slavery, the selling of girls for marriage, religious slavery, war slavery, and prison labor, but these constitute a much smaller percentage of overall slaves than those listed above.)

For the purposes of casting light on modern servitude, it is useful to make a distinction between slavery and serfdom in the pre-modern sense. The difference between ancient slavery and medieval serfdom is one that has absorbed the attention of Marxist-influenced historians since the time that Friederich Engels proposed that economic evolution proceeds through four major stages: ancient slavery, followed by medieval serfdom, modern wage exploitation, and communism. Lenin then extended the scheme by dividing the era of communism into four stages: the revolt of the working class, the dictatorship of the working class, the withering away of the state, and finally true communism (Bush, 1996; Nelson, 2001).

Simply put, the distinction between the ancient slave and the medieval serf, the first two stages of economic evolution, can be articulated as follows: the slave of ancient

times was considered to have died (Finley, 1976, 1998; Garnsey, 1996; Nelson, 2001; Patterson, 2005); all possessions passed to the master, and the slave who disobeyed his or her master for any reason could be killed, or killed merely at the master's whim. Slaves had no possessions, were segregated by class and lived in prison-like barracks, often separated from their families. They were under the harsh control of a slave-driver and generally forced to work in gangs (Nelson, 2001). This type of forced labor has existed throughout recorded history with entire ancient economies based on its perpetuation (Garnsey, 1996).

The medieval serf, by contrast, was free except for the obligations owed to the local lord and the rights this lord claimed over them. Servile obligations and noble rights could be extensive, but the serf was a living creature with a soul and the master could not deny serfs the amenities of the Church, demand work on holy days, or require service that was immoral. The serf had the rights according to natural law and could resist a lord either attempting to kill him or her or to withhold the necessities of life (Nelson, 2001). The lords understood that the welfare of the serf factored into that of their own estate and, therefore, did not ruthlessly exploit the serf as slaves had been done (Hoch, 1986). (Also see Kolchin, 1990).

There were two kinds of medieval serf: those bound to the soil and those bound to the lord. Servants usually had a separate hut with an attached garden. They lived with their families and married couples were kept together. Those serving the lord had duties assigned by the steward of the manor and were responsible for the tilling of land and provisioning the manor house. In return, food and clothing were provided for the serf and his or her family. Frequently the serf had time to supplement his or her needs by gardening



and could produce things to sell or keep (Nelson, 2001). Other serfs were responsible for working the lands of the lord, producing food and tending livestock. They also had time to garden and produce goods (Schor, 1993).

The transition from slavery to serfdom was apparently slow and fitful, but the reasons prompting the transformation of ancient slavery into the medieval system of serfdom have not been sufficiently clarified (Nelson, 2001). Interestingly, in the more modern times of the seventeenth century the American slave shared many rights with those in indentured servitude as well as free workers both black and white. It was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that slaves would eventually lose all of their rights in America (Harris, 2003), only to regain them in the mid- to late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Germane to this dissertation Williams (1994) makes the interesting argument that slavery was the foundation for the emergence of capitalism. He observes:

According to Adam Smith, the prosperity of a new colony depends upon one simple economic factor – “plenty of good land.” The British colonial possessions up to 1776, however, can broadly be divided into two types. The first is the self-sufficient and diversified economy of small farmers... The second type is the colony which has facilities for the production of staple articles on a large scale for an export market. In the first category fell the Northern colonies of the American mainland; in the second, the mainland tobacco colonies and the sugar islands of the Caribbean. In colonies of the latter type... land and capital were both useless unless labor could be commanded. Labor... must be constant and must work, or be made to work, in co-operation. In such colonies the rugged individualism of the Massachusetts farmer, practicing his intensive agriculture and wringing by the sweat of his brow niggardly returns from a grudging soil, must yield to the disciplined gang of the big capitalist practicing extensive agriculture and producing on a large scale. Without this compulsion, the laborer would otherwise exercise his natural inclination to work his own land and toil on his own account.

(1994, pp. 4 - 5)

Americans in the nineteenth century, prodded by the ideological and social changes brought about by the concurrence of abolition in the South and industrial capital-

ism in the North, began to argue which realms of self and social existence could be rendered market commodities and which could not, that is, what was saleable at the very personal level. But in order for capitalism to continue, wage exploitation, Engels' third stage of economic evolution and a relatively new form of servitude in the history of humankind, seemed to be required (Turner, 1995). Much more akin to serfdom, a person laboring under this type of slavery is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Fourth Edition, 2000) as, "A wage earner whose livelihood is completely dependent on the wages earned," in other words, a "wage slave" in contemporary parlance. Again, whether or not this description fits the future that Hayek was describing, it is a colloquialism that nicely, although abbreviated, describes the condition of many Americans in the first decade of the 21st century.

Worthy of note: Schor (1993) observes, that the medieval serfs did not work as hard as contemporary serfs, or wage slaves. Because serfs typically had a number of days off to attend to their personal needs during the week, because they worked only from sunup to sunset (a short time in the winter), and because of numerous religious holidays on which they did not work, the serf on average put in far fewer hours than the wage slave of today. She concurs with others that the industrial revolution of the early nineteenth century was the beginning of the modern era of labor bondage, although the indentured servant preceded this era (Ballagh, 2004; Bush, 2000; Palmer, 1998).

However, modern wage slavery appears to affect all but those few who need not work, although it is those at the bottom of the economy who suffer the worst. Even an apparently bright economy cannot mask this phenomenon. Dooley and Praus (2004) contend:

A funny thing happened on the way to economic utopia. At the turn of the millennium, Americans were enjoying an economic expansion of record length that had begun in 1993. But a shadow hovered over the celebration of rising stock prices and falling unemployment rates. It was not the obvious fear that the next economic bust was lurking around the corner. Of course, there was a contraction in 2001, even before the September 11 terror attacks. But along with the threat of recession, there was a rising suspicion that even the best of economic times are somehow flawed. The conventional wisdom assumes that an economy that minimizes unemployment must be good. But during the late twentieth century, signs appeared that the postindustrial, downsized, restructured, and globalized economy had not banished the old unemployment but had only replaced it with an inadequate type of employment – a kind of disguised unemployment.

p. 1

Among the wage slaves at the bottom of the working ladder are the modern day migrants who often work in poverty and debt bondage in the fruit orchards and farm fields of America (Hahamovitch, 1997; McWilliams, 2000; Rothenberg, 1998; Thompson Jr. & Wiggins, 2002). Many foreign migrants, rather than returning home to their native countries, often stay in ramshackle trailer parks where the landlord provides lodging, gas, groceries, and other necessities as a loan on the next season's labor. The cost of living in these poor conditions, as it is difficult for the migrant farm laborer to find decent and reasonable lodging elsewhere, is generally greater than the wages the laborers will make in the next season so they are continually in a state of growing debt to the landlord. It is impossible to determine with any precision the size of the migrant work force. But there are far more today than there were in the past, and they are among the poorest workers in America. The hourly wage for many, adjusted for inflation, has dropped by as much as 50 percent. The average migrant earns \$7,500 a year and lives to be about 49 years old (Schlosser, 2003).

Other wage slaves are those caught, often illegal aliens entrapped in debt bondage after entering or being smuggled into the United States, in the grinding servitude of gar-

ment production. While much of this production has been outsourced to sweatshops in other countries (Esbenshade, 2004; Holmes, 2003; E. Rosen, 2002), there is still a significant group that labors in poverty producing clothing in American sweatshops (Bonacich & Appelbaum, 2000; R. J. S. Ross, 2004). Another growing group are those in low-cost geographies who labor to produce outsourced products in the high-tech arena (Burrows, 2006; Wearden, 2004). Although there is debate as to whether sweatshops in America are growing in number or shrinking (Ellis, 2002), there is ample evidence that sweatshops continue to be a problem.

Besides migrant and garment workers, near the bottom of the economic ladder are also the working poor. While low-wage workers, comprising around 32 percent of the working population, are loosely defined as those whose income is at or below twice the poverty level (Acs, Phillips, & McKenzie, 2001; Mishel, Bernstein, & Allegretto, 2006) they often work for minimum-wage or below minimum-wage and are too often caught in an exhausting effort to work harder and harder while stretching every dollar, generally while falling further and further into debt (Ehrenreich, 2001; Freedom, 2002; J. Johnson, 2002; Shipler, 2005). For these workers it is difficult to find a full time job with benefits and typically they must settle for working multiple part-time jobs, often in domestic, cleaning, retail, food, and other services, with little, if any, left over after paying for food, shelter, transportation, and child care. Often these workers are charged excessively for poor lodging conditions as many landlords will not accept them. They often must also endure inconvenient modes of transportation as they typically cannot afford a car, find living accommodations near their workplace, or find public transportation near their living quarters. Healthcare is all too often not an option, other than going to an emergency

room and joining the interminable wait, because of their low wages, lack of worker benefits, and transportation difficulties (Ehrenreich, 2001). And childcare is often a latchkey affair that leaves their children unattended and at risk (Barnes, 2005; Dooley & Praus, 2004). Often seen as being of lesser human quality than others who make a better living, these workers labor not only under extreme hardship, they also work under a social stigma. Bluestone, Murphy, and Stephenson (1973) observe:

Stereotypes of the poor persist. There are still those who believe that poverty is the result of laziness and shiftlessness stemming from a lower-class mentality that prefers the “action” of the street to any steady job. The less myopic define the problem as unemployment, low labor force participation, old age, ill-health, and poor education. But until recently few realized that poverty stems from other sources as well....

The evidence... is accumulating and indicates that in the majority of the very poorest families in America, the household head and often additional family members work. Sometimes this work is only part-time and interrupted by periods of involuntary unemployment, but in at least one poor family in four, the household head is employed full-time throughout the year.... Wages are low enough in some occupations and in some industries that an individual with a moderate size family can work forty hours a week, fifty-two weeks a year and still face the bleakest realities of poverty.

p. 1, 2

The middle and upper-middle classes in America appear, not surprisingly, to have a far better lot. But some argue that they still experience the modern equivalent of servitude and bondage in their pursuit of the American dream (Bowe, Bowe, & Streeter, 2001; Ehrenreich, 2005; Fraser, 2001; Levison, 2002a, 2002b; Wolfe, 2005). This pursuit of ever-increasing affluence may at first appear to be voluntary. But in the minds of those who take on the pursuit the act can be one of necessity rather than volition (de Graaf, 2003; de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2002; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Schor, 1993, 1999). This topic will be addressed further in the next chapter, so for now let it be sufficient to say that currently the great majority of Americans seem to be ensnared in a form

of serfdom perpetuated by a socio-economic system that demands the production of things and services from almost everyone. For most people, this routine production takes the form of physical and/or mental work. One must work for a living, and this work is intrinsically tied to money. People need money for food, for transportation, for habitation, for health, for development, for entertainment, and for socializing. Even if one were to eschew the trappings of modern civilization and attempt to live freely off of the land one would likely be overly taxed, jailed, or driven away, at least within the boundary of the United States (see Native Americans in almost any contemporary text you choose). Even though great advances have been made in production technology, Americans have not used this technology to create a Star Trek world where one's essential needs have been automatically provided for and one's only responsibility is to pursue something one would love to do. For most Americans work means overwork, done out of fear and intimidation, doing something they often don't like (Bunting, 2005).

Popular music has exemplified this modern distaste for work even in the halcyon days of the 1950's and 1960's. For examples see:

- Five O'Clock World by The Vogues found at <http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/bigfish/fiveoclockworld.htm>
- You Don't Have to Cry by Stephen Stills, Gold Hill Records, found at <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/You-Don't-Have-to-Cry-lyrics-Crosby-Stills-Nash-and-Young/B5AD53EC56F8C36848256D990022E3D2>
- 9 to 5 by Dolly Parton found at [http://www.lyricsfreak.com/d/dolly+parton/9+to+5\\_20041614.html](http://www.lyricsfreak.com/d/dolly+parton/9+to+5_20041614.html)

The servitude of the modern worker has continued, and in many cases become more oppressive, since these songs were written. America seems to have forgotten the lessons of history regarding servitude, and as a result the legacy of slavery and racism has been difficult to overcome even with the widespread social activism of the 1950's and 1960's (Patterson, 1998). At the time these issues received broad attention. Unfortunately the servitude of contemporary America in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has not received nearly the same amount of scrutiny and is a less popular topic for debate.

Nevertheless, the essence of servitude appears to remain the same as the primary distinction across the millennia is its particular form and protocol, but never its function. This function is, metaphorically speaking, to keep people's heads in the feedbag and pulling on the cart; and it seems to be for the sole benefit of someone else who is far less concerned about the slave's quality of life than is the slave, modern or ancient (Harrison & Bluestone, 1988; Newman, 1994; Rubin, 1994). It was argued in 1845 that slaves were stupid, could not take care of themselves, and that they would likely slip into insanity if given their freedom (Owens, 1977). Many similar arguments have been asserted by the elite regarding those in modern servitude. Some have argued that all slavery or servitude is voluntary and has been throughout history – that people have always had many alternative choices including active resistance, passive resistance, and escape. This would be generally true if people were aware of these choices and were willing to take the risk. But the notion of personal volition also assumes that people have the ability, resources, and motivation to seize the opportunity and remove their shackles. In many cases, unfortunately, people seem to see no other viable alternatives than to either avoid the pain of non-compliance, or view compliance as the only way to get what little they

might out of life. In any case, the fact appears to remain that slavery and servitude are a part of the contemporary American scene.

### ***Work and Overwork***

Many have pointed out that overwork has become the new addiction, if not the new passion, of the American people (Camus, 1992; Cline, 2006; Schaef & Fassel, 1988).

Rubinstein (1978) notes a wide consensus supporting the idea that the birth of industrial capitalism was accompanied by and-or accomplished through a profound change in how people conceptualize work. With the advent and spread of Christianity work was viewed as punishment and a result of the fall of humanity from grace (R. E. Lane, 1992). The work ethos of medieval times considered mundane labor to be a mark of inferior status and worthy of disdain, those who had to work had fallen farther than those who did not. However, by the late eighteenth century a person's work was considered a measure of worthiness. The more modern work ethic, or the spirit of capitalism, has brought labor to the center stage of the modern era (Arendt, 1959). Unfortunately, the rise of modern society has also been associated with the gradual erosion of solidarity and the intimacy of social cohesion, in essence, an alienation of people from one another (Nisbet, 1953; Putnam, 2000; D. Rubinstein, 1978).

However, research has suggested that a depersonalization of society is virtually a prerequisite to an emerging work ethic of the capitalist sort, therefore creating an inverse relationship between love and work. Max Weber (1960) asserted that it was in the Reformation that Western man began to see work not as an obstacle, but rather a path to salvation. But he also noted a Protestant tendency to devalue social ties for a more indi-



vidual conscience and a personal, rather than collective, path to salvation. He even spoke of a mistrust of friendship and contempt for idle socialization (Bendix, 1962). Strangely, an ethical system facilitating honesty between strangers was based upon a Puritan devaluation of all personal ties. One's calling was considered more important than one's next of kin, requiring a sober and fair dealing with all people without favoritism (D. Rubinstein, 1978).

Henri Pirenne (1956) also hypothesized a link between the disintegration of social ties and the capitalist work ethic. He searched for the origin of an entrepreneurial class within medieval society where the love of gain ran cross-grain to tradition. He believed that an alienation from the social bonds of feudalism was a required prerequisite to an emerging class of merchants. He believed that it must have been a group from the fringes of society, vagabonds and footloose adventurers, who first comprised the core of mercantilism. A more static population would not be exposed to the opportunities for trade that the more mobile would enjoy, and would be more constrained by the conventional prohibitions against trading for profit (Simmel, 1971).

An additional interpretation is offered by Eric Hoffer (1963) who notes that as traditional social structures decay, the individual finds himself deprived of the security of collective integration. In a sense, the individual is declassed, with little to help one determine one's value and who one is. Under these circumstances it is typical for one to turn to work as a new dedication, finding a new identity from that lost in the decay of more traditional social affiliations. Work, then, provides individual usefulness and worth, and must be pursued continually.

Speaking on the corrosive effect of capitalism, John Millar states:

In a rude age, where there is little industry, or desire of accumulation, neighbouring independent societies are apt to rob and plunder each other; but the members of the same society ... are often strongly united in bands of friendship and affection ... But in a country where nobody is idle, and where every person is eager to augment his fortune ... there occur innumerable competitions and rivalships, which contract the heart, and set mankind at variance. In proportion as every man is attentive to his own advancement, he is vexed and tormented by every obstacle to his prosperity, and prompted to regard his competitors with envy, resentment and other malignant passions.

(Pollard, 1971, p.72)

Many others observed that social alienation was a product of nineteenth century capitalism, and that the growth of personal ambition and striving for achievement paralleled a deterioration of interpersonal relationships, producing a corrosive effect on social solidarity. They also imply that this conflict is endemic to industrialization because kinship ties inhibit the mobility necessary to an industrialized society (Moore & Feldman, 1960; Smelser, 1962).

The implications of the conflict between work and love extend beyond the realm of economic development. Many view the exclusive choice between social commitment and personal achievement to be fundamental to the human experience. Kant suggested that people are drawn together by social instincts but are later driven apart by personal but anti-social proclivities (Borg, 1962, p. 244).

Werner Sombart observed a similar tension between affection and achievement. He points out, "Either economic interests in the broadest sense, or love interests, form the central point of all life's importance. One lives either to work or else to love. Work implies saving, love implies spending," (Gouldner, 1970, P. 103). Karl Mannheim hypothesizes:

Striving for success leads to the discovery of "the other self" – not, to be sure, as a real whole, a genuine human entity, but as a participant in the struggle, an oppo-

nent or rival ... If what we seek is success, we shall see the others, not as selves in their own right, but merely as tools or data for calculation. What the other really "is" can be seen only by one who loves him.

(Mannheim, 1959, P. 252)

But Sigmund Freud claimed that man needs both love and work. However, he also suggests that this ideal may be impossible as work and love are fundamentally at odds. He linked this antagonism to the economics of the libido stating that libidinal energies have limitations, and that channeling them into work requires that they be withdrawn from sexuality and love. He felt that the necessity for work was a response to scarcity and, therefore, an oppressor of human existence. He notes a natural human aversion to work and argues that, "The great majority of people only work under the stress of necessity" (Freud, 1962, p. 27). He further notes:

Since a man does not have unlimited quantities of psychical energy at his disposal, he has to accomplish his tasks by making an expedient distribution of his libido. What he employs for cultural aims he to a great extent withdraws from women and sexual life.

(Freud, 1962, p. 55)

Freud also points out that sexuality is not the only thing that must be suppressed. He states that love is in opposition to the interests of civilization, where culture demands the inhibition of a wide array of social instincts, including affectionate relationships. He argues that the choices people make between love and work determines the type of person they are. Parsons (1966) notes a similar antagonism, arguing that the ethic of achievement so fundamental to capitalism requires the dissolution of social ties and impersonality in social interactions. According to Parsons, children are taught to develop a capacity for impersonality and an appreciation of achievement in order to acquire status. Social solidarity and the achievement ethic are antipodal. Interpersonal intimacy is a threat to performance and those institutions which require it. While one can love without

subverting one's commitment to work, it can only be done by fundamentally linking the meaning of love to achievement. Therefore, a woman or man are only seen a lovable if they achieve according to social standards (Parsons, 1951).

Social scientific research also yields examples of the belief that strong relationships are incompatible with personal achievement. Dynes, Clark, and Dinitz (1956) found that high personal aspirations were correlated with unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships, while lower personal aspirations were related to satisfactory relationships. They view the upwardly mobile as those who were trained to be independent earlier in life than most, attributing to them an ability to deal with others in a dispassionate and instrumental manner.

Warner and Abegglen (1955) note the same phenomenon, pointing out that successful executives appeared socially detached with little ability to commit to others. Their relationships were generally shallow and utilitarian. Family life, including sexual activity, was held as a diversion from, if not an intrusion into, more important occupational commitments. Warner and Abegglen argue that this emotional distancing is a prerequisite of upward mobility. They state that a person with upward mobility must be ready to detach from others and from the past in the pursuit of newer and better goals.

Studies of crime and delinquency have also shown that juveniles of the lower classes often face an exclusive choice between individual achievement and a show of peer solidarity through breaking the law. Albert Cohen (1955) argues that, as opposed to middle class individualism, there is an ethics of reciprocity existing in the interactions of lower class youth resulting in excess delinquency. Cohen characterizes this as the corner-boy emphasis on primary group relationship versus college-boy emphasis on personal

achievement. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) agree noting the importance of delinquency for social acceptance in these groups, while Matza (1964) argues that not only is loyalty a basic issue for delinquent groups it must also be frequently tested.

Travis Hirschi summarizes:

According to delinquency research, one of the lower-class adolescent's "problems" is that he is unable to sever ties to parents and peers, ties that prevent him from devoting sufficient time and energy to educational and occupational aspirations. His attachments are thus seen as getting in the way of conventional commitments.

(Hirschi, 1967, P. 27)

He notes, however, that the attachment between delinquents is neither warm nor intimate. Rather, a commitment to conventional achievement is better related to higher levels of attachment to others.

While this research suggests a unique tension between social mobility and group cohesion in this unusual context, pointing to again to a conflict between love and work, there are findings in small group research that more nearly universalize this conflict.

Robert Bales (2001) suggests that small groups typically evolve either a task leader or a social-emotional leader. He notes a strong conflict between task commitment and group cohesion and solidarity, requiring a separate leader for each sphere. He argues that that a group typically alternates in pendulum fashion between emphasis on task and relationship, and emphasized the difficulty of attempting to resolve both issues at the same time. Slater (1955) also observes an incompatibility between task and social-emotional roles as do Kordis and Ribeiro (2005). Alex Bavelas (1950) reveals similar findings in his research in the relationship between group cohesion, productivity, and communication patterns, noting that productive communication patterns produced the lowest morale, while circle-pattern group communication produced the highest morale but was also the

least effective. Shepherd concludes that groups with high cohesion have medium or low productivity, focusing on interpersonal warmth rather than productivity, even where productivity is emphasized.

Note: The above assumption conflicts with more recent research on high-performance teams and synergistic processes (Blanchard, Carew, & Parisi-Carew, 1992; Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Katzenbach & Smith, 1999; Naisbitt, Naisbitt, & Phillips, 1999; Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite, & Zenger, 1990). However, in a rapid change environment such as exists today the opportunity to keep groups intact long enough to produce a synergistic effect has been all but removed. Great resources and expertise must be utilized in a committed effort to actualize the greatest team potential. Recently this effort has diminished in an environment of focus on shareholder return, executive compensation, and outsourcing.

Rubinstein (1978) laments that the enmity between love and work has some bleak implications, most importantly Marx's theory of alienation. Marx (1972) saw the alienation of people as one of the primary failings of capitalism. Humans, in his view, are primarily social beings and dialectically dependent in their relationship with each other. But capitalism denies this. It promotes an outlook that views others as a threat to one's personal boundaries and freedoms, turning them into rivals and obstacles rather than assets. Marx's second facet of alienation was that of people from their work. In his view people need work in order to exercise and develop their creativity and talent. But capitalism denies access to creative work. The kind of work offered in a capitalistic system is all too often monotonous, tedious, meaningless, and beneath the worker. The workplace becomes a prison in which one is lost to oneself and subordinate to the property owner.

In this respect work accomplished in a capitalist system is meaningless and violates proper human association. And finally, adding insult to injury, the result of one's work generates more capital for the property owner thus becoming an instrument of one's own oppression.

Marx suggests that communism would allow play its proper part and would support people in working together towards their mutual fulfillment. However, if indeed love and work are enemies, this view is an illusion. Marx would argue, though, that love and work are at odds only within the special circumstances of a capitalist system and ideology. Socialism would not present such a dilemma. Unfortunately, the notion that dedication to work can divert people from deeper social involvement is not easily dismissed. It is quite possible that the battle between love and work is endemic. Some forms of work, as well as some forms of achievement, require deep immersion, requiring a relative alienation of the individual from others (Nettler, 1970).

Anticipating this argument, Marx redefines the meaning of work so as to emphasize its intrinsic social nature. He concludes that the isolation of the dedicated worker is illusory of the consumer is taken into account. He notes that one does not work solely for oneself, but for others. Therefore, the producer is dependent on a consumer to give his work and product meaning. Production is dialectically dependent on consumption, making work a public activity with the presence of a consumer made necessary even at the onset of production (Marx, 1972).

According to Marx, the distinguishing feature of human activity is its purposefulness (also see Fogel, 2000; and G. T. Martin, 2005). The purpose of production is consumption, which gives meaning to the productive act. The consumer is present in the

act of purposeful production and the producer is in relationship with the consumer.

Therefore, they are enmeshed in an undeniable relationship, which prevents an isolated worker from avoiding social involvement. This exists in opposition to a capitalist system in which production is tied to profitability rather than to the needs of a consumer.

Therefore, one may conclude that it is the competitive and individualistic nature of work in a capitalist society that creates the antagonism between love and work. But the Western achievement ethic injected into the context of medieval society cannot be overlooked as a significant contributor. The medieval doctrine held society as an integrated organism whose function depended on each part playing its role. Ordinary labor was a social necessity, but desiring to move beyond one's station was a threat to the social order. The socially disruptive nature of excessive aspiration led to the restriction of economic entrepreneurialism and the view that the rising middle class was both socially destructive and religiously suspect. But the liberal middle class defended their ascent by attacking communal values in favor of unfettered individual rights, arguing that unrestrained greed was the guarantor of overall public good. This position, however, obscured the social nature of work (Tawney, 1921).

Protestantism amplified the individualistic concept of work, viewing it primarily in terms of individual growth and salvation in the afterlife, while at the same time it estranged family life from its role as a safe haven from the demands of a capitalistic world (Lasch, 1977). The notion of work as a social activity was a threat to the calling, irrational, and unfit. Labor was only legitimate in anti-social terms (Tawney, 1926). Therefore, the medieval notion of economic aspiration as disloyal to society, com-



pounded by the Protestant distaste for interpersonal commitment, very likely exacerbated the tension between love and work that appears endemic to a capitalist economy.

Complementary to this view, Laut (1999; 2004) notes that in contemporary America the concept of hard work is often defined as doing what one doesn't want to do. This potentially painful and guilt inspired work ethic has been imbedded in the American psyche courtesy of the Puritans (Applebaum, 1998; Beder, 2000). Over-represented among the early major industrialists (Ashton, 1964), their belief that suffering is required to redeem original sin became part of America's attitude towards work. However, the idea that hard work builds character and leads to material wealth, also part of the Puritan world view, has proven false in many instances, especially in contemporary America (Moen & Roehling, 2004).

The notion that happiness must be earned through toil, i.e. suffering, is built upon the belief that humanity is undeserving – that reward will always be contingent upon discomfort. But this form of thinking is circular, because if one is always unworthy one cannot relax and enjoy the reward of one's labor. A popular cliché states that without pain there is no gain. One cannot despise leisure and laziness and still feel comfortable feeling perfectly comfortable.

(For example, technology could be used to eliminate much of humanity's needs and toil, but the American culture has, so far, not availed itself of technology's complete potential. This has more to do with Americans' attitudes and beliefs than with the available technology.)

Therefore, one could conclude that America's economy has been at odds with other important values since its inception. Following this notion one could also conclude

that overwork would only exacerbate this conflict and broaden it to other areas of life, especially combined with a rising depersonalization of work. This is very close to what one finds in examining contemporary work environments. Studs Terkel observes:

...work is, by its very nature, about violence – to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is, above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations. To survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us.

It is about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying...

For the many there is hardly concealed discontent. The blue-collar blues is no more bitterly sung than the white-collar moan. "I'm a machine," says the spot-welder. "I'm caged," says the bank teller, and echoes the hotel clerk. "I'm a mule," says the steelworker. "I'm less than a farm implement," says the migrant worker. "I'm an object," says the high-fashion model. Blue collar and white call upon the identical phrase: "I'm a robot." "There is nothing to talk about," the young accountant despairingly enunciates. It was some time ago that John Henry sang, "A man ain't nothin' but a man." The hard, unromantic fact is: he died with his hammer in his hand, while the machine pumped on... Bob Cratchit may still be hanging on (though his time is fast running out, as did his feather pen long ago), but Scrooge has been replaced by the conglomerate.

(Terkel, 1990, pp. xiii - xvi)

Along with the separation of the happier aspects of life from work in America, along with a near-desperate search for meaning in work among those not caught in the mode of pure survival ("Ain't got no satisfaction," 1993; Jansen, 2003; Kang & Albion, 2006; Lore, 1998; Sher, 1994), work has been elevated to the level of defining the individual (Gini, 2001), which is quite different than the individual bringing his or her self-definition to the workplace based on other associations (Haslam, 2003). Ciulla (2000) observes that America's consumption-driven global economy frequently causes people to compromise their higher values when making life decisions. She states that even though

there is more freedom and flexibility in modern America, with more and better tools to increase efficiency and convenience, the work-oriented nature of society and one's work within it determines one's life. She states that this has gone beyond the work ethic to a point where people's jobs have become the primary source of identity (also see Sennett, 1998).

Gini (2001) asserts that the notion of work as pleasure has been replaced work as a means to consume. However, Gini asks why, if labor presently denotes pain, sorrow, or a burden, do people not trade prosperity for leisure? He opines that most no longer work out of necessity, pleasure, or a sense of duty; nor the satisfaction of craftsmanship or a job well done. Rather, he notes that people more often find themselves bored and desiring things that only money can buy, and have become a nation of culture consumers. Gini suggests that since people have come to identify themselves through their jobs, because society places so much importance on one's work and because people's jobs occupy so much of their time and lives, that people should examine more closely what they are truly getting out of their work. At the very least, he suggests, work should offer the potential for purpose and hope. Although all too often it does not (Bowe et al., 2001; Terkel, 1990).

While consumption has historically been a part of personal and group identity (Bourdieu, 1984; J. Friedman, 1999; D. Miller, 1987; D. Slater, 2003), and the objects people buy have also taken on a social identity (Appadurai, 1986), more recently how people consume, rather than how the work, has, for many, come to define personal identity (A. L. Benson, 2000; Tomlinson, 1994). While consumerism is covered more completely in the following chapter, the transition of identity emerging first from social

affiliations, then from work, then from consumption is notable. In America's intensively capitalistic society consumption has begun to blend into social institutions. For example, consumption has typically been distinct from the realms of work and production. However, du Gay (1996) argues that these distinctions are breaking down. He states that the predispositions and capacities of employees have become increasingly difficult to distinguish from those of customers. Both are viewed as autonomous, responsible, and calculating individuals in society. These employees are expected to be entrepreneurs of the self, both at work and in all other aspects of their lives, ready to promote their own interests independently and to avoid any reliance on organizational guidance, largesse, or stability (also see Barley & Kunda, 2004; Beck, 2000; McGovern & Russell, 2001; Pink, 1997, 2001, 2005; A. Ross, 2003; Sennett, 1998).

Sennett (2006) notes that in the transition from earlier forms of industrial capitalism to a more global and mutable version the work ethic is changing. New beliefs regarding the value of talent and merit are displacing the older values of achievement and craftsmanship. He also points out that the boundary between politics and consumption is dissipating. Recent reforms in private and public institutions promote flexible, global corporations as a model of freedom for individuals who can prosper in unstable and fragmented institutions. The new worker is required to be one who can discount or abandon past experience, focus on potential ability, and adjust their sights to the short term horizon. In a new business environment that has been flattened and de-layered, where management and leadership are accomplished via e-mail, the dismantling of large-scale institutions has not resulted in communities of trust and solidarity. A more recent corporate focus on short-term value and shareholder wealth has stunted the more paternalistic

concern for employees more typical of the 1950's and 1960's. Wages have stagnated and benefits have been reduced or deleted, leaving a new economy that has left many employees in the lurch for an environment that is more suited to the young, unattached, wealthy and better educated (also see Levine, 1998).

Fraser (2001) also observes that the paternalistic organization of the 1950's and 1960's has become a thing of the past and that contemporary merger frenzies, brought about by federal and state regulatory changes since 1980, have fostered layoffs, longer work days, a rising contract workforce, and shrinking benefits. The moment leveraged buyouts and corporate takeovers began to dominate the landscape benefit reduction, layoffs, and other cost cutting measures took precedence over other business matters, making the present work situation a Darwinian sweatshop. She points out that the typical company attitude is similar to the sixties bumper sticker that read, "Love it or leave it!" In the tradition of C. Wright Mills (2002), Thorstein Veblen (1943), William H. Whyte (1956), and Alan Harrington (1959) Fraser describes the status of new-economy middle-class Americans in stark contrast to those in the upper echelons. This new middle class has barely improved its purchasing power over the last decade while the incomes of the upper-middle class and wealthy have more than doubled. Over the same period the benefits of the middle class have declined or have been eliminated. New technology has eliminated traditionally stable jobs while increasing the work of those who are forced to use it. This climate of increased competition and insecurity among the middle class has benefited corporations with greater productivity and higher profits but may end in corporate self-destruction as workers tire of being motivated by fear. She points out that most companies that have instituted massive layoffs have not demonstrated better stock market

performance than other businesses. In addition, employees who survive layoffs become demoralized while company loyalty and teamwork languishes in an environment where employees are taught to be independent contractors of their skills and to value self-reliance over all else. The lavish pay and benefits enjoyed by the executive staff further drives a stake into the heart of what little extra effort people are willing to devote to the corporation's success during supposedly hard times.

Head (2003) reviews nearly two hundred years of American work history to observe pivotal events leading to current work practices. He argues that the present methods of mass production and scientific management were founded in 1824 by John Hall when Hall developed the machining of metal components at the Harpers Ferry arsenal. Jumping to 1913 Head points out how Henry Ford, Fredrick Winslow Taylor, and William Leffingwell would bring together the technical and organizational achievements of the previous century to produce an unrivaled method of production. These techniques and technologies were improved upon throughout the 20th century, continuing to shape the economy in America, including the management and methods of the service sector.

Head notes how this evolving approach has dehumanized the workplace, including the intentional dumbing-down of workers and the use of electronic monitoring to manage performance. He rails against this reengineering, the invasiveness of information technology, and the methods of mass production as they are used in the modern workplace. As he calls for a re-humanization of the workplace, Head laments that, in addition to the physical and emotional cost to those who work in an environment where workplace skills are lost, supervisors micromanage every second of an employee's work, service industries are hyper-streamlined and productivity is constantly engineered, inflation-

adjusted wages and benefits in America increased less than one percent per year from 1990 to 2003, leaving the American worker in economic stagnation. Even though productivity may have been improved for the corporation, the human side, customer service and employee welfare, has deteriorated.

Sennett (2006) observes that for nearly a generation, globalization has brought downward pressure on unskilled wages. However, due to innovations in technology, the same pressure is being brought to bear on skilled wages as well. He notes that with an expanded access to labor through the global labor market, there has been a race to the bottom in search of lower wages, but that the free market does not necessarily guarantee greater freedom and satisfaction for individuals.

Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich (2001) notes that although many of us are, in a sense, better off than ever before, we find ourselves working harder over longer hours, work more jobs over the course of a lifetime, and face greater job insecurity. He points out that the balance between paid work and the rest of life has moved heavily towards work (also see Oswald, 2003), with a negative impact on employee-employer loyalty as the workweek extends beyond the traditional 40 hours. Many couples do not make enough to pay the bills, so they piece together part-time work such as working in restaurants, taking care of the disabled, and walking dogs for their friends and neighbors. Others simply work additional weekends and holidays at their jobs to make up for the difference. This is impacting the home in that families are more stressed and children often spend much of their time at school or in daycare, or sometimes alone, potentially to their detriment (Bergmann & Helburn, 2002; Child care and child development: Results from

the NICHD study of early child care and youth development, 2005; Finn-Stevenson & Zigler, 1999; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Lamorey, Robinson, Rowland, & Coleman, 1998).

In part this apparent retreat from child rearing has been caused by the influx of women into the workforce. By 1992, 66 percent of all married mothers, including more than half of married mothers with children aged five or younger, were either working or looking for work. By this time married mothers comprised a significant segment of the female workforce and their families contained almost half of America's children. These mothers were far more likely to work year-round and full-time compared to married mothers in the early 1970's, although this commitment remained far from the norm. Most married mothers handled work and family obligations by working part of the year or part-time, or by staying home when the children were young, indicating that childcare was still a priority (Hayghe & Bianchi, 1994). By March of 2003, however, there were 26,445,000 married mothers with children under 18 in the American workforce with a participation rate of 71.1 percent in the labor force according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/fameec/t05.htm>). Because of the economic need to have both parents in a household working, when both are available, and the obvious need for a single mother to provide for her household, the stress on both the working mother and the rest of the family has been exacerbated by the increased demand for mothers to work, often on weekends (Heymann & Beem, 2005; Not married to the job: 2005 annual report on the American workplace, 2005), and the increase in hours demanded of her (Blair-Loy, 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001, 2004; Moen, 2003; Presser, 2003). As a result there are as many books written to help working mothers, or supermoms as they have been nick-



named, as there are tomes written about the trials and tribulations of being one (see Blades & Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2006; Bolton, 2000; Buckworth, 2005; Engberg, 1999; C. Evans, 2006; Holcomb, 2000; Mason, 2002; McKenna, 1997; J. K. Peters, 1997; Pillsbury, 1994; Steiner, 2006; Zappert, 2001). This by no means obviates the advice offered to single or childless women in the workforce (Godwin, 2004; Gordon, 2005; Quinlan, 2005).

One upshot of the larger numbers of working mothers had been the advent of the appellation supercouple, a recent colloquialism indicating a married couple that must juggle overwhelming work and family responsibilities together (Epstein & Kallenberg, 2004; Moen, 2003; Schnieder & Waite, 2005; Sotile & Sotile, 1998). Often these couples work non-traditional hours. Two-fifths of all American workers are employed during evenings, nights, weekends, and/or on rotating shifts. This phenomenon is having a profound and often negative effect on the well-being of both the individual and their families (Presser, 2005).

Taking a broader view the historian Marshall Sahlins (1972) claims that the market system has sentenced all working people to lifetimes of hard labor. Confirming this observation Juliet Schor (1993) points out that conventional wisdom assumes that America's capitalist economy has already proven itself by providing a 40-hour week, annual vacations, and years of extended schooling and retirement. She notes, however, that this improvement is in contrast only to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and America, where people labored under the longest and most difficult work schedules in history. In reality, work in other parts of the world, and work at different times in history, has been far less demanding than what people experienced even in the hey days of the

1940's, 50's, and 60's. She indicates that since 1948 the productivity of the American worker has doubled; yet the real income of the average American has not improved. She also notes that consumption has doubled, debt has risen, and hours of work have steadily increased since the late 1960's. She says that since 1970, Americans work nearly an extra month every year. To explain the disparity between productivity and leisure, Schor postulates a new view of the labor market characterized by asymmetries between workers and their employers, and based primarily on the preference of employers for longer work hours and a chronic shortage of jobs. She views this asymmetry as a fundamental failure on the part of our economy to use our increased productivity to improve the quantity and quality of leisure time and to decrease unemployment through the redistribution of work. While Schor asserts that the cost of employee benefits helps to maintain this discrepancy, Hunnicutt (1984; 1988) observes that even unions have failed to seek more leisure time rather than increased wages. (Interestingly, while there are many who are overworked there are also those who wish to work more and feel underutilized (Bluestone & Stephen, 1997; Burtless, 1999; Clarkberg & Moen, 2001; Epstein & Kallenberg, 2004; Ellen Galsinsky et al., 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 1998; Lerman, 1997; J. P. Robinson & Bostrom, 1994; Rones, Ilg, & Gardner, 1997). This supports Schor's assessment that employers prefer to have a few working very hard, even if this means that others are unemployed, rather than to spread the work out among all who wish to work.)

On the other hand many employees would prefer to not work so long and hard (Elliot, 2004; Parrish, 2006; "Time equals happiness," 2002). A recent ABCNews.com poll (Sussman, 2001) indicates that half of the workers who responded say that working long hours isn't worth it because it creates stress and lack of time, while the number of

respondents saying that they work too hard has doubled since 1965. Another ABCNews.com series states that Americans now work harder and longer than any other industrialized country in the world (Schabner, 2001). (Also see "Americans lead in labor productivity," 2001.)

While some suggest that employees are wasting on average nearly two hours per day on activities such as surfing the Internet, socializing with co-workers, running errands, making personal calls, spacing out, applying for other jobs, writing poetry, sleeping, or reading, at a cost to companies of \$544 billion per year (Malachowski & Simonini, 2006), that much of this laziness is purposeful (Maier, 2005), and that Americans often work less than those in some second-world countries ("Think you work long hours?: Work weeks in many countries, including South Korea and Turkey, are longer than in the US," 2001), Perlow (1997) complains that twelve-hour work days and 60 plus work hour weeks common among many in America are not only unnecessary but also counterproductive. Unfortunately, she asserts, corporations have ignored the growing evidence that long hours of work are harmful for individuals, families, communities, and even the corporations themselves because they cling to the false belief that long hours are what it takes to compete. Due to the prevalence of this overwork myth in America workers find themselves harried by interruptions, shifting deadlines, and competing demands. The result is lost enthusiasm and loyalty for the work and for the company, employee burnout, and employee turnover. The fatigue from overwork alone results in reduced problem solving ability, increased risky behavior, reaction time, cutting corners, and mistakes, at the expense of overall efficiency (Eckhardt, 2002). At best a hyper-demanding workplace creates a crisis mentality and heroic efforts that become the norm rather than

the exception. This constant focus on putting out the immediate fire perpetuates the cycle by reducing the ability to look ahead in order to prevent future crises (Perlow, 1997; Perlow, Okuyson, & Repenning, 2002).

According to two Families and Work Institute reports (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; Ellen Galinsky, Kim, & Bond, 2001a), feeling overworked is a psychological state that has the potential to negatively affect attitudes, behavior, social relationships, and health both on and off the job. The 2001 report revealed that 28 percent of employees surveyed felt overworked often or very often in the past three months; 28 percent felt overwhelmed by how much work they had to do often or very often in the past three months; and 29 percent felt that they didn't have the time to step back and process or reflect on their work often or very often during the past three months. Significantly 46 percent responded often or very often to at least one of these questions, while only 24 percent said they rarely or never experienced any of these three feelings. In addition, 54 percent felt overworked at least sometimes in the past three months; 55 percent felt overwhelmed by how much work they had to do at least sometimes in the past three months; and 59 percent felt they did not have time to step back and process or reflect on their work at least sometimes in the past three months.

This report also notes that feeling overworked is associated with many different aspects of employees' jobs and workplaces:

1. Employees who work more paid and unpaid hours per week at their primary job feel more overworked.
2. Employees who work more hours than they would prefer – regardless of actual hours worked – also feel more overworked. On average, employees surveyed would prefer to work 34.5 hours per week.

3. Employees who work more days per week at their primary job feel more overworked.
4. Employees who work more days than they would prefer – regardless of how many days they actually work – also feel more overworked.
5. Employees who work longer hours or more days than they would prefer for factors other than personal motivation, such as other people's expectations, feel more overworked. However, personal and financial reasons for working more did not cause feeling overworked.
6. Employees who cannot change their work schedule so that they can work the hours or days they prefer feel more overworked.
7. Employees who experience greater pressure on the job, such as needing to work fast and-or hard, or not having enough time to complete the job, feel much more overworked.
8. Employees who have more difficulty focusing at work feel much more overworked. Three out of five employees say they *often* or *very often* experience difficulty focusing on the work they have to do; work interruptions; or have to work on too many tasks at the same time.
9. Employees who must use technology for their jobs during non-work time more frequently feel overworked. Of those polled, 41percent *often* or *very often* use technology (cellular/mobile phones, beepers, pagers, computers, email, fax) for their jobs during typical non-work hours or days.
10. Employees who are more accessible (by whatever means) to their employers during non-work hours and days feel more overworked. About 22 percent of employees say they *often* or *very often* have to be accessible to their employers during typical non-work hours and non-work days.
11. Employees who do not take all their vacation experience high levels of feeling overworked. One-quarter of employees do not take all of the vacation to which they are entitled because of the demands of their jobs.

12. Employees who work for companies that have reduced their workforce or have had difficulty hiring new employees feel more overworked. Of those polled, 27 percent reported that their organizations had eliminated jobs during the preceding year and 37 percent said that their organizations had difficulty hiring.
13. Employees who have poorer quality jobs in terms of autonomy, productive time, learning opportunities, and job security feel more overworked.
14. Employees who have inadequate materials and equipment to do a good job, inadequate support from people at work to do a good job, inadequate flexibility to manage work and family responsibilities, inadequate support from supervisors, and lack of respect feel more overworked.

The 2001 study also observes that the more employees feel overworked:

- The more likely they are to report making mistakes at work, feel angry towards their employer, resent coworkers who do not work as hard, and look for a new job with another employer.
- The more often they will experience work-life conflict, lack of success in family relationships, neglect themselves, report good health, and experience the ability to cope with everyday events.
- The more often they will experience injuries on the job, claim workers' compensation, experience sleep deprivation, and act out their resentment in the workplace.
- The more often they will demonstrate poor job performance, be absent more often from work, experience more mental health problems, and use the health care system more extensively.

The authors observe:

Our findings strongly suggest that every employee reaches a point when increasing work demands simply become too much — a point at which personal and family relations, personal health, and the quality of work itself are seriously threatened. Today's 24/7 economy appears to be pushing many employees to and beyond that point.

(Ellen Galinsky et al., 2001a, p. 16)  
(Also see Short, McCabe, & Tooley, 2002)

In 2005 Galinsky found that the more overworked employees feel the more they are likely to have higher levels of stress and health problems. She also notes that these people are more likely to have clinical depression and to neglect caring for themselves. In this study the reasons people feel overworked include interruptions causing inability to focus on work, the excessive multi-tasking that is required, job pressure, and doing work that is meaningless and a waste of time. She notes that overwork is not simply a matter of how much work a person has to do, but what kind of work one must do. If valueless work were eliminated, people would feel less overworked and overwhelmed (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005). She also points out that:

- One in three American employees is chronically overworked.
- 54 percent of American employees have felt overwhelmed at work in the past month.
- 29 percent of employees spend a lot of time doing work that they consider a waste of time, thus making them more likely to feel overworked.
- 79 percent of employees had access to paid vacations in 2004, but 36 percent had not and were not planning to take their full vacation.
- Most employees take short vacations, with 37 percent taking vacations of seven days or fewer with only 14 percent taking vacations of two weeks or more.

- Among employees who take one to three days off 68 percent return feeling relaxed while 85 percent of those who take seven or more days off feel relaxed upon return.
- Only 8 percent of employees who are not overworked experience symptoms of clinical depression while 21 percent of those who are highly overworked do.

It would appear that avoiding worthless tasks or avoiding the workplace altogether help to greatly improve employees' perspective (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; "The low-stress secret to success: Work less," 1999). However, it would also appear that many do not avail themselves of opportunities for absence or have the opportunity to escape value-free work.

And although many appear to languish under the weight of overwork, and a few debate whether overwork is even an issue (Fay, 1992), there are some who appear, at least on the surface, to thrive in this condition, although this too is debated (Rakstis, 1997). A common label for these people is workaholic. Robinson (2001) describes a workaholic as a person who often views themselves as indispensable to their organization. They believe they are star performers, but their boss most likely views them as inefficient. When away from work, which is seldom, a workaholic's family experiences them as a detached and remote person who has no time for family meals or activities (also see Lazear, 2001). Robinson diagnoses these people as suffering from an obsessive-compulsive disorder, one he calls America's best-dressed addiction. Saddled with an apparent inability to turn work off, their desks are often stacked with work. They are perfectionists who are demanding and obsessed with perfection, constantly worrying over detail, going over their work again and again. Rather than using teamwork or delegating



tasks, workaholics try to do everything themselves. But in spite of their hard work, productivity often lags.

Workaholics are less efficient, have more absenteeism, and have poorer relationships at work than their more healthy counterparts, although they may find their work relationships more rewarding than those at home (B. E. Robinson, 2001; J. Sprankle & Ebel, 1987; Zimmerman, 1994). They typically make poor bosses, as they often micro-manage, use heavy-handed techniques, discourage initiative and creativity, destroy self-esteem, and generally make unreasonable demands (Geroy, Wright, & Berrell, 2000; Pace & Suojanen, 1988; B. E. Robinson, 2001). This, in turn, often leads to anxiety, burnout, absenteeism, and turnover among their subordinates. Robinson suggests that the physical and mental problems stemming from workaholism can cost companies in America as much as \$160 billion per year.

Their ability to perform at work can suffer from headaches, dizziness, indigestion, fatigue, chest pain, and shortness of breath due to their obsession (problems very similar to those of panic and anxiety disorder). They may also display manic moods, irritability, impatience, and outbursts of temper, and can suffer from insomnia and an inability to concentrate. A workaholic's memory can also become a problem. They often have difficulty remembering the rants and rages that they are prone to, leading to a state of confusion. Their well bunkered world of power, control, ambition, and success, does not kindly suffer the freedom, spontaneity, creativity, and love necessary for a more realistic and satisfying life (Killinger, 1991; J. K. Sprankle, 1990). In extreme cases, their obsession with work may even drive them to suicide (B. E. Robinson, 2001).

At home things aren't any better, if not worse. Because they are slaves to their jobs they often begin with missing a dinner or a night out with friends or family, but progress to missing important events such as their children's school performances, weddings, reunions, and graduations (Coplan, 2001). Robinson (2001) finds that the divorce rate among workaholics is 40 percent higher than the rest of the population. They experience difficulty with intimacy and involvement with either spouse or children. The workaholic puts themselves and their work above everything else and expects for their family to support this idea, often expecting perfect and absolute support.

Robinson suggests that the organizations for which they work do not create the workaholic. Rather, it comes from growing up in a dysfunctional family. However, Bunting (2005) argues that while economic factors including downsizing and job insecurity have placed pressure on employees to work longer and harder, companies have reframed the notion of work to make it more central in people's lives (also see Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005). As other institutions decline, such as community organizations, people use work to provide the lost meaning in their lives. And employers are more than eager to provide this lost sense of purpose. For people who love to work, there are lots of businesses that would love to take advantage of them. Therefore, regardless of the genesis of workaholism, companies are prone to exacerbate them.

While working too hard and too much is often seen as a personal problem, an addiction (Black, 2001; Fassel, 1990; Nakken, 1988; B. E. Robinson, 2001), it is also seen by many, to be the result of demands at work that have nothing to do with the propensities or preferences of the individual (Clarkberg & Moen, 2001; Sawi, 2000; Schaef & Fassel, 1988). In many ways, workaholism is encouraged and rewarded both by organi-

zations and society at large (Killinger, 1991; J. Sprankle & Ebel, 1987), especially through the use of new communication and computation technologies for use outside of the workplace as part of a technologically driven society (Gini, 2001; B. E. Robinson, 2001). According to Philipson (2002) work is colonizing people's emotional lives by providing self-worth and a sense of connection when these things are missing from a person's life in other arenas. In some cases work provides a completely packaged social environment, complete with health care facilities, gyms, child care, and great restaurants, creating a home away from home that is better than home. Philipson observes that Americans spend more time at work than anyone else in the industrialized world, not including time spent on the electronic leashes of e-mail, laptops, and cell phones. She notes that in the past success was demonstrated by being idle, a member of the leisure class. However, she states that people now measure success by how much and how hard they work, putting in long hours to gain self-esteem and recognition that have more to do with a sense of belonging than the money they earn. In this way employees over-invest in the workplace, not the least reason being that society now places more value on work than on leisure, and companies are more than willing to utilize this bias to their advantage.

It has also been noted that some organizations are prone to overwork their best employees (Holt, 1983). But it would be useful for them to remember that working too much can reduce both productivity and satisfaction, hurting both the individual and the organization (Danziger & Reinhart, 1994; Geroy et al., 2000; Hanson, 1989; Zemke, 2001), and can lead, in some cases, to an individual's death (Fassel, 1990; Killinger, 1991; Michie, 1996; "More mental disorders or suicide may be certified as occupation-

related," 2001; O'Neill, 2003). In Japan there is even a word for death by overwork, karoshi (Kato, 1995; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

Fassel observes:

Hard manual labor may lower your cholesterol count, but workaholism will kill you. It may kill you sooner than other addictions, because the physical effects of the disease are harder to detect due to the workaholic's tendency to regulate diet and exercise. Many workaholics die from heart attacks or become debilitated by strokes. Others place their lives and the lives of others in danger due to blackouts they experience while driving. Having a fatal disease means you die from it eventually. Consequently, every nonrecovering workaholic can say, "I died of the process of work."

(1990, p. 11)

A favorite method of overworking for workaholics is multitasking. However, this method of work is used by many in the workplace who are pressured to do more than they are typically capable of doing.

The term multitasking comes from computer science and means the apparent simultaneous performance of two separate tasks. In America's fast-paced world of work the term has come to apply to people as well, that is, those people who can, apparently, do many separate things at once.

Merson (2005) observes:

The important thing to recognize is that when you are attempting to multitask – and the operative word is attempting – you are asking your singular brain to focus on two or more assignments simultaneously. You are expecting yourself to give each of them one hundred percent concentration. It doesn't take Einstein's great-grandchild to figure out that this is impossible. Consider the mathematics: how can you give Project A one hundred percent of your mental energy when you're giving one hundred percent to Project B? The simple truth is that you're giving them each fifty percent at most.

p. 86

And yet many, if not most, working people in America feel that multitasking is the only way to accomplish all of their responsibilities. Overholt (2002) points out that doing more with less has become the new mantra of business in our current economy.

This more-with-less attitude often means doing more work with less people. For many the solution is to attempt to get more done through multitasking.

Weil and Rosen (1997) assert that many people, especially those in white collar jobs, begin their day at work already exhausted as a result of what they call multitasking madness, a condition which has been largely enabled by new technologies. This particular pathology involves both starting and ending one's day with a deluge of e-mails, Internet sites, stacks of folders, while-you-were-out slips, Federal Express packages, regular mail, phone calls, faxes, pages, and other interruptions from folks who are just as inundated. People suffering from multitasking madness often start and stop dozens of tasks throughout the day, often losing their train of thought and having to work overtime to gain it again. Weil and Rosen state that employees of Fortune 1,000 companies send and receive an average of 178 messages a day and are, on average, interrupted at least three times an hour. Although people have an excellent neural mechanism for switching attention from one task to another, keeping them simultaneously active in other parts of their brain, their minds becomes less efficient at performing any single task. In addition multitasking can interfere with memory, impair concentration, increase stress, cause physical distress such as stomachaches and headaches, and even interfere with sleep and leisure time after work. But multitasking not only hurts the individual, it hurts the organization as well. Anderson (2001) points out that the task-switching penalty for multitasking is approximately 20 to 40 percent of worker productivity. Rather than saving time and making work activity more efficient, rapidly switching from one task to another makes people more harried and less efficient and effective.

In short, multitasking hurts one's productivity, work quality, and ability to use newly acquired skills, while also decreasing one's quality of relationships and one's well-being both physically and mentally (Karl Albrecht, 2006; Budd, 2005; Ferrazzi & Haneberg, 2006; Florida, 2002; Foerde, KNowlton, & Poldrack, 2003; Hyman & Liponis, 2003; Kerzner, 2006; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Maltz, 2001; Marra, 2004; Meredith & Mantel Jr., 2006; Morgenstern, 2004a, 2004b; Nelson-Neuhaus et al., 2004; Perlow, 1997, 1998; Perlow et al., 2002; Putnam, 2000; J. Rubinstein, Meyer, & Evans, 2001; Sindell & Sindell, 2006; Wallace, 2006).

There is also strong evidence to support the existence of a host of ancillary ills associated with overwork including stress, sleep deprivation, misuse of technology, and unhappiness. Some indicators include work-related stress, work-related sleep deprivation, job dissatisfaction, and work-related misuse of technology. Each of these indicators is discussed in the following sections.

### ***Work-Related Stress***

Burnout is reaching epidemic proportions among North American workers today. It's not so much that something has gone wrong with us but rather that there have been fundamental changes in the workplace and the nature of our jobs. The workplace today is a cold, hostile, demanding environment, both economically and psychologically. People are emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. The daily demands of the job, the family, and everything in between erode their energy and enthusiasm. The joy of success and the thrill of achievement are more and more difficult to attain. Dedication and commitment to the job are fading. People are becoming cynical, keeping their distance, trying not to let themselves get too involved.

(Christina Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 1)

Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyles. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. They have touched almost all professions, starting from

an artist to a surgeon, or a commercial pilot to a sales executive. With change comes stress, inevitably. Professional stress or job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations.

(Stress and the workplace, 2000)

The workforce and workplace in America are changing at a very rapid rate.

These changes are creating a concern over their effects on the workforce. One of these concerns is the stress that the new working environment will impose and the behaviors it will foster (S. L. Sauter et al., 2002). While individuals appear to have different levels of tolerance to stress (Budner, 1962; French & Caplan, 1973; Keenan & McBain, 1979; Rhodewalt, Sansone, Hill, & Wysoki, 1991; Van Servellen & Topf, 1994), and stress comes in many forms and physical/psychological manifestations (Long, 1995; McLean, 1979) many in the workforce appear to be suffering from stress and stress in general falls into three broad categories: boredom, a lack of sufficient stress – an insufficient level of the positive stimulation required to make things interesting and engaging, eustress, the positive and sufficient form of stress that is responsible for humor, excitement, fascination, and many other factors that make us healthy and life worthwhile, and distress, which causes harmful anxiety (Csikszentmihaly, 1975; Goleman, 1998; Huffman, 2007; Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2004; Tortora & Derrickson, 2006) and of which there seems to be the most concern. In modern times negative stress, or distress, has been defined as the reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, that is, when one is required to do something that is beyond one's control or abilities and when one has insufficient external support to compensate (Crane, 1992; S. Sauter et al., 2002; Wild, 2006). (From this point on in the text the word stress will indicate negative stress or distress.) In 1983 (Wallis) the issue of stress in America made the cover of Time magazine and was

called the epidemic of the eighties. Apparently stress, especially stress associated with work, has not become any less of a problem since then, given the number of self-help books that have been written to address it including the following: (H. Benson, 2000; Charlesworth & Nathan, 1985; Colbert, 2005; Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2000; Elkin, 1999; Girdano, Dusek, & Everly, 2004; Leyden-Rubenstein, 1998; Losyk, 2005; Luskin & Pelletier, 2005; Matheny & McCarthy, 2000; O'Connor, 2005; Sormaz & Tulgan, 2003; B. Weiss, 2003; P. Wilson, 1995; Winner, 2003) among others. And while much of the popular media in the past has dealt with issues of stress in the workplace, their target audience has typically been managers and other professionals rather than the rank and file (Bunting, 2005). However, because of rapid changes in the work environment from technological advances to a myriad of economic, political, and other social factors, work stress is undergoing a transformation for the individual worker. Because of this Sulsky and Smith (2004) postulate that work stress is a process rather than a static issue. Others suggest that people have merely learned to take on the attitude of being a work stress victim rather than to behave more proactively (Wainwright & Calnan, 2002). But however defined, work stress has spread to all levels of the workplace and is increasing in importance as a problem.

Seglin (1998) points out that:

- 80 percent of working people feels stress on the job
- Nearly half of these indicated that they need help with stress management and 42 percent state that their coworkers need help with stress
- 14 percent of respondents stated that in the past year they felt like striking a co-worker, although they did not



- 14 percent stated that they felt like shouting or screaming due to stress on the job
- 10 percent fear violence from a coworker
- 18 percent have been threatened with violence in the past year
- 9 percent know of an act of violence or assault in their workplace

In a report by Stress.org (<http://www.stress.org/job.htm>) it was noted:

- 29 percent of respondents had yelled at a coworker because of stress in the workplace
- 65 percent of respondents agreed that workplace stress had been difficult for them
- 10 percent said that physical violence had occurred at work because of stress on the job
- 42 percent note that verbal abuse and yelling in the workplace are common
- 14 percent said that equipment had been damaged in their workplace due to rage on the job
- 2 percent admitted that they had struck a coworker
- Nearly one in five respondents quit a previous job because of workplace stress
- 12 percent missed work due to job stress
- Nearly one in four have been brought to tears because of stress on the job
- Over half reported spending 12-hours per day doing job related duties
- 34 percent complained of routine difficulty with sleep, 38 percent with hand pain, 44 percent with eye strain, and 62 percent with neck pain due to work related stress
- 25 percent note their job as the primary stressor in their lives

- From 1996 to 2000 the number of workers who called in sick because of stress tripled
- Nearly one million workers are absent from work every day due to stress
- 60 percent of employee absences can be traced to job stress
- In 1999 the number of employees fearing that they might lose their job had doubled since the last decade
- In 2000 nearly half of all workers feared losing their job
- Job stress is costing U.S. industry over \$300 billion annually (Lee, 1997, notes that on average 45 percent of after tax profit is spent on corporate benefits, with 60 to 90 percent due to stress related issues).
- Most accidents on the job are stress related
- Workers' compensation is close to bankruptcy in many states due to increased claims for mental stress
- Keyboard operators who worry that their activities are being monitored for performance have a high incidence of carpal tunnel syndrome and repetitive musculoskeletal injury
- Such injuries and complaints are America's leading workplace health cost
- When employees perceive that they are being subjected to imposing demands, but have little control over the outcome, they are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease.

This report also observes that on average 20 murders are committed each week in the America workplace, making homicide the second highest cause of workplace deaths and the leading one for females. In addition, nearly one million non-fatal violent crimes

occur each year as the victim is working. (Not only is road rage becoming common during commuting to work but desk rage and phone rage have entered the working lexicon.)

It is also noted by stress.org that American workers average more hours on the job than those of any other industrialized nation, where the trend has been towards fewer hours. This report also notes that, according to an International Labor Organization study in 2000, workers in the U.S. labor the equivalent of an extra 40-hour work week compared to ten years previously. Japan held the record in hours worked until 1995, but Americans now work nearly a month longer than the Japanese and three months more than workers in Germany. In addition, Americans are also seen as working harder.

Galinsky, Kim, and Bond (2001b) report that nine out of ten employees agree somewhat or strongly that their job requires them to work very fast, and/or that they are required to work very hard, and/or they never have enough time to get everything done on the job. Three out of five employees say they often or very often have difficulty focusing on the work they have to do, and/or experience work interruptions, and/or have to work on too many tasks at the same time. In addition, one-quarter of the employees surveyed say they do not take all of the vacation to which they are entitled because of the demands of their jobs.

According to this study, the more overworked employees feel the more likely they are to report making mistakes at work, feel angry toward their employers, resent coworkers who do not work as hard as they do, look for a new job with another employer, experience negative work-life conflicts, feel less successful in relationships with their spouse, partner, children, or friends, neglect themselves, lose sleep, and report poorer health than those who do not feel overworked. All of these negative consequences can

cause reduced job performance, poor employee retention, increased health care costs, and serious mistakes on the job resulting in financial loss and injury. In addition, morale is negatively affected and stress is significantly increased. In some cases, employees under this kind of stress will act out their anger in the workplace in destructive or violent ways. In essence, employees who feel more overworked tend to feel less successful in their relationships, neglect themselves, and feel more stressed and less able to cope with everyday life. Among this group, mental health problems and associated physical health problems appear to be increasing dramatically. This often leads to decreased productivity and greater utilization of available health care resources, including counseling.

In the report *Stress...at Work* by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (S. Sauter et al., 2002) it is observed that in a survey by Northwestern National Life (*Employee burnout: America's new epidemic*, 1991) 40 percent of workers report that their job is very or extremely stressful, in a survey by Yale University (Barsade & Wiesenfield, 1997) 29 percent of workers report they feel quite a bit or extremely stressed at work, and in a survey by the Families and Work Institute (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2001b) 26 percent of workers report that they are often or very often burned out or stressed by their work. Their report also notes that one-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives, three-fourths of employees believe that workers today have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago, and problems at work are more strongly associated with complaints regarding poor health than are any other life stressor—more so, even, than financial or family problems. According to the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (Goetzel et al., 1998), health care expenditures are nearly 50 percent greater for workers who report high levels of

stress. And, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Tabular data, 1992-96: Number and percentage distribution of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work, by nature of injury or illness and number of days away from work, 1996), workers who take time off from work because of stress, anxiety, or a related disorder will be absent from the job for over 20 days.

In Europe, where workers typically work many fewer hours, as well as the United States stress has become the main concern across almost all industrial sectors (Stress at work tops safety poll, 2000; "Work life: Stress burning a hole in U.S. work force," 1992). To understand the nature of this apparent epidemic it is useful to identify its causes. To date the causes of stress in the workplace have generally been categorized by as follows:

- Change
- Terrorism
- Violence at work
- Work demands
- Home-work interface
- New work technology
- Information overload
- Workforce reduction
- Organizational politics
- Management style
- Design of tasks
- Interpersonal relationships
- Work roles

- Career worries
- Environmental conditions

These categories can include concerns regarding shift work, heavy workload, infrequent breaks, long hours, hectic tasks, boring, routine, and meaningless tasks, underutilized skills, lack of control, lack of participation in decisions, lack of family-friendly policies, lack of support from others, lack of opportunity for growth or advancement, lack of preparation, rapid change, poor communication, conflict, too much responsibility or too many responsibilities, uncertain expectations, job insecurity, alienation, dangerous or unpleasant working conditions such as noise, pollution, bullying and intimidation, physical threats, mobbing, crowding, and ergonomic/human factor problems (Barling, Kelloway, & Frone, 2005; Bowie, Fisher, & Cooper, 2005; Brod, 1984; Brook, 1973; Cherry, 1978; Cole, Grubb, Sauter, Swanson, & Lawless, 1997; Cary L. Cooper & Payne, 1994; C. L. Cooper & Smith, 1985; Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2002; Fraser, 2001; Futterman, 2004; Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; Goodwin, 2000; Hoel, Sparks, & Cooper, 2002; Hornstein, 2003; Israel, House, Schurman, Heaney, & Mero, 1989; Jackson, 1983; Kelleher, 1996; Kinney & Johnson, 1993; Korunka, Zauchner, & Weiss, 1997; Lazarus, 1991; Long, 1995; Christina Maslach & Leiter, 1997; K. A. Miller, 2004; L. Miller, 1995; Monroy, Jonas, Mathey, & Murphy, 1998; Namie & Namie, 2003; O'Connor, 2005; Payne & Cooper, 2001; Peterson, 1998; Roistacher, 2001; S. Sauter et al., 2002; H. Selye, 1974; Stress and overwork, 2004; "Stress-damaged workforce," 2002; Stressed to breaking point: How managers are pushing people to the brink!, 1996; Sutton & Kahn, 1984; Swenson, 1999; Tselikis, 2001; Veninga, 1998; von Onciul, 1996; Weil & Rosen, 1997; "Work stress survey," 1999). With the exception of terrorism, change,

work and home issues, and possibly the fear of losing one's job, these categories generally exclude the external or human-capital factors that also contribute to stress in the contemporary world of work.

Sauter (2002) also notes that the conventional approach to solving stress in the workplace through human resource interventions has proven inadequate (also see Briner & Reynolds, 1993; O'Driscoll & Cooper, 1994; Reynolds & Briner, 1994) because the source of stress at work has not been removed. Most techniques focus on the individual rather than on larger issues, creating the dilemma of blaming the victim while causal issues go unaddressed. Sauter also argues that:

Some employers assume that stressful working conditions are a necessary evil—that companies must turn up the pressure on workers and set aside health concerns to remain productive and profitable in today's economy. But research findings challenge this belief. Studies show that stressful working conditions are actually associated with increased absenteeism, tardiness, and intentions by workers to quit their jobs—all of which have a negative effect on the bottom line....

Low morale, health and job complaints, and employee turnover often provide the first signs of job stress. But sometimes there are no clues, especially if employees are fearful of losing their jobs. Lack of obvious or widespread signs is not a good reason to dismiss concerns about job stress....

(2002, p. 1)

Additionally Sauter points out that the effects of job stress not only hurt job performance (also see Zemke, 2001) but the health of the individual. Early warning signs may be low morale, job dissatisfaction, short temper, sleep difficulties, poor concentration, short temper, upset stomach, and headache. These may progress, however, to much more severe symptoms including cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, workplace injury, ulcers, cancer, impaired immune function, alcohol and drug abuse, and psychological disorders including memory loss, depression, panic and anxiety disorder, and even suicide (Anxiety and the workplace, 2000; Barraclough, 2000; Bremner, 2005;

C. L. Cooper & Smith, 1985; Dear, 1995; DePaulo & Horvitz, 2002; DiBerardinis, 1999; Elisburg, 1995; Fearing, 2000; Fitter & Gulas, 2002; Michael R. Frone, 1999; Grunberg, Moore, R, & Greenberg, 1999; Gunderson & Rahe, 1974; Israel et al., 1989; Kahn, 1981; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Kasl, Gore, & Cobb, 1975; Long, 1995; Lowman, 1993; McEwen & Lasley, 2004; McLean, 1979; Parker & Farmer, 1990; Preidt, 2004c; S. Sauter, Hurrell, & Cooper, 1989; S. L. Sauter, Murphy, & Hurrell, 1990; Schnall, Landsbergis, & Baker, 1994; H. Selye, 1976; Sternberg, 2001; Varhol, 2000; Vasse, Nijhuis, & Kok, 1998; Wallenstein, 2003; "Work-related stress causes decline in nurses' health," 2000).

Ironically, characteristics that an employer would often seek in an employee; extraordinary selflessness, attention to detail, and commitment to the job, are all perfectionist traits that can indicate a propensity for panic and anxiety disorder and can be exacerbated by stress (Anxiety and the workplace, 2000). When manifest this disorder can cause attacks of anxiety accompanied by sweating, numbness, elevated heart rate, dyspnoea, trembling, and nausea.

Borrowing from Hans Selye (1978), Talbott (2002) warns that stress is killing Americans because people's built in stress response is better suited to physical danger, running and fighting, rather than coping with perceived danger that is not physically imminent. However, the freeze response is also noted as a natural feral reaction to stress and that the human body can suffer when this response is exhibited (Scaer, 2001). Over the long term Talbot argues that excessive amounts of cortisol, a hormone elevated during prolonged and chronic stress, can diminish sex drive, shrink the brain, suppress the immune system, and threaten health. Wilson (2002) argues that adrenal fatigue, or over-



stimulation of the adrenal glands during prolonged stress with the resulting over-production of adrenaline, has become the 21st century stress syndrome. Cortisol and adrenaline are closely related, as are other hormones and hormone balances that are disturbed during stress (M. Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Fujigaki & Mori, 1997; Hinkle, 1973; Isaacs, 2002; Sapolsky, 1998; S. Sauter et al., 2002; Hans Selye, 1978).

Hitti (2006) notes that years of constant work stress can also take its toll on a person's heart or pancreas. A cluster of health related abnormalities called metabolic syndrome, highly related to heart disease and diabetes, appears to be twice as likely to occur in those with chronic work stress. The risk factors include abdominal obesity, high levels of blood lipids, low levels of high-density lipoprotein, elevated blood pressure, and elevated fasting blood sugar levels. In her study Hitti noted that workers with highly demanding jobs but little support or control were most likely to develop metabolic syndrome. A BBC News report produced similar findings (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/health/4629202.stm>).

Weiss and Molitor (2004) observe that changes in management, restructuring, and layoffs often increase employee anxiety and worries about job security. They also note that prolonged job-related stress can lead to erratic eating habits and insufficient exercise, resulting in elevated blood pressure, obesity, and elevated cholesterol. They note that job stressors including the perception of insufficient reward, a hostile work environment, and the demand for long work hours can accelerate the onset of heart disease and the probability of heart attacks. Job stress often causes burnout, emotional exhaustion, cynicism, depression – precursors to stroke, heart disease, eating disorders, diabetes, and some

forms of cancer. Chronic depression due to stress can reduce the efficacy of the immune system and even lead to premature death.

The effects of prolonged stress are often described as burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1976; 1981) describe this phenomena (burnout) as consisting of three components: emotional exhaustion and sometimes cynicism, de-individuation and depersonalization of self and others, and negative self-assessment. These stages are especially pertinent to healthcare professionals experiencing burnout (Bonn & Bonn, 2000; "The doctor is still in," 2002; Langemo, 1988; Lloyd & King, 2001; Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002; Matterna, 1998; "Overworked nurses kill and injure thousands," 2000/2001; Ramirez & Graham, 1996; Revicki & Whitley, 1997; Vettor & Kosinski Jr., 2000; Wellsley, 2000), and are quite similar to what has been noted as the career depression syndrome epidemic also characterized by three stages: career dissatisfaction, career demotivation, and career paralysis (Griedland & Marcus, 2002).

A study conducted jointly by Age Wave, Harris Interactive, Inc., and The Concoors Group (Problems at the top: Apathy, contempt for managers, 2005) shows that the number of employees suffering from burnout is increasing. It notes that 42 percent are coping with burnout, 33 percent believe that their job is at a dead end, and 21 percent report being anxious to change jobs.

Hopefully it is clear that work life can suffer when there is too much work related stress. But life at home can also suffer when there is stress at work, including role conflict (Almeida, McDonald, & Grzywacz, 2002; Broman, 2001; E. Galinsky, 1999; Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Kelley, 1999; Wiersma & Berg, 1991), especially with dual-worker families (Burke, 1988; M. R. Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus

& Beutell, 1985; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Moen, Harris-Abbott, Lee, & Roehling, 1999; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1996; Westman & Etzion, 1995), also when there are young children and/or aging parents for which to care (Bekker, de Jong, Zijlstra, & van Landeghem, 2000; Zal, 1992) and especially for women (Bailyn, 2006; Bolton, 2000; Burtless, 1999; C. L. Cooper & Davidson, 1982; Davidson & Cooper, 2001; Engberg, 1999; Hochschild & Machung, 2003; Kavanagh & Halpern, 1977; Phillips-Miller, Campbell, & Morrison, 2000; Reinhold, 1996; "Stress and work," 1994; "Women, work, and stress," 2000) and when work-family benefits or a culture for supporting them are poor or absent in the workplace (Rothausen, 1994; C. A. Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

Apparently, though, it is the psychological characteristics of work, rather than just the amount of work, that are especially problematic. Having a job marked by high pressure and no support from the boss can produce more marital arguments than usual. These arguments can range widely from how couples spend their money to how they spend their leisure time. Pressure at work can foster family neglect, as negative moods at work can make workers psychologically unavailable, preoccupied with work, fatigued, and irritable when they come home. It appears that the spillover from negative moods generated at work cause more arguments at home than does simply working too much (Hughes, Gailinsky, & Morris, 1992), (also see D. L. Cohen, 1993; Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997; Justice & Juncan, 1977; Reinhold, 1996; K. J. Williams & Alliger, 1994). Additionally, stress at home can also exacerbate stress at work, possibly creating a feed-forward cycle where employees overwork in order to avoid spending time with their families (Crouter & Bumpus, 2001; Hochschild, 1997).

### ***Work-Related Sleep Deprivation***

As mentioned earlier, stress interferes with people's ability to sleep (Preidt, 2004b), and often sleep deprivation and stress both have their genesis in overwork, while making work more difficult in return.

Martin (2002) observes:

Many of us do not get enough sleep and we suffer the consequences, often without realizing what we are doing to ourselves. The demands of the 24-hour society are marginalizing sleep, yet it is not an optional activity. Nature imposes it upon us. We can survive for longer without food. When our sleep falls short in quantity or quality we pay a heavy price in depressed mood, impaired performance, damaged social relationships and poorer health...

p. 3

Evans (2005) points out:

Sleep deprivation makes the learning process more difficult, causes a variety of mood and attention disorders and, in extreme cases, leads to complete psychosis...

p. 1

James Gleick (2000) notes that the mere presence of an alarm clock indicates sleep deprivation. If this is the case, then apparently sleeping well and working in America have almost become mutually exclusive (Borysenko, 2003; Coren, 2005; P. Martin, 2002; Schaffner & Horn, 2003; Whybrow, 2005). And according to most sleep researchers sleep loss is generally a bad thing (Coren, 2005; Kurcinka, 2006; Preidt, 2004a; Vgontzas et al., 2004) that is affecting people of all ages (Esherick, 2005; Kurcinka, 2006) and can often be caused by stress (Van Reeth et al., 2000). It can have mildly deleterious effects in the short term, such as daytime sleepiness (Excessive daytime sleepiness: Gallup survey: Sleepiness in America, 1997), or a decrease in the frequency and quality of one's sex life (Less sleep could mean less sex, 2005; Poll: Americans

working more, sleeping less, 2001), but it can also have dangerous or fatal effects in the long term and create dangerous feed-forward cycles such as those between sleep loss and obesity (Blackburn, 2006; Kauffman, 2006; Sleep loss boosts appetite, may encourage weight gain, 2004). It can greatly increase stress (Springen & Wingert, 2004) which can subsequently further decrease sleep time (Reeth et al., 2000). It can reduce the release of growth hormone, affect memory (Dotinga, 2004; Siegel, 2001; Study shows sleep helps improve memory, 2000), negatively alter brain activity (Brain activity is visibly altered following sleep deprivation, 2000; DeNoon, 2000; Tam, 1998), and make one obese, (E. Cohen, 2000; Dizon, 2000; Sorgen, 2003; Squires, 2002), therefore causing additional sleep loss (2002 "Sleep in America" Poll, 2002; Vgontzas et al., 1998). Sleep loss can also make one vulnerable to diabetes (Dinsmoor, 2002; Mann, 2001; Wiley & Formby, 2001), anxiety (Markway & Markway, 2003), depression, accidents, premature aging (Easton, 1999; Mercola, 1999), poor job performance, strained relationships (Facts about problem sleepiness, 1997; H. Marano, 2003), and can also exacerbate the diseases one already has (Mercola, 2000).

While the amount of sleep needed varies from individual to individual, and there is some debate regarding the numbers (K. Cobb, 2002), on average people need eight hours of sleep per night (Dinges, 2002; Let sleep work for you, 2003). If this amount is reduced by even an hour or two, or the schedule of sleep becomes upset, nasty things can happen to one's work, relationships, and health (Kantrowitz, Kalb, Springen, & Carmichael, 2002; Risk of short sleeping: Recent studies expose dangers in chronic sleep deprivation, 2002). In addition, it may even be counter-productive to force people to work throughout the day without a nap ("Siesta time," 2002). And these problems are not

isolated. In the United States sleep loss is mounting up to a vast sleep debt (Brink, 2000; Chatterjee, 1999) and the additional sleep needed to repay this debt is not forthcoming, largely due to increased demands at work and a more frenzied lifestyle for American people. While healthful sleep has been empirically proven to be the single most important factor in predicting longevity, even more important than diet, exercise, or heredity, America appears to be a sleep-sick society, ignorant of the facts of sleep and the cost of sleep deprivation (Dement, 2000).

According to researchers, sleep problems in America have become a modern epidemic that is taking a catastrophic toll on people's bodies and minds (Atkinson, 2000; Coren, 1997; The nature of sleep, 2002). The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) estimates that 30-40 million Americans experience serious sleep disorders that undermine their sleep quality and their health. It indicates that people do not take the need to sleep seriously and that in their 24-hour society people frequently borrow from sleep time to do other things (Let sleep work for you, 2003). The NSF states that average sleep time has been reduced by 20 percent in the last century. They, along with others, also indicate that in the past 25 years a month has been added to the average work/commute time which, in turn, increases stress and reduces the opportunity for restorative sleep (Salvatore, 1999) while an average three-day business trip, which is the most common, induces an eight hour sleep loss ("The stat," 2004). Apparently, Americans are living in a changing society that is incurring a rising national sleep debt, while living in bodies that have not changed to handle the demand. Furthermore, the problem will only get worse as people in America age (Weintraub, 2004).

Sleeplessness due to an overextended lifestyle not only diminishes health but also other aspects of life quality (Weintraub, 2004). Song (2006) points out that the benefits of sleep accrue to the mind as well as the body. She notes that 71 percent of adults and 85 percent of teens do not get enough sleep, but often they are so used to being chronically sleep deprived, and so skillful at coping with it, that they do not realize that sleep loss can mimic dementia. Without the sleep needed to improve judgment and problem solving ability, consolidate memory, decrease reaction time, lighten emotional stress, and promote learning and concentration individuals can fail to notice their poor ability to perform or pass the effects of sleep starvation off as attributable to other things, such as a meeting being boring or a room being too warm. But the effects of sleep deprivation at work, home, and in between cannot be written off so easily.

Accordingly, the NSF and others note that if people suffer from loss of sleep they are less attentive and alert, with an increase likelihood of risky behavior (Roehrs, Greenwald, & Roth, 2004), and are more inclined to mood problems and irritability, with an accompanying loss in concentration and judgment that can interfere with work performance and key relationships (Benbadis, 1997; Keane, 2003). Chronic sleep duration of six hours or less a night can cause cognitive performance deficits equal to two nights of total sleep deprivation (Dongen, Maislin, Mullington, & Dinges, 2003). According to some, ongoing sleep deprivation is as debilitating as persistently being drunk (Renew - sleep and stress, 2004; Sleep deprivation as bad as alcohol impairment, study suggests, 2000). When sleep is lost or poor one is also at higher risk of having accidents that affect others as well as oneself. In addition to the pain and suffering they may cause, accidents attributed to sleep loss create a significant cost to employers (Ruane, 2001) and to society

at large (Lack of sleep America's top health problem, doctors say, 1997; Leger, 1994; R. D. Peters et al., 1999; Segelken, 1998).

The most common cause of excessive sleepiness appears to be chronic sleep deprivation (Mahowald, 2000). And according to a National Sleep Foundation poll (2001 "Sleep in America" Poll, 2001), sleep deprivation continues to be widespread in America. 63 percent of American adults do not get the recommended eight hours of sleep needed for good health, safety, and optimum performance. One-third of Americans indicate that they get less sleep now than they did five years ago and 69 percent say they experience frequent sleep problems. While many cases of sleep deprivation are attributable to shift work (Akerstedt, 1988) and physiological disorders such as sleep apnea (J. T. Johnson, Gluckman, & Sanders, 2002; P. Lavie, 2001; Peretz Lavie, 2003; Pascualy & Soest, 2000), narcolepsy, and restless leg syndrome, and rising too early (Dye, 2003), overwork clearly remains a significant factor. The NSF poll continues by showing that nearly as many adults say they now spend more time at work as say they spend less time sleeping, 40 percent vs. 38 percent respectively. In addition, 38 percent say they are working fifty hours or more a week. Those who work more also sleep less and experience insomnia more than those who spend fewer hours working. However, 33 percent of respondents indicated that work related activities would be the least likely aspect of their lives that they would be willing to sacrifice in order to get more sleep. This correlates with other research indicating that people think that they can cheat sleep over long periods (Ferrara & Gennaro, 2001; Healy, 2004; Reese, 1998). According to NSF Vice President, James C. Walsh, "There is a direct relationship between hours worked and its negative impact on sleep. This is particularly noticeable for people working more than 40 hours per



week,” (Less fun, less sleep, more work, an American portrait: National Sleep Foundation Poll shows Americans living to work, not working to live; foundation urges Americans to 'make time for sleep', 2001).

The toll of sleep loss, and the hypersomnia and insomnia caused to a significant degree by the demands of work in America, is being paid not only at home and work but on the highway as well (Hassen, 2002). It has been estimated that over 10,000 auto accidents occur every year in America due to sleep loss (J. L. Davis, 2006; Kirchheimer, 2003), and from other sources 65,000 auto accidents per year are linked to driving while drowsy (R. D. Peters et al., 1999) and 200,000 are noted as being caused by sleep deprivation (Benbadis, 1997), many of which happened during the commute to and from work.

In addition to the other ills brought about by insomnia and sleep deprivation, researchers have found that those who suffer from these ills were more likely to say they disliked or even hated their job the next day (J. Warner, 2006). But loss of sleep is not the only factor in the rising tide of worker unhappiness and dissatisfaction. And work dissatisfaction is also a factor in poor health, creating another damaging feed forward cycle.

(As a sad footnote to this topic, research since the tragedy of 9/11 indicates that sleep in America has been negatively impacted by additional anxiety, stress, depression, fear, and bad dreams due to this terrible event according to Pyszcznski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003.)

### *Unhappy Work, Unhappy Life*

According to a report by The Conference Board (U.S. job satisfaction keeps falling, 2005) there is an increasing decline in job satisfaction among Americans of all ages

and incomes. Only half of Americans now say that they are satisfied with their jobs, compared to 60 percent in 1995, but only 14 percent say that they are very satisfied. Sadly, one quarter say they just show up for to work to get a paycheck. This study observes:

- The largest decline in overall job satisfaction, from 60.9% to 49.2%, occurred among workers 35-44.
- The second largest decline took place among workers aged 45-54, with the satisfaction level dropping from 57.3% to 47.7%.
- The smallest decline occurred among workers 65 and over. Overall job satisfaction declined from 60.8% to 58.0%, making this group the most satisfied with their jobs.
- The largest decline in job satisfaction took place among householders earning \$25,000 to \$35,000, with satisfaction falling from 55.7% to 41.4%. This income group expressed the second lowest level of overall satisfaction.
- The second largest decline was posted by householders earning \$35,000-\$50,000. This group experienced a decline from 59.7% to 46.7%.
- With less than 47% of householders claiming to be satisfied with their current job, workers in the Middle Atlantic and Mountain states are the least satisfied workers in the U.S.
- The East South Central region has the most content workers. Close to 59% of residents in these states claim they are satisfied with their jobs.
- Company promotion policies and bonus plans tended to be the lowest on the satisfaction scale.

- Educational and job training programs did not fare well either. Only 30% of workers claimed to be satisfied with these types of company programs.
- Workers also rated their wages poorly, with only 33.5% of householders expressing satisfaction with their pay.
- 40% of workers feel disconnected from their employers.
- Two out of every three workers do not identify with or feel motivated to drive their employer's business goals and objectives.
- 25% of employees are just “showing up to collect a paycheck.”

p. 2

Although satisfaction at work follows a sort of “U” curve as people age (young people become sharply less satisfied with work until they bottom out at around age 27, with satisfaction slowly improving until they are about 55 years old, thereafter experiencing a rapid improvement in satisfaction), people of all ages in America have experienced a steady decline in overall satisfaction since 1970 (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2002; Oswald, 2002; Problems at the top: Apathy, contempt for managers, 2005).

Reinhold observes:

An estimated twenty million Americans are staying in jobs they hate in order to keep their health insurance – when research indicates that career dissatisfaction is more likely than anything else to make them need to use it. Polls have shown, moreover, that less than 10 percent of Americans are really satisfied with their work....

In your own workplace, you have probably heard (and perhaps even made) some of these despairing comments:

“The work just keeps on piling up – and makes me want to scream.”

“It’s depressing to be in that shut-down environment.”

“I hate not having time for a life.”

“This job doesn’t use my talents.”

“I’ve been stuck here for twelve years, and there’s just no place for me to go.”

“My boss treats us all like children.”  
“My job doesn’t mean much to me anymore.”  
“It’s time for me to be on my own now.”

As a nation, we have focused great concern on our health-care system, yet we often ignore one of our greatest health risks: the way we do our work. For example, we’ve known for more than twenty years that the greatest predictor of heart attacks in people under fifty – more potent even than smoking, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, or diabetes – is job dissatisfaction.

Sometimes, just thinking about going to work can be lethal. Statistically, more people have heart attacks and strokes on Mondays between eight and nine a.m. than at any other time of the week. The relationship between work stress and cardiovascular emergencies is so clear that it’s been given a special name: Black Monday Syndrome.

*(Reinhold, 1996, pp. 1 - 3)*

Another 2005 survey notes that across the American workforce, only 45 percent of workers say they are satisfied with their jobs, a much lower number engaged by their jobs, only 15 percent feel energized to a strong degree by their work, and only 20 percent feel much passion for their jobs (Problems at the top: Apathy, contempt for managers, 2005).

Because of this atmosphere of discontent, many employees are seriously considering finding another job (Bonne, 2003; Job Satisfaction and Retention Survey, 2005/2006). And although it could be argued that the workplace in America has drastically improved since the days of Upton Sinclair (1906), Maslach and Leiter (1997) would assert that the improvements made since that time have begun to diminish. Hornstein (2003) observes one problem contributing to the current unhappiness at work issues from the elite deviance often exhibited by the upper echelons of management:

- The idea that a social contract does not exist, i.e. people in the organization are not all working together for the common good
- A pernicious culture of executive privilege

- Management misbehavior, immunity, and unfair special treatment
- Enhancing oneself by diminishing others
- Stealing reward and recognition from others

Others have noted additional causes of workplace unhappiness that are very similar to the list of workplace stressors:

- Meaningless or boring work
- Organizational and workplace change, including downsizing and relocation
- Discrimination
- Lack of security
- Lack of education
- Work/family conflict
- Large vs. small workplace
- Long commute time
- Overly frequent travel
- Working an undesired shift
- Overwork
- Difficult interpersonal relationships
- Emotional intimidation and bullying
- Insufficient reward, development, access, or recognition

(Allcorn, 1992; "Bad work," 2002; Bix, 2000; Brady, 2004; Buell, 1995; Denenberg & Braverman, 2001; Fritz & Orndahl, 2006; Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; H. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001; J. Gardner & Oswald, 2002; Gonthier & Morrissey, 2002;

Gotlib & Hammen, 2002; Gottlieb & Conkling, 1995; Gregory, 2003; Hodson, 1999; Holman, Wall, Clegg, Sparrow, & Howard, 2003; Marks, 2003; Maud, 2000; Mitchell, 2005; Monk & Folkard, 1992; Noer, 1993; Oswald, 2002; "Time equals happiness," 2002; Yates, 1994, 2003; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000.)

In yet another feed-forward cycle workplace unhappiness and depression can lead to absenteeism, physical pain, morale problems, increased accidents, decreased productivity, and alcohol and drug abuse (Ainsworth, 2000). Unfortunately, the reasons for how and why people in America work and overwork seem to expand their unhappiness to a point where it encompasses large portions of life outside of work. And although overconsumption will be addressed at length in the next chapter, it is worth noting here that the drive to overwork is fueled to a large degree by the need to consume. This drive toward consumption has pushed Americans not only into a consistent lifestyle of overwork, but also into one of constant debt. Sadly, this does not seem to be providing the satisfaction or fulfillment Americans seem to desire (Whybrow, 2005).

Despite the fact that people are now healthier and live much longer than their predecessors even a century ago, with affluence, scientific progress, and luxuries undreamed of at that time, many people feel that their lives have been wasted, spent in the polar opposites of anxiety and boredom (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Even with a plentitude of cultural assurances, most people sooner or later discover that their affluent, sophisticated, and scientific world is not going to provide for their happiness. When this realization sinks in, people often redouble their efforts to obtain more money, power, status, and possessions, having been told that these things will make them happy and enhance their quality of life. Unfortunately though this may work in the short term, the

long term effect of this kind of effort appears to be without satisfaction or real substance (de Graaf et al., 2002; Schor, 1999; Schor & Holt, 2000; Schwartz, 2004) and can do considerable damage to everyone else as well as oneself (Daring, 1992). Former Vice-President Al Gore (1992) notes that while the accumulation of material goods is at an all-time high, so is the number of people who feel an emptiness in their lives. David G. Myers (2000) points out that even though we are living in a time of unprecedented prosperity, the divorce rate has doubled, teen suicide has tripled, recorded violent crime has quadrupled, the prison population has quintupled, and depression has soared to ten times the pre-World War II level. It can be confusing that America has it both so good and so bad.

However, Csikszentmihalyi notes that the road to true happiness begins with control over one's inner life and ultimately one's experience through the achievement of "flow." And because a large portion of life is spent at work, one must transform one's work into a state of flow – a state where an activity is so enjoyable and involving that nothing else seems to matter. We then engage in the activity for the sheer pleasure of doing it. He notes that one must also have clear goals and reasonable challenges, but above all, one's chosen work must be meaningful and fulfilling. Victor Frankl (1962) makes a similar point by noting that happiness cannot be pursued directly, rather, it comes from personal dedication to a meaningful pursuit that is greater than oneself (also see Fogel, 2000).

Discouragingly, the World Wide Web is pockmarked with sites dedicated to people's hatred of their jobs. Just type, "I hate my job" into any search engine and stand back. Some of the sites that appear are personal rants; others are entire forums dedicated

to venting frustration, dismay, anger, and disbelief regarding the seeming plethora of dismal and unrewarding jobs. Strangely, however, many people in the workplace seem reluctant to leave their jobs and, even more strangely, many appear to be addicted to their work.

According to James Fearing (2001), work addiction syndrome, very similar to workaholism, is affecting corporations and organizations from every occupation and industry. He notes that this syndrome is not the result of some personal or moral deficit on the part of the individual. Rather, it often strikes highly talented, productive, values driven, and laudable individuals who are often unaware of their dysfunction. He notes, however, that they are indeed aware of their own unhappiness, both at work and at home. Because of this, they are driven to perform even harder, unable to achieve satisfaction with their current accomplishments. Their behavior and intense work schedules are often symptomatic of deeper insecurities and an inaccurate perception of self. Often, the work addict uses his or her addiction to control, deny, or avoid these uncomfortable feelings.

Lamentably, today's corporate environment of downsizing, mergers, and take-overs often seems to encourage the work addict's behavior, even though it is ultimately costly to the organization. These addicted organizations place their employees in a stressful environment of constantly living on the edge. According to Schaefer and Fassel (1988), these organizations promote an atmosphere of denial and codependence, rewarding individuals who do not confront the real problems of the organization and who support, rather, the dysfunctional beliefs and behaviors of the current organizational paradigm. This can lead, ultimately, to a lack of fulfillment and a sense of depression, unhappiness, and despair.



Overwork, addiction, sleep deprivation, and stress can all contribute to depression and, as noted earlier, may be important factors in the general epidemic of depression in the workplace. In 2000, the World Health Organization reported that by 2020 clinical depression was expected to outrank cancer and follow only heart disease to become the second greatest cause of worldwide death and disability (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000; Murray & Lopez, 1996).

Depressive disorders within the workplace have been much higher than anticipated by researchers and accompany the highest medical costs of all behavioral health disorders (Conti & Burton, 1994). In addition, Marano (2003) concludes that workplace depression costs employers \$44 billion a year in lost productivity without factoring in the medical costs. The lion's share of lost productivity comes from what Marano calls presenteeism, as opposed to absenteeism. This phenomenon occurs when people go to work in a depressed state and, as a result, function poorly by failing to communicate, meet deadlines, or produce quality work. They often come to work late, leave early, take long lunches, and while at work can become paralyzed by indecision. In these circumstances work relationships may also suffer as the person experiencing depression will often withdraw from others or instigate conflict.

As of 1990 untreated depression cost over \$43.7 billion in absenteeism, lost productivity and direct treatment (Greenberg, Stiglin, Finkelstein, & Berndt, 1993). By 1995 the cost of depression rose to \$600 per depressed worker (Conti & Burton, 1994). Although depression tends to affect people in their prime working years, it can last a lifetime if untreated. Frighteningly, as of 1994 nearly 15 percent of employees suffering from diagnosed severe depression committed suicide (Diagnostic and statistical manual

of mental disorders, 1994). The nature of this disorder poses a challenge to helping professionals both within and outside of the organization (Maud, 2000) as depression follows only stress and family crisis in the top three workplace problems for employee assistance professionals. Fortunately, more than 80 percent of people with clinical depression can be successfully treated if there is early recognition, intervention, and support.

Too often, however a depressed employee will not seek treatment because they are unaware of their specific problem (Blazer, 2005), fear breach of confidentiality, fear that disclosure will negatively affect their job, or worry that they have inadequate insurance. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>) these people may attempt to continue work while experiencing the following symptoms:

- Persistent sad, empty, or anxious moods
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, and feeling sluggish
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disorders
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, including suicide attempts
- Irritability
- Excessive crying
- Chronic aches and pains

For additional related resources on the Web see:

<http://www.sciam.com/1196issue/1196scicit4.html>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/stress/>

<http://archpsyc.ama-assn.org/issues/current/rfull/yoa10107.html>

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list\\_uids=9524977&dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=9524977&dopt=Abstract)

[http://www.allaboutdepression.com/cau\\_01.html](http://www.allaboutdepression.com/cau_01.html)

[http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/chapter4/sec3\\_1.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/chapter4/sec3_1.html)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/workplace.cfm>

<http://www.well.com/user/fsquared/depress.html>

<http://www.wiley.com/cda/product/0,,0787951404%7Cdesc%7C2551,00.html>

<http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/Anxiety/strong/work.html>

<http://www.anxietyculture.mcmail.com/puritanf.htm>

<http://www.careermotiv8.com/dpr.htm>

<http://www.hoyweb.com/lh/career.htm>

<http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/fearing2.html>

[http://www.addictionsofthe21stcentury.com/html/work\\_addiction\\_quiz.html](http://www.addictionsofthe21stcentury.com/html/work_addiction_quiz.html)

<http://www.akavirgo.com/health/workaddiction.htm>

<http://www.akavirgo.com/health/workaddiction.htm>

<http://helping.apa.org/work/stress5.html>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/stresspk.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg281.pdf>

<http://www.workhealth.org/strain/briefintro.html>

<http://www.workhealth.org/strain/briefintro.html>

<http://www.workhealth.org/strain/hpjs1.html>

<http://www.workhealth.org/strain/hpjs3.html>

<http://www.workhealth.org/>

<http://www.apa.org/releases/workstrs.html>

[http://www.ananova.com/business/story/sm\\_510480.html](http://www.ananova.com/business/story/sm_510480.html)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid\\_1046000/1046366.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid_1046000/1046366.stm)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/health/newsid\\_964000/964971.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/health/newsid_964000/964971.stm)

[http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed414521.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed414521.html)

<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9903/12/work.place.stress/>

<http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/niosh/niosh.html>

<http://www.familiesandwork.org/>

<http://www.newdream.org/work/>

<http://www.newdream.org/money/index.html>

Because of the frequency with which overwork, fatigue, stress, and depression occur in the workplace and the consequences to productivity and satisfaction (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005); it is reasonable to assume that companies would employ as many resources as possible to alleviate the problem. Leisure is often seen as a means to relieve the cumulative burdens of work (Tremberth & Dewe, 2002), so the traditional response by business is to send people on vacation. However, in the current work environment vacations have only a mildly mitigating effect even if they are taken, which they sometimes are not (Strauss-Blasche, Ekmekcioglu, & Marktl, 2002), and other avenues of temporary

escape may also be blocked. Up to one third of employees responding to a recent report state that they:

- Work and eat lunch at same time.
- Never leave building after arriving at work.
- Job makes them feel older than they are.
- Feel must work when injured or sick.
- Can't take vacation due to work demands.
- Lose sleep because of work worries.
- Must habitually work late to be promoted.
- Would be fired or demoted if seriously ill.

*("Reducing work stress," 2001, p. 2)*

Therefore other means might prove more helpful. One of these would be the reduction of stress and work through the use of new and more enabling technologies. Paradoxically, it would seem that the recent technological advances, purported to increase leisure and happiness for all, have instead added to the work overload and dissatisfaction of many.

### ***Work-Related Misuse of Technology***

Carroll (1977) comments:

Technology often embodies and expresses political value choices that, in their operations and effects, are binding on individuals and groups, whether such choices have been made in political forums or elsewhere.... Technological processes in contemporary society have become the equivalent of a form of law – that is, an authoritative or binding expression of social norms and values from which the individual or group may have no immediate recourse.

pp. 338, 339 (Also see Murphie & Potts, 2003)

Disikes (2001) adds:

The legendary English economist John Maynard Keynes once forecast that by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advances in technology would make us more productive workers, turning our greatest challenge into how to fill our leisure time with meaningful activities.

Keynes may have been wrong about that, but more recently, hopeful technologists and economic observers have followed in his footsteps... increased productivity should mean that Americans are free to work shorter and shorter hours while accumulating the same wealth. But in reality, work weeks are as long as ever.

p. 1

From the early beginnings of technological development pundits of the time have told the masses that new technology will afford them more leisure and relieve them from the drudgeries of life. This was especially true during the middle of the 20th century (Dumazedier, 1967). However, studies since that time have indicated that, rather than providing for more leisure time and time for personal expression, technology and the resulting social change has made life more hectic and demanding in technologically developed countries (Linder, 1970; C. Maslach, 1982; Schor, 1993). Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich (2002) states that technology is the engine behind a new economy that demands that more attention be paid to work than to one's personal life. The Families and Work Institute 2001 report (Ellen Galinsky et al., 2001a) indicates that 41 percent of employees use technologies such as cellular/mobile phones, pagers, beepers, computers, fax, and e-mail often or very often for their jobs during typical non-work time, and those who use this technology feel more overworked more often. More specifically, the 38 percent of employees who say they often or very often use technology for their jobs during non-work time experience high levels of feeling overworked. 22 percent of employees say they often or very often have to be accessible to their employers during typical non-work time and, therefore, feel more overworked. More specifically,

41 percent of those who say they have to be accessible to their employers often or very often during non-work time report high levels of feeling overworked. At any level, employees who feel they are more accessible than necessary to their employers feel more overworked, and accessibility generally means through the use of technology.

In a 49 month study of business attitudes (L. D. Rosen & Weil, 2000) observes a strong increase in the use of technology at work and at home after work hours by both clerical/support staff and executives/managers. Rather than being more accepting of and excited about new technology, these people appear to have become more hesitant. This hesitance, Rosen and Weil believe, is due to the increased stress brought about by new technology and its use.

In his review of a study conducted by the World Federation for Mental Health and the United Nations International Labor Organization, presented in Geneva in October, 2000, Richard Service (2000) points out that one in 10 workers in the five industrialized countries studied are affected by depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout (also see Conway & Siegelman, 1995; Weil & Rosen, 1997). He also notes that clinical depression has become one of the most common illnesses in the U.S., causing the loss of 200 million days of work a year. According to Service, the common threads linking the prevalence of these disturbing conditions are the rapid introduction of technology, time pressures, and globalization. He also refers to the idea presented in the conference that we are living in a time when people live less by tradition and must make more decisions independently regarding work schedules. This shift blurs the boundaries between work and home, creating a seamless society where one is never free from the pressures and obligations of work. One can no longer go home and forget about work because it is

difficult to know when work is over. Work has become an end in itself, and this condition is being facilitated, in part, by the rapid deployment of technology.

In addition to the negative impact on individuals, the productivity promised by technology has been questioned by researchers (Disikes, 2001). Being able to instantly access an employee at any time through cell phones or a barrage of e-mails or instant messages can lead to interruptions that both frustrate the individual and hinder performance (Agre, 2001; Bhattacharjee, 2002; Conlin, 2004; Ellen Galinsky et al., 2005; Gibbs, 2005; Hof, 2004; Surowiecki, 2006), potentially leading to addictive behavior (Fisher, 2004; Mobile phone users 'stressed out': People are becoming addicted to mobile phones, causing them to become stressed and irritable, work suggests, 2006; Morahan-Martin & Schumaker, 1997; Taylor, 2002; K. S. Young, 1998) and social isolation (DeAngelis, 2000; Sclove, 1995). The promise of telecommuting has certainly changed the geography of work (Dannhauser, 1999; Hrisak, 1999; Riley, Mandavilli, & Heino, 2002; Slepicka, 1999), and it has also reportedly improved productivity (Babcock, 1995), and offers the potential benefits of work schedule flexibility (Lovelace, 2000), eliminating commuting time (Apgar IV, 1998), improved quality of life (Lovelace, 2000), and relieved strain on the environment (Opportunities in telecommuting: A quantitative analysis of drivers, deterrents, and deployment patterns, 2000). But people are also afforded the opportunity to put in more work at home and on vacation, especially if one has a college degree (Mandel, 2005b), for which there is no extra pay, so productivity levels gauged by output per hour are difficult to ascertain (de Graaf, 2003; Schor, 1993). Learning how to use new technology can increase hours spent at work (Mandel, 2005a), but even more insidiously, new technologies have produced a very viable avenue for out-



sourcing jobs, including white collar and professional, to more economical geographies including a very recent and concerted effort to offshore jobs to countries outside the United States (L. Cohen & Young, 2005; Corbett, 2004; T. L. Friedman, 2006; M. Robinson & Kalakota, 2005).

Advances in technology have also created more opportunity to increase the surveillance of employees, possibly violating their rights and arguably causing more stress. Computer monitoring, global positioning systems in cars and cell phones, radio tags, biometrics, hidden cameras, e-mail and phone call snooping, and even keystroke counting are now being used to put pressure on workers to make every minute of every day count for their employers, who don't even have to disclose surveillance policies. Even after one has been hired ongoing background checks alert the boss if, say, an employee has just been charged with driving while intoxicated or some other violation of the law, or just simply has received a bad credit rating. Even away from work blog content is being reviewed and some employees are now required to have locator chips injected under their skin (Katherine Albrecht & McIntyre, 2005; Bassman, 1992; Brennan & Johnson, 2004; Brin, 1998; Conlin, 2002; Dell, 2006; Dell & Cullen, 2006; D'Urso, 2006; Ihlwan & Reinhardt, 2005; D. G. Johnson, 2000; LaGesse, 2003; F. S. Lane, 2003; Lyon, 2003; McGrath, 2004; Newitz, 2004; O'Harrow Jr., 2005; Schonfeld, 2005; Shapiro, 2002; Solove, 2004; Steinberg, 2001/2002).

### ***Conclusion***

Some people seem to be satisfied in almost any circumstance (Straw, 1984). However, since the 1950's organizations have attempted to improve employee satisfaction even though studies have shown that satisfaction at work may not affect productivity at all but only improve attendance and reduce turnover (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Iafaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Locke, 1976; Vroom, 1964). Also, as one can observe in Figure 2, boredom and entitlement may be as damaging to the individual and the organization as distress and anxiety (Bardwick, 1991; Crane, 1992; Hamper, 1991; Kriegel, 1985; Lynch & Kordis, 1988; Zimpel, 1974).

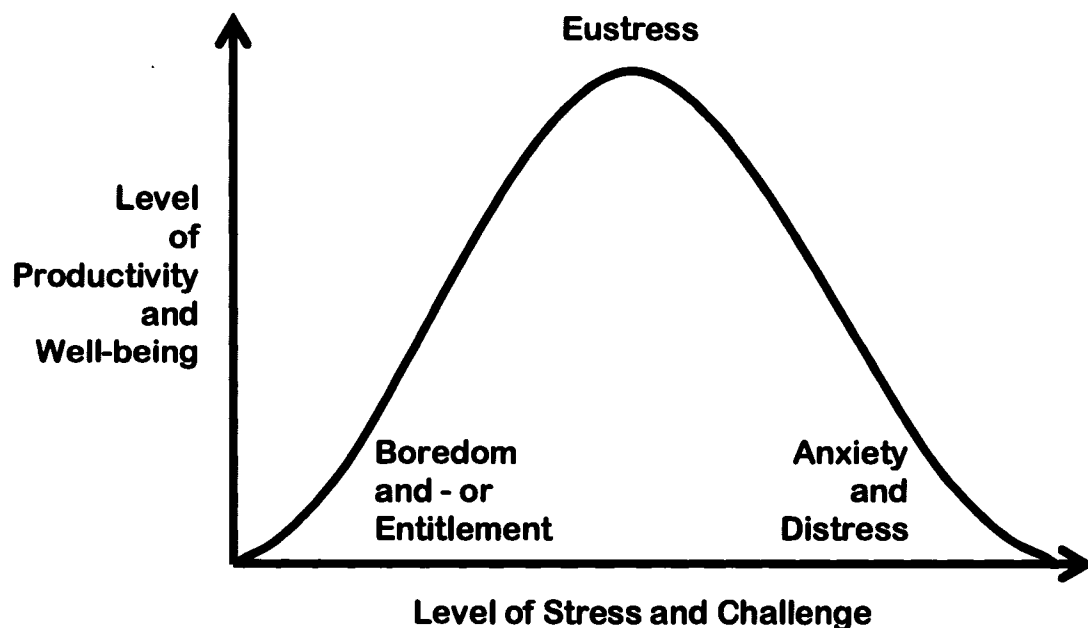


Figure 2. Relationship between levels of stress and productivity and well-being.

Be that as it may, the working conditions in America appear to be taking their toll, decreasing worker's overall well-being and quality of life. And it is not too much of a leap to view contemporary American work life as a new form of serfdom.

Marx and Engles (1848) made a pillar of their philosophy the idea that slavery and serfdom, and the accompanying misery and suffering, have been a part of the human fabric since the beginning of cultural history. They track the progression from early bi-modal slave-master cultures to the feudal serf-lord cultures to the bourgeois-proletariat culture predominant in their time. Given the nature of America's overworked condition, it is arguable that people in the United States are currently in yet another iteration of this phenomenon.

Americans seem to be caught on an overwork treadmill with an ever-receding horizon, and the situation only appears to be getting worse. Outsourcing, offshoring, downsizing, mergers and acquisitions, and the subsequent mercenary atmosphere of the workplace are treating many employees as disposable commodities in conditions of servitude. The consequences of this would appear to be severe, especially long term, and seem to spill over into the employee's life outside of work. So why do people do it?

In a Time Magazine essay James Poniewozik (2002) notes,

This is the paradox of our post-9/11 "reprioritizing": America – credit-addicted, 25-brands-of-toothpaste-on-the-shelf America – cannot afford for us to examine our lives too closely. Our way of life is predicated on our not taking stock; not getting off the career-overtime-promotion hamster wheel; not, God forbid, living each day as if it might be our last. Because who would spend that day in an airless cubicle or on the 8:30 to Denver?

p. 74

This lack of introspection can be caused by many factors, many of which have been discussed: sleep deprivation, habituation or addiction to overwork, depression, the perception of being trapped, lack of resources, the fear of reprisal, invasive technology, and overwhelming by demand. All of these factors are very powerful in their influence over human servitude. However, one additional and very important factor may be evidenced by the idea that Americans now have a referent group to which many fervently

aspire, but to which it is nearly impossible to gain membership. For most people in the United States this referent group is the top 20 percent of the income distribution. This referent group is characterized as those who earn \$90,000.00 a year or more. However, the top 5 percent of this group, the upper-professional-middle class, earn an average of \$254,000.00 and are now widely observed and emulated (Schor, 1998). Schor asserts that this referent group is often illusory and does not really exist in the manner in which it is portrayed, as the most powerful engines for perpetuating this referent group are television, one's children (manipulating the parents to over-consume after being manipulated themselves through the influence of television and peer pressure), and coworkers. She also notes that working harder and spending more to achieve an arbitrarily prescribed standard of living that is constantly being upgraded has created a feed-forward cycle in which overworking and over-spending exacerbate each other, creating wage slaves who are overly indebted, who experience a decreasing quality of life, and who have little apparent chance to get out of the rat race. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the rationale for overwork might lie in the need to over-consume (T. J. C. Robinson, 2006) and will be the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Five: Servitude and Overconsumption in America**

The previous chapter focused on the prevalence of servitude and overwork in America and the subsequent harmful consequences. However, other factors relating to life in the United States contribute to its misfortunes and over-consumption is arguably one of them (R. H. Frank, 1999; Hammerslough, 2001; Kasser, 2002; Kawachi & Kennedy, 2002; Lane, 2001; Scitovsky, 1992; Simon, 2003). Contemporary Americans seem to be caught in a trap of both overwork and overconsumption. This trend shows little signs of changing even though debt in America is breaking all previous records; both at the individual and national levels. The cyclic nature of overworking in order to overconsume seems to be embedded in the contemporary American psyche. This chapter will examine the history, causes, and effects of overconsumption and the rationales offered for its enduring vitality.

The phenomenon of overconsumption has roots going back to at least the early industrialization of America, where one could observe that people with wealth and power, and those aspiring to have such, found great benefit in helping to create a consumer class that would provide a resource for both production and consumption. But contrary to the more realistic implications, this idea was at first wrapped in shiny paper and pretty bows, presented as a gift to the common man. The sweatshops of the early- to mid-1800s proved otherwise to the average laborer. However, a renewed enthusiasm would surface every now and then. MacDonald (2003) remarks that in 1888 Edward

Bellamy wrote of a twenty-first century utopia achieved, in part, by production and consumption in a world where competitive-capitalism is replaced by an industrial army and where every citizen receives the same wage. But for adults over 45, the world is one of total leisure and consumption of the good things they helped to create. This utopia was the imagined destination for an American culture that was in the midst of a social and economic metamorphosis. Lears (1983) recounts this transformation:

Around the turn of the century a fundamental cultural transformation occurred within the educated strata of Western capitalist nations. In the United States as elsewhere, the bourgeois ethos had enjoined perpetual work, compulsive saving, civic responsibility, and a rigid morality of self-denial. By the early twentieth century that outlook had begun to give way to a new set of values sanctioning periodic leisure, compulsive spending, apolitical passivity, and an apparently permissive (but subtly coercive) morality of individual fulfillment. The older culture was suited to a production-oriented society of small entrepreneurs; the newer culture epitomized a consumption-oriented society dominated by bureaucratic corporations.

p. 3

To be sure there were critics who decried this change, and the era of the Robber Barons and finally the Great Depression would throw a decidedly wet blanket on this version of American Dream with its notion of universal leisure and consumption. But when America joined World War II it fostered both an immediately renewed patriotism and later a brighter economic outlook (Applebaum, 1998). The 1950s and 1960s saw unprecedented growth in the middle class, the great compression, and important strides in American's overall well-being. But against this fortunate tide, the era between 1970 and the early years of the twenty-first century seemed to make unfortunate progress in terms of economic prosperity for the middle class and the poor while consumerism continued unrestrained. To explain this puzzle Fox and Lears (1983) contend that by mid-twentieth century the visionary utopians such as Bellamy were beginning to be replaced by defend-

ers of the status quo. They note that by 1959 Richard Nixon was debating the American way of life with Nikita Krushchev, bragging about the 31 million homes, 50 million television sets, 56 million cars, and 143 million radio sets that American families owned – presumably many more than were owned by Russian families. Fox and Lears argue that by mid-twentieth century consumption had become a way of seeing the world, a cultural ideal.

But, as mentioned previously, it did not arrive fully formed. Early in the century the seeds of consumerism were already growing and bearing fruit. Fox and Lears note that by the 1920's people were buying a vast array of products on credit and that a 1944 Hoover Vacuum ad followed Roosevelt's Four Freedoms; freedom from want, fear, religion, and speech, with their version of a fifth freedom, freedom of choice. This espoused freedom of choice was merely a thin veneer covering the real message, the freedom necessary to consume. Fox and Lears contend that preserving democracy, and capitalism by association, meant more than abolishing poverty or destroying fascism. It also meant the preservation, growth, and protection of the consumer marketplace.

In the early twenty-first century it would appear that Americans continue to honor this notion by consuming with an ever increasing impetus. But America is also extending its culture of consumerism to other countries at a rate that, while some say the momentum has been building up for at least 100 years (de Grazia, 2005), many still consider alarming (Assadourian et al., 2004; Assadourian et al., 2006; Cooper, 2000; de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2002; de Souza, 1999; Hopfl, 2004; Lasn, 2000; Moaveni, 2003; J. A. Roberts & Sepulveda, 1999; Rosenblatt, 1999).

Barber (1996) points out:

There is no activity more intrinsically globalizing than trade, no ideology less interested in nations than capitalism, no challenge to frontiers more audacious than the market. By many measures, corporations are today more central players in global affairs than nations. We call them multinational but they are more accurately understood as transnational or postnational or even antinational. For they abjure the very idea of nations or any other parochialism that limits them in time or space. Their customers are not citizens of a particular nation or members of a parochial clan: they belong to the universal tribe of consumers defined by needs and wants that are ubiquitous, if not by nature then by the cunning of advertising. A consumer is a consumer is a consumer.

p. 23

It is arguable that the rapid growth of multinational and transnational organizations has consigned to the dustbin any hope that the benefits of early-to-mid-twentieth-century advances in American production and gain sharing would continue into the future. But the predicted consumer culture is a fait accompli. In the milieu of social criticism the contemporary metaphors of America's rapacious over-consumption abound; some in the most prosaic and familiar places. Just west of the University of Colorado on The Hill, a shopping and eating haunt for students and faculty, is a burger and beer joint called The Sink. The Sink has been a student hangout for decades (Robert Redford was a bus boy there) and the inside is filled with hand-painted murals depicting social, political, and ecological commentary. One prominent mural on the east wall continues to elicit animated discussion by the patrons. It portrays the icons of egregious consumption, the trophy house, the trophy spouse, the trophy car, boat, plane, (and other products and by-products of industrial wealth) traveling with their respective owners down a long conveyor belt. At the end of the belt is a huge, hog-like contraption consuming everything that has the misfortune of falling into its gaping maw. The consumers traveling the con-



veyor belt seem quite satisfied with themselves until, of course, they plunge into the machine along with all of their possessions.

Why in the midst of affluent Boulder has this mural had such endurance and how is it that American life is so narcissistically and destructively portrayed?

Greider (1998) suggests:

Imagine a wondrous new machine, strong and supple, a machine that reaps as it destroys. It is huge and mobile, something like the machines of modern agriculture but vastly more complicated and powerful. Think of this awesome machine running over open terrain and ignoring familiar boundaries. It plows across fields and fencerows with a fierce momentum that is exhilarating to behold and also frightening. As it goes, the machine throws off furrows of wreckage.

Now imagine that there are skillful hands on board, but no one is at the wheel. In fact, this machine has no wheel nor any internal governor to control the speed and direction. It is sustained by its own forward motion, guided mainly by its own appetites. And it is accelerating.

The machine is... modern capitalism driven by the imperatives of global industrial revolution.

p. 11

Even though the reminders of a consumer culture gone badly appear with increasing frequency, they also appear to do little to staunch the red ink of a hemorrhaging consumer checkbook (Fowles, 1977; Galbraith, 1998; R. Williams, 1985). Many claim that this is partially due to an historical American work ethic.

Throughout much of America's history the willingness of its people to work overly hard and overly long was motivated by a work ethic that was infused into their daily lives. Bauman (1998) observes that the American work ethic was historically characterized by one commandment linked to two outspoken premises and two tacit assumptions. The first outspoken premise was that one had to do something seen as valuable to others in order to get what one needed. The second premise was that it is wrong to be content with what one already had. Concurrently the first tacit assumption was that

work is normal and leisure is abnormal. The second tacit assumption was that labor only has merit if it is valued by others. The commandment then followed, stating that one should go on working even if one does not see the benefit. In other words, work is good, and leisure is evil.

Bauman argues:

Since it erupted into the European consciousness in the early stages of industrialization, and in its many avatars throughout the twisted itinerary of modernity and “modernization,” the work ethic served politicians, philosophers and preachers alike as a clarion call to, or an excuse for, attempts to uproot, by hook or by crook, the popular habit which they saw as the prime obstacle to the new brave world they intended to build: the allegedly widespread inclination to avoid, of one could the ostensible blessings of factory employment, and to resist docile submission to the rhythm of life set by the foreman, the clock and the machine.

The morbid and dangerous habit that the work ethic was meant to fight, destroy and eradicate at the time it entered the public debate, was rooted in the traditional human inclination to consider one’s own needs as given and to desire no more than to satisfy them. Once their habitual needs had been met, the “traditionalist” workers saw no rhyme nor reason to go on working, or for that matter to earn more money; what for, after all? There were so many other interesting and decent things to do, things one could not buy but could well overlook, neglect or lose if one was running after money from dawn to dusk. The threshold of decent life was set low, was fixed and forbidden to cross, and there was no urge to climb higher once that threshold was reached. This is, at any rate, how the entrepreneurs of the time, and the economists who zealously made sense of their troubles, as well as the moral preachers eager to improve things, painted the picture....

As it happened, the true course of events was exactly the opposite to what the early entrepreneurs implied in their complaints against shiftless and laggard factory hands, and what the economists and sociologists took later for the tested truth of history. It was in fact the advent of the factory system that spelled the collapse of the love affair between the craftsman and his work which the “work ethic” postulated....

The new factory system needed part-humans: soulless little wheels in a complex mechanism. The battle was waged against the other, now useless, “human parts” – human interests and ambitions irrelevant for productive effort and needlessly interfering with the parts deployed in production. The work ethic was, basically, about the surrender of freedom....

If implemented, the work ethic would have also separated productive effort from human needs; for the first time in history, it would have given priority to “what can be done” over the “what needs to be done.” It would render the satisfaction of human needs irrelevant to the logic, and most importantly to the limits, of productive effort; it would make possible the modern paradox of “growth for the growth sake.”

pp. 5 - 8

But this work ethic could only continue if the products of work were consumed as quickly as they were made. Because of this, a consumption ethic evolved and became just as dictated and part of the fabric of American life as the ethic of overwork. The unique patterns of this consumption ethic within capitalist economies began in the United States and Europe in the late 1800’s but became the hallmark of the American way of life throughout the twentieth century (Bocock, 1997; L. Cohen, 2003; Cross, 2000; Dauntton & Hilton, 2001; Glickman, 1999; Leach, 1994; Matt, 2003; Riesman, Glazer, & Denney, 2001; Stearns, 2003; Strasser, McGovern, & Judt, 1998). From a culture that measured people by their accomplishments America became a place where people were judged by their possessions (Fox & Lears, 1983).

This transition was not without its critics (Butsch, 2001). But with the emergence of the citizen consumer into modern culture consumption lost its character as merely a way to meet people’s basic needs and eventually became an accepted vehicle for satisfying a perpetually expanding list of externally generated desires – fulfilling an ongoing quest for novelty, status, and identity, among other things (L. Cohen, 2003; Glickman, 1999; Landau, 2004). Due to the nature of America’s consumer culture many of today’s citizens have fallen into a pattern of over-consumption in an effort to make themselves happy, often buying things they don’t need (Danziger, 2004), and sometimes, ironically, buying things they don’t even want (J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999).

Because of the ubiquity of this kind of consumer behavior (Arthur, 1994; Beatty, Kahle, Utsey, & Keown, 1993; Bloch, Ridgway, & Nelson, 1991; W. S. DeSarbo & E. A. Edwards, 1996; M. B. Holbrook, 1987, 1995; Nataraajan & Goff, 1992; T. C. O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; M. Richins & Dawson, 1992; J. Sherry, 1983; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Westbrook & Black, 1985), people who often bought too much, or became obsessed with buying, garnered catchy handles such as shopaholics (Damon, 1988) or spendaholics (Fierman, 1995). There are those who debate the exact meanings and differences among these colloquialisms and their comorbidity with other pathologies (Benson, 2000; Black, 2000; Campbell, 2000; Dittmar, 2000; Faber, 2000; Faber, Christenson, de Zwaan, & Mitchell, 1995; Goldsmith & McElroy, 2000; M. Holbrook, 1986; M. B. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982a; "Just ask us," 2001; Nataraajan & Goff, 1992; James A. Roberts & Tanner, 2000), but originally the pathological impulse to buy was simply defined, in professional circles, as oniomania (Bleuler, 1924; Kraepelin, 1915). Edwards (1992) offers an easy characterization of present-day compulsive buying:

[It is] a chronic, abnormal form of shopping and spending characterized, in the extreme, by an overpowering, uncontrollable, and repetitive urge to buy, with disregard for the consequences.

p. 54

In the mainstream culture this syndrome, by any name, was typically attributed to women and generally not taken very seriously. For much of the 20th century the orthodox view was that women were slaves to consumerism while men were more rational shoppers (Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stavropoulos, & Kirby, 2003; Jervis, 1998; McRobbie, 1998). There are plenty of contemporary writers who even poke fun at, while giving sanction to, the foibles of the female shopaholic through books (Guisewite, 1996; Jackson, Laudat, Stanhope, & Esdaile, 2003; Kinsella, 2001, 2002; Leggatt, 2001), diaries created specifi-

cally for shopaholics (MissAdventures: Diary of a shopaholic, 2006), and daily shopaholic calendars (Stickles, 2006). If one is a female celebrity, the shopaholic lifestyle may even be de rigueur (Schneider et al., 1999).

However, some see compulsive buying from a darker perspective and write about their descent into and recovery from shopaholism (Bosnak, 2003; Collins, 2006). Others, including many in the helping professions, consider compulsive buying and the debt that often results to be a serious albeit treatable form of addiction; one that is not especially limited to women (Benson, 2000; Boundy, 2000; "The call of the mall," 1995; Catalano & Sonenberg, 1993; A currency of hope, 1999; Damon, 1988, 1990; Day, 1997; Elliot, 1994; Glatt & Cook, 1987; Grant & Kim, 2003; Hrischman, 1992; Kasser, 2002; Lejoyeux & Ades, 1996; Mellan, 1997; O'Connor, 2005; Pirisi, 1995). While others now agree that modern servitude to consumption has extended to all genders, races, and ages in the United States (Corrigan, 1997; de Graaf et al., 2002; Easterbrook, 2003; Farrell, 1998; Galbraith, 1998; LaChance, 2006; McGovern, 1999; Ritzer, 2006; Rosenblatt, 1999; J. Schor, et.al., 2000).

This is not to say that all of the academic and professional literature considers buying and consuming to be harmful. If one has far too little, then the ability to buy and consume can arguably improve one's happiness (Kasser, 2002). But for most there is a threshold beyond which consumption does not buy happiness (Easterbrook, 2003; Schwartz, 2004). Myers and Diener (1996) suggest a correlation with income:

People have not become happier over time as their cultures have become more affluent. Even though Americans earn twice as much in today's dollars as they did in 1957, the proportion of those telling surveyors from the National Opinion Research Center that they are "very happy" has declined from 35 to 29 percent. Even very rich people – those surveyed among *Forbes* magazine's 100 wealthiest Americans – are only slightly happier than the average American. Those whose

income has increased over a 10-year period are not happier than those whose income is stagnant. Indeed, in most nations the correlation between income and happiness is negligible – only in the poorest countries, such as Bangladesh and India, is income a good measure of emotional well-being. Are people in rich countries happier, by and large, than people in not so rich countries? It appears in general they are, but the margin may be slim.... Furthermore... it is impossible to tell whether the happiness of people in wealthier nations is based on money or is a by-product of other felicities.

pp. 54, 55

And in most cases the happiness that is achieved by over-shopping slowly becomes a way of avoiding pain rather than seeking pleasure (Futrelle, 2006). This switch from pleasure seeking to pain avoidance is a characteristic of addiction and can, paradoxically, often lead to more pain (de Graaf et al., 2002; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999) and even a decline in general social welfare (Goff & Fleisher III, 1999). Therefore, over-consumption can lead to unhappiness just as effectively as overwork. The irony is that a great many people appear to overwork primarily in order to over-consume (de Graaf, 2003; de Graaf et al., 2002; R. H. Frank, 1999; Robinson, 2006; J. B. Schor, 1993, 1999). But if both can lead to unhappiness, why do it?

There are two important reasons. First, some believe that over-consumption has had its rewards, noting that people in America have generally improved their lot, according to accepted standards, since the early 20th century (D'Souza, 2000; Edmunds, 2003; Fogel, 2000; Goff & Fleisher III, 1999) even though other aspects of people's quality of life may have slipped (Fogel, 2000; D. G. Myers, 2000). Lebergott (1996) observes that most Americans have now spent their way to happiness and that the consumption of earlier times that was reserved only for the rich has now been made available to all but the very poor.

In agreement Marber (2003) opines:

Measured by virtually any yardstick, you are – whether or not you know it – wealthy.

This is particularly true for any college-educated American. Yes, we Americans must work, but not as our grandparents or great-grandparents did to eke out survival minimums of food, clothing and shelter. We still work to eat, but today, it's for food we desire, not the minimum calories needed to survive. Our choices are vast, from fresh organic vegetables and exotic fruits from around the world to prepared microwavable meals. We also work to eat out, whether it's at a diner, an Outback Steakhouse, or a trendy Zagat-rated restaurant. Americans now spend almost as much money dining out as we spend eating at home.

We still work for clothes, but not simply to cover our naked bodies. We want to wear the right clothes, whether they're from Old Navy, Eddie Bauer, the J. Crew catalog, or a chic boutique. We don't buy basic shoes; we buy Nike Air Jordans, Timberland boots, or Gucci loafers. We want new, stylish wardrobes every year, and most of us discard clothes well before they're worn out.

We still work for shelter, but more for nesting in houses or apartments that we own, or will own when our mortgages are paid. We work to live in taller high-rises with views, prettier suburbs with better schools, or luxury condominiums with health clubs. We work to live in gated communities, to have vacation homes and time-shares, to renovate or add on, to decorate and redecorate from IKEA, Pottery Barn, Crate & Barrel, or Horchow.

Perhaps most importantly, we work to entertain ourselves when we're not working. We work to buy Sony's largest and flattest television, theatre tickets, the best sports or movie packages on satellite TV, Dell's newest Pentium computer, Madonna's latest compact disc (CD) or download, and Barbie dolls, BMX bikes, and X-Boxes for our kids. We work to relax and read *Forbes* or *Entertainment Weekly* and watch rented videos from Blockbuster. We work to sun at the beach, fish at the lake, gamble in Las Vegas, fly to Hawaii or Disney World, take a cruise, or maybe sightsee in Europe. Many work not to own just any car, but to buy a second or even third car, or to upgrade to the latest Lexus or Jeep.

These trends underpin my definition of wealth in the new millennium: freedom. Freedom from hunger, from disease, from short lives, from illiteracy, from debilitating physical labor, from poor housing, from shabby clothing, and not unimportantly, from boredom.

p. 2

Twitchell (1999) asserts that America's shopping spree is emblematic of the consumerism that had become the driving force behind the nation's culture. He argues that people in the United States are not victims of a materialistic culture, but rather the willing

benefactors. In his opinion the Industrial Revolution was the consequence of people's love of things rather than the cause. He notes that producers may conspire to sell to the public but the public is always more than happy to comply.

Twitchell explains the advent of modern materialism by noting that in a modern, urban, and secular society religion is likely to be replaced by a worship of consumption; the liturgy is replaced by advertising; salvation is achieved through acquisition.

Holbrook (1993) agrees with this enchanted nature of modern materialism, as does Marx, who observes:

A commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it satisfies human needs, or that it first takes on these properties as the product of human labor. It is absolutely clear that, by his activity, man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will.

(2000, p. 331)

Fogel (2000) argues against the substitution of materialism for spirituality by noting that Americans are simultaneously attached to both and that the battle between morals and materialism has been a recurring and culture shaping pattern in American history. For example, the modern struggle between morality and materialism can produce a condition among the newly rich called sudden wealth syndrome (Blech, 2003; D'Souza, 2000; Newman & Grauerholz, 2002; Pearsall, 2002; Price, 2000; Martin E. P. Seligman, Linley, & Joseph, 2004). This syndrome affects both the individual and their families, and is characterized by excessive guilt, confusion over one's identity, and fear that one's



newly achieved wealth will cause one's children to grow up without the appropriate values. Fogel asserts that whenever abundance is manifest it breeds anxiety because it produces more freedom, but warns that freedom can lead to self-indulgence and self-destruction. Fogel laments that in America's materialistic culture the have's possess the resources to pursue their spiritual purpose while the have-not's do not. But this inequality fails to mitigate people's attachment to both.

The second reason that people overconsume even though it makes them unhappy consumption may be seen as a benefit because of its ability to help people define their personal image and identity (R. Belk, 2000; R. W. Belk & Pollay, 1985; Campbell, 2000; G. Comstock, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 2000; S. Ewen, 1988; S. Ewen & Ewen, 1992; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Lunt & Livingstone, 1992; Matt, 2003; Murphy, 2000; Pooler, 2003; M. L. Richins, 1991; Stone, 1954; Tian & McKenzie, 2001; J. B. Twitchell, 1999; Wolkomir & Wolkomir, 2000), although the plethora of choices may sometimes make finding one's identity more confusing (Gergen, 2000). In some cases, people will even lie about their possessions in order to bolster a certain self-image (Sengupta, Dahl, & Gorn, 2002). And this defining quality of consumption and possession is no new phenomenon. By the end of the 19th century William James (1890) observed that:

A man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands, and yacht and bank-account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down, – not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all.

pp. 291, 292

In support of this idea Veblen (1899) coined the term conspicuous consumption to illustrate the behavior of those who visibly spend large amounts of money in order to establish or maintain their social standing. If the assertion that possessions and consumption maintains one's self-concept and status is indeed the case, it could be argued that in post-modern times over-consumption might even more powerfully define the individual.

Echoing Veblen, Berger (2000) notes:

Consumer cultures [today], as I understand them, are those in which there has been a great expansion (some might say a veritable explosion) of commodity production, leading to societies full of consumer goods and services and places where these consumer goods and services can be purchased. In consumer cultures, the "game" people play is "get as much as you can." Success is defined as being the person "who has the most toys." This leads to a lust for consuming products – and conspicuously displaying them – as a means of demonstrating that one is a success and, ultimately, that one is worthy. And the very act of consumption has now also become aestheticized and sexualized and is itself the source of a great deal of pleasure.

p. 23

Twitchell (2002) also comments:

If you want to understand material culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century, you must understand the overwhelming importance of unnecessary material. If you are looking for the one unambiguous result of modern capitalism, of the industrial revolution, and of marketing, here it is. In the way we live now, you are not what you make. You are what you consume. And outside of that which is found in a few aisles in the grocery and hardware stores, most of what you consume is *totally* unnecessary...

p. 1

As part of the progression of consumerism in America's history Matt (2003) observes that early in the twentieth century people were caught up in trying to keep up with the Joneses. Twitchell (1999) extends this idea by noting that late in the twentieth century people wanted to surpass their neighbors, rather than merely keeping up with them. Finally Schor (2000; 1999) asserts that in the beginning of the new millennium many

Americans want to keep up with people they don't even know. Schor coined the term competitive consumption to illustrate this pattern of spending in the United States which is driven by the consumer's need to match the norms of a reference group that is typically beyond his or her income range. She agrees with Matt and Twitchell that historically one's reference group was composed of those living within one's own neighborhood and was relatively homogeneous. However, she argues that now the current pattern of consumption generally emulates the top of the income pyramid regardless of the consumer's personal income or level of debt.

According to Schor the status spending of the 1980's and 1990's resulted in a growing aspirational gap that fueled frustration among those whose incomes could not keep up with the new reference group to which they aspired, the richest 20 percent of Americans. She states that this aspirational gap has begun to jeopardize America's quality of life and has been especially problematic for lower-income households, making them easy marks for credit card companies and predatory lending. As a result of this gap, and the frustration it seems to engender, credit card debt has skyrocketed and savings have precipitously fallen. This behavior has persisted even though, at least since the 1970's, income distribution has shifted even more decisively to the top 20 percent of the population, who now control well over 80 percent of the wealth.

Other concerns regarding this aspirational gap include a related decline in more fundamental and worthwhile values, and the creation of a dumbed-down consumer culture that yields precious few human satisfactions. Ironically, many of the lifestyles seen on television programs that seem to have great influence on people's beliefs about consumption are both untrue and unachievable, at least in the ways that they are depicted.

Coffee house workers living in New York City, radio talk show personalities living in Seattle, or cops living in Los Angeles in reality can hardly afford to live in luxurious apartments, drive expensive cars, wear the newest fashions, or frequent the best restaurants. Yet, that is how they are depicted (J. B. Schor, 1999).

What is driving this phenomenon? While the topic of why Americans work and spend as they do will be covered in much greater detail in the chapters on false-social-norms marketing, it is important to note here that many people are persuaded to seek the lifestyle of the rich and famous (or semi-rich and semi-famous), through the influence of television, their children, and their coworkers (de Graaf et al., 2002; Harmon, 2001; Murphy, 2000; Thomas C. O'Guinn, 1997; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999, 2004; J. B. Schor & Holt, 2000; M. J. Sirgy, et.al, 1998). This is often a result of the increased amount of time spent with coworkers at work, the increased amount of time spent trying to placate the demands of children to assuage the guilt of not spending as much time with them as one should, usually because of work, the decreased time spent with people in one's neighborhood, often because of work, and the diced-up and paltry leisure time left over from work generally spent developing an addiction to television (Kubey & Csikszentmihaly, 2002), which has become both a ubiquitous and powerful influence on buying behavior.

This feed-forward cycle of overworking to overspend which forces one to again overwork is often seen as the cause of social harm as well as detriment to the individual (Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Kanner, 2003; Robinson, 2006; Schwartz, 2001, 2004). Shor (2000; 1993; J. B. Schor & Holt, 2000) argues that that the recent intensification of competitive spending has eroded tax payments and support for public goods such as

education, public safety, and social services, which then creates even more demand for private spending. (As a case in point, a recent mailer I received proclaims that buying an expensive Land Rover SUV is as patriotic as the Boston Tea Party because it provides its owner with a far greater tax break than merely buying a luxury car; due to the fact that it is considered a farm vehicle by the government and is granted accelerated tax depreciation.)

Danziger (2004) criticizes Shor's argument noting that, in the aftermath of 9/11, Shor's point is un-American and that America's economic viability and way of life depend on continued and sustained consumption (also see Moran & McCully, 2001). And after 9/11 Americans did certainly continue to buy (Chura, Cardona, Cuneo, & Halliday, 2002), and the economy of the United States continues, apparently, to be supported by the consumption habit of its citizens.

It also seems clear that American business benefits from over-consumption, at least monetarily. Impulsive buying alone accounts for more than \$4 billion in annual sales (Kacen & Lee, 2002). But Frank (1999) maintains that America's wealth and possessions have simply failed to provide the happiness anticipated by the consumer. He argues that although the buying habits of the superrich account for only a small fraction of spending in America, overspending has become a virus affecting all Americans. He maintains that changes in the economic culture have affected everyone no matter where they are on the income scale:

No matter how little you feel you are influenced by what others do, you cannot have escaped the effects of recent changes in the spending environment. Among other things, they affect the kinds of gifts you must give at weddings and birthdays, and the amounts you must spend for anniversary dinners; the price you must pay for a house in a neighborhood with a good school; the size your vehicle must be if you want your family to be relatively safe from injury; the kinds of sneakers

your children will demand; the universities they'll need to attend if you want them to face good prospects after graduation; the kinds of wine you'll want to serve to mark special occasions; and the kind of suit you'll choose to wear to a job interview.

(R. H. Frank, 1999, p. 4)

The former Chairman of the Federal Reserve agrees:

It's not that humans have become any more greedy than in generations past. It is that the avenues to express greed [have] grown so enormously.

Alan Greenspan ("Up front," 2002, p. 12)

Media reports of excessive spending certainly support Frank's and Greenspan's view. A short selection follows:

- Some people are now vacationing in accommodations as sumptuous as a luxury hotel, but the hotel is on wheels. 45 foot recreational vehicles (RV) with queen size beds, marble steps, 48 inch plasma TVs, 11.5 feet wide expanded living areas, five closets, leather upholstery, full-size refrigerators and cooking areas (and probably a hot tub), with stylish trailers that pull cars and motorcycles behind the vehicle, are representative of a new craze to make what used to be a blue collar staple an emblem of the nouveau riche. It is not unusual for these folks to pay millions for these vehicles, which doesn't include the hundreds of thousands of dollars they will likely pay for an upscale lot so that they can park their RV in a fancy gated resort complete with spas, tennis courts, and pools (Peterson, 2005).
- Stationary housing has been affected similarly. Many Americans now want their homes to be as big and nice as they can possibly afford. Although still not representative of the majority, eight to ten thousand square foot homes have at least become common in most cities and suburbs. The farther from the city, expanding to exurbia, the bigger the houses seem to get. Many Americans have become

house-hunting, house-modeling, house-rich and house-proud, often defining themselves through and by their homes. Home ownership is breaking record highs even with the downturn in real estate prices. The decrease in home value has contributed to an increase in home remodeling but the biggest incentive was the tragedy of 9/11. Since that time a home has become the place to cocoon and people want that cocoon to be both comforting and filled with amenities. Features such as media rooms and offices can now be found in mid-range homes that are also designed to be feng shui friendly. Paradoxically volume has replaced coziness, but the move towards large informal interior space compensates by making the kitchen central to the floor plan. People want to eat, live, and play in the same space. However, walled-off luxury master bedrooms with private baths, sitting and exercise areas, fireplaces, and lots of walk-in closet space are now the rage. If possible, the family McMansion should be built to the lot line and crammed with gyms, media rooms, home offices, music areas, patios with wood burning fireplaces and huge grills, four-car designer garages complete with refrigerators and crammed with classy cars and \$17,000.00 riding lawnmowers, game rooms, kitchens appointed with commercial appliances and fireplaces, wine cellars, near-wall size TVs, security systems, hot-tub theaters, ubiquitous computing, intelligent environmental control, massive decks, pools with infinity edges, luxury baths with steam showers and closeted computerized toilets, and water features with fiber optics all within a gated community that keeps out the undesirables. Among other reasons for this splurge; Americans are so deprived of leisure time they are trying to make up for it in the design of their homes (Blakely & Snyder, 1997;

Caplan, 2004; Carr, 2006; Dawson & Palmeri, 2003; Fonda, 2004; Hoffman, 2006; Koss-Feder, 2005; Saporito, 2002).

- Home remodeling has become a \$290 billion industry. Bathroom remodeling alone accounts for an average of \$2,520.00 per job, but many cost well over \$30,000.00. Bathrooms have become the new trophy room and are now designed to reflect the owner's taste. People often wish to emulate the design and styles they encounter in upscale hotels and resorts with chromotherapy tubs, fireplaces, and mirrors with LCD televisions inside (MacMillan, 2006b).
- Because people within a family now have very different schedules, diets, and lifestyles the large living areas in newer homes are being designed to have window seats, alcoves, and personal nooks which allow people to be near the others but still alone, paradoxically attempting an atmosphere of cohesion that also accommodates personal needs (Hine, 2002).
- Those who have outgrown their home, want to get away without getting away, or just want an extra showplace by the pool are erecting garden buildings, or luxury sheds as they might appear. Starting at around \$13,000.00 these outside getaways run about 10 ft. by 15 ft. and can be furnished with carpeting, a shingled roof, paneling, Internet access, air conditioning and heating, elegant windows, and special lighting (Armstrong, 2006). And if this doesn't float the ego's boat one can buy a designer tree house for a paltry \$7,000.00 up to around \$1,000,000,000.00 (MacMillan, 2006a).
- Time magazine's special 2006 summer supplement addition asks the question on its cover, "Green living: Is sustainability the new luxury?" Sporting Cartier and



Victor & Rolf fragrances, tree house villas in Australia's Daintree rainforest, groceries from tony Whole Foods, grass-like flower vases for only \$98.00, architect Frank Gehry's first-ever jewelry collection, Breitling and Patek Philippe watches, silverware with botanical shapes, A-list eyewear, Sub-Zero refrigerators, Dyson vacuum cleaners, and multi-million dollar homes that are designed to be "environmentally sensitive" for people who want more than a tract house with a few solar panels slapped on, furniture made from recycled materials selling for only a few thousand dollars each, this supplement has everything one would need for an elegant venture into the realms of environmental stewardship and a downshifted lifestyle.

- Handcrafted vodkas and whiskies (Khermouch, 2002, 2004), designer salt (Smillie, 2002), individualized wines (<http://www.personalwine.com/>), boutique beef (Levine, 2004), and other personalized, upmarket, and customized food items such as olive oil, ice cream, and coffee are becoming de rigueur in the affluent kitchen.
- An ad for Toyota's Avalon, seen in the November 11, 2002 edition of Forbes on page 135, shows the sedan being washed with expensive bottled water. The ad asks, "With a car this luxurious, only one question remains – sparkling or still?" On the first page of Money in the March, 2002 issue one is told that buying a new 3.5-liter Nissan Altima may promote feelings of superiority and provides the cure for the common car.

- Inside of the October 28<sup>th</sup> issue of Forbes a special advertising section takes up 40 pages alerting men to the death of business casual wear and promoting the new norm of business formal (and very business expensive) wear.
- In Manhattan \$430.00 per square foot is being paid for air rights above a church so that apartment dwellers can forever have their view. The total cost approximates \$30 million ("Numbers," 2005).
- Busy households, or simply those who can afford it, are paying personal chefs to cook for them. The average wage for these chefs on the hoof is \$200.00 per day (Cole, 2002).
- Due to the profligate culture, wealth advisers are being hired to help rich parents prevent their children from squandering money after the parents' death (Kadlec, 2002), and to set up trust funds, at an average of \$25,000.00, for the family pets (Hempel, 2004).
- A twenty-something shopaholic woman in Brooklyn has set up a website called Save Karyn where people can donate money to get her out of debt. After racking up a \$20,000.00 credit card debt through buying lattes, shoes, CDs, and purses she states that she is now reformed, but argues that her spending did help to shore up the economy (Timmons, 2002).
- Two writers observe that many publications have diagnosed a growing socioeconomic problem: the desperate plight of the merely rich, that is, those who are now forced to keep up with the super-rich. In a parody of depression-era icons they poke fun at a group of "senior vice president humiliated by the fact that they have to fly commercial," a "family of six forced to live in a home with neither an in-

door driving range nor a dedicated yoga room,” an “investment banker upset to realize that last year not only did he make less than a former colleague who now runs a hedge fund but he also made less than a journeyman outfielder who now plays for the New York Mets,” and finally a “woman disturbed at being the only mother at the Greenwich Country Day School who’s still driving a 2006 Cadillac Escalade when everyone else is driving 2007 Porsche Cayennes” (Handy & Sweeny, 2006, p. 130).

- The average cost of a wedding in America is now \$30,000.00 and those with greater affluence often spend six figures or more. The average young coffee drinker spends \$750.00 a year for premium take-out coffee. The average priced new car now sells for nearly \$30,000.00, not including the \$3,000.00 option package for a global positioning system. Cigarettes in New York now cost \$7.00 per pack and people in America spent \$88 billion for tobacco products in 2005. Americans spent \$450 billion in the same year for Christmas gifts (Pummer, 2006).
- For those who ascribe to the notion that the pen is flashier than the sword Parker is producing a Limited Edition Parker Snake Pen based on the original introduced in 1906, retailing at a mere \$12,000.00 with gold and silver appointments and emerald eyes for the snakes. And if one wishes to only emulate the wealthy one can buy replicas of furniture owned by the rich and famous for a paltry sum of tens of thousands of dollars apiece ("Money to burn... or how to spend your money when you have too much," 1997).

- In order to avoid physical wear and tear and to better accommodate their calendars many celebrities and other women of means are scheduling C-sections, up 150 percent since 1975, at their own convenience and regardless of expense or medical need. Tabloids are calling these women too posh to push (Song, 2004).

- BusinessWeek touts:

Work hard, play, hard, stay fit. That's a mantra for today's executives. Whether it's driving a Porsche 996 GT3, fishing at the Drynahan Lodge in northern Scotland, or eating a great rib eye at Mahogany Prime Steak House in Omaha, a rich, balanced life is a life worth having. But it is one that is increasingly difficult to attain. Rarely have executives faced so many uncertainties in their professional and personal lives. Stress is ubiquitous and often overwhelming. It can threaten performance and undermine health. *BusinessWeek's* new Executive Life issue is a guide to restoring some fun and balance to an exec's harried reality. You'll find tips on hiring a trainer to get the body fine-tuned and doing meditation to clear the mind. There are out-of-the-way places to visit, including the very private Fisherman Island, off the coast of Maine, and faraway places to stay, such as the private villas and palaces of Morocco, with their own cooks and housekeepers. For execs looking to upgrade their own spaces, *BusinessWeek* offers advice on building a home theater, putting together a private gym, and even remodeling the entire manse. The dog days of summer are upon us, but there's still plenty of time to have fun.

("The personal side of success," 2004, p. 71)

- Cox (2006) notes that in the future everyone will be famous for \$15,000.00, rather than for 15 minutes, as fame is being commoditized by an industry devoted to celebrity culture. But this is the low-end figure. Coming of age rituals now cost upwards of \$200,000.00 for sweet-sixteen parties designed to make teenage girls feel like their favorite pop star. The birthday girl makes her entrance in a helicopter where an entire mall has been rented for a faux fashion show with hired dancers and guests arriving in stretch Hummers. This fete is followed by dancing to a pricey name-band and pricey gifts for the pricey guests. The old celebration

of sheet cake, friends, games and candles has now been replaced by a “My Super Sweet 16” party, for those who can afford it.

- The simple life is also being commoditized and introduced as a luxury only money can buy. A recent ad for the Lincoln LS reads, “An afternoon sail. A dinner part at sunset. Digging for the first course. Define luxury for yourself. Luxury is more than a hood ornament. It’s a feeling you get when you’re living by your own rules. It’s knowing that sometimes the best thing about a 3.9 litre 32-valve V8 is that it get you to a place where you can slow down faster,” (“Lincoln American Luxury,” 2001, p. 11).

Not only have simple things such as salt and a sunset become a sign of one’s personality and stature, but many of the things that people used to do for themselves have been commoditized. Car washing and detailing, personal shopping, baby sitting, grocery buying and delivery, cooking, house cleaning, transporting children to various events, accounting, gardening, laundering and dry cleaning, to name just a few, have been outsourced by those who can afford to do so (J. B. Schor & Holt, 2000). In fact, some researchers say that everything, including relationships, life experiences, one’s sexuality and reproductive capability, genes, and even one’s rebellious rejection of the prevailing culture has become a commodity that can be either traded or upgraded (D. Bell, 1976; Butsch, 2001; Danziger, 2005; T. Frank, 1998; Gladwell, 2000; Heath & Potter, 2004; Hooks, 2000; Lasalle & Britton, 2003; Rifkin, 2001; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003).

Ewen (2000) observes that much of this commodification, even that of dissent, resides in the nebulous but ubiquitous notion of style:

Style speaks for the rise of a democratic society, in which who one wishes to become is often seen as more consequential than who one is. On the other hand,

style speaks for a society in which coherent meaning has fled to the hills, and in which drift has provided a context of continual discontent.... Style, today, is inextricably woven into the fabric of social, political, and economic life. It is the product of a vast and seamless network of industries. The production of sumptuous images, for the very few, was once limited to the sacred workshops of the medieval monasteries; now, the production and marketing of style is global, touching the lives and imaginations of nearly everyone. Design, or one sort or another, is affixed to almost every conceivable commodity, and style is now “laddled out” from what the art critic Herbert Read once disparagingly termed a continuous and “glorified soup kitchen.”

p. 54

Frank argues that the stylized and upscale motion of the American lifestyle could be viewed as merely a symptom of greater productivity and prosperity. But he also sees the darker aspect of people’s spending patterns. While those on the top of the income ladder are doing breathtakingly well, those on the middle have made no progress and those on the low end are now even further down. The static or declining income for most Americans is reflected in little to no savings, rising debt, and an all-time high in bankruptcies. Taken together these symptoms not only have immediate effects but also slow the growth of the economy and place people’s retirement at risk. Because the sale of luxury goods is growing four times faster than overall spending, rich and poor alike are taking shorter vacations and putting in more time at work. They are also taking less time for sleep, leisure, travel, exercise, and relationships – all of the things that heal and repair the soul. He adds that egocentric over-consumption, or autistic consumption in the current lexicon, has also caused public works, roads, and utilities to fall into disrepair while poverty, drug abuse, and related crime are on the rise.

Frank laments the apparent reality that broad increases in people’s stock of material goods do little or nothing to improve their well-being beyond a very basic level. Faster cars and bigger houses don’t seem to make people happier in the long run, for example. Fortunately, he also notes that spending more to improve traffic congestion, to

have cleaner air and water, to have safer cities, or to enjoy more time with friends and family does seem to improve people's life experience. But in order to refocus on those things that do improve the quality of life, America's luxury fever must first be abated.

Frank's luxury fever is accompanied by other catchy handles given to America's mass addiction to consumption, affluenza and American mania. According to de Graaf, Wann, and Naylor affluenza is defined as a "painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more," (2002, p. 2), and:

1. The bloated, sluggish and unfulfilled feeling that results from efforts to keep up with the Joneses.
2. An epidemic of stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by dogged pursuit of the American Dream.
3. An unsustainable addiction to economic growth.

(de Graaf, 1998)

This particular form of social disease isn't limited to the affluent. Its symptoms are found throughout society and affect the poor and the middle class as well as the rich. And because in American society the poor seem to get poorer while the rich get richer, the poor are punished twice because they are conditioned to want affluence, but given very few, if any, opportunities to attain it. The affluenza epidemic, according to the authors, has its roots in the obsessive and near religious quest for economic expansion that has become core to the American dream. But they argue that America's consumption habits have exceeded the planet's ability to absorb the resulting pollution and to replace the natural resources.

Whybrow (2005) argues that America's addiction to consumerism, which he calls American mania, is a result of the reward system of a brain that evolved to deal with the privations extant 200,000 years ago rather than the information-overloaded, rapid-change,

abundance-rich culture of today. He asserts that Americans are increasingly feeling dissatisfied and overworked in a 24/7 society pressed to consume. Epidemic rates of stress, anxiety, depression, obesity and time urgency are grudgingly accepted as part of everyday existence, signaling an American Dream gone badly.

Scitovsky (1992) notes the decline of the American dream from a consumer's perspective:

The middle of the twentieth century may well turn out to have been the high point of our national existence. We saw ourselves in the forefront not only as a nation, but also as individuals. The American consumer was on top of the world, freely spending the world's highest income on the world's most copied and coveted life-style.

The glory, alas, was short-lived. We started losing our self-confidence while still on the ascendant. With hardly a change in objective circumstances, the American consumer's picture of himself changed drastically in the short span of hardly more than a decade. Our proud self-image of sovereign consumer shrank to that of the pitiful character of a Caspar Milquetoast, the helpless consumer who gets oppressed and harassed, cheated and shortchanged, even poisoned, from every side. Why such a great and sudden change in the way in which we see ourselves?

Part of the reason, no doubt, is our growing realization that technical and economic progress also has a dark side to it. We are gaining increasing scientific evidence of the cumulative harm to health, environment, and future generations created by our reckless brandishing of weapons, extermination of pests, squandering of resources, popping of pills, ingesting of food additives, and use or overuse of every mechanical aid to our comfort and safety....

But is there not another reason for our increasing frustration with our freely chosen lives? Could it not be that we seek our satisfaction in the wrong things, or in the wrong way, and are then dissatisfied with the outcome?

pp. 3, 4

In 1979 President Carter acknowledged:

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we have discovered that owning things and consuming things does



not satisfy our longing for meaning. We have learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

(Greider, 1989, p. 14)

Upon reviewing the literature extant on the materialistic lifestyle Kasser points out a simple consistency: “People who strongly value the pursuit of wealth and possessions report lower psychological well-being than those who are less concerned with such aims,” (2002, p. 5). Since many other researchers and authors have come to the same general conclusion (de Graaf et al., 2002; R. H. Frank, 1999; O. James, 2000; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999, 2004; Scitovsky, 1992) it could be argued that new quality of life measures need to be found. Shortly before his death in 1968 Robert F. Kennedy addressed this issue in his final speech:

Too much and too long, we seem to have surrendered community excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things. Our gross national product, now, is over eight hundred billion dollars a year, but that GNP, if we should judge America by that, counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage.

It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts the destruction of our redwoods and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl.

It counts napalm and the cost of a nuclear warhead, and armored cars for police who fight riots in our streets.

It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country.

It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.

(Found at <http://www.jfklancer.com/RFK-FX/speeches.html>)

His words seem contemporary, potentially truer now than in 1968. De Graff, Wann, and Naylor (2002) suggest that a genuine progress indicator (GPI) replace the GNP, now the gross domestic product (GDP). Dominguez and Robin (1992) agree, believing that measuring people's income is far too narrow a parameter for evaluating happiness and quality of life. They recommend, rather, that one's satisfaction, fulfillment, and value be measured against the life energy expended to achieve them, and that life energy be applied in alignment with one's values and life purpose. They assert that people should live life on their own terms, and that this way of life must be examined differently than simply measuring production and consumption. In some instances sacrificing personal income and possessions can lead to greater satisfaction, especially if it is done in order to support one's values and pursue one's purpose or if the sacrifice is for a greater cause.

But America's political leaders seem to be singing a different tune. Shortly after the attacks of 9/11 George W. Bush advised the American people, rather than to sacrifice, to shop. But shopping as a form of patriotism has proven as unsatisfying as measuring America's quality of life by the GNP (Frazier, 2002).

On blogs and Internet sites Americans are sharing similar sentiments:

We consumers have become a nation of servants to financial institutions. We used to joke that a bank was where you could borrow money if you could prove you didn't need it. Now, with the advent of aggressive credit marketing strategies, we can borrow even when we shouldn't be allowed to.

Dave Ramsey

Just as your children have to learn the rewards of hard work, you have to relearn them. But trust me: Frugality really does offer greater psychic rewards than conspicuous consumption. Start treating the little things in life with more respect and it will carry over to the bigger things.

Stephan Pollan

Debt Warp holds that our whip-it-out credit card culture makes it so easy to buy stuff that people delude themselves into thinking they're more affluent, better set for the future, than they are. Debt Warp reshapes reality and turns age-old precepts about frugality upside down.

Lee Eisenberg

Where's the peer pressure to live small today so that we might live comfortably tomorrow? Where's the celebrity spokesperson to tell us how way cool it is to eschew the little luxuries of the moment in order to afford a long-term-care policy?

Lee Eisenberg

*The above four quotes found at  
<http://www.debtspiration.com/category/spending/consumerism/>*

According to Redefining Progress ([http://www.rprogress.org/newprograms/sustIndi/gpi/gpi\\_reports.shtml](http://www.rprogress.org/newprograms/sustIndi/gpi/gpi_reports.shtml)) , the GDP has continued to rise rapidly since 1950 but since 1970 the GPI has remained relatively flat. Why, then, would people contribute so mightily to a metric (the GDP) that had so little relevance to their personal fulfillment and quality of life (the GPI)?

There seem to be at least five aspects of the American lifestyle that keep its citizens mired in production and consumption rather than finding satisfaction in more fulfilling ways: the consumer culture itself, personality traits, the objects of consumption, experience of time, and fear. Although fear as a motivator will be discussed in following chapters, the other four factors will be discussed here.

## *Culture*

Just as different generations have a varying commitment to the work ethic (Bynner & Parsons, 2000), they have also been affected differently by the consumer culture. The baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964 and who are often considered less viable in the contemporary marketplace as well as the workplace (Golway, 1999), are nonetheless also considered less vulnerable to the onslaught of America's consumer culture. While the baby busters, those born between 1965 and 1976, are considered to be more favorably disposed toward marketing and advertising as an influence on their buying habits (James A. Roberts & Manolis, 2000). Later generations, however, appear to have become more cynical regarding the conventional methods used to sell products and much more reliant on the subculture, or their perception of the subculture, of their peers (M. Austin & Aitchison, 2003; Bearden, Netmeyer, & Teel, 1989; R. W. Belk, 1985; Churchill Jr., 1979; Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991; D. Eisenberg, 2002; Flouri, 1999; Furnham & Stacey, 1991; Godin, 2001; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Kasser, Ryan, Zax, & Sameroff, 1995; Kilbourne & Pipher, 1999; T. C. O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Phillips & Rasberry, 2005; Rindfleisch, 1994; Wipperfurth, 2005). Although there is some debate as to whether America's youth is again becoming more materialistic or moving towards post-materialistic values ("Buying into the simple life," 1996; Castro, 1991; T. N. Clark, 2000; Graham, 1999; Hellevik, 1993; J. B. Schor, 1999), this does not obviate the fact that young people, especially young women (Brumberg, 1997; S. J. Douglas, 1995; Greenfield, 2002; Hesse-Biber, 1997; Kilbourne & Pipher, 1999; Kitch, 2001) are inundated with advertising, promotions, packaging, settings, product placement, and a maelstrom of other viral-environmental-emotional-social-influencer invasions and that

this milieu of constant marketing has a strongly mitigating effect (August et al., 2001; Berger, 2000; D. Eisenberg, 2002; Feig, 2006; Friedman, 1991; Gladwell, 2002; Godin, 2001; Halle, 1993; Hine, 1997, 2002; Hughes, 2005; Kilbourne & Pipher, 1999; Kirby & Marsden, 2005; Lenderman, 2006; Ritzer, 1999; Rosen, 2000; J. B. Schor, 2004; Silverman, 2001). The movie *Josie and the Pussycats* (Elfont & Kaplan, 2001) offers an excellent example of how marketing works in the post-modern society. The plot revolves around the subliminal messages recorded in pop music. However, the movie is crammed with product placements and company logos appear on every conceivable surface. Even in the shower one finds a sponge shaped like a box of McDonald's French fries and one wall sports a tile mosaic of a McDonald's promotional cartoon character. The point of this comedy is that the real commercial message is visual and visceral, not auditory, and creates a ubiquitous, inescapable context in which everyone must coexist with a constant bombardment of commercial images. These images form, in my opinion, a super-liminal message, a message that invades the membrane of consciousness itself, rather than a subliminal message that unnoticed passes consciousness through osmosis to reach the unconscious. In other words, super-liminal advertising overwhelms the conscious mind whereas subliminal advertising bypasses it. One can be aware of super-liminal information, but most simply choose to ignore it. Subliminal messages are far less effective if they are acknowledged consciously. In another fascinating example of super-liminal advertising, white letters are stenciled onto a sidewalk near an intersection with the message, "From here, it looks like you could use some new underwear. Bamboo Lingerie," (M. Austin & Aitchison, 2003, p. 111).

An argument can well be made that throughout recent history it is young people that have been harmed the most by America's insidious culture of consumerism. Although upbringing can influence the young consumer (F. R. Hibbert, I. F. Beutler, & T. M. Martin, 2004), the ethos of consumption remains a powerful force in shaping their behavior (Miller, 1987; J. A. Roberts & Sepulveda, 1999) and there seems to be a universal appeal for young people today in becoming a member of this consumer culture.

Although parents may decry the devastating effects of television and other media on their kids and their buying habits, many still use television programs, movies, and videogames as a way to pacify their children or to substitute as a baby sitter (Minow & LaMay, 1996). Winn (2002) concurs noting that television is often used as a plug-in drug, especially for the youngest TV watchers, children in the two-to-five-year-old age group, who spend on average nearly 22 hours every week watching television. She points out:

Instead of having to establish rules and limits... instead of having to work at socializing children in order to make them more agreeable to live with, parents could solve all these problems by resorting to the television set. "Go watch TV" were the magic words.

(1984, p. 45)

Anderegg (2003) agrees and argues that parents could improve their children's lot by simply turning off the television, but they are too addicted themselves:

Turning off the television would control the effects of content and the effects of the medium itself at the same time. But the open secret is that we can't live without television ourselves. We can't live without it because we want to watch it, and we can't live without it because we cannot stand not to have something that will pacify our children when we want them to be pacified or, to put it nicely, drugged.

p. 163

Kilpatrick (1993) remarks that this whole-family addiction to television has broader consequences:

Perhaps the most profound effect of television watching, however, is its effect on family relationships. Regular television viewing deprives families of opportunities to interact with one another. There are just so many hours in the day, and, right now, for many families television takes up a disproportionate number of them. Watching TV is much easier than conversation, and it is certainly easier than confrontation – although confrontation is sometimes what is called for in family life. Because TV tends to pacify children, thus providing temporary harmony, many parents use it as a substitute for the hard work of establishing real discipline.

p. 165

Myers (1989) agrees stating:

I do believe that addiction to television (as opposed to deliberate, measured viewing) makes sincere and deep relations with people and with reality more difficult to sustain.

p. 174

Observing the role of various media as “the other parent,” Steyer (2002) suggests that the content of programming is also crucial. He notes that long before children are able to make sense of it they are exposed to sex, violence, coarseness, and commercialism and recommends that society and parents take a more active role in monitoring the content of children’s media. As early as 1961 the head of the Federal Communications Commission was calling television in America a vast wasteland and recommended that the obscene and brutal TV content be replaced with constructive programs that motivate children to learn and assimilate appropriate values (Minow & LaMay, 1996). Ravitch and Viteritti (2003) complain that because they are the primary sources of information for kids today, TV, movies, and the Internet they are creating a media induced form of attention deficit disorder and contain far too much violence and sexuality.

On the other hand Winn (2002) contends that, for the youngest viewers at least, the most troubling problem with the media has little to do with the content of the programming. Winn observes that seldom, if ever, is the context of TV viewing considered when studies of children’s TV habits are carried out. But there seems to be evidence that

it can be just as harmful as any harmful content might be. She argues that given the amount of time these children spend watching television, the potential damage in what they watch pales in comparison to the potential damage in the experience itself.

Although there is contemporary concern regarding the content and context of media exposure, especially with the advent of the Internet and the expanding opportunity for children to access the Internet (Holloway & Valentine, 2003) both to buy products and to better absorb the culture of consumption (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002), Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, and Wright (2001) assert that:

Historically, each new medium of mass communication has, within a few years of its introduction, been condemned as a threat to the young people who use it most. Typically the new medium has been blamed for capturing excessive time and interest of children and youth, for corrupting their values, for wasting time that would otherwise have been spent more constructively, and for causing a decline in taste, morality, self-discipline, learning and socialization....

It has therefore been held responsible for captivating the younger generation with a level of passive engagement that was close to addiction and for generating an indiscriminate fascination with all its messages regardless of their content, validity, merit, or relevance to the life of the child. On the heels of fears about the medium itself have come concerns about content that will corrupt moral values and stimulate undesirable behavior. In the United States, we vacillate between alarms about violence and concerns about sex on the media, with each new medium raising alarm that it poses greater threats than those that preceded it.

At the same time, new media have been greeted with optimism about their potential for expanding the horizons of the young and for offering powerful new tools for teaching and learning.

p. 1

There are others who question the corrupting effects of contemporary media (Freedman, 2002; Potter, 2003), but Macbeth (1996) contends that studies are now providing evidence that they exist – although they are gradual and accumulate over time. And while some are looking into how to better children's media in order to improve learning and socialization (Fisch, 2004; Van Evra, 2004), others are challenging the myth



that exposure to television improves kid's visual and vocabulary skills (George Comstock & Paik, 1991; Kilpatrick, 1993; Singer & Singer, 2001). Fearful of the media's assault on the young person's mind many parents are attempting to limit the exposure of their children (Wittmeier, 1999). However, their attempts are often in vain. In the popular book *Reviving Ophelia* (Pipher, 1994) the author reminds us that the external cultural environment now has more influence on the young, in general, than the nuclear family (also see Olfman, 2005; Sternheimer, 2003).

The sense of power, prestige, distrust, and anxiety, arguably socially induced phenomena often produced outside of the home, are closely related to compulsive buying and the culture of consumption (James A. Roberts & Jones, 2001). Latham (2002) uses the metaphor of the vampire-cyborg, first introduced by Marx, to illustrate how young people, and those who remain childlike in their consumption, develop a remorseless hunger within a libidinal economy that encodes desire into its very fabric. He also uses this metaphor to show how they simultaneously assimilate the technology of consumption into their very being. The child, or the child in us, is not a mere victim, but participates in this process by allowing themselves to be seduced into a form of self-surrender which absorbs the messages of the image-based apparatuses of product design, fashion, and advertisement that are meticulously devised to induce endless consumption.

Ewen (2000) remarks:

Often silently, at times unacknowledged, the marketing of style works on the ways that people understand and relate to the world around them. Its influence can be seen within the insecure, but nonetheless formative, boundaries of adolescence, when the search for *identity* accelerates.

p. 51

And in few places is the assault on adolescent identity more visible than in many American schools. Recently the sacrosanct relationship between childhood and school

has become, for many, an extension of consumer culture. The classroom and school building have all too often become places where education, entertainment, and advertising can meld and their boundaries collapse (also see Spring, 2003). In a parody of corporate gluttony schools are now part of the bazaar, and companies pay to exploit an arena where children, commodities, and manufactured images can merge with the semiotics of markets, information technology, and communication media (Kenway & Bullen, 2003).

Schor observes that in classrooms, on the playground, in video games, and even at slumber parties advertising and product placement have invaded children's lives. Companies are targeting children's friends and families by enlisting them as guerrilla marketers, even going so far as to co-opt the Girl Scouts. She states:

The United States is the most consumer-oriented society in the world. People work longer hours than in any other industrialized country. Savings rates are lower. Consumer credit has exploded, and roughly a million and a half households declare bankruptcy every year. There are more than 46,000 shopping centers in the country, a nearly two-thirds increase since 1986. Despite fewer people per household, the size of houses continues to expand rapidly, with new construction featuring walk-in closets and three- and four-car garages to store record quantities of stuff. According to my estimates, the average adult acquires forty-eight new pieces of apparel a year. (She has also been discarding clothes at record rates, in comparison to historical precedents.) Americans own more television sets than inhabitants of any other country – nearly one set per person. Observers blame TV for plummeting levels of civic engagement, the dearth of community, and the decline of everyday socializing. Heavy viewing has also resulted in historically unprecedented exposure to commercials. And ads have proliferated far beyond the television screen to virtually every social institution and type of public space, from museums and zoos, to college campuses and elementary school classrooms, restaurant bathrooms and menus, at the airport, even in the sky.

The architects of this culture – the companies that make, market, and advertise consumer products – have now set their sights on children. Although children have long participated in the consumer marketplace, until recently they were bit players, purchasers of cheap goods. They attracted little of the industry's talent

and resources and were approached primarily through their mothers. That has changed. Kids and teens are now the epicenter of American consumer culture.

(2004, p. 9)

Schor continues by noting that the amount and influence of corporate marketing in public schools has exploded since 1997. The nature of a school's captive audience has proven too tempting. Originating in 1989, Channel One is a daily news and advertising broadcast that is shown to one quarter of the nation's middle and secondary schools. Eight million students, 40 percent of all teens in America, see the program 90 percent of all days the schools are open for class. Reported to have an audience second only to the Super Bowl, the payout for its access is a measly gift of video monitors and equipment, use only. She cites a recent Michigan study which indicates that after watching Channel One students are more likely to agree that a nice car is more important than school, designer labels make a difference, and wealthier people are happier.

In addition to the effects of Channel One, Schor points out that schools are selling advertising on buses, stadiums, and the walls inside of the school halls and classrooms. In 2001 NetworkNext gave 500 schools mobile computers under the condition that teachers show ads to the children when they use them for presentations. Cover Concepts donates millions of book covers a year enveloped in ads. McGraw-Hill textbooks use Nike, Topps trading cards, Disneyland, and Gatorade as props in their examples. For roughly \$5 thousand a year Shop-Rite bought the naming rights for a Brooklawn, New Jersey gymnasium. The list of corporate invasions into the school system, from writing the curriculum to discount coupons to vending machines to school uniforms, is too large to mention here, but they are legion (D. Boyles, 2000; D. R. Boyles, 2004; Molnar, 1996, 2005; Saltman, 2000; J. B. Schor, 2004).

Often what makes kids vulnerable to school based marketing is the pervasive need to be cool. A cool kid could be viewed as a transient verb. In fact, some suggest that even the concept of teenagers is a social construct, a socially induced mindset that is abstracted from reality (Danesi, 1994; Hine, 1999). But since the mid-twentieth century, among younger kids, older kids at heart, and the parent who lives vicariously through their children, the attainment of cool has become both a paramount goal and a bar which is constantly being raised by corporate marketers (Cross, 2004; Danesi, 1994; T. Frank, 1998; Mathieson, 2006). Through tapping into a youth's innermost needs, fears, and desires (the playground of Anna Freud, Heller, 1990) companies hope to produce a brand that will garner long-term allegiance and exhibit a sense of perpetual cool (Del Vecchio, 1998). A primary tool for creating cool is the ability to understand and use the irrational but deep sense of class and belonging that is ever part of the young person's experience in school (Milner, 2004).

Of course schools are not the only place in which kids are inundated with advertising and other forms of corporate marketing and influence (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Because children's purchasing power has risen sharply and because children are becoming shoppers at an earlier age kids are buying more with both their own money and guilt money given by parents who are easy prey to marketers who play on their time-starved-child-abandoning self-deprecation (J. B. Schor, 2004). Kids are also more prone to self-branding and consumer identification in contemporary times (Quart, 2003; J. B. Schor, 2004). Peer-to-peer marketers and adult teen-trend spotters (Laermer, 2002) hone in on the delicate nature of teenagers' self-fashioning and manipulate it through "youth buzz" and "influencers." Quart (2003) argues that teens are obsessed with the notion that

brand identification will cover over the emptiness and lack that they feel. She notes that self-branding through things as personal as breast-enhancement surgery and kid-produced blogs for anorexia are common. Even culture and nationality have become fashion accessories (Klein, 2002). But the music, clothes, food, relationships, language, and other signs and semiotics that Americas youth consider a self-created aspect of their sub-culture are, in reality, often manufactured without their knowledge (Danesi, 1994). Even counterculture has become consumer culture (Heath & Potter, 2004; Li, 1993). Schor observes that the average ten year old has memorized 300 to 400 brands. She states, "Among eight to fourteen year olds, 92 percent of requests are brand specific," (J. B. Schor, 2004, p. 25). Kids know which brands are cool and "they turn brands into 'signs,' pure symbolic entities, detached from specific products and functional characteristics.... Youth have eagerly embraced an ethic of labels and logos," (J. B. Schor, 2004, p. 26).

Quart also points out that branding has progressively targeted a younger audience:

Marketers have expanded their purview to nine-to-thirteen-year-olds as well, rather like urban realtors set on gentrifying neglected neighborhoods. Teen marketers and product managers have expanded into this "tween" niche by prepping the kids to be the sort of teen consumers that companies wish for. Companies ranging from Eastman Kodak to the WB channel now explicitly target these childish attentions, and car manufacturers angle for them in the hopes that kids will nag their parents for SUVs. It's an important strategy for Radio Disney, which has gathered an audience of 2.2 million kids aged from six to eleven, sitting ducklings for on-air advertisements. As Radio Disney's brand manager crowed, 55 percent of the station's listening occurs in cars when mom and kid are together: "You get the gatekeeper and the 'nagger' together."

Tweens and younger teens are now the audience for the teen magazines that have also emerged in the last six years, a new welter of high-rolling ventures such as Teen People, Teen Vogue, and Elle Girl. These, the training wheels of the glossies, prepare girls and boys for the day when they will move on to People, Vogue, and Elle.

(Quart, 2003, p. 4)

The tweeners buying power has captured the interest of marketers who have lately gone to great expense to understand this subset of the adolescent market. This impatient and techno-savvy group has been bracketed off into fringes, influencers, conformers, and passives as the tween culture is beset by those who would influence their particular buying habits. In an environment of instant communication this group is exposed to roughly 8 thousand brands a day, while corporations attempt to find the particular brand that will offer them familiarity and security in an often unfamiliar and insecure world ("Children's materialism increasing," 2001; Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003; Siegel, Coffey, & Livingston, 2004; Sutherland & Thompson, 2003).

Reviewing this special class of adolescents Sutherland and Thompson (2003) comment:

Most adults don't make things or grow things or even repair things much anymore. We buy. Our time-pressured lives encourage us to buy things just for the convenience. So our kids grow up seeing the ubiquity of our consuming ways and respond to it in a natural way. They too want "more."

p. 2

Corporations spend over \$15 billion every year on marketing to children. They encourage nagging and an insatiable desire to consume. Virtually from birth kids are bombarded by advertising that manipulates their vulnerabilities and infiltrates nearly every aspect of their lives. Cross promotional marketing affects everything from fast food to the clothes kids wear to their toys and even to characters in their books. Kids are exposed to thousands of ads every day on television, on the Internet, on billboards, listening to the radio, in stores and malls, in school, in restrooms, in restaurants, on the playground, at the park, on signs, in music CDs, at the movies, in video games, in magazines, on cars and buses, in videos, on vending machines, on packaged foods, on pop cans, on tickets, on coupons, on backpacks, on handrails, on the sidewalk, in windows, in

neon, on apparel, on lunchboxes, stenciled on other kids heads, and on almost every other conceivable surface allowable. The typical young person sees over 40 thousand television ads per year alone while watching an average of 18 hours of television a week. Kids also clock in approximately 8 hours of media exposure per day. This onslaught exacerbates their risk for obesity, violence, sexual precocity, eating disorders, stunted or distorted emotional development, stifled creativity, and substance abuse (D. Acuff & Reiher, 2005; Linn, 2005; J. B. Schor, 2004). (Interestingly Acuff and Reiher appear to have first advised corporations on why and how children buy things, see Acuff & Reiher (1998), but later moved to defending children against the marketing machine.)

### *Personality*

Personal traits can also be powerful in determining one's susceptibility to over-consumption and moderate the effects of external influence. Those who are less conscientious, more agreeable, more extroverted, less emotionally stable, more materialistic, and more open to new experiences often travel a more direct path to compulsive buying (Mowen & Spears, 1999). Research on compulsive buying also reveals that low self-esteem, high levels of depression and anxiety, lack of impulsive control, approval seeking, escape coping tendencies, envy, isolation, compulsiveness, perfectionism, and excitement seeking are all associated traits and behaviors (d'Astous, 1990; W.S. DeSarbo & E.A. Edwards, 1996; Faber et al., 1995; Mowen & Spears, 1999).

These traits can be correlated not only to actual behavior but also in how people perceive others with respect to their materialistic leanings (M. b. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1993). In addition, cultural changes brought on, in part, by marketing have allowed the

postmodern male more latitude in his consumption habits, granting him less social responsibility and more opportunity to indulge his more adolescent desires (Ehrenreich, 1983, 1989; Featherstone, 1991; Miles, 2002).

### *Objects*

Miller (1995) contends that consumption is a process of objectification in which the object of purchase simultaneously becomes a form in which people construct both their self-concept and their understanding of the world. He also notes that these objects become of greater value and attain more intrinsic power if they are difficult to obtain (Miller, 1987). And both Miller (1987) and Featherstone (1991) argue that people in contemporary culture spend more time interacting with objects than they do people; a reversal of interactions in the past. Also see Makay (1997) and Harrington and Bielby (2001).

Baudrillard (2004) reminds one that the objects of desire themselves can be as hypnotic in their ubiquitous and ephemeral nature as is the culture they help to shape:

There is all around us today a kind of fantastic conspicuousness of consumption and abundance, constituted by the multiplication of objects, services and material goods, and this represents something of a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species. Strictly speaking, the humans of the age of affluence are surrounded not so much by other human beings, as they were in all previous ages, but by objects. Their daily dealings are now not so much with their fellow men, but rather – on a rising statistical curve – with the reception and manipulation of goods and messages.... The two concepts ‘environment’ and ‘ambience’ have doubtless only enjoyed such a vogue since we have come to live not so much alongside other human beings – in their physical presence and the presence of their speech – as beneath the mute gaze of mesmerizing, obedient objects which endlessly repeat the same refrain: that of our dumbfounded power, our virtual affluence, our absence one from another. Just as the wolf-child became a wolf by living among wolves, so we too are slowly becoming functional. We live by object time: by this I mean that we live at the pace of objects, live to the rhythm of their ceaseless succession. Today, it is we who watch them as they are born, grow



to maturity and die, whereas in all previous civilizations it was timeless objects, instruments or monuments which outlived the generations of human beings.

p. 25

### *Time*

Agreeing with Baudrillard's assessment of time, the magazine Adbusters affirms:

Your new consciousness:

[From] rhythms of nature

time of rooster crowing

rising and setting sun

changing seasons phases of the moon

incoming and outgoing tides

changing constellation of stars

[To] rhythms of (consumer) culture

expiry dates

morning and evening rush hours

academic semesters

two week vacations

four year elections

tax due day

("Your new consciousness," 2006)

Many researchers from many disciplines, including economics, have acknowledged the distinction between time as it passes on the clock, machine time, and time as it is perceived organically and biologically (Currie & Steedman, 1990). However, early in

the twentieth century Marshall (1920) taught that economics must be grounded in the biological experience:

The growing prominence of what has been called the biological view of the science has tended to throw the notions of economic law and measurement into the background; as though such notions were too hard and rigid to be applied to the living and everchanging economic organism. But biology itself teaches us that the vertebrate organisms are the most highly developed. The modern economic organism is vertebrate; and the science which deals with it should not be invertebrate. It should have that delicacy and sensitiveness of touch which are required for enabling it to adapt itself closely to the real phenomena of the world...

p. 769

But in the literature the notion of keeping people distracted from biological time and attached to consumer time has long been a strategy for luring people to their downfall, economically or otherwise (Reumann, 2005). This theme is evident in the *Screwtape Letters* (2001), in which C. S. Lewis, a well-known Christian apologist of the early twentieth century, writes about two demons trying to tempt a human into giving up his soul to Satan. Screwtape is the mentor while Wormwood, his nephew, is the new and eager student. Wormwood has had difficulty tempting his subject after letting the man walk in the woods and read a book. Screwtape chides:

And now for your blunders. On your own showing you first of all allowed the patient to read a book he really enjoyed, because he enjoyed it and not on order to make clever remarks about it to his new friends. In the second place, you allowed him to walk down to the old mill and have tea there – a walk through the country he really likes; and taken alone. In other words you allowed him two real positive Pleasures. Were you so ignorant as not to see the danger of this? The characteristic of Pains and Pleasures is that they are unmistakably real, and therefore, as far as they go, give the man who feels them a touchstone of reality. This if you had been trying to damn your man by the Romantic method – by making him a kind of Childe Harold or Werther submerged in self-pity for imaginary distresses – you would try to protect him at all costs from any real pain; because, of course, five minutes' genuine toothache would reveal the romantic sorrows for the nonsense they were and unmask your whole stratagem. But you were trying to damn your patient by the World, that is by palming off vanity, bustle, irony, and expensive tedium as pleasures. How can you have failed to see that a *real* pleasure was the last thing you ought to have let him meet? Didn't you foresee that it would just kill by contrast all the trumpery which you have been so laboriously teaching him

to value? And that the sort of pleasure which the book and the walk gave him was the most dangerous of all? That it would peel off from his sensibility the kind of crust you have been forming on it, and make him feel that he was coming home, recovering himself? As a preliminary to detaching him from the Enemy, you wanted to detach him from himself, and had made some progress in doing so. Now, all that is undone.

(Lewis, 2001, pp. 63 - 65)

In agreement with Lewis, Lasn (2000) suggests:

Imagine that you are a member of a typical postmodern family, living in a typical house, in a typical neighborhood, in a typical North American city. You're over-leveraged and overworked. You eat a lot of takeout, your kids holler for Nikes and the TV is on five hours a day. One day it dawns on you that, as a family, you're failing. You aren't so much a family as five strangers sharing power and water.

You decide, as a tonic, to go on a camping trip – a pit-latrine-and-flame-cooked-wieners experience uncorrupted by phones, faxes, or *Baywatch*. In the absence of electronic distractions, you will get to know each other again.

After only a few hours in the wilderness, though, it becomes clear that you don't know how to do this. You might as well have been shot into deep space, so psychologically ill-equipped are you for the enforced camaraderie of the outside world.

Your kids experience actual physical withdrawal from television. Your seven-year-old can't finish a whole sentence or stay focused on more than three bites of her Van Camp's beans. She wears a *Village of the Damned* expression and asks you to repeat almost everything you say.

Your fourteen-year-old finishes his meal in silence and excuses himself to the tent, where he scavenges for magazines and, finding none, just konks out. There are no signs of life. The kids' senses have become so deadened from disuse they can't touch, taste, smell or see that they are in a marvelous place. To them it doesn't feel marvelous. It doesn't feel like anything at all.

If you have read Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, you will recognize that the stages your kids are going through – denial, anger, depression, bargaining – closely mimic the stages of grief, as if they are adjusting to a loss. Which in a real way they are: the loss of their selves. Or rather, the loss of the selves that feel most authentic to them. Their mediated selves. Those selves that, when disconnected from the urban data stream, cease to function.

Your family, like most postmodern clans, finds itself adrift at a historically significant time. The last couple of centuries have marked a radical transition in

human lifestyle. We've gone from living in a natural world to living in a manufactured one. For two million years our personalities and cultures were shaped by nature. The generations alive today – who cannot recognize an edible mushroom in the forest or build a fire without matches – are the first to have had their lives shaped almost entirely by the electronic mass media environment....

This detachment from nature may not seem like much of a problem, but it is. In fact, it's a disaster.... To "ecopsychologist" Theodore Roszak, our rampant, oblivious consumption at the expense of the planet is, simply, a sickness – one no less harmful than the disorders catalogued in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM IV), the encyclopedia of modern psychiatric complaint.... Roszak views the current widespread sense of malaise as a kind of "separation anxiety" from nature. It should be an easy metaphor to connect with. We're bombarded these days with analysis of failed relationships, of the psychological havoc that breakups wreak. The psychological fallout from our breakup with nature is like that. When you cut off arterial blood to an organ, the organ dies. When you cut the flow of nature into people's lives, their spirit dies. It's as simple as that.

pp. 3 – 5

Louv (2005) concludes that children today suffer from a separation from the natural environment, what he calls nature-deficit disorder. He fears that children will no longer have the opportunity, nor desire the opportunity, to commune with nature in a meaningful and health inducing way because the natural environment is being diminished by consumption and the distraction of contemporary media is so overwhelming.

Taylor (2003) argues that while kids will relentlessly nag for what they want and at least half of American parents will give in, what children really want is to spend time with their parents doing simpler, more meaningful rituals such as storytelling, hiking, camping, hobbies, and family dinners. She also suggests that parents make their kids media savvy and help them to develop financial literacy so that they can avoid the treadmill of overwork and over-consumption – having more fun with less stuff. Sherlock (2003) also notes that helping kids deal with peer pressure, limiting TV viewing, engaging in environmentally friendly practices, celebrating, holidays, and embracing simplicity will

enhance both the quantity and quality of family life while giving children priceless skills and values (also see Bodnar, 1996; J. R. Hibbert, I. F. Beutler, & T. M. Martin, 2004).

As noted previously, these aspects of American life account for much of America's overconsumption, but various explanations of consumer behavior have fallen in and out of style among researchers over the past 50 years (Ratneshwar, Mick, & Huffman, 2000). Currently the resurgence of academic interest in consumer research can be sorted into the following four categories: higher-order values; social identity; behavioral decision theory; and attitude theory (Cynthia Huffman, Ratneshwar, & Mick, 2000). Values are important because they connect consumption with a means to achieve a higher goal or purpose that is core to the individual. Social identity changes with a person's roles throughout the day, but helps to determine what a person buys through reinforcing the ideal self and creates a relationship with brands that provide meaning when they are linked with one's self-concept. A person's consumption choices are also predicated on the outcomes and contingencies of many contextual factors such as time allotted for purchase, the availability of alternatives, and the perceived value attributed to a product or service. Behavioral theory explores these contingencies. Finally, attitude theory studies the cognition-motivation interface, emphasizing how consumer choices are generally derived from consumer expectations and their evaluation of consumables based on product benefits and desired features. While no approach on its own, or even the combination of the four, is comprehensive, the models together do begin to articulate the continuum of lower-to-higher order motivational factors from personal utility to personal values (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Allen & Starr, 1982; Anzai & Simon, 1979; J. F. Austin & Vancouver, 1996; R. P. Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; R. P. Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Bandura,

1989; Barsalou, 1991; R. W. Belk, 1988; D. E. Bell, Raiffa, & Tversky, 1988; Bettman, 1979; Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979; Einhorn & Hogarth, 1988; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Gollwitzer & Bargh, 1996; Higgins & Sorrentino, 1990; M. B. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982b; Holt, 1995; C. Huffman & Houston, 1993; Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; McCracken, 1986; Montgomery, 1989; Pieters, Baumgartner, & Allen, 1995; Ratneshwar, Shocker, Cotte, & Srivastava, 1999; M. L. Richins, 1994; I. Simonson, 1989; J. M. Sirgy, 1982; Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1988; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987; Walker & Olson, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988).

However, while it is fair to say that the ubiquity of consumerism is matched only by its complexity (D. Clark, Doel, & Housiaux, 2003; Miles, 1998; Miller, 1987), and that consumer behavior has been studied from a great variety of perspectives and disciplines, both global and local, including economics, sociology, history, feminism, architecture, psychology, philosophy, theology, biology and physiology, anthropology, communication, history, business and marketing, political science, and even the arts (Aaker, 1998; Appadurai, 1986; Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; R. Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli, & Priester, 2002; Baudrillard, 1995; Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2005; Bock, 1997; Bordo, 1995; P. Boyer, 1978; Budd, Craig, & Steinman, 1999; Butsch, 2001; Chung, Inaba, Koolhaas, & Leong, 2002; Deaton, 1992; Dollimore & Sinfield, 1994; M. Douglas, 1996; Fine & Leopold, 1993; Griffith, 1998; Halle, 1993; Harrington & Bielby, 2001; Hawkins, Joch, & Meyers-Levy, 2001; Hesse-Biber, 1997; M. B. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1993; Holt, 1998; Huyssen, 1986; Joshi, 1999; Kacen & Lee, 2002; Kasser & Kanner, 2003; Kilbourne & Pipher, 1999; Kitch, 2001; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1990;

Lodziak, 2002; Mariampolski, 2006; Menzel & Mann, 2002; F. R. Myers, 2001; Nussbaum, 1993; Ratneshwar & Mick, 2005; Ratneshwar et al., 2000; Rosenblatt, 1999; Rossiter & Chan, 1998; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; J. S. Sherry, 1995; Itamar Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, Drolet, & Nowlis, 2001; Solomon, 2003; Statt, 1997; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989; J. Twitchell, 2000; Tybout & Artz, 1994; Underhill, 1999, 2004; Unnava, Agarwal, & Haugtvedt, 1996; Wells, 1993; Whybrow, 2005; Wolf, 2002; Wood, 2000; P. Wright, 1973), some people have the unique ability to make simple the problem of consumer motivation. Geisel (1961), under the pseudonym Dr. Seuss, became quite popular by using serious concerns, such as life purpose, diversity, family tranquility, fear, and consumerism as the topics of children's books in which he delightfully distilled the issues down to a very understandable essence. In one such case he portrays just how competitive consumption can be perpetrated through skillful manipulation of social comparison. The story poem begins as follows:

Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches

Had bellies with stars.

The Plain-Belly Sneetches

Had none upon thars.

Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small

You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.

But, because they had stars, all the Star-Belly Sneetches

Would brag, "We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches."

With their snoots in the air, they would sniff and they'd snort

"We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!"

They'd hike right on past them without even talking....

Then one day, it seems... while the Plain-Belly Sneetches

Were moping and dopping alone on the beaches,

Just sitting there wishing their bellies had stars...

A stranger zipped up in the strangest of cars!

"My friends," he announced in a voice clear and keen,

"My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean.

And I've heard of your troubles. I've heard you're unhappy.

But I can fix that. I'm the Fix-it-Up Chappie.

I've come here to help you. I have what you need.

And my prices are low. And I work at great speed.

And my work is one hundred per cent guaranteed!"

Then, quickly, Sylvester McMonkey McBean

Put together a very peculiar machine.

And he said, "You want stars like a Star-Belly Sneetch...?"

My friends, you can have them for three dollars each!"....

(Geisel, 1961, pp. 2 - 9)

As the poem continues all of the Sneetches without stars on their bellies pay Sylvester to get one put on, at which point those Sneetches who originally had stars on their



bellies pay to have Sylvester remove them so that they can maintain their status as an elite. Then those who had paid to have stars applied also paid to have them taken off and so on, with Sneetches going so numerous and quickly through the machine that they finally lose track of whether or not having stars on their belly make them part of the elite or part of the rabble. And because the Sneetches had stars applied and removed so many times, Sylvester made out like a bandit.

The moral, of course, is that the exercise for the Sneetches was self-defeating, unless, that is, they learned something from it. So far, the lesson appears to have been lost on many Americans as well.

Conniff (2003) extends Geisel's and Veblen's ideas by identifying those who display the wealthy lifestyle to which many lesser beings aspire as *Homo sapiens pecuniosus*. He makes the point that this particular subspecies also fits into basic patterns of territoriality, social hierarchy, reproductive behavior, parental care, and physique that are characteristic of all social groups – with the exception that list of people that they feel are important to impress is much narrower. But impress them they must and the display of status and prosocial dominance must continue, creating a tenuous form of self-assertion that must be continually renewed.

This opuluxe spending, status-asserting behavior, and conspicuous display observed earlier by both Veblen and Twitchell is highlighted by Epstein (2002) when he points out that Prada-and-two-dogs-in-a-purse lifestyles are the new chic and that the posh and popular International Croquet Association considers any croquet set priced under \$300.00 to be appropriate only for children. But also making a case for Geisel's and

Conniff's perspective Epstein argues that the hip-and-trendy lifestyle must be continuously upgraded if one is to maintain social status:

Snobbery often entails taking a petty, superficial, or irrelevant distinction and, so to say, running with it. It is sitting in your BMW 740i and feeling quietly, assuredly better than the poor vulgarian (as you cannot help judging him) who pulls up next to you at the stoplight in his garish Cadillac. It is the calm pleasure with which you greet the news that the son of the woman you have just been introduced to is majoring in photojournalism at Arizona State University while your own daughter is studying art history at Harvard. It is the delight you feel when an associate at your law firm walks into your office wearing an ill-tailored Italian suit that costs three times your own better-fitting traditional clothes. In such comforts, and many more minuscule and subtler ones, does the snob find paradise.

Paradise, however, figures always to be temporary, because the snob resides in a world of relentless one-upmanship, even though, unbeknownst to him, he may be the only one playing the game. He can almost be certain that one day, at another stoplight, a Bentley will pull up next to his pathetic BMW; that he will be introduced to a woman whose son is studying classics at Oxford; and another colleague will enter his office wearing a bespoke English suit, a wafer-thin Patek Philippe watch, and Italian shoes made from, let us say, the foreskins of Norwegian rams. In such minor discomforts does the snob find his or her hell.

So little does it take to lift a snob's spirits, and so little, too, to send him or her plunging, that the life of a snob is likely to be fairly jumpy.

pp. 15 – 16

This need for constant upgrading has trickled down to the middle class as they attempt to emulate those on the top of the economic pyramid. While people scrimp for deals to bolster their budget they also splurge on things they can't afford but feel they must have. The middle zone of retail, once the bastion of the middle class, has fallen from grace (Lynch & Kordis, 1991; Silverstein & Butman, 2006). The aspiring affluencionado shops at WalMart and Sachs, but not at J. C. Penney. Even the lowly safety razor has evolved into either a throw away or a luxury item. Since the twin-blade Gillette Sensor Excel became available in 1994, with its start-up pack retailing for \$4.49 and five refills for \$5.29, it has been replaced with the Mach 3 in 1998, retailing at \$6.99 for the start-up pack and \$6.79 for four refills, and then with the Fusion Power razor in 2006

with the start-up pack retailing for \$11.99 and four refills at \$14.00 (Beucke, 2006).

Meanwhile Bic is selling bags of 144 disposable single-blade razors for \$24.49 on Amazon.com.

But despite the dearth of middle-zone products Brooks (2004) has measured an explosion of size in the suburbs, that is, in the size of cars, houses, fast food portions, wardrobes, TVs, amenities, and expenses, while almost whimsically observing that middle-class suburbanites have developed a rather poetic wisdom regarding the edges of expensive granite counter tops and the custom heating of bathroom floors. Trying to avoid the appearance of materialism and vulgarity these suburban dwellers nonetheless aspire to lifestyles of simple and elegant affluence that keeps disorder and anxiety at bay; but it is also a lifestyle that requires constant improvement.

Unfortunately, in the midst of humanity's rapacious production and consumption in order to live the requisite upgraded lifestyle the natural, social, economic, political, and religious environments appear, to many, to be withering rather than improving.

### *Environmental Consequences*

Speaking to both the environmental and social consequences former Vice President Al Gore (1992) complains:

[America] is holding ever more tightly to its habit of consuming larger and larger quantities every year of coal, oil, fresh air and water, trees, topsoil and the thousand other substances we rip from the crust of the earth, transforming them into not just the sustenance and shelter we need but much more that we don't need... The accumulation of material goods is at an all time high, but so is the number of people who feel an emptiness in their lives.

p. 221

Robinson (2006) agrees that the cycle of overwork and over-consumption in America is having a very negative effect on the environment. He argues that there is a

fundamental flaw in America's market economy that makes people unknowingly damage their quality of life and well-being by indulging in the above cycle of excess while simultaneously failing to enjoy adequate leisure time. He notes that Americans' inability to accurately measure the cost and benefit derived from their overwork and over-consumption causes them to overtax the environment through unsustainable demands (also see Smith, 1994).

Sagar (2005) asserts that while America expresses concern with the environmental improvement metrics and programs of other countries the concomitant introspection needed to improve or even sustain environmental policy within America is sorely lacking. This seems paradoxical since the global environmental footprint created by America's consumption and unsustainable practices has historically been greater than that of any other country. In addition, many multinational corporations, often located in the United States, have been very resistant to any imposition of a binding global treaty on corporate environmental accountability (Clapp, 2005). Even though the expenditure on global consumption has quadrupled since 1960, much to the benefit of these corporations, the cause-and-effect processes, and their harmful results, have been obscured. Because of this the tragic deaths of millions of people who live in dangerously unhealthy environments are seen as merely the sad but unavoidable accidents of economic progress (Dauvergne, 2005).

The World Watch organization (Assadourian et al., 2004; Assadourian et al., 2006) decries over-consumption, noting that over-packed landfill sites, an epidemic of obesity, failure to recycle and reuse basic materials, the growth of household waste, increased road traffic, greater use and obsolescence of household appliances, over-fishing

of the oceans, greater use of energy, and many other excesses of consumption are wrecking the planet and the people who live on it. If the patterns of consumption in the United States continue to be copied by developing nations, by 2050 the limited resources of the earth will be exceeded by over eight times. Tragically, while the developed and newly developing countries binge on consumption the poorer countries bear the greatest brunt of the resulting pollution, toxicity, and other environmental damage (also see Hollander, 2003).

World Watch states that 122 million Indians, 121 million Japanese, 76 million Germans, 61 million Russians, 58 million Brazilians, and 53 million French have also adopted the American lifestyle and are enjoying a consumer-centric society. In China over 240 million people have joined the consumer class, adopting the diets, cars, shopping habits, and other aspects of the lifestyle pioneered by America and sought by much of the remaining world. Soon China, with nearly four times the population of America, will overtake the United States in the magnitude of its consumer class. But America still leads in consumption. The United States has roughly 25 percent of the world's cars, with more private vehicles on the road than there are people with licenses to drive them. Since 1975 American households have fewer people living in them but the homes are now 38 percent bigger on average. With only 4.5 percent of the world's population Americans use five times more energy than the average global citizen and the United States emits approximately 25 percent of the global greenhouse gasses. Americans buy and consume more clothing, toys, fast food, caviar, soda, and shrimp than any other nation.

On the other hand, 2.8 billion people spend less than \$2 a day while over a billion lack even basic access to safe drinking water. Ironically, the growing consumption in the

wealthier consumer societies has been accompanied by increased poverty, teenage suicide, diminished access to health care, rising personal debt, lack of leisure time, and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. From this perspective it would appear that the \$20 trillion spent on increased consumption worldwide has not increase general happiness or health (Assadourian et al., 2004; Assadourian et al., 2006).

The 2004 Living Planet report issued by the World Wildlife Fund indicated that people were already using 20 percent more natural resources than the Earth could produce. The average amount of productive land needed to sustain one person – their ecological footprint – is 2.2 hectares. Given the planet's population of over 6 billion in 2004, there were only 1.8 hectares available per person. From this perspective the world's population was consuming 20 percent more resources than the planet could produce (Loh & Wackernagel, 2004; Overconsumption threatens ecological balance, WWF warns, 2004) and the situation has only gotten worse. Consumption in the form of ecological overshoot continues to exceed the planet's biocapacity at an ever accelerating rate (Hails, Loh, & Goldfinger, 2006; Venetoulis & Talberth, 2005). This is exacerbated by the waste resulting from over-consumption and lack of sufficient reuse and recycling. For example, in the United States enough wood, cardboard, and paper are thrown away every year to heat over 5 million homes for over 200 years (Sivard, 1996).

A 2004 report on water use (Lundqvist et al., 2004-2005) notes that in the developed world supermarkets are bursting at the seams with food while a large portion of the world's population languishes in hunger. But beneath the issues of both hunger and obesity lies the problem of how food is produced, distributed and consumed. Sustainable development is being undermined by a rapacious demand for food. Natural landscapes

are rapidly being converted into agricultural land, rivers are being drained, and water is being polluted with fertilizer and pesticides in order to meet the growing demand. Beyond mere irrigation of food crops the processing of food requires tremendous amounts of water and much is discharged in the final process as wastewater (Carawan, 1996; Lundqvist et al., 2004-2005). Demand for food appears to increase by 50 percent with the advent of every new generation. As this norm for increased consumption continues to embrace the high-calorie diet of developed countries the demand for water is likely to become dramatic or even unattainable. For example, one loaf of bread requires only 550 liters of water to produce and 100 grams of beef requires 1500 liters. As diets become more meat intensive the demand for water will increase accordingly. Unfortunately, nearly 25 percent of the world's population live near rivers where the water will be completely committed for other than their purposes (Lundqvist et al., 2004-2005; Pearce, 2006; Water: A shared responsibility: The United Nations world water development report 2, 2006).

Myers and Kent (2004) lament that over half of all available freshwater is being consumed already. They note that by 2020 another 1.3 billion people will be added to the present 6.3 billion on the Earth and that they will all be making demands on the diminishing water supplies. This growth in population has a strong potential to foster conflict and even wars over water (de Villiers, 2001; Glennon, 2002; N. Myers & Kent, 2004; Pearce, 2006; Postel, 1997; Rothfeder, 2001; Shiva, 2002; Ward, 2002). Over-consumption has also degraded over 20 million square kilometers of land and has begun to dislocate the climate, depleting the environment further. In addition, headlong consumption by long-rich countries as well as the new consumers has created grand-scale pollution, energy

shortages, and mountains of toxins and waste in a way that is bringing humanity towards a headlong crash with the natural world (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2004; N. Myers & Kent, 2004).

Dominguez and Robin (1992) decry this situation:

We are depleting the earth's resources, clogging its arteries (rivers and roads), and polluting the air, water and soil.... One of the primary engines driving global environmental problems is North American patterns of excess consumption. Couple this consumption with the understandable envy and yearning growing in the "have-nots" to acquire the same luxuries that we enjoy, and you have a scenario for disaster. And this disaster isn't in the future. It has already begun.

We can all recite the tragic indicators of this looming disaster – from the greenhouse effect to the hole in the ozone layer. They are front page news, making reluctant and frightened ecologists of us all. And these conditions are made worse by an advertising industry that creates demand for products we don't need that are using up raw materials we may soon run out of....

Humans now appropriate 40 percent of what nature has to offer – even though we are but one species among as yet uncounted millions. Continued growth, either in population or in consumption, could spell disaster....

pp. 10 – 14

Durning (1992) opines that in the last several decades more has been consumed than in the combined history of humanity. Thus, the affluence that followed World War II has ushered in a new form of human culture: the consumer society. However, he notes that while the new culture of consumption is just as important an issue as population growth or technological change, it is generally viewed as simply a good thing or otherwise ignored. This beneficent view of consumption is encapsulated by Victor Lebow shortly after the Second World War:

Our enormously productive economy... demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption... We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate.

(As quoted in Dominguez & Robin, 1992, p. 17)



Dominguez and Robin observe:

By the early 1920's a curious wrinkle had emerged in the U.S. economy. The astounding capacity of machinery to fill human needs had been so successful that economic activity was slowing down. Instinctively knowing they had enough, workers were asking for a shorter workweek and more leisure to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Two sectors of American society were alarmed at this trend. The moralists who had internalized the Protestant work ethic believed that "idle hands would do the work of the devil." Leisure is debasing, they thought, leading at least to sloth if not to the rest of the seven deadly sins. The other sector to sound the alarm was the industrialists. Reduced demand for factory output threatened to halt economic growth. Workers did not seem as instinctively eager to buy new goods and services (like cars, chemicals, appliances and entertainment) as they did the old ones (like food, clothing and shelter).

The alternative to growth, however, was seen not as maturity but as the precursor to the stagnation of civilization and the death of progress. New markets were needed for the expanding cornucopia of goods that machines could turn out with such speed and precision for the continued profit of the industrialists. And here's the stroke of genius: these new markets would consist of the same populace, but the people would be educated to want not only old and necessary items but new things that they didn't need. Enter the concept of "standard of living." A new art, science and industry was born to convince Americans that they were working to elevate their standard of living rather than to satisfy basic economic needs. In 1929 the Herbert Hoover Commission on Recent Economic Changes published a progress report on this new (and very welcome) strategy:

The survey has proved conclusively what has long been held theoretically to be true, that wants are almost insatiable; that one want satisfied makes way for another. The conclusion is that economically we have a boundless field before us; that there are new wants which will make way endlessly for newer wants, as fast as they are satisfied.... Our situation is fortunate, our momentum is remarkable.

Instead of leisure being [a] relaxed activity, it was transformed into an opportunity for increased consumption – even consumption of leisure itself...

(1992, pp. 15, 16)

A report to the 2001 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Changing consumption patterns: Report of the Secretary-General, 2001) asserts:

20 percent of the world's population, in the high-income countries, account for 86 percent of the total private consumption expenditures, while the poorest 20 percent, in low-income countries, consume a mere 1.3 percent. Consumption per

capita has increased steadily in industrialized countries at about 2.3 percent per year over the past 25 years, very rapidly in East Asia at about 6.1 percent, and at a rising rate in South Asia at around 2.0 percent. On the other hand, the consumption expenditure of the average African household is 20 percent less than it was 25 years ago. The lack of adequate consumption by the poorer segment of the world population is a critical concern for sustainable development....

More efficient use of energy is critical to sustainable consumption.... People in the [developed] countries continued to consume much more energy than those in developing countries... 10 times the consumption in developing regions....

Over the past century, mainly as a result of agricultural expansion to meet the growing demand for food and other agricultural products, about half of the world's wetlands area has been lost and grasslands have been reduced by more than 90 percent in some areas. The world's forested area has declined from 11.4 square kilometers (km<sup>2</sup>) per person in 1970 to only 7.3 km<sup>2</sup> per person at present. In addition, nearly 70 percent of the world's major fish stocks are overfished or are being fished at their biological limit.... Soil degradation has afflicted two thirds of the world's agricultural lands as farming practices have intensified to meet increasing demand for food, with particularly high growth in demand for meat and dairy products. Dams and other water diversions to meet growing demand for water, especially for agriculture, fragment almost 60 percent of the world's large rivers. As a result of unsustainable development and degradation of freshwater ecosystems, 20 percent of the world's freshwater species are extinct, threatened or endangered.

Looking at material flows, industrial economies have become more efficient in their use of materials, but overall waste generation has continued to increase.... Overall resource consumption and waste flows into the environment continued to grow owing to economic and population growth. One half to three quarters of annual resource inputs to industrial economies were returned to the environment as wastes within a year. Improvements in resource efficiency and waste reduction have been limited by continuing use of older-generation technologies and by consumer lifestyles focusing on mobility, convenience and product disposability.... Environmental pressures continue to increase owing to the continuing increase in the volume of goods and services consumed and discarded as a result of increasing income and consumer demand....

An important driving force for changing consumption and production patterns in the world today is globalization. Through globalization, consumers now have more choices of goods and services.... However, globalization also poses some environmental threats through, for example, increased consumption of natural resources and generation of waste.... Globalization can also result in the spread of unsustainable lifestyles. Current policies and production patterns are insufficient to address the increased stress on the environment owing to increased production and consumption. There is also concern that global competition is undermining

social and environmental policies.... Globalization is, in some cases, exacerbating the effects of weak environmental policies. For example, demand from the world market for food and other agricultural products may promote excessive use of agro-chemicals, resulting in soil degradation, or encourage unsustainable fishing in the absence of proper fisheries management regimes. High demand and high prices on world markets can increase pressure for unsustainable harvesting of tropical timber. In addition, alien invasive species that accompany goods and transportation can cause significant damage to ecosystems....

pp. 1 - 5

Arguably urban and suburban sprawl represent a significant and deleterious aspect of over-consumption and the resulting environmental burden. Beginning with concern over the sprawl in California (Dear, Wolch, Pastor, & Dreier, 2004; Fulton, 2001), and later expanding to other states with large urban areas, the dispute regarding the costs and benefits of tract homes and suburban expansion has continued unabated (Gillham, 2002; Persky & Wiewel, 2000).

Bruegmann (2005) forwards the idea that sprawl is a natural outcome of both metropolitan maturity (meaning congestion, decay, and a high cost of living) and the financial means to escape the city. He notes that sprawl has occurred throughout history whenever these two factors are present and provide the benefits of privacy, mobility, and choice.

However, the bulk of the arguments put forward appear to be against modern sprawl. Morris (2005) complains that the suburban landscape has twisted the American dream into a ghoulish nightmare, with a subsequent increase in rape, murder, and assault, more per capita than any other developed nation. The dearth of small towns and the unplanned growth of sprawl have substituted malls for main streets, cars for conversation, and television for social intercourse, leaving the average American afraid, isolated, depressed, and alienated.

Agreeing with Morris, Kowinski (2002) examines America's apparent drive to turn everything into a parking lot and concludes that the shopping mall as the most insidious and ubiquitous manifestation of sprawl. Both Sen (2005) and Cohen (2002) concur, observing that shopping malls now represent the post-modern American lifestyle. Sen notes that there are more malls than there are cities, colleges, or television stations and more shopping centers than hotels, hospitals, school districts, or movie theaters.

From a broader perspective Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck (2000) observe that America's main streets and neighborhoods have been replaced by alien substitutes. Like an architectural version of the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* the sprawling subdivisions, office parks, and shopping centers built over the past fifty years have destroyed the traditional neighborhood and eroded citizenship, equality, and personal safety. They charge that these changes have especially burdened stay-at-home mothers, the elderly, teens, and children, and that the resulting pedestrian unfriendly environments are neither functional nor economically and environmentally sustainable. They also note that over 20,000 gated communities have been built in America as a result of peoples' feeling of alienation and vulnerability in this strange environment. However, these communities often breed indifference and a lack of empathy for others who are less fortunate, thus creating more alienation.

Rome (2001) asserts that in pursuit of the American dream, cheap land, and profit in the postwar era homebuilders also failed to account for the environmental cost of their endeavors. He notes that:

In the years after World War II, the nation's biggest homebuilders were hailed as heroes: By making the United States a nation of homeowners, the boosters argued, tract housing would help lay the foundation for a booming mass-consumption economy. Yet, just a generation later, a host of critics were calling

the sprawl of suburbia an environmental disaster – and arguing that the problem of environmentally destructive development demanded far-reaching government action.

P. 3

He contends that hills were leveled, wetlands filled, and floodplains built upon. Septic tanks were installed near streams and wells. Open space was all but eliminated. Freedom to develop one's own land in any fashion, to make a profit in the least expensive way possible, became unprofitable for everything else and spurred controversy that has continued until present time. To environmentalists, as well as to the environment, the urban and suburban centers where most people live are just as important as wild lands. Thus, the birth of the new environmentalism began with the postwar debate over the uncontrolled spread of tract housing.

According to Johnson and Klemens (2005) the overpopulation and overconsumption that threaten the biological diversity of the Earth are exemplified in this kind of sprawl. Through developer disregard the natural environment experiences fragmentation, habitat loss, pollution, and a radical alteration of natural communities, processes, and ecosystems.

Flint (2006) believes that there is a fundamental battle between those who wish to rethink zoning laws that favor inefficient and deleterious sprawl and those who advocate property rights that allow them full control over the development of their property. He argues that the accelerated pace of development should be countered with a more conservative view in which the subsidized highways and expansion of public services that overdevelopment brings are not a reflection of the free market and ultimately impose undue costs.

Gutfreund (2004) traces the history of transportation policy and political forces that have subsidized sprawl and severely undermined the quality of life in three of America's major municipalities, suggesting that these are but examples and that the entire nation suffers from sprawl. He complains that, overly influenced by land developers, the auto industries, and an anti-urban bias, Washington promoted the overdevelopment of roads and highways in America and subsidized suburban development – fueling a nationwide dependence on cars and road building, destabilizing cities, and saddling state and local governments with expensive highway construction and maintenance.

### *Social Consequences*

Paradoxically, studies have determined that sprawl is even more expensive than more environmentally friendly alternatives (Burchell, Downs, McCann, & Mukherji, 2005), creating an additional revenue drain on America's citizens. But there are additional and more severe outcomes of sprawl and overconsumption for people in the United States.

While the concept of sprawl certainly refers to urban and suburban expansion, it can also include the extension of agricultural lands into areas that were once pristine; including forests, prairies, and wetlands. In addition to this encroachment, Pfeiffer (2006) expresses concern regarding America's growing dependency on fossil fuels for agricultural use. He estimates that the global expansion of agriculture has appropriated fully 40 percent of the planet's photosynthetic capability. And while the Green Revolution helped to provide abundant food it also resulted in an exploding population that is well in excess of the planet's carrying capacity. Pfeiffer observes that America could sustain only about

two thirds of today's population if it were to give up fossil fuel based agriculture. The problem is that the supply is already starting to decline and the rest will be much more difficult and expensive to extract. Extended to the planet as a whole, the suspension of fossil fuel based agriculture would only support about two billion people, roughly one third of the current population, unless alternatives are found.

At times defined as a gluttonous consumption of land, Hirschhorn (2005) observes that urban and suburban sprawl are similar to pornography, people know it when they see it. But more than being an obscenity, sprawl is also a killer. It kills people, rural lifestyles, time, quality of life, social capital, and the essence of American society. The sprawl industry and lobby deny American real choice in transportation and housing, refusing them the opportunity for active living. Active living involves walking to work, to the store, or to a bus or train station. It also means riding a bicycle to an appointment or hiking just for fun. But most Americans avoid exercise because it means doing so in unfriendly environments such as basements, fitness centers, or gravel roads. This has contributed greatly to the levels of obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. The risks involved in an inactive lifestyle include car accidents, stress, road rage, long commute times, time pressure, loneliness, depression, loss of social interaction, consumption of unhealthy fast food and comfort foods, air pollution, asthma, emphysema, lung cancer, noise, poorer quality of education for children, violence, television addiction, drug abuse, exhaustion, and sleep deprivation. Hirschhorn concludes that industry and government have influenced the perpetuation of zoning regulations, subsidy, tax codes, and propaganda that support sprawl at the expense of a healthier and more human friendly environment.

Nozzi (2003) contends that until 1945 the focus of design for American communities was people, pedestrians, bicyclists, and kids; blocks were shorter and neighborhood interaction was more available. He observes that in Europe the homes are modest but the public places are luxurious and expansive, a direct contrast to the American obsession with building cities for cars rather than for people. Nozzi comments that America becomes its own worst enemy when cars are valued more than people. When this happens more public money is used for costly roads which allow people to move away from the city. But the increased distance between home and work causes people to drive more often, which leads to more road building, which produces more pollution and traffic accidents which, in turn, makes people want to live farther away. Walking to work or riding a bicycle has become less and less available. Some city and county codes even prohibit the mixed land use of shops, offices, and homes that would facilitate leaving the car at home. Nozzi also argues that the high-speed roads that are now common are barriers to a healthier lifestyle. Rounded corners, widened lanes, and the removal of trees along the roads have created a racetrack environment where nobody can safely walk or bike. He complains that when the cities are designed to make cars happier, everything else suffers.

Kay (1998) laments that Americans spend more than eight billion hours every year stuck in traffic with daily drives becoming longer and more frequent. She agrees that the automobile is destroying America's communities, economic competitiveness, and environment. Kay argues that in America's quest for freedom and mobility through a growing dependence on the car as the primary mode of transportation, it has, paradoxically, lost its mobility and freedom.



According to Kunstler (1994), America has become locked into a model of suburbanization that is far too dependent on the automobile. Once the expression of individualism and independence, home ownership and transportation have become soulless under the abstracting influence of modernism. Kunstler describes modern planned cities as capitals of unreality. He sees the American dream transformed into a nightmare of crass consumption and commercialism promoted by a modern machine-worshipping corporate culture. He notes:

Thirty years ago, Lewis Mumford said of post-World War II development, “the end product is an encapsulated life, spent more and more either in a motor car or within the cabin of darkness before a television set.” The whole wicked, sprawling, megalopolitan mess, he gloomily predicted, would completely demoralize mankind and lead to nuclear holocaust.

It hasn’t come to that [yet], but what Mumford deplored was just the beginning of a process that, instead of blowing up the world, has nearly wrecked the human habitat in America. Ever-busy, ever-building, ever-in-motion, ever-throwing-out the old for the new, we have hardly paused to think about what we are so busy building, and what we have thrown away. Meanwhile, the everyday landscape becomes more nightmarish and unmanageable each year. For many, the word development itself has become a dirty word.

Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years, and most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading – the jive-plastic commuter tract home wastelands, the Potemkin village shopping plazas with their vast perking lagoons, the Lego-block hotel complexes, the “gourmet mansardic” junk-food joints, the Orwellian office “parks” featuring buildings sheathed in the same reflective glass as the sunglasses worn by chain-gang guards, the particle-board garden apartments rising up in every meadow and cornfield, the freeway loops around every big and little city with their clusters of discount merchandise marts, the whole destructive, wasteful, toxic, agoraphobia-inducing spectacle that politicians proudly call “growth.”

The newspaper headlines may shout about global warming, extinctions of living species, the devastation of rain forests, and other worldwide catastrophes, but Americans evince a striking complacency when it comes to their everyday environment and the growing calamity that it represents.

(Kunstler, 1994, p. 10)

Princen, Maniates, and Conca (2002) insist that the problem of over-consumption must be newly confronted. Previous attempts to forward concepts such as sustainable development and green production stress technological solutions which are not green enough, promote economic growth in the wrong places, and promote numbers that are already too large. They argue that more recycling, green purchasing, and small changes in the process of production are insufficient. In addition, the notion that consumption is the purpose of the economy has not been challenged. Consumption must be placed at the center of the debate and stringent and diverse efforts must be employed to address it.

Spurlock (2005) fumes:

Every waking moment of our lives, we swim in an ocean of advertising, all of it telling us the same thing: Consume. Consume. And then consumer some more.

In 2003, the auto industry spent \$18.2 billion telling us we needed a new car, more cars, bigger cars. Over the last twenty-five years, the number of household vehicles in the United States has doubled. The rate of increase in the number of cars, vans and SUVs for personal travel has been six times the rate of population increase. In fact, according to the Department of Transportation, there are now, for the first time in history, *more cars than drivers* in America....

We drive everywhere now. Almost nine-tenths of our daily travel takes place in a personal vehicle. Walking, actually using the legs and feet God gave us, accounts for appallingly little of our day-to-day getting around. Even on trips of under one mile, according to the Department of Transportation, we walked only 24 percent of the time in 2001 (and rode a bike under 2 percent). Walking declined by almost half in the two decades between 1980 and 2000. In Los Angeles, you can get arrested for walking. The cops figure if you're not in a car you can't be up to any good. If you're not in a car, you're a vagrant. Same goes for the suburbs, where so many of us now live.

And what do you put inside that SUV, minivan or pickup truck you're driving everywhere, other than your kids? Well, lots of *stuff*, that's what. In 2002, the retail industry in this country spent \$13.5 billion telling us what to buy, and we must have been listening, because in 2003 we spent nearly \$8 *trillion* on all kinds of crap. That's right, trillion. How insane is that? We are the biggest consuming culture on the planet. We buy almost twice as much crap as our nearest competitor, Japan. We spend more on ourselves than the entire gross national product of any nation in the world.

And all that shopping – whew, has made us hungry. Every year, the food industry spends around \$33 billion convincing us that we’re famished. So we all climb back into our giant vehicle filled with all our stuff from Wal-Mart, and we cruise to the nearest fast-food joint....

[But] what does all that consumption do for us? Does it make us happy? You tell me. If we were all so happy, would we be on so many drugs? Antidepressant use in the U.S. nearly *tripled* in the past decade. We’ve got drugs in America we can take for anything: if we’re feeling too bad, too good, too skinny, too fat, too sleepy, too wide awake, too unmanly. We’ve got drugs to counteract the disastrous health effects of all our overconsumption – diet drugs, heart drugs, liver drugs, drugs to make our hair grow back and our sillies stiff. In 2003, we Americans spent \$227 billion on medications....

Yet none of the stuff we consume – no matter how much bigger our SUV is than our neighbor’s, no matter how many Whoppers we wolf down, no matter how many DVD’s we own or how much Zoloft we take – makes us feel full, or satisfied or happy.

And the line between personal responsibility and corporate responsibility gets finer and more blurred. Yes, you’re still responsible for your own life, your own health, your own happiness. But your desires, the things you want, the things you think you need – that’s all manipulated by corporate advertising and marketing that now whisper and shout and wink at you from every corner of your life – at home, at work, at school, at play.

Consume. Consume. Still not happy? Then you obviously haven’t consumed enough.

pp. 5 – 7

Looking from the outside in at America, Schumaker (2001) joins in the rant:

On a recent visit home to Wisconsin I found myself sitting alone in a crowded shopping mall.... Above me towered a brutish vending machine.... A miserable young lad approached, dragging the body of his package-laden mother. He searched her eyes repeatedly until she finally fed the machine, got a Rocket Ranger toy and stuck it out to her child.

He slapped it onto the floor and screeched for still another selection. Mom stuffed in more bills until finally the boy was out of choices. “Well, for God’s sake, what do you want,” she bellowed.

In a confused rage the boy bawled, over and over again, “I want something, I want something, I want something.” As I watched the boy... [I felt] glad that I now live in New Zealand....

The percentage of total economic activity that is generated in America from personal spending has reached 70 percent, far more than any other nation.... In a spending showdown, no-one is faster or more deadly than Americans.... Private spending is between 50 percent and 90 percent greater than in all major European countries. Over the past five years the savings rate in the US has fallen to a negative rate so that we now spend around \$35 billion more than we earn. Virtually all shame has been erased from indebtedness. In 1999 US citizens racked up credit-card debt of \$1.5 trillion, while total consumer debt reached a mind-boggling \$6 trillion. The one million bankruptcies filed annually due to credit excesses are readily absorbed by an economic system that flourishes on consumer foolhardiness.

When it comes to the physical-waste side of the equation, Americans are leaving Sasquatch-sized footprints. The strategy of overproduction, overspending and overconsumption sees Americans piling up far more solid waste than any other nation. The typical US family of four amasses a seemingly impossible 13 kg of solid waste per day....

[But] most feel proud as well as fortified by the cultural assumption that overindulgence is good for the country.... In 1970, a large-scale survey of US university students showed that 80 per cent of them had as a goal “the development of a meaningful philosophy of life.” By 1989, the percentage had fallen to 41 per cent. During the same period, the number of those aiming “to be very well off financially” increased from 39 per cent to 75 per cent....

American-style radical consumerism has succeeded to the point that social analysts now speak of things like “consumer trance” and “ecological dissociation,”.... Eighty-five percent of Americans indicated in a recent poll that a “six figure” income would be required to service their yearned-for lifestyle. Yet nearly 30 per cent of those actually canting six figures reported that their “basic needs” were not being met....

Of special concern to mental-health professionals are studies showing that high degrees of materialism have a toxic effect on psychological and social well-being. A strong materialist orientation has been associated with diminished life satisfaction, impaired self-esteem, dissatisfaction with friendships and leisure activities, and a predisposition to depression ....

Hyper-materialism also features prominently in the emerging plague of “existential disorders” such as chronic boredom, ennui, jadedness, purposelessness, meaninglessness and alienation. Surveys of therapists reveal that 40 per cent of Americans seeking psychotherapy today suffer from these and other complaints, often referred to as all-pervasive “psychic deadness.” Once materialism becomes the epicenter of one’s life it can be hard to feel any more alive than the lifeless objects that litter the consumer world. In a recent study of US university students, 81 per cent of them reported feeling in an “existential vacuum,”....

The world seems hellbent on following America's lead. But there is nothing useful to be learned from the American Dream in its present hyper-commercialized form. The toxic consciousness that it fosters has transformed the dream into a nightmare.

pp. 34, 35

### *Political and Economic Consequences*

Nocera (1994) recounts the spiraling inflation of the late 1970s and early 1980s, arguing that these times led many middle-class Americans to abandon the thrift and aversion to risk that they acquired during the Depression. He states that the escalating inflation, unpredictable interest rates, and a diminished standard of living caused people to take on more debt even while assimilating the new resources of multiple family incomes, adjustable-rate mortgages, credit cards, stock ownership, and money-market accounts.

Lahart (2003) contends that there will be hell to pay as Americans use consumer credit as never before. He asserts that the American consumer has become deeply addicted to spending and is digging deeper and deeper into debt in order to live beyond his or her means. As of mid-2003 consumer credit had risen to nearly 20 percent of personal income. To give perspective, he notes that this consumption bubble may even dwarf the asset bubble that burst in 2000. And while the perseverance of consumer spending is credited with keeping America's economy going, the consumer credit and mortgage debt are both higher with respect to disposable income than at any other time in America's history.

Lahart notes that consumer spending accounts for approximately 70 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), but this trend could easily falter. The generous rates of-

ferred by the Federal Reserve have not been used as an opportunity to save but as an opportunity to spend. Financial institutions have taken advantage by offering people even more efficient ways of going into debt. New credit cards, variable rate loans, home equity lines of credit, renting to own, and other credit and loan vehicles have been hastily employed to help people, as Lahart calls it, eat their house. He goes on to observe that America as a nation is going into hock as well. America's widening trade gap, deficits, and national debt have given example and latitude for Americans to emulate this bad behavior.

According to Branigin (2004) America's consumer debt went over \$2 trillion for the very first time, representing a doubling since consumer debt topped \$1 trillion in December of 1994. Branigin agrees with Lahart that this debt dwarfs that of any other country and exemplifies the kind of stock market bubble characteristic of the 1990's in America. The problem is alarming, as America cannot remain the wealthiest country in the world and shoulder this kind of debt, especially when the historically low interest rates are bound to rise. Bankruptcies are surging, reaching 1.6 million households in 2003. And with mortgages taken into account, America's households owe nearly \$9 trillion (also see Hagenbaugh, 2004; Laurier, 2004).

Manning (2000) notes that Americans have been conditioned to accept debt as a normal part of life. Calling credit cards yuppie food stamps, he warns that the problem of consumer debt may be worse than the figures indicate. New kinds of hybrid financial institutions are creating new kinds of loans that are not being taken into account, especially those where the introductory interest rate is 0 percent but jumps to over 200 percent a year. Manning says that the cost of borrowing on credit has tripled since the 1980's.

Average household consumer debt is \$9 thousand according to the credit card industry, but Manning suggests that it is really closer to \$13 thousand. He goes on to say that historically the best customer was one who paid off their loans. But now they are the ones who never do because finance charges and other fees are a major source of profit for lenders. Manning argues that eventually America's standard of living will suffer unless there is a positive change in consumer debt. If not, people will need to work longer and their retirement will continue to be pushed further and further out. Other consequences include the likelihood that the rate of bankruptcies will grow along with the rate of divorce. America's addiction to credit has a very poor prognosis unless a more rational mood prevails.

Del Giudice (2006) claims that credit card borrowing in America has jumped in 2006 due to gasoline prices, rising interest rates, new laws which make it harder to file for bankruptcy, and a cooling housing market which is reducing the demand for home-equity loans.

Noting the predatory nature of marketing credit to young people Quart comments:

You can see the commercial remaking of teenagers in the ads for investment services and credit card companies directed at teens in the high-gloss teen magazines. The companies feign ignorance about the rising rates of credit card debt among the very young, that those under twenty-five are now the fastest-growing group filing for bankruptcy. In blatant disregard for youth consumer debt, financial-services companies now create teenage-oriented credit and cash cards. Among these cards are Visa's Visa Buxx card and the Coca-Cola-owned RocketCash debit card, where parents or other adults can put cash onto a teen's RocketCash account through an advance from the parents' own credit card.

(2003, p. 4)

Calling American consumers the hedonists of last resort, Gillin (2002) finds that record amounts of personal debt and numbers of bankruptcies and foreclosures have become commonplace and are expected to climb. Corporations have been propped up by

consumer spending after the recession beginning in 2000, but the ongoing growth in debt is unsustainable. More frightening would be the prospect of paying down the debt. Gil-  
lin predicts that it would require 50 years to accomplish if American were to stop using credit entirely and focus only on debt reduction. But consumers and lenders don't seem to be worrying even as the bulk of lending is moving towards sub-prime loans. Even with an increase in bad debt, banks have no immediate need to feel concerned as they can loan at nearly 200 percent markup of the percentage at which they are allowed to borrow from the government, and only need to have ten percent of what they intend to borrow in their accounts.

The rising debt and consumption in America might be partially excused if the bulk of products consumed were of real value. However, they seem to exist primarily to promote a social context that is without relevant content. Ritzer (2004a) explains that, more and more, these products, which were first produced in the United States and later disseminated around much of the world, are nothing:

Vast, fully-enclosed shopping malls. Lots of glass, light, stainless steel, chrome, and granite. Hundreds of shops along lengthy corridors that criss-cross at various points. Most of the shops are outlets of large chains: that is made clear by their well-known signs and logos. Large numbers of people traipsing through familiar structures, along well-traveled corridors, and past shops with names well known to them. Some are just strolling, others window-shopping, while still others dart in and out of shops to make purchases, usually using credit cards. These malls, corridors, consumers, and shops could be almost anywhere – Los Angeles, Singapore, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, or Johannesburg.... Whether or not they shop in malls, consumer throughout the world are increasingly drawn to more-or-less mass-produced-and-distributed products and brands.... In purchasing these things, in logo-ed shops, in or out of malls, consumers around the globe encounter employees who are less and less likely to be knowledgeable about what they sell and increasingly likely to interact with them in an impersonal, even highly scripted, manner. The shops are increasingly also on the Internet, where consumers are more likely to encounter “shopbots” than people.... Anywhere they go in the world (or on the Net), consumers are increasingly unlikely to receive much in the way of service from such employees and, in fact, are likely to serve themselves or



to interact with technologies like the Web site of an online retailer, the ATM, the self-service gasoline pump, or the “speedpass” booth on the toll road....

These... exemplify the major forms of nothing.... [and] we are witnessing the globalization of nothing.... The social world, particularly in the realm of consumption, is increasingly characterized by nothing. In this case, “nothing” refers to a *social form that is generally centrally conceived, controlled, and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content.*

pp. 1 – 3

This nothingness, unfortunately, has not seemed to faze the American consumer and the coalition of government and corporations continue to give easy rationales for those who would continue their lifestyle of consumption. As a consequence, household savings in the United States has experienced a steep decline. One writer opines, though, that this is a good thing:

I have a confession: I'm not much of a saver anymore. Sure, I put enough into my 401(k) to get the maximum match from my employer. But I used to sock away another 10% of my paycheck for my kids' college, emergencies, and big-ticket purchases. I don't anymore: The stock market does my saving for me.

Multiply that mindset by tens of millions of consumers, and you grasp why the nation's already low personal savings rate has plummeted this year to 0.6% of disposable income. During September and October, the government reports, the rate actually dipped below zero – unheard of since the Great Depression.

That statistic might unnerve you. But don't worry: The U.S. is awash in savings from other sources, mainly business. What's more, the meteoric rise in stock values has given consumers a huge pot of money to tap without having to put more aside. “U.S. households are the richest ever,” proclaims David A. Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's DRI. “They figure, ‘We're so rich, we don't have to save,’”....

For now, the U.S. is – and the world needs – a nation of big spenders. “You have a weak global economy kept afloat by Americans who are spending like mad,” says Edward E. Yardeni, chief economist at Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. “If those spending yuppies become frugal yuppies, look out.” Michael R. Paslawskyj, chief economist at CIT Group Inc. of Livingston, N.J., warns that a downturn in stocks could abruptly turn Americans into savers, pushing the U.S. into a recession. His advice: Don't save too much right away. “Do it gradually.”

Fine by me. After hearing economists scold us Americans for being profligate materialists, it's nice to be told to keep spending. I'm off to the mall to do my part for the world economy.

(Ullman, 1999, p. 54)

But despite this cheery outlook, real trouble seems to be on the way (Schwenninger & Dugger, 2002). Government debt is approaching \$9 trillion, about half of which accounted for by foreign investment, and the trade deficit is around \$750 billion and growing. (According to the CIA about two thirds of the expense of US consumption, ironically, comes from the purchase of foreign oil. See <https://cia.gov/cia//publications/factbook/geos/us.html>.)

The U.S. is floating the economies of much of the world through its consumption, but the gains in productivity mentioned above have not been plowed back into the American economy or benefited the average American consumer-citizen. The middle class and poor have buoyed the American economy since the last recession through their consumption, but they seem to be losing financial ground by the minute. The richest 1 percent of Americans own over 40 percent of the stock, and the richest 10 percent own over 80 percent, so only the rich appear to benefit substantially by stock value increase. But despite America's overconsumption and the resulting demise of household savings and escalation in debt, the Economist magazine ("A taxing time for squirrels," 1995) argues that thrift, a natural response to this kind of situation, seems to have gone out of fashion, especially in America.

Feldstein (2006) recalls that the savings rate of American households has been declining for more than a decade and recently turned negative. Despite corporate savings, this decrease in household savings has dramatically reduced national savings overall. He

points out that in 2003 and 2004 the combined net savings of households, businesses, and government was at its lowest in at least 50 years.

He states:

This sharp decline in saving has had important implications for the United States and for the global economy. It has reduced productivity-enhancing net business investment in the United States to less than four percent of GDP and made the United States increasingly dependent on capital from the rest of the world to finance that investment. At the same time, the decreased national savings rate – and the increase in consumer spending that it implies – has induced a rise in U.S. imports. Those imports have contributed to the growth of output and employment in many countries around the world.

(Feldstein, 2006, p. 1)

From a political and economic perspective this could be considered good news for the rest of the world but bad news for Americans. Abate (2006) comments:

When the Commerce Department recently tallied up consumer finances for November, it found that Americans shelled out more money than they took in. It was the seventh such month of red ink during 2005.... In November the savings rate was a negative 0.2 percent.

Given how much red ink households racked up in the first 11 months of last year... the nation's personal savings rate could well be negative for all of 2005... the first such occurrence since the Great Depression.

The term “savings rate” may be a misnomer. Keith Leggett, senior economist with the American Bankers Association, described the measure as a tally of all the income that isn't spent.... Traditionally this unspent income has been used to accumulate capital for future investment.... But many experts say that in the months ahead, savings-starved, debt-burdened households will slow their spending and, with it, the economy.

p. J – 1

According to the numbers, however, the situation now appears even worse.

Household savings in America have been in decline since 1992, went negative in 2005, and continued into the red throughout 2006 (Bosworth, 2006; Harvey, 2004; IMF Executive Board concludes 2006 Article IV Consultation with the United States, 2006). As a percent of disposable income the decline has been even more dramatic since 1982 (see

<http://www.bea.gov/bea/an/0898niw/box2.htm>). Americans are spending more than they make and building an unsustainable debt load to make it happen. Why?

Although it has been explained previously the reason bears repeating. Schor (1998) argues that although Americans are working harder than ever, they are saving less and racking up huge credit card debts. More and more people are pursuing the trappings of the good life: trophy cars, trophy homes, trophy kitchens, etc. Even the affluent complain that it's hard to afford the basics. When interviewed, most people say that they need twice as much as what they make to get along, regardless of their present income (J. B. Schor, 1999). Schor explains that people are either living in denial about their spending habits, or are agnostic as to where their money goes, or both. But to a large degree people seem also to be responding to intense social pressure. Schor notes that people communicate much of who they are through how they spend their money. And even if they buy things they don't need, there are symbolic fantasies attached to these things that make them desirable. She also points out that people work in time-consuming jobs, and therefore they feel a need to buy their free time by getting others to do their work at home: cleaning, gardening, driving, and things like making family meals. But as a consequence they often must earn more money to pay for those services so they work longer hours, creating a vicious feed-forward cycle.

Supporting this line of thought Popcorn (1991) asserted that affluent Americans would cocoon themselves from the squalor and danger of an environment in economic and social decline. She observed that Americans were making their homes more hospitable to living-in rather than going out, with more comfortable furniture, home theaters, and people to do their cooking, laundry, errands, shopping, and housecleaning for them.

However, Danziger (2005) explains that the 15 million most affluent households now make up the leading edge of a new luxury consumer she calls Butterflies, and are named so because they are emerging from their opulent cocoons and turning their attention to the world outside. She states that the conspicuous consumption of the 1990s is now passé. The Butterflies put a premium on experiences and see luxury in terms of how it connects with their dreams, desires, and passions, rather than in terms of price. However, past luxuries soon become necessities and there is increasing pressure on lower classes to emulate the upper. It is therefore unlikely that a Butterfly would give up a luxurious cocoon to which they could return after a hard day of experiential passion, or that lesser bugs would cease to aspire to the Butterfly's standard of living.

### ***Social and Religious Consequences***

Lasn (2000) complains that America is no longer a country but a multimillion-dollar brand. Klein (2002) agrees, noting that Americans live in an era where image is nearly everything and brand identities create the person as well as the nation. She notes that brands have become ubiquitous in a global economy where the entire planet presents a marketing opportunity and corporations see themselves as lifestyle sellers rather than product manufacturers. These corporations abuse the consumer, the environment, and their own workers because they would rather invest their resources in dominating the airwaves, physical space, and cyberspace to make greater and greater profits from over-consumption. She complains that it is difficult to reveal this manipulation because free speech and the telling of truth to power have been drowned out by the commercial cacophony. Bauman (1998) comments that in times past being poor meant not having a job,

but now it means that one is a failed consumer. And again, American consumerism seems to most viciously afflict the nation's young people. For America's youth, money is making it to the top of their list of values, if it is not already there. Even in the halls of academia Droge and McCoy (1995) point out that money appears to be especially important to contemporary college students who have been raised in America's credit-card, easy-access society. The list of characteristics and instances that identify overconsumption in the United States are too vast to articulate fully in this chapter.

However, the same numerous and varied aspects of American consumer culture have cried out for an appellation appropriate for such a market oriented existence. Therefore, with much fanfare, a new category of abbreviated sound bites have arrived with the prefix "Mc," such as McDonaldization, McChurch, McMansion, McWorld, and McJob. The contemporary and popular inclusion of these words in the American lexicon indicates their wide appeal in describing both the American consumer culture and its rapid deployment around the world. These words indicate the structuring of everyday life by bureaucratic control and performance criteria based on the flexibility, standardization, and practicability of fast-food service made famous by the McDonald's corporation, and which extend their influence to economic imperialism, globalization, the rationalization of modern life, cultural commodification, and the prominence of the American lifestyle (Barber, 1996; Smart, 1999). The first to popularize the term McDonaldization, Ritzer (1998) points out that the new means of consumption, i.e. credit cards, shopping malls, and cybermalls, are now employed to further everything from the McDisneyization of contemporary tourism to the McUniversitization of education. He states:

McDonaldization affects not only the restaurant business but also education, work, the criminal justice system, health care, travel, leisure, dieting, politics, the

family, religion, and virtually every other aspect of society. McDonaldization has shown every sign of being an inexorable process, sweeping through seemingly impervious institutions and regions of the world.

(Ritzer, 2006, p. 5)

Viewing America's postmodern consumer culture through the lens of semiotics, critical theory, philosophy, and feminism (Alfino, Caputo, & Wynyard, 1998; Ritzer, 1998, 2004b, 2006) Ritzer sees McDonaldization as characterized by uniformity of product, efficiency, calculability, predictability, national and international expansion, and control through non-human systems. He states, however, that although these traits proffer distinct advantages, they can also cause great harm. There are social, cultural, economic, and environmental perils associated with the widespread application of McDonaldization, the least of which is what Ritzer calls the irrational outcomes of rationalization. He notes that although efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control can form the basis of a rational system, rational systems inevitably spawn irrationalities because they serve to deny human reason, that is, rational systems are often unreasonable (Ritzer, 2004b; Schlosser, 2001; Spurlock, 2004).

Drane (2002), Sine (1999), and (Stetzer & Putnam, 2006) extend the concept of McDonaldization to religion stating that many places of worship in American have become stereotyped McChurches, with formulaic worship that is the equivalent of fast food. Sine goes on to attack the average capitalist-suburban Christian, and the church, for forgetting the teachings of Jesus. He states that the demonstrated McWorld values of putting material things first, then family and God should be reversed to place God first, followed by family and then the material things that are truly needed. He goes on to say that there is far too much pressure on young people to join the consumer rat race, that the globalization of mega-corporations through expanded consumption has given them un-

precedented power and is hurting the poor of the world, and that the result for the average American is greater risk for depression, divorce, hypertension, or bankruptcy. Nonetheless, the new and non-traditional American evangelical megachurches are becoming so popular that they continue to open veritable franchises, McChurches that employ the aforementioned standardized formula, by building satellite campuses and creating multiple venues for worship (Fourier, Sosnik, & Dowd, 2006).

Young (2006) observes:

Drive-through people fill our churches today. They pull up every weekend and expect an inspirational McMessage, fun-filled McChildcare, heart-warming McMusic, sensational McProgramming and then they're off. The exhaust fumes fill the air as minivans, cars, and SUVs bolt out of the parking lot in rapid-fire succession.

pp. 38, 39

Veith (1994) relates a similar sentiment:

Charles Colson tells about an evangelical church that decided it needed to grow membership. The pastor first commissioned a market survey. It found that many people were turned off by the term "Baptist." The church changed its name. The survey showed that people wanted accessibility, so the church put up a new building off the freeway. It had beamed ceilings, stone fireplaces, and no crosses or other religious symbols that might make people feel uncomfortable. Then the pastor decided to stop using theological language.... Sure enough, the church grew.... [by] adjusting its teaching to the demands of the marketplace, the church embarked on a pilgrimage to postmodernism....

Some have described postmodernist culture as a "therapeutic culture," in which a sense of psychological well-being, not truth, is the controlling value. The contemporary church likewise faces the temptation to replace theology with therapy.

Since postmodern thought is impatient with transcendent spiritual beliefs, the focus shifts to the here and the now, to the tangible. People have little interest in Heaven; they want health and wealth now. Since postmodernists are oriented to power, they will be drawn to power churches which promise miracles to solve every problem, political clout, exponential numerical growth, and success after success....

Colson severely criticizes the feel-good theologies of the "hot-tub religion" and the capitulation to popular culture of the "McChurch." Consumerism in the church, he says, dilutes its message, changes the church's character...

pp. 212 – 213



Williams (2006) also extends the concept of McDonaldization to service workers through the concept of McJobs. She explains that department stores began opening in the late 1800s and continued to spread throughout the nation. She remarks:

By the 1920's [department stores] became popular urban destinations for middle- and upper-class women. These early stores were modeled after fancy private clubs. They offered a range of luxurious services to flatter the pretensions of the haute bourgeoisie. In addition to offering a rich, aesthetically pleasurable environment for meeting with friends, many stores provided nurseries, valet parking, delivery services, doormen, restaurants, public lectures, and even baths.

p. 4

She continues, however, by observing that the indulgences offered to the clientele were quite dissimilar to the way the saleswomen were treated.

Although treatment of retail workers improved during the twentieth century, partly because the women who shopped at these turn-of-the-century palaces of consumption were appalled at the treatment of the saleswomen and campaigned to improve their working conditions and treatment, Williams criticizes the recent downward trend in opportunities and circumstances for the present day service worker. She describes the work that these people do as McJobs – jobs where the buying power of minimum wage has decreased, unions have been weakened, and benefits and job security have been lost.

Klein (2002) agrees, stating most of the workers who keep these companies running never share in any of the rewards. When Klein asked the president of Borders whether the bookstore chain could pay its clerks a living wage, he replied that while the concept was romantically appealing, it ignored the realities of America's business environment. Klein cynically notes that, given today's circumstances, the clerks should probably be grateful they're not stuck in a sweatshop making pennies an hour. In most situations service jobs are filled with permanent temporaries, or permatemps, who can do

most of the work but receive few, if any, benefits like health care, profit sharing, stock options, or paid vacations and holidays.

Therefore, if America is indeed a very expensive brand, as noted at the beginning of this section, then the most concise designation for its zealous consumer culture could easily be the McDonaldized economy or “McOnomy.” Not surprisingly the state of the economy in the United States, or that in other countries for that matter, is frequently determined by the Big Mac Index (The Big Mac Index: Food for thought, 2004; Caetano, Moura, & Da Silva, 2004; Click, 1996; Ong, 1997), that is, how many are sold and at what price. Although the value of this index is debated, it is still symbolic of American overconsumption and the icons thereof.

### *Conclusion*

America seems to be caught in a vicious cycle of overwork and overconsumption (Robinson, 2006). But is it making people happier or adding to their quality of life?

Myers (2005) answers by stating that in affluent countries, such as the United States, almost everyone can afford the basic necessities so increasing affluence matters surprisingly little. But he also notes that in poor countries being relatively well off makes for greater well-being and that psychologically it is better to be of an upper class or caste than a lower one (also see Bruni & Porta, 2005; Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwartz, in press; D. G. Myers, 1993). Myers points out that people do need food, sleep, warmth, and interpersonal contact, but the correlation between income and happiness is weak at best (see Inglehart, 1990, p. 242). It doesn't seem to matter whether one rides the bus or drives a BMW. Wealth is like health, people can suffer when they

don't have it but they don't necessarily appreciate it when they do, and this kind of adaptation plays a very important role in people's perceptions. Myers observes:

Even very rich people – the Forbe's 100 wealthiest Americans... are only slightly happier than average. With net worths all exceeding \$100 million, providing ample money to buy things they don't need and hardly care about... [they] agreed that "Money can increase OR decrease happiness, depending on how it is used."

He continues this discourse by pointing out the converse perspective:

At the other end of life's circumstances are most victims of disabling tragedies. With exceptions – vicious child abuse or rape, for example – most people who suffer negative life events do not exhibit long-term emotional devastation. People who become blind or paralyzed, perhaps after a car accident, thereafter suffer the frustrations imposed by their limitations. Daily, they must cope with the challenges imposed by their disabilities. Yet, remarkably, most eventually recover a near-normal level of day-to-day happiness. Thus, university students who must cope with disabilities are as likely as able-bodied students to report themselves happy, and their friends agree with their self-perceptions. "Weeping may linger for the night" observed the Psalmist, "but joy comes with the morning."

(D. G. Myers, 2005, p. 1)

(Also see Allman, 1989; Diener & Horwitz, 1985, and Psalms: 30: 5b, NRSV)

It would appear that beyond a certain point the objective circumstances of life have a negligible role in the experience of happiness (Kamman, 1983). A society in which everyone lived in a small house would provide people with no less happiness than a society in which everyone lived in a large one. When good things happen people are happy until they adapt. When bad things happen people are unhappy until they adapt. Afterward, people generally return to a sense of moderate well-being (Argyle, 2001; Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978). Myers notes that the luxuries of yesterday become the necessities of today and the relics of tomorrow.

However, Americans seem to blindly continue on their overconsumption binge. Ironically some of the better selling items in America today are things to put other things in; bigger closets, bigger houses, bigger garages, bigger storage rooms, etc., which are of-

ten become the graveyards of things that are no longer needed or desired. Yet with all of their possessions people seem to be no happier than they were 50 years ago (Niemi, Mueller, & Smith, 1989). In fact, Myers (2000) proposes, people are now twice as rich and a little less happy. And, he continues, people in America are also miserable more often. Depression has increased by tenfold since mid-century (also see "The changing rate of major depression: Cross-national comparisons," 1992; Klerman & Weissman, 1989; Martin E.P. Seligman, 1989). And never, according to Myers, has a nation experienced such physical comfort, freedom, and sophisticated pleasures accompanied by such psychological misery, imprisonment, and broken relationships. Materially these are the best of times but spiritually people are bereft. Becoming rich and better off has not improved America's psychological well-being (Meyers, 2005; D. G. Myers & Diener, 1996, 1997).

Why, then, would Americans continue their overwork-overconsumption binge? One could argue that it is because the goal of overconsumption and overwork taps into the core of people's identity and self evaluation. Eisenberg (2006) believes that everyone in America carries a number in their head that represents the net worth they need to live well and retire in comfort. However, he notes that this number is also about self worth. Americans, he argues, set this number based on external factors, such as where they should live or what car they should drive, and if they don't live up to this number they feel as though they have failed. Eisenberg observes that people have tried to acquire more stuff to make them feel better, but they do it through what he calls debt warp, or going into debt to live the lifestyle one feels one is supposed to live. He notes that this debt warp seems to affect all Americans, young and old, male and female, rich and poor. Debt warp has been heralded as the democratization of luxury and the fast lane to equality.

But in a country where the richest 1 percent of Americans carry only 6 percent of the consumer debt and the poorest 90 percent hold 70 percent, it is only an illusion.

But living in debt and on credit, which is living in servitude, is not simply an artifact of self-imposition, nor is it solely the fault of the American consumer. Americans have had ample help in developing their appetite for the faux security derived from having, or striving to have, the (prescribed) good things in life.

In his clever “factual novel” Akhavan (2006) has one of his lead characters opine:

In a materialistic socio-economic system, the bankers’ greed – where profit is derived from lending – combined with people’s irresponsible consumption, increasingly places everyone in debt. To earn currencies, the public needs to perpetually work...since they can never earn enough money to pay the interest, as well as the principal loan! Borrow, spend, work, earn, pay interest, and so on. As the world’s greatest ‘pyramid scheme’...this system is self-perpetuating! In this way, the ‘Capitalists’ became the new economic masters of the industrialized world...

One of the greatest early international bankers, the late German Mayer Amschel “Rothschild”.... It was he, who once said so beautifully and concisely:

*“Give me control of a nation’s currency, and I care not who makes its laws,”....*

*Controlling a nation’s ‘money supply’ ...in effect controls its economic ‘life force.’* Obviously, the most powerful nations were targeted first. If there were objections or hesitations, then... a costly war could be a great inducement for an almost bankrupt nation(s). Whether the Napoleonic, Boer, Crimean, or the American Civil war, they had the same desirable effect: of placing all the warring sides in substantial positions of debt, and therefore...servitude.... People’s greed, materialism, and debt... resulted in their servitude, and our effective control of their lives! Now, the possession of the Central Banks of large powerful nation-states...could give us political control of the entire modern world. *Everyone will be a slave to ‘consumerism’ and ‘capital’...the ‘religions’ of the next millennium!*

pp. 240 – 241

Servitude through overconsumption also has its roots in the field of economics and economists’ influence on government. Historically economists have arbitrarily assumed that people pursue goals in the narrowest of self-interest (and this self-interest is

assumed to be of greatest benefit to the whole when practiced in a free market). But this specious argument falls apart upon examining people's real behavior (Robert H. Frank, 1988, 2004). Many fine scientists and writers have attempted to reduce human behavior to an extremely limited set of selfish and Darwinian-like activities (Pascal Boyer, 2001; Dawkins, 1989, 2006; Dennett, 2006; R. Wright, 1995). However, Frank (2004) contends that people can often promote their personal ends more effectively by pursuing certain goals that are in clear conflict with self-interest. One way of doing this is through a contractual commitment in which both parties prosper, but both are also likely to suffer if the contract is broken (a revision of the traditional prisoner's dilemma in which breaking an agreement is advantageous to a single defector). In America the problem appears to be that all parties will eventually suffer if overconsumption continues, but few seem to know, especially those who have benefited most, that there is a broken contract which if mended would benefit everyone.

One potential solution would be to broadly disseminate factual information. For example, Smith (1994) remarks that politicians would have little choice but to work for world peace, and the resulting prosperity for everyone, if the average American realized that poverty could be largely eliminated while working fewer hours and spending less. He argues that the Cold War alone wasted five times the wealth necessary to eradicate poverty in the world. Beyond defense related expenses the sheer unnecessary consumption and waste in America could likely be reversed to do the same. Unfortunately these observations seem invisible to today's average American who is distracted by and caught up in the invasive and overwhelming culture of consumption and overwork.

I began this last section by asking whether or not Americans were happy, and the literature strongly suggests that overconsumption does not lead to happiness, but rather to unhappiness. In other words, America needs to find healthier avenues in the pursuit of happiness that was guaranteed by America's founders. But the thriving work ethic in America would also suggest that leisure and happiness might not be the best alternative to America's culture of overwork; that work itself should be the goal and the reward.

Therefore, should America be promoting happiness?

Argyle (2001) says yes:

Is happiness really so important, or are there more important goals for the human race? Would we prefer the famous composers to have been happier but not to have produced any music? As well as musical creativity there are many other fields of human striving – science, sport social welfare, for example, where those involved value what they are doing rather than any happiness it will generate. In fact it does generate a lot of happiness, especially if they succeed in these goals; we know this from research on job satisfaction....

We value human creativity, but we have seen that one effect of positive mood induction is greater creativity of some kinds. We value human striving and aspiration, and are not attracted by the vision of the future of our race by Fukuyama (1992) in his book *The End of History and the Last Man*. He thought that when all our work is done by computers and other machines all we will have to do is lie in the sun like dogs. However, experiments on the induction of positive moods show that positive moods do not make people lie in the sun, rather they want to engage in sociability, altruism, and building resources by work, exploration and reflection. This may be the biological point of happiness, that it leads, not to quiescence, but to building resources and social bonds.

p. 228

And the converse seems also to be true. At an individual level one could make the assertion that the situation is bad enough. If nothing changes in how we earn and spend it is likely that stress and stress related illness will increase, negative stress on families will continue (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001), quality of childcare will worsen (Stewart, 2001), and individual levels of satisfaction and fulfillment will decline (Reich, 2002) along with greater disconnection from one's community (Putnam, 2000). How-

ever, if the current trends in overwork and over-consumption continue to produce high maintenance of debt, bank resale of debt, weakness in and suspicion of the stock market, poor retirement fund performance, default on loans, and bankruptcy, the economic fabric of America may also be in peril (Henwood, 1999). And if over-consumption and misuse of technology continue at the current rate our resources will dwindle and our environment may no longer sustain a livable quality of life (Butler, 1994).

This chapter has dealt with the aspect of overconsumption and American's subsequent social and economic servitude to it. Political, religious, and environmental concerns have also been touched upon, but deserve more attention. There is a host of evidence that these issues, and many others, are producing a cumulative effect, one that could have disastrous consequences for Americans now and especially in the near future. The next chapter will turn its attention to these issues and their potentially devastating outcomes.



## **Chapter Six: Bumps, Xs, Spikes, Hockey Sticks, and Bifurcation**

I have already argued that the consequences of America's culture of overwork and overconsumption appear to be more complex and extensive, reaching far beyond the experience of the individual to affect the larger social, economic, and environmental milieu. In this chapter, however, I will endeavor to reduce these issues to those that appear to be the most unsustainable and outline the potential catastrophe that will likely result if they extend into the near future. Ultimately these issues are illustrated as unsustainable spikes and-or what are known colloquially as hockey-stick graphs, while dissatisfaction and disutility are illustrated graphically as bumps and-or intersecting lines. The spikes and hockey sticks are represented cumulatively in a bifurcation graph illustrating the potential outcomes if current trends are not altered. I have used three major themes: social; economic; and environmental; as the foundation for introducing these issues. However, sequencing their presentation offers some difficulty as the subjects are interrelated as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 illustrates the overlap and interconnectedness of each individual category and subject. For example, population growth can increase consumption which, in turn, can damage the environment which can then spur or curtail population growth depending on the economic realities of the region, and so on. There are also particular topics, such as political action, useable energy, or widespread poverty that apply equally across these

categories. As a matter of pure convenience, then, I will begin with the issues involving the Earth's environment.

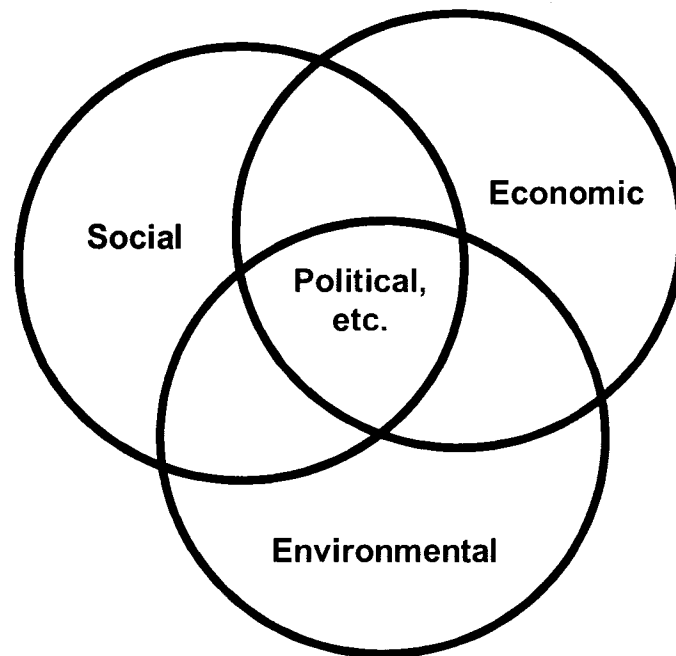


Figure 3. Relationship between areas of inquiry treated in this chapter.

### ***Environmental Issues***

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:24 King James Bible

One of the great problems resulting from America's current economic practices seems to be a lack of concern for the environment coupled with the unacknowledged but nonetheless severe ecological damage that results directly from the nation's behavior in the marketplace. America seems, in general, to be oblivious to the great harm being done to the planet through the practice of making profit more important than making sense and consuming at an ever more rapacious rate. Because sales and profit appear to be the first and often the only goals of production; products are sold with the real social and

ecological cost very rarely being factored into the selling price. Therefore the negative effects of the product, or those of its manufacture, are externalized upon an often unwitting public (Schor, 1999). Currently America seems to be treating its capital as income, as if it were infinite. Sadly, this comes with dire consequences (Schumacher, 1999), not the least of which is the cost of recovery left to future generations. That is, if future generations are left to recover anything (Annan, 2002; Lovelock, 2006).

As noted in previous chapters humans often overwork in order to overconsume, and human overconsumption (and overwork to a lesser degree) has apparently led to a number of activities which continue to damage the earth's environment. These include: overgrazing; deforestation and clear-cutting; sprawl; over-mining; general pollution, which itself includes human, medical, chemical, and nuclear waste, trash and garbage, air and water spoilage; and a host of others harmful behaviors. And there are many who have written about recent and future environmental disasters and resource depletion due to human activity (Abraham, 2000; Ayres, 1999; Brown, 2001; Brown, Larsen, & Fischlowitz-Roberts, 2002; Carson, 1962; Cieslewicz, 2002; J. Cohen, 1995; de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2002; Dorf, 2001; Goodwin, 2002; Greider, 2003; N. Hertz, 2003).

However, first among these problems appears to be global warming because of the extent, duration, and imminence of its threat to life on this planet (Dessler & Parson, 2006).

### *Global Warming*

What is global warming and why is it a concern? Currently, global warming is an increase in the temperature of earth's atmosphere, land, and oceans caused, to a very

large degree, by an increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gasses trap heat radiated from the sun and prevent it from being radiated back into space. It is of concern because if the heat gets too high for too long, life on earth as people know it can change for the worse.

The greenhouse gasses involved in global warming are CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, CFC-11, and CFC-12 (Dornbusch & Poterba, 1991). Without interference from these greenhouse gasses a certain amount of the sun's heat bounces off of the atmosphere, water, soil, ice, and snow and is reflected back into space. The rest is absorbed by the planet's biosphere. However, greenhouse gases allow heat in, but trap it by reflecting heat back to the earth. The more greenhouse gas, the more heat is trapped and the more the planet warms, eventually melting snow and ice. This melting can cause the earth to warm even more.

As snow and ice melt, darker land and ocean surfaces absorb more solar energy. And as sea ice retreats, solar heat absorbed by the oceans is more easily transferred to the atmosphere (Symon, Arris, & Heal, 2005).

From this broad perspective global warming seems fairly easy to understand. But is it truly happening? And if so, isn't it part of some natural cycle?

The evidence would certainly suggest that the earth has undergone periodic global warming and cooling (Alley, 2002; Andersen, Granger, Reis, Weinhold, & Wunder, 2002; Bridgman & Oliver, 2006; Burroughs, 2005; Dow & Downing, 2006; Fagan, 2000; Gore, 2006b; Leahy, 2004d; Macdougall, 2004; Nichols, 1999; Pearce, 1989; Tyler, 2003; C. M. Wood & McDonald, 1997; Denis Wood, 2004; W. W. Wood, 2005). But the current trend in global warming has been cited as the number one disaster most likely to destroy life on Earth in this century (Dow & Downing, 2006; Vargas, 2006). Its rate is

10 to 100 times faster than historic periods of global warming or cooling (C. M. Wood & McDonald, 1997). And unlike other catastrophes that have the potential to destroy life on Earth such as the impact of comets and giant meteors, global incineration from a gamma-ray burst, the eruption of super-volcanoes, a near-earth encounter with a black hole, or an unexpected global plague; the devastating consequences of global warming would be the result of humanity's own effort (Vargas, 2006). But despite the recent media hyperventilation, and even though the prevailing evidence and scientific analysis weighs heavily against them (Athanasίου & Baer, 2002; Ayres, 1999; P. Brown, 2006a; Dow & Downing, 2006; Flannery, 2005; Gelbspan, 2004; Johansen, 2001, 2006; Kluger, 2005; Kolbert, 2006; J. K. Leggett, 2001; Liotta & Shearer, 2006; Lynas, 2004; Romm, 2005; A. Silverstein, Silverstein, & Nunn, 2003; Speth, 2005; Weart, 2004), there are still those who call global warming and-or human created climate change a hoax, including President George W. Bush (Baily, 2002; Mathiesen, 2004; T. Moore, 2000; Townsend & Harris, 2004; Williscroft, 2006; W. W. Wood, 2005).

Even novelists are getting into the act. Michael Crichton, who has achieved fame by making people afraid of space exploration (Crichton, 2003), biotechnology (Crichton, 1990, 2003, 2006) and nanotechnology (Crichton, 2002) has recently taken a swipe at the vast majority of scientists who support the notion that planet Earth is warming in an unnatural way (Crichton, 2005). There are also some who claim that it is happening, but that the money required to fix it would be better spent on something else, and-or that the current global warming is another instance of a natural cycle and inevitable, and-or that the effects will not be that severe so people shouldn't worry about it, and-or that the effects will be beneficial, and-or that the study of global warming is a fairly uncertain

science so one can't know anything for sure (Appell, 2003; Ayres, 1999; Cline, 1992; Essex & McKittrick, 2003; Hollander, 2003; Leroux, 2005; Lomborg, 2001, 2004; Michaels, 2005a, 2005b; Michaels & Balling, 2000; T. Moore, 2000; Philander, 1998; S. F. Singer, 1998).

Variations in sunlight reaching the earth's surface, planetary wobble, changes in orbit, polar shifts, and other such phenomena do make the science of global warming complicated (Appell, 2004; *Future climate change*, 2006; J. M. Nash, 2004; Ruddiman, 2005a; S. Simpson, 2003). However, the evidence seems strong that global warming this time around has a human genesis and some even suggest that humans initiated global warming hundreds, if not thousands, of years ago (Boulter, 2002; G. E. Christianson, 1999; Gore, 2006a; J. J. McCarthy, Canziani, Leary, Dokken, & White, 2001; Oreskes, 2004; A.C. Revkin & Seelye, 2003; Ruddiman, 2005a, 2005b).

It would appear, then, that global warming is happening and that currently it is of human origin. But how are humans creating the greenhouse gasses? It can happen in many ways, but the primary culprit appears to be carbon dioxide which is released as a consequence of both burning fossil fuels and changes in land use.

In Figure 4, carbon emissions generated by human activity are tracked over a 1000 year period. The subsequent increase in carbon dioxide concentrations and air temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere are compared and appear to match fairly closely since 1700. This comparison can be extended in time to better illustrate the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> on temperature, as shown in Figure 5.

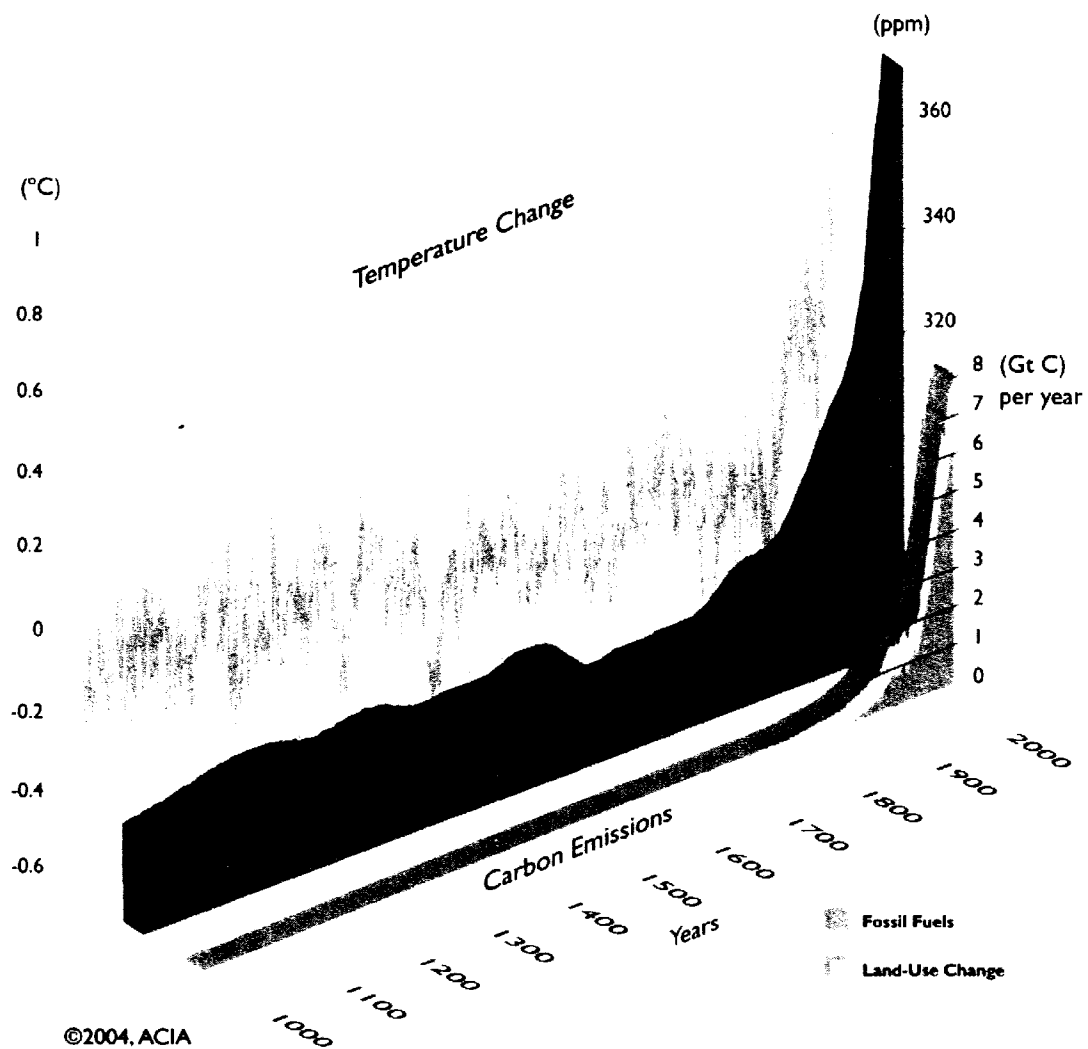


Figure 4. Carbon dioxide concentration, carbon emissions, and change in average global temperature over the last 1,000 years.

(Used with permission, Symon et al., 2005)  
 (For a copy of this graph see <http://www.amap.no/acia/index.html>.)

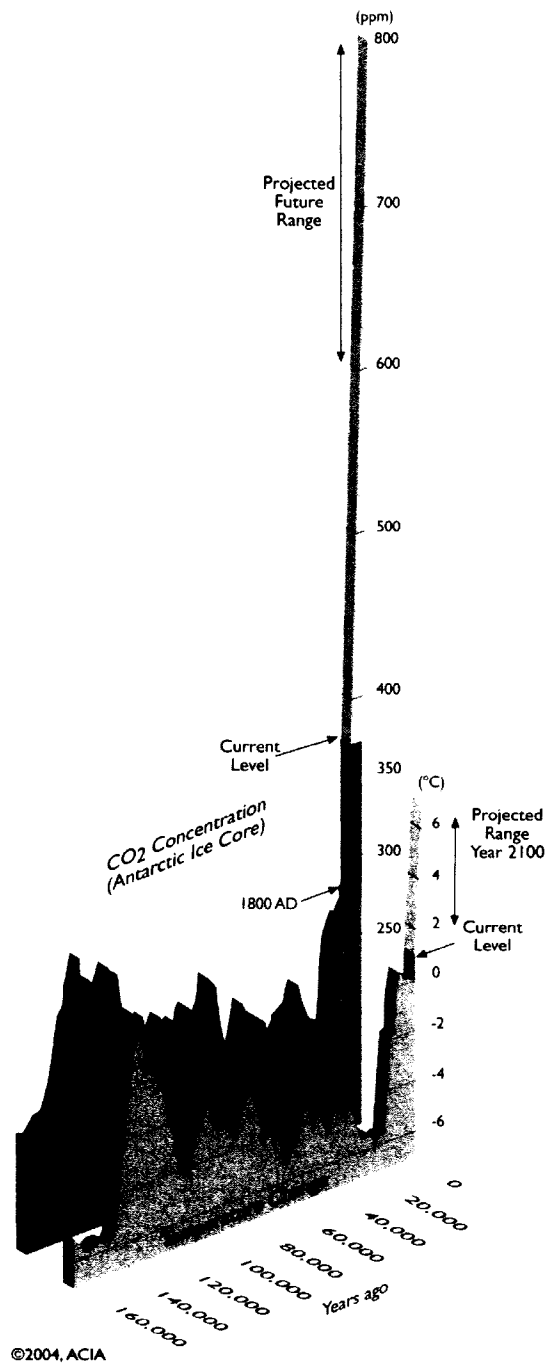


Figure 5. Carbon dioxide concentration and change in average global temperature over the last 160,000 years.

(Used with permission, Symon et al., 2005)  
 (For a copy of this graph see <http://www.amap.no/acia/index.html>.)



Based on ice core samples, Figure 5 shows the link between concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in parts per million and average temperatures over the past 160,000 years. The graph also projects to the next 100 years. Notice that temperature tracks CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.

Others agree, as demonstrated in Figure 6:

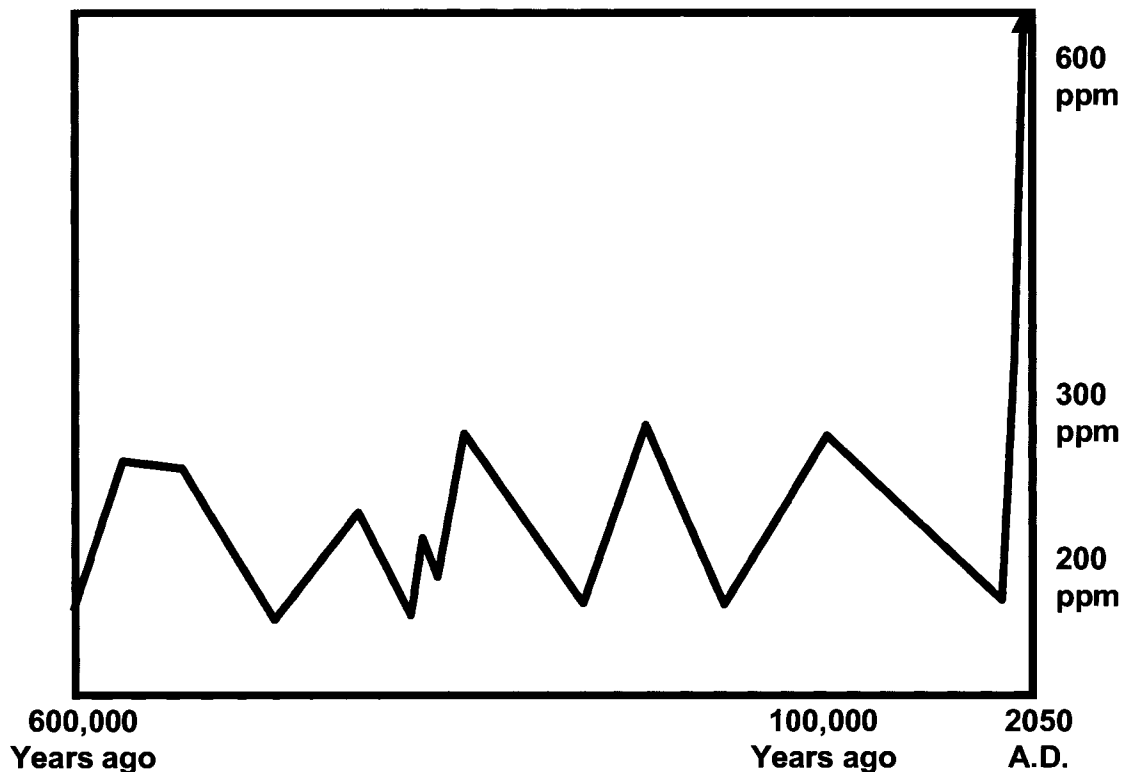


Figure 6. Carbon dioxide concentration over the last 600,000 years.

(Adapted from Ayres, 1999, p. 17; and Gore, 2006b, pp. 66, 67)

Figure 6 demonstrates the rise in carbon dioxide over the last 600,000 years and predicts the rise in carbon dioxide to the year 2050. In this figure, carbon dioxide is measured on the vertical axis in atmospheric parts per million. The horizontal axis shows the passage of time. The last, and most important, spike on the graph has taken place since the mid-1700s. Gore (2006b) asserts that at no time during the 650,000 years before

the pre-industrial period did carbon dioxide exceed 300 parts per million. However, he notes that global temperatures rise and fall with the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and that this concentration will exceed 600 parts per million by the year 2050.

According to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies carbon dioxide emissions derived from the consumption of fuel went from 0 metric tons in 1751 to 54 metric tons in 1850, to 534 metric tons in 1900, to 1,630 metric tons in 1950, to 6,611 in 2000 (Carey, 2004).

And it only takes a small amount of carbon in the atmosphere to make a big difference. The atmospheric carbon dioxide level during the last ice age was 180 parts per million. When the ice melted and the temperature became comfortable for humans again carbon had risen to 280 parts per million. Over the last 150 years mankind has helped to push the carbon level in the atmosphere to 381 parts per million and the number is rising at a greatly accelerated rate (Gore, 1992, 2006b; Kluger, 2006a). However, it is expected to jump dramatically, reaching between 800 to 1,000 parts per million, by the end of the century if the status quo is maintained (Carey, 2004; Leahy, 2004d).

Mann (Appell, 2005) observes that the temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere began to rise dramatically towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He notes that if carbon emissions are not curtailed the temperature will continue to rise at an accelerated rate (also see Houghton, 2004). Even if humanity begins to remediate the carbon levels in the atmosphere Mann claims that the world is already committed to 50 to 100 years of global warming and rising sea levels. Measuring data from ice cores, tree rings, and historical

records Mann created the graph shown in Figure 7, which illustrates the hockey-stick nature of temperature rise in the Northern Hemisphere:

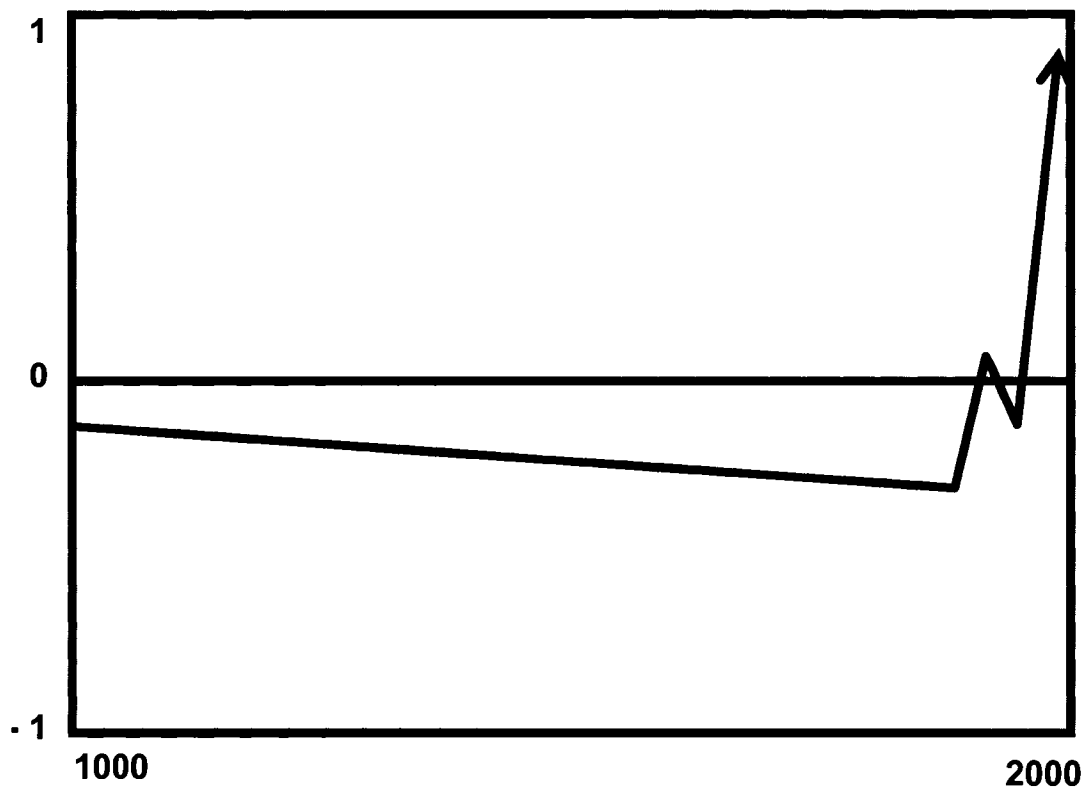


Figure 7. Temperature rise in the northern hemisphere over the last 1000 years.

(Adapted from Appell, 2005, p. 35)

In Figure 7, the vertical axis represents the percentage of deviation from the 1961 to 1990 average temperature in the Northern Hemisphere. The horizontal axis represents the years from 1000 to 2000 A.D. On average the temperatures appeared to be slightly cooling until the early 1900s, at which time they began warm rapidly.

Global warming is not only affecting the temperature of the land and the atmosphere but that the oceans as well. Figure 8 shows the change in average ocean surface temperatures from the baseline average set in 1971 to 2000. The vertical axis represents degrees Fahrenheit; the horizontal axis represents time.

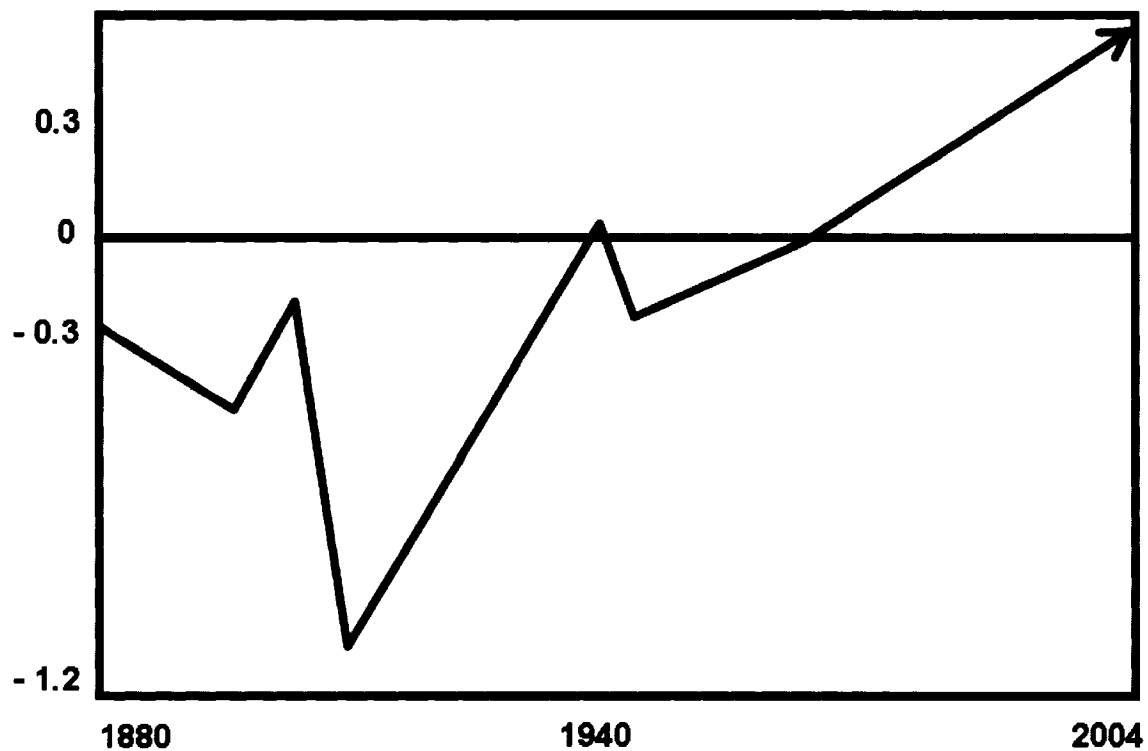


Figure 8. Change in average ocean surface temperatures from 1880 to 2004 compared to the baseline average set in 1971.

(Adapted from Kluger, 2005, p. 45)

Leahy (2006) notes that on a daily basis the average person on earth burns enough fuel to put 24 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Multiply this by the six-or-so billion people on the planet and one gets approximately 144 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day. He also suggests that between one-fourth and one-third of these carbon dioxide emissions are taken up by the ocean. As this CO<sub>2</sub> combines with the water it forms acid. This process is known as ocean acidification. This acidification of the oceans contributes to the damage of earth's ecosystem, including the demise of coral reefs and barriers. Aston (2003) notes that a study conducted by Britain's University of

East Anglia has found that the cover of coral reefs in the Caribbean has already fallen by 80 percent. Also the coral reefs in the South Pacific Ocean are dying and the cold-water corals in the north will likely not survive this century, resulting in a catastrophic impact on marine life (Leahy, 2006). But this is not the only problem.

Some ecosystems cannot absorb as much carbon dioxide as was once believed (Weintraub, 2005). Greenhouse gasses have not been rising as quickly as the emissions of carbon dioxide because some of it is absorbed by the soil. But the soil is reaching saturation in its ability to absorb carbon dioxide, and will soon begin releasing it to the atmosphere (Port, 2002). And by 2020 conservative predictions place carbon dioxide emissions at four to five times greater than the oceans and the land combined are currently absorbing (Musser, 2005). This will likely have far more profound effects than the death of coral, although the decimation of coral is of great concern.

Unfortunately, Americans in the mainstream were not alerted to the problem of global warming and human-created climate change until the latter part of the twentieth century, even though the United States is responsible for 30.3 percent of the current global warming and people in the United States are responsible for twice the carbon emissions per person as people in the next highest carbon polluting country (Gore, 2006b).

As recently as 1987, in Time's October 19<sup>th</sup> cover story, *The Heat is On*, America was being given one of its first broad warning signals. Based on new scientific evidence Time noted that the extinction of frog species in the American tropics, the melting of Greenland's glaciers, and other important indicators were telling scientists that this time global warming was human made and not part of an historic cycle of heating and cooling.

Time stated that people are changing the earth's surface and its atmosphere so dramatically that they are becoming competitors with natural phenomena, and that the effect could be irreversible. In 2006, Time's entire April 5<sup>th</sup> issue, *Be Worried. Be Very Worried*, was dedicated to the problems resulting from global warming. It noted that polar ice caps were melting faster than ever, causing polar bears to drown in large numbers due to the lack of solid ice over the ocean, that increasingly land is being devastated by drought, an area that has doubled since the 1970's, that rising waters are drowning communities in low-lying areas, and that global warming is ruining the world's climate (also see Cage, 2006; and Lemonick, 2004).

In the same issue Kluger (2006a) observes that:

No one can say exactly what it looks like when a planet takes ill, but it probably looks a lot like Earth. Never mind what you've heard about global warming as a slow-motion emergency that would take decades to play out. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us.

It certainly looked that way last week as the atmospheric bomb that was Cyclone Larry – a Category 5 storm with wind bursts that reached 180 m.p.h. – exploded through northeastern fire and dust turned the skies of Indonesia orange, thanks to drought-fueled blazes sweeping the island nation. It certainly looks that way as sections of ice the size of small states calve from the disintegrating Arctic and Antarctic. And it certainly looks that way as the sodden wreckage of New Orleans continues to molder, while the waters of the Atlantic gather themselves for a new hurricane season just two months away. Disasters have always been with us and surely always will be. But when they hit this hard and come this fast – when the emergency becomes commonplace – something has gone grievously wrong. That something is global warming.

(2006a, p. 35)

Kluger continued by noting that with the rash of heat waves, storms, fires, floods, and massive melting the global climate is crashing (also see *Global warming behind killer typhoon season in China: Experts say*, 2006; *Global warming surpassed natural cycles in fueling 2005 hurricane season*, 2006; and Kher, 2002). He notes that scientists have been warning of this for decades, but people continue to pump greenhouse gasses

into the atmosphere as if nothing were happening. But the Earth's climate, he argues, is embedded with hidden tipping points and feedforward loops that can precipitate sudden collapse (also see Alley, 2002; Alley, 2004; Angelo, 2005; Hansen, 2004; and Leahy, 2004d). Some large glaciers, for example, are losing a vertical meter in height per year, have doubled their rate of slide, and are likely to speed up their melting and slipping as global warming continues. The Pori Kalis glacier in Peru is shrinking at a rate of 200 meters per year. This is 40 times faster than in 1978 (Carey, 2004). 22 cubic miles of the Greenland ice sheet melted away in 1996, while in 2005, 53 cubic miles were lost. The melting of the Greenland ice sheet alone could be enough to raise sea level by 23 feet (Hansen, 2004; Kluger, 2006a). The Antarctic by itself contains enough ice to raise the sea level by 215 feet. And the loss of this ice could increase global warming dramatically. Exposed ocean water absorbs 90 percent of the heat it is exposed to, while ice reflects 90 percent. Deep ocean waters are being affected as well as those on the surface (Kluger, 2005). If deeper waters continue to warm, huge methane deposits on the ocean floor will begin to release the methane into the water and the atmosphere at an ever accelerating rate. This release of methane will increase the greenhouse effect and exacerbate global warming.

As mentioned before, melting snow will also contribute to global warming as snow reflects heat in the same fashion as ice, but vegetation and dark soil absorb 80 percent. Paradoxically, snow also protects soil from freezing. Therefore, colder regions in the north may have difficulty with permafrost forming in new areas (P. Basu, 2006). But for other areas, such as in Alaska, Canada, and Siberia, permafrost is necessary to maintain regional plant and animal life. It also contains large amounts of carbon, 200 to

800 gigatons (total human output is currently around 7 gigatons per year), bound up in and below the frozen soil (Carey, 2004; Kluger, 2006a). If this soil melts it will release the gas to the atmosphere and dramatically speed global warming (Kluger, 2006a). This is also true of soils in shallow ocean waters. Methane hydrates, an icy form of methane, are also trapped in huge amounts in the permafrost and in cold ocean sediments. Ocean warming of just a few degrees could cause these hydrates to decompose and release methane to the atmosphere (Symon et al., 2005).

A paradoxical result of global warming is the potential disruption of the Atlantic Ocean Conveyor. The temperature of the Northern Hemisphere is regulated and kept relatively temperate by the flow of salt water between tropical and arctic regions of the ocean. This conveyor, including the Gulf Stream and traveling through the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans, has shut down before and caused dramatic cooling. But if this flow were to be interrupted by a sufficient injection of fresh water from melting glaciers and ice shelves, the loss of circulation would cause temperatures, especially in Europe and the northeastern part of America, to drop impressively.

Figure 9 depicts the Atlantic Conveyor as it moves around the globe. The red lines indicate warm water flows closer to the surface, the blue indicate cool water flows deeper in the ocean. When the warm water loses its heat it sinks and becomes a deeper and cooler flow. When the cool water gains heat it rises and becomes a warmer surface flow.



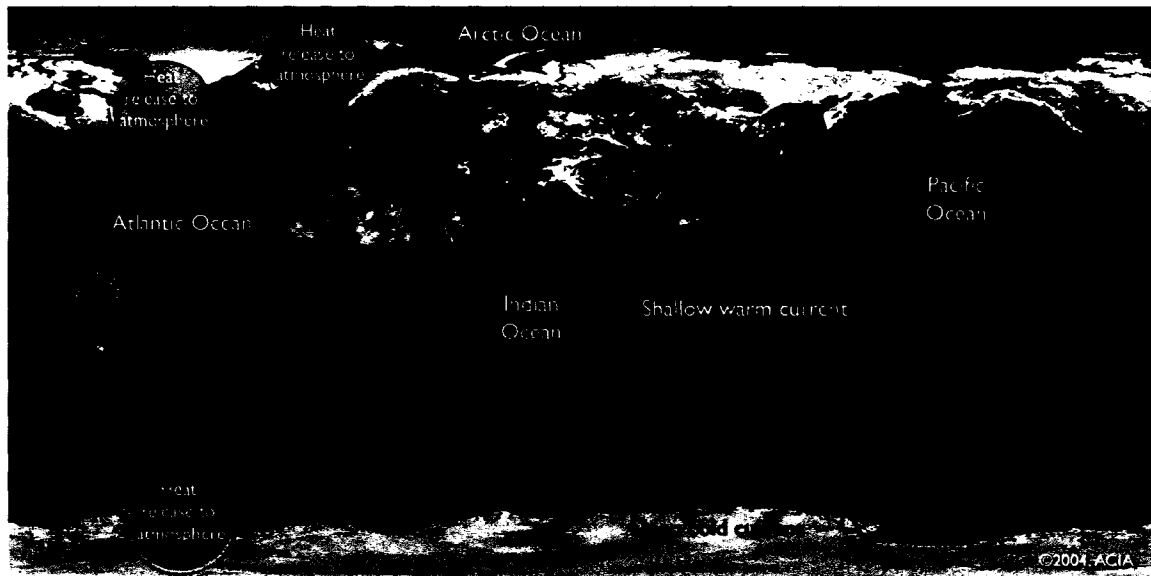


Figure 9. The Atlantic Conveyor. Red lines are warm water flows; blue lines are cool water flows.

(Used with permission, Symon et al., 2005)  
 (For a copy of this illustration see <http://www.amap.no/acia/index.html>.)

As mode of comparison, if the temperatures in Europe were to drop by an average of even 10 degrees Fahrenheit the continent would be plunged into another ice age, if not for the overall global warming that is presently occurring. But although the effects of global warming on a large scale, such as melting glaciers, are unlikely to be cancelled out by an interruption in the Atlantic flow, it is quite possible that the Northern Hemisphere could become more frigid in many locations if the Atlantic Conveyor were to stop (Alley, 2004; Carey, 2004; Gore, 2006b; Kluger, 2006a; Vellinga & Wood, 2002).

While some still argue that humans could not possibly have an impact on planetary weather, Hansen (2004) observes that the accumulation of small perturbations can be very powerful in their combined effect on the climate. He suggests that the current impact of humans on global warming is approximately two watts, the heat of two small Christmas tree bulbs, per square meter. Yet, the heat generated by human activity,

especially from the emission of greenhouse gases, now exceeds those of nature. Hanson also argues that effects of anthropogenic interference on the climate are occurring much more rapidly than the natural historic swings between ice ages and warm interglacial ages. And because of the capacity of the oceans to absorb heat it will take about one hundred years for the Earth to achieve a balance of heat that it receives from the Sun and the energy that it radiates back out into space. But this equilibrium will settle at a higher temperature than before. The global average increase in surface temperature has risen about 0.75 degree Celsius since the late 1800s. But most of that increase, approximately 0.5 degree, happened after 1950 as humans accelerated their global warming activities. Hanson notes that the highest prudent level of additional global warming should not exceed one degree Celsius. However, in the next 50 years he estimates that additional heat created by humans would approximate two to four watts per square meter, two to four times that currently being produced. Thompson (2005) asserts that during the twenty-first century average global temperature is predicted to rise between 1.4 degrees and 5.8 degrees Centigrade. She notes that even after carbon emissions are curtailed their effect on the environment, and the subsequent time to equilibrium, could project hundreds, even thousands of years out.

Currently, however, global warming is traumatizing the polar regions of Earth by melting permafrost, glaciers, and sea ice. The summertime atmosphere in the Antarctic Peninsula has warmed more than two degrees Celsius since the 1950's. Even subtle changes in temperature at the South Pole could trigger the disintegration of ice shelves and cause ice sheets to be depleted more quickly than they are replenished. Already Antarctica is losing ice faster than it is made. If the Antarctic lost its entire ice sheet,

global sea levels would rise by approximately 16 feet beyond that caused by melting in other areas of the world (Bindschadler & Bentley, 2002; Andrew C. Revkin, 2006b).

Although the Antarctic is of great concern, the Arctic in particular is showing the greatest evidence of damage. Temperatures there have risen twice as fast in recent decades compared to rest of world and the ice is melting at record levels (T. Clarke, 2002; Roger Doyle, 2005). In Alaska and the rest of the Arctic temperatures are forecast to rise an extra 7 to 13 degrees over the next 100 years due to greenhouse emissions from human activity. This area appears to be warming so quickly because global air circulation and natural feedback loops increase warming at ground level and the rapid melting of ice. During the past 50 years the decline of sea ice and snow cover in the Arctic has been considerable, but an additional loss of approximately 10 to 50 percent is forecast for the next 100 years. Some models predict that by 2100 the Arctic sea ice will completely disappear (Symon et al., 2005).

Sturm, Perovich, and Serreze (2003) agree that the Arctic is imperiled, noting that the Arctic temperatures in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are higher than they have been in 400 years. But this is not the only reason for concern.

They note:

The list is impressively long: The warmest air temperatures in four centuries, a shrinking sea-ice cover, a record amount of melting on the Greenland Ice Sheet, Alaskan glaciers retreating at unprecedented rates. Add to this the increasing discharge from Russian rivers, an Arctic growing season that has lengthened by several days per decade, and permafrost that has started to thaw. Taken together, these observations announce in a way no single measurement could that the Arctic is undergoing a profound transformation. Its full extent has come to light only in the past decade, after scientists in different disciplines began comparing their findings. Now many of those scientists are collaborating, trying to understand the ramifications of the changes and to predict what lies ahead for the Arctic and the rest of the globe.

What they learn will have planetwide importance because the Arctic exerts an outsize degree of control on the climate. Much as a spillway in a dam controls the level of a reservoir, the polar regions control the earth's heat balance. Because more solar energy is absorbed in the tropics than at the poles, winds and ocean currents constantly transport heat poleward, where the extensive snow and ice cover influences its fate. As long as this highly reflective cover is intact and extensive, sunlight coming directly into the Arctic is mostly reflected back into space, keeping the Arctic cool and a good repository for the heat brought in from lower latitudes. But if the cover begins to melt and shrink, it will reflect less sunlight, and the Arctic will become a poorer repository, eventually warming the climate of the entire planet.

(Sturm et al., 2003, p. 62)

Recently, with respect to this writing, the Arctic gave another warning shot across humanity's bow. On December 29, 2006 the Associated Press reported that a giant ice shelf measuring approximately 41 square miles had snapped free from Canada's Arctic, signaling an acceleration of global warming. The article notes that over the next few years this ice could drift into shipping routes where there is significant oil and gas development (*Ancient ice shelf breaks free from Canadian Arctic*, 2006).

If the problem of Arctic melting were not so dire, one could find humor in the notion that a rogue ice shelf could disrupt the industry that created it. But rogue ice set adrift in the Arctic is only one of the planet's worries as a result of global warming.

Recent climate change at both of the earth's poles is endangering species. Polar bears, walrus, Arctic fox, penguins, caribou, seals, and certain fish are all endangered due to the loss of their habitat (Parmesan & Galbraith, 2004; Symon et al., 2005). Not only are these animals threatened, but people living in or near these regions will suffer because they use these animals for food and trade. When permafrost melts, the land surface softens which promotes coastal erosion. Over the past 30 years some Alaskan villages have lost 100 to 300 feet of coastline. Half of this loss has occurred since 1997 (Kolbert, 2006; Lemonick, 2004; Roosevelt, 2004).

And the poles are not the only regions affected:

- Ocean warming and melting polar ice are impacting temperate and tropical communities, causing coastline encroachment and loss of habitat (Dean, 2006b; J. Madeleine Nash, 2005).
- Rising global temperatures seem to be having, and will potentially continue to have, an important effect on the distribution and growth of plant, insect, and animal populations that are detrimental to humans. For example, as water temperatures rise they will likely trigger more frequent and larger blooms in certain cyanobacteria, which are linked to Alzheimer's disease and other disorders similar to Parkinson's and Lou Gehrig's disease through the generation of a toxin called BMAA (Choi, 2005).
- Beneficial species, for humans, are at greater risk as these detrimental species are on the ascension. From frogs to butterflies, from King Protea flowers to giant quiver trees, from red-breasted geese to African elephants, species beneficial to humans are on the decline, while poisonous mistletoe, bark beetle, mosquitoes, killer bees, and poison ivy are on the rise and are increasing their range and-or are becoming more toxic (Bjerklie & Cray, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Kluger, 2006c).
- Many warn that global warming will very likely increase human sickness and death. The World Health Organization states that climate change is currently responsible for over 150,000 extra deaths a year and that figure will, conservatively, double by 2030 (Gore, 2006b; Gorman, 2006). Rising temperature not only stresses humanity – a European heat wave killed 20,000 in 2003, and 2005 and 2006 were among the 10 of the last 12 years that clocked in as the

hottest years on record with respect to average temperatures (A. Goodman, 2007; Kluger, 2006a; "Numbers," 2006) – it also increases the amount of ground-level ozone and smog, increasing the risk of heart and lung disease. Higher levels of carbon dioxide improve the growth of ragweed and other pollen producing plants, inducing spikes in asthma and allergies which are already exacerbated by emissions of sulphur and soot from fossil fuel combustion. Flooding from global warming will reduce water quality and put people at a higher risk of drowning. Rising water temperature heightens the risk of cholera. The increase in the population and range of mosquitoes due to global warming provides a greater risk of malaria (Doxey, 2002; Gorman, 2006; Hansen, 2004; Kluger & Dorfman, 2002). Not only are mosquitoes moving to higher altitudes, but a host of other vectors for infectious diseases are on the rise including lice, rodents, ticks, bats, fleas, snails, algae, tsetse flies, and algae. Over the past 30 years new diseases have emerged at an average of one per year, accompanied by a surge in some old diseases which were previously under control, including tuberculosis, influenza, e. coli, hantavirus, dengue fever, coronavirus, and lyme disease (Gore, 2006b).

- Rising water temperatures are also creating a surge in parasites that attack river salmon. In British Columbia a forested area the size of Maine, 22 million acres, has been plagued by pine beetles which, because of the milder and shorter winters, are decimating the pine forest. In Colorado a similar problem is occurring. Global warming has also expanded the habitat of snails that carry schistosomiasis, a parasite that damages body organs in humans (Carey, 2006).

- In addition rising global temperatures are causing many interdependent species to shift out of sync with each other, placing them at risk. In 2002 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published an overview based on 2,500 published papers. Of the 500 plus birds, amphibians, plants, and other organisms studied, 80 percent had changed the timing of their migration or reproduction, the length of their growing season, the size of their population, or their distribution. This uncoupling of interdependent species is very problematic and could even cause extinction. For example, when food sources such as flowers or caterpillars bloom or emerge too early, their population peaks before avian hatchlings can eat them (Both & Visser, 2001; Fitter & Fitter, 2002; Gore, 2006b; Grossman, 2004; Schneider & Root, 2002; Weuthrich, 2000). Sadly, more than a million species worldwide could be driven to extinction by 2050 as a result of climate change (Bjerklie & Cray, 2006; Gore, 2006b).
- Global warming does not simply result in higher sea levels and growing frequency of flooding. In parts of the east and much of the western United States there has been record dryness and heat resulting in widespread drought. Crops are being abandoned within the drought zone, and because 38 percent of cattle in America live are raised in these regions herds are being depleted. In Africa the rainy season has been shortened to the point that rice can no longer be grown and the dry season is too hot to grow potatoes (Carey, 2006).
- Dry areas in the northern hemisphere are moving further north as the jet stream moves northward due to global warming. The dry areas in the southern hemisphere are moving south as the jet stream there moves south for the same

reason (Aston, 2006a; Bridges, 2006b). The resulting warm, dry climate has fueled forest fires on twice as many acres as the historic average. These fires also release carbon to the atmosphere and exacerbate warming. But even though recent droughts have been severe they are unlike the droughts of the 1930s and 1950s. Unusual precipitation has been interspersed among the dry spells. This, however, has yet to compensate for the depletion of major reservoirs (Blakemore, 2006; Gore, 2006b; M. Nash, 2004; Sieger, Adams, McCarthy, & Dawson, 2002) and a growing number of forests are being placed at risk of catastrophic fires ("Land of fire," 2002; M. Nash, 2004).

- Already conflicts over water have made the news. Unfortunately, the increase in world population, modernization, pollution, and global warming are likely to induce wars over water, inside of and between nations, in the near future (Ginsburg, 2002; Klare, 2002; J. Madeline Nash, 2005; Townsend & Harris, 2004; Wheeler, 2002).
- In general global warming is predicted to heat the planet, raise sea levels, and bring more extreme weather. Overall this will likely result in floods, more violent storms, species extinctions (not the least by killing species critical to those higher up in the food chain), desertification and droughts (Alley, 2004; Angelo, 2005; Carey, 2004; Kluger & Dorfman, 2002; Selva, 2006). For example, by 2050, if the current trends in global warming, pollution, and over-fishing continue, nearly all seafood will experience a depletion of approximately 90 percent (Parfit, 2002; Sloan, 2003; *So long seafood?: Experts warn of disaster: Overfishing, pollution, warming are destroying stocks, study finds*, 2006).



Although there continues to be debate as to the veracity of global warming, its human genesis, and the impact on earth if it is indeed occurring; there is also a great deal of agreement among the majority of scientists as to the fact of global warming and the effects it will have. The following list illustrates the point:

1. Current climate change is attributed to human activity (Bowen, 2005; *Climate: An introduction: Our changing atmosphere*, 2006; Stephen Cole, 2006; Coshof, Taylor, & Abel, 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Easterbrook, 2006; Flannery, 2005; S. Freeman, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Handwerk, 2005; Kluger, 2006b; Kok, Vermeulen, Faaij, & de Jager, 2002; Kolbert, 2006; Kovel, 2002; Leahy, 2006; Lyman, Mintzer, Courier, & MacKenzie, 1990; Lynas, 2004; Pearce, 1989; Pelley, 2006; Permesan & Galbraith, 2004; Philipkoski, 2004; Samuels, 1996; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005).
2. The accelerated pace of climate change is occurring faster than previously expected (Adams, 2006; Barker, 2001; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Coshof et al., 2006; Flannery, 2005; *France's Chirac warns mankind faces climate volcano*, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Handwerk, 2005; Johansen, 2006; Knight, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2004a; Linden, 2006b; Lynas, 2004; Parizek & Alley, 2004; Pearce, 1989; Pelley, 2006; Philipkoski, 2004; Sample, 2006; Schneider, 1990; A. D. Smith, 2007; Symon et al., 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
3. There is rapid melting of snow, glaciers, ice shelves, and ice sheets with a concurrent rise in ocean temperature and sea level (Bowen, 2005; Coshof et al., 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Flannery, 2005; Gore, 2006b; Handwerk, 2005;

- Johansen, 2006; Kluger, 2006b; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2004a, 2006; Lean, 2006b; Lovgren, 2004; Lynas, 2004; Parizek & Alley, 2004; Randerson, 2006b; A. D. Smith, 2007; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
4. The Atlantic flow is at risk of being disrupted (Gore, 2006b; Handwerk, 2005; M. c. Jacobson, Charlson, Rodhe, & Orians, 2000; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
  5. Coastlands and nearby low lying areas imperiled by rising sea level (Barker, 2001; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Coshof et al., 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Glover, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Hertsgaard, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Lovgren, 2004; Lynas, 2004; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002)
  6. There is, and will continue to be, a heightened impact and frequency of flooding with increasingly devastating results (Barker, 2001; Bowen, 2005; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gelbspan, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Kunstler, 2006; Lynas, 2004; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
  7. Storms, mudslides, and fires are becoming more violent and more numerous and will occur earlier in the year (Aston, 2006b; Barker, 2001; Bowen, 2005; Carey, 2006; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Coshof et al., 2006; Dotto, 2000; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gelbspan, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Kluger, 2005; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2006; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).

8. Drought and desertification will continue to spread (Carey, 2006; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Coshof et al., 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gelbspan, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2004c; Lean, 2006b; Lyman et al., 1990; Pearce, 2006; Philipkoski, 2004; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
9. Crop yields will be diminished in many areas (Barker, 2001; Bowen, 2005; Carey, 2006; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Knight, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Pearce, 2006; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
10. Fresh water will be less available (Bowen, 2005; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gelbspan, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Kolbert, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Lynas, 2004; Pearce, 2006; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).
11. Acid rain and lowered ph in the oceans and many other water sources will increase with detrimental effect (Abrahamson, 1989; Flannery, 2005; Glenn & Gordon, 2006; Glover, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Harrop, 2002; Helvarg, 2006; Houghton, 2004; Jensen, 2006b; Leahy, 2006; Lombardi, Altunina, & Beaubien, 2004; Paulson, 2006; Samuels, 1996; Speth, 2005). The atmospheric pollution that causes global warming will also lead to nutrient depletion and pollution in the oceans (Harrop, 2002; Thorne-Miller & Earle, 1999).
12. There will be accelerated species extinction; decreased species diversity; and an interruption in the food chain, soil creation, plant pollination, and the natural cleaning of water and air. (Barker, 2001; *Climate change impacts on East Africa:*

*A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Gore, 2006b; *Greenpeace arctic mission to spotlight polar bears*, 2006; Handwerk, 2005; Johansen, 2006; Kay, 2006; Kluger, 2006b; Kolbert, 2006; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2006; *Native species going, going, gone*, 2004; Parmesan & Galbraith, 2004; R. L. Peters & Lovejoy, 1994; Philipkoski, 2004; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; Wormworth & Mallon, 2006). As much as one fourth to one third of all existing species will be extinct by 2050 (Parmesan & Galbraith, 2004; Philipkoski, 2004).

13. There will be intensified species invasion, infestation, and the spread of disease (Barker, 2001; Carey, 2006; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Devraj, 2006; Gelbspan, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Kolbert, 2006; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; Parmesan & Galbraith, 2004; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; Wormworth & Mallon, 2006).
14. Everyone will be affected, but indigenous peoples in the Arctic and people in poorer countries will likely be affected the most (Carey, 2006; *Climate change impacts on East Africa: A review of the scientific literature*, 2006; Coshof et al., 2006; Duraippah, 1993; Glover, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Knight, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Requier-Desjardins, Spash, & van der Straaten, 1999; Symon et al., 2005; Uzawa, 2003).
15. There will be an increase in environmental refugees, social disruption, conflict, and war over diminished resources (Coshof et al., 2006; Dow & Downing, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Jensen, 2006a, 2006b; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler,

2006; Pearce, 2006; Randerson, 2006b; Shen, 2001; Speth, 2005; D. R. Ward, 2002).

16. The economic impact of climate change will increase; the cost of remediation is thought to be far less than the cost of doing nothing and new jobs – approximately 600,000 by 2010 and 1.4 million by 2020 in the energy sector alone (Barrett & Hoerner, 2002) – will likely be created if remediation is sought. Doing nothing, however, might result in the worst economic recession in history (Barker, 2001; Bruce, Lee, & Haites, 1996; Carey, 2006; Cline, 1992; de Mooij, 2000; Dornbusch & Poterba, 1991; Dow & Downing, 2006; Duraippah, 1993; Flannery, 2005; Gore, 2006b; Houghton, 2004; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2004b; Mendelsohn, 2001; R. C. Porter, 1999; Shen, 2001)
17. There has been, especially on the part of the George W. Bush administration, politicizing and denial of global science to protect vested interests (Bowen, 2005; Buchwald, 2006; Eilperin, 2006a; Gelbspan, 1998, 2004; *GOP ignores danger of global warming*, 2006; Gore, 2006b; Knight, 2006; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; J. K. Leggett, 2001; Linden, 2006a, 2006b; Lynas, 2004; O'Donnell, 2006; Paterson, 1996; Pelley, 2006; Philipkoski, 2004; Randerson, 2006b; Andrew C. Revkin, 2006a; Samuels, 1996; Speth, 2005; Symon et al., 2005; Thacker, 2006; *TV ad blitz targets Gore, warming "alarmists"*, 2006; K. Wilson, 2006). Even budgets to monitor weather and other aspects of the environment are at risk (Crenson, 2006a).

(To many the final item on this list seems the most disturbing. If global warming is a fact then there is nothing that people can do to change what has already been done.

However, what people and nations do in the future is still up for grabs. That is, if the problem is acknowledged and action is supported with all of humanity's ingenuity and all of the necessary economic resources. However, it is unlikely that America, as the greatest offender, will change its old habits unless the blind status quo loses support and a new vision of environmental health is realized by those in power. The sad state of President George W. Bush's position on global warming and his apparent need to repay the vested interests that put him into office have severely hindered any effort to undo the damage that may be and already has been done. His position seems so blatant and entrenched that it is garnering derision from almost every direction.)

As mentioned earlier, cycles in climate change have been a normal part of earth's history. But earth's history has also been punctuated by abrupt climate changes. The relative equilibrium of slow climate drift can be quickly interrupted by a precipitous shock (J. D. Cox, 2005). It would appear that humanity and the earth are currently on the brink of one of these rapid shifts and that no amount of political denial will make it otherwise. Calvin (2002) observes that humanity has lately come to the realization that its ancestors had to survive hundreds of severe and abrupt climate changes, and that these changes provided the opportunity for huge increases in the complexity and intelligence of the human species. He muses:

One of the most shocking scientific realizations of all time has slowly been dawning on us: the earth's climate does great flip-flops every few thousand years, and with breathtaking speed. Many times in the lives of our ancestors, the climate abruptly cooled, just within several years. Worse, there was much less rainfall in many places, together with high winds and severe dust storms. Many forests, already doing poorly from the cool summers, dried up in the ensuing decade. Animal populations crashed – and likely early human populations as well. Lightning strikes surely ignited giant forest fires, denuding large areas even in the tropics.... Sometimes this was only the first step of a descent onto a madhouse century of flickering climate.

Our ancestors lived through hundreds of such episodes – but each became a population bottleneck, one that eliminated most of their relatives. We are the improbable descendants of those who survived – and later thrived.... Had the cooling taken a few centuries to happen, so that the forests could have gradually shifted, our ancestors would not have been treated so badly.... Each hominid generation could have made their living in the way their parents taught them, culturally adapting to the shifting milieu. But when the cooling and drought were abrupt, surviving the transition was a serious problem. It was one unlucky generation that suddenly had to improvise amidst crashing populations and burning ecosystems....

Such a climate-induced downsizing temporarily exaggerated the importance of such traits as cooperation, hunting, and innovation. We might call the survivors the Phoenix Generation.... But several thousand years later, after the stories about the hard times had disappeared.... It happened all over again: another generation got surprised by a downside episode of the boom-and-bust climate.... Fortunately, their ancestors had survived the same challenge and some of the genes for the relevant behavioral traits were still present, waiting to be tapped again.

For the ones with the right stuff.... [the] latter-day Phoenix Generation promoted those genes a little bit more, another stroke on the pump.

The ice core record of temperature suggests that this phoenix scenario recurred hundreds of times, that the Phoenix paleoclimate pump is the longest-running rags-to-riches play in humanity's history.

(Calvin, 2002, pp. 3 - 5)

(Also see Blackmore, 2000; J. Diamond, 2004; and Linden, 2006b)

Calvin suggests that it is time for humanity to exercise the inherent complexity and innovativeness that has evolved over humanity's history in order to come to another realization – humanity is triggering massive shifts in its own climate and it needs to respond appropriately and intelligently.

Some complain that this is not America's problem and that others are more to blame. For example, nearly 30 percent of carbon dioxide in the air is due to the burning of brush for subsistence agriculture and wood fires for cooking (Gore, 2006b), and this burning is often attributed to poorer countries (Hollander, 2003). But the United States

remains by far the top emitter of greenhouse gases, putting nearly 7 million metric tons into the atmosphere every year. With the exception of China and India this is an amount greater than the next five highest atmospheric polluting countries combined (Faden, 2005). This prominence, however, may not last. Even if America dramatically curtails its production of carbon dioxide, China and India, aspiring to the American lifestyle, are ramping up their pollution at a breathtaking rate. The Chinese especially are very anxious to acquire luxury goods and to upgrade their lifestyle to emulate the west (Elliott, 2007; D. Roberts & Balfour, 2006). For example, drivers in the United States currently account for one half of the world's greenhouse gas emitted from automobiles. But in 2002, approximately 100 thousand gas-guzzling SUVs were sold in China, and by 2008 sales are expected to surge to nearly 600 thousand (D. Roberts, 2003). The International Energy Agency predicts that in China alone the increase in greenhouse-gas emissions between 2000 and 2030 will rival that of the rest of the industrial nations combined. While India's consumption of energy since 1980 has increased 208 percent and their emissions of greenhouse gas could rise by at least 70 percent by 2025 (Walsh, 2006).

If for no other reason, then, American needs to take part in environmentally friendly energy practices in order to provide responsible leadership and a better example for the rest of the world. But because the Bush administration has apparently done so much to deny and suppress information regarding global warming and climate change, especially as it relates to human activity, it is likely that the current administration will characteristically stay the course (D. A. Brown, 2002; Kluger, 2006a; Linden, 2006a).

Evidently this leaves the responsibility for providing a good example squarely in the laps of local government, corporations, and individual consumers. And, according to



Krimgold (2005), there are methods by which people can have a positive impact such as restoring coastal buffer zones, limiting development in vulnerable areas, and increasing energy diversity and efficiency. But these measures are seen by many as merely sticking one's finger in the dike (Lovelock, 2006).

Also, most of the individual effort taken so far has been in the form of altered consumer practices and small steps in energy conservation. Unfortunately, green consumerism, or buying environmentally friendly products even though they may cost more, will likely not be enough to save the planet. It appears more reasonable to consider active conservation efforts, such as leasing tracts of forest. It is not inevitable that ecological destruction is necessary for financial gain. For example, coffee grows well underneath the high canopy of a rain forest. Instead of cutting the forest to grow coffee, the trees could remain. But all too often the richest areas of the world with respect to biodiversity are also the most threatened. These biodiversity hot spots comprise only 1.4 percent of the world's land surface although they host 44 percent of all vascular plant species and 35 percent of all land-dwelling vertebrate species. Unfortunately 44 percent of their primary vegetation has already been lost to the production of beef, soybeans, palm oil, coffee, timber, and cocoa, and the razing of the land is accelerating for these practices. Sustainable practices could replace the current method of raising and processing these products. Or, because the margin on these products is often so low, the land could be rented by conservationists for as little as one dollar per hectare per year. Of the two it is more likely that conservation efforts will have the highest reward. Green consumerism and sustainable practices might be necessary, but they will not be sufficient

(Hardner & Rice, 2002; N. Myers, Mittermeier, Mittermeier, da Fonseca, & Kent, 2000; R. E. Rice, Gullison, & Reid, 1997; Wohlsen, 2006).

Corporations and local government, on the other hand, could have an even greater and more positive impact. Although at the state level there has been a certain amount of resistance (Dutzik, 2002), some communities are becoming more aware of the holistic efforts needed, and are taking action. And there is a plethora of resources for living a more sustainable community lifestyle (Brandon & Lombardi, 2005; Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001; Dorf, 2001; *Environmentally friendly cities: Proceedings of PLEA '98*, 1998; Hallsmith, 2003; James & Lahti, 2004; Jenks & Dempsey, 2005; A. Lovins, 2001a; A. B. Lovins, 1979; A. B. Lovins & Lovins, 2002; Low, Gleeson, Elander, & Lidskog, 2000; D. Miller & De Roo, 2004; Schultz, 2001; Schumacher, 1999; Taniguchi & Thompson, 2006; Thomas, 2003; R. R. White, 2002). Corporations, however, have less to show for their efforts. While there are some who genuinely care and are taking the steps necessary to be socially and ecologically responsible (Creekmore, Daniel, Pearl, & Boss, 2005), and while there seem to be business benefits in doing so (Ardagh & Wilber, 2005; Carey, 2006; A. R. Edwards, 2005; Esty & Winston, 2006; R. E. Freeman, Pierce, & Dodd, 2000; Hart, 2005; Holliday, Schmidheiny, & Watts, 2002; A. Lovins, 2001b; A. B. Lovins, Lovins, & Hawken, 1999; A. B. Lovins et al., 2000; Makower, 1994; Savitz & Weber, 2006; Walsh, 2007; Willard, 2002) – although these benefits are debated (Henriques & Richardson, 2004; Schendler, 2002; Vogel, 2006) – the list of environmentally responsible corporations is lamentably small (Esty & Winston, 2006). Many complain that corporations either see environmental responsibility, or the appearance of it, as a business advantage that allows them to trump the competition, or

that they are merely greenwashing and-or bluewashing themselves to placate consumers who are becoming more aware of social and environmental issues (Esty & Winston, 2006; Hart, 2005; Munshi & Kurian, 2005; P. Phillips, 2006; Savitz & Weber, 2006), Wal-Mart being a notable example (Dicker, 2005; Fishman, 2006; Greenwald, 2005; Norman, 2005; Quinn, 2005; H. Smith & Young, 2004; Walsh, 2007).

All in all, it would seem, much needs to be done with few willing to do it. But the data appears to present overwhelming evidence that if nothing is done to avert the effects of global warming and to reverse the trend of accelerating and destructive practices in which so many seemingly oblivious or selfish people indulge, mayhem and disaster will occur on a global scale.

Samuels (1996) laments:

The global environmental malaise confronting us today is symptomatic of human malaise: an attitude that individuals have a right to pursue the good life with no concomitant duty of care to ensure that future generations also partake of that good life. Whether or not an individual decides to moderate their consumption of resources, and take responsibility for the continuing quality of life, becomes an act of conscience, a quality notoriously deficient in the make-up of the human mind.

Sufficient empirical evidence of this global environmental malaise has, however, been accumulated which presents very powerful arguments for undertaking immediate precautionary measures as a minimum requirement. There is, moreover, a strong likelihood – given the observable behavior of countless other lifeforms – that threshold points will be reached and breached in the planet's ability to adapt. Chain reactions leading to the irreversible destruction of life-sustaining planetary systems can no longer be dismissed as the ravings of environmental activists....

Short-term benefits and long-term costs are far removed from one another not only in time but in concept.... Classical economics... defines productivity narrowly and equates gains with economic progress. Ill effects of such progress are concealed by labeling them "externalities," and because they are difficult to measure, conveniently excluding them from the calculations. Consequently, much economic growth may be an illusion because of the failure to account for reduction in natural capital and damage to eco-systems.

The attitude that humankind is master of the planet is everywhere enshrined, and the next five billion people who will walk this earth in the next half-century will not be content to accept twentieth century “third world” living standards. They too will expect to consume at the rate that post-industrial technocratic western nations consume. Currently 20% of the world’s population consumes 80% of its resources. A five-to-sevenfold increase in consumption of energy and goods will be needed to raise the consumption level in the developing world to that enjoyed in the developed world.... Exert[ing] stresses on planetary eco-systems which are unimaginable today.

Human nature has not shown itself to be particularly amenable to foregoing opportunities for immediate and personal gratification in order that anonymous individuals who might live a half-century hence might enjoy similar opportunities.... There are no limits to growth built-in to national economic agendas, and annual GNP growth is a priority in all nation states irrespective of their politico-economic ideology.... Improving the quality of the environment does not seem to be recognized as a practical reality – albeit ethically desirable – or it is likely to be rejected as utopian, if not irreligious.

pp. 1 - 5

### *Biodiversity*

As noted previously, global warming is contributing greatly to species extinction and the loss of biodiversity. However, humans are making the problem worse through a variety of other means.

Catastrophic species extinctions due to events other than those perpetrated by humans have been a salient part of earth’s history, even though there is some debate as to their genesis (Benton, 2005; Courtillot & McClinton, 2002; Erwin, 2006; Gaston & Spicer, 2004; A. Hallam & Wignall, 2000; T. Hallam, 2004; MacPhee & Sues, 1999; Newman & Palmer, 2003). However, it would appear that population growth and the behaviors of the market are, inadvertently or not, well on their way to creating a catastrophic species extinction in the near future that appears to be of human origin. Human practices resulting in sprawl, erosion, pollution, deforestation, and global

warming, among others, are deleting species faster than they are being discovered and far faster than their potential benefits can be assessed (*Global status of biological diversity: Report of the Secretary-General*, 2001; Gore, 2006a; E. A. Johnson & Klemens, 2005; Martin, 2005; Novacek, 2001; Samuels, 1996). Thus, a manmade massive species extinction appears imminent and the resulting loss to the biosphere potentially disastrous (Hulot, 2006; Kunich, 2006; McKee, 2003; Reaka-Kudla, Wilson, & Wilson, 1997; E. O. Wilson, 1988). Experiments involving the removal or addition of even a single species from a particular environment have revealed damage to the whole ecosystem (Kareiva & Levin, 2003; R. T. Paine & Zaret, 1975). But a species extinction induced by humanity would yield a far more devastating result, not the least for humans (Boulter, 2002; Kunich, 2006).

Wilson (2002; 1988) notes that, due to current practices, one of the greatest threats posed to the environment involves the loss of earth's biodiversity. He points out that at the current rate of species extinction, over half of the known species will not exist by the end of this century. He also argues that this mass extinction is primarily due to habitat destruction, introduction of invasive species, pollution, and over-harvesting, exacerbated by a burgeoning population and dwindling supplies of water and arable land. A recent study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences (Wackernagel et al., 2002) notes that human demand may well have exceeded the biosphere's regenerative capacity since the 1980s. According to this report, humanity's load corresponded to 70 percent of the capacity of the global biosphere in 1961, and grew to 120 percent in 1999 (also see Chambers, Simmons, & Wackernagel, 2001; Hails, 2006; Venetoulis & Talberth, 2005; and Wackernagel & Rees, 1995).

(For a full and very detailed report on humanity's ecological footprint, go to [http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living\\_planet\\_report.pdf](http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living_planet_report.pdf). Also see <http://www.lead.org/leadnet/footprint/intro.htm>, <http://www.rprogress.org/programs/sustainability/ef/>, and <http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp>.)

Ayres (1999) suggests that the extinction of species since the advent of humans is exhibiting a hockey-stick-like curve, as shown in Figure 10.

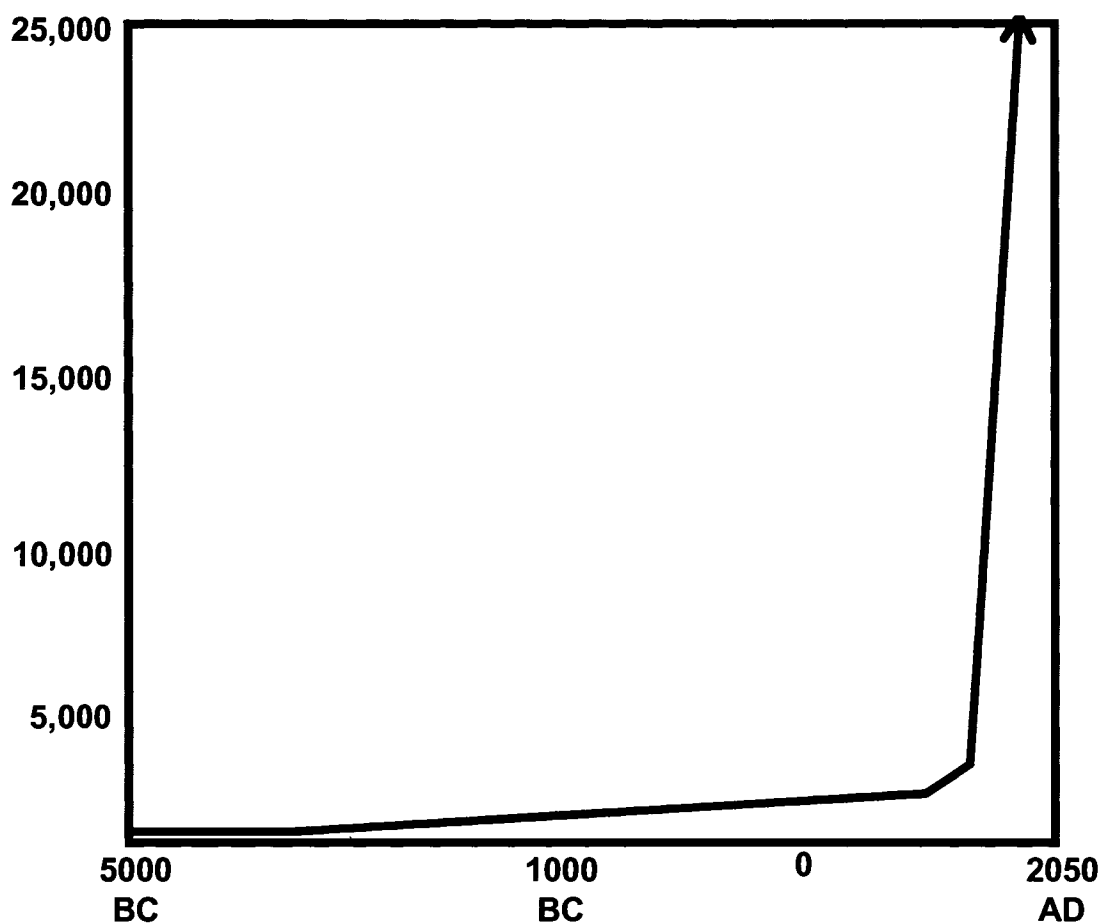


Figure 10. Extinction of species over the last 7000 years and projected forward to the year 2050.

(Adapted from Ayres, 1999)

In Figure 10, the horizontal axis represents time and the vertical axis represents the number of species driven to extinction each year. Ayres notes that by 5000 B.C. humans had removed roughly half of the original forest cover of the planet as the Agricultural Revolution gained momentum. By 1500 A.D. birds, seals, and porpoises were slaughtered, extinguishing hundreds, during the Age of Exploration. By the 1970s the Green Revolutions had created monocultures that destroyed plant diversity, soil microbes, and pollinators. By the 1980s bioinvasions were made possible by accelerating habitat destruction and breaking down the natural barriers between ecosystems. By the mid-1990s slash-and-burn methods were destroying tropical forests at an alarming rate. By the late-1990s species are not able to migrate fast enough to avoid global warming and begin to die off. Earth entered a period of species extinction faster than any that has come before, according to biologists surveyed by the New York Museum of Natural History (also see Hails, 2006).

In Figure 11, Gore presents a longer visual history of extinction, counting, among others, the known animal, bird, fish, and amphibian species that have perished and are likely to perish in the future. He reports that the extinction currently in progress is occurring at a pace 1000 times faster than the average background rate (also see Pimm & Jenkins, 2005):

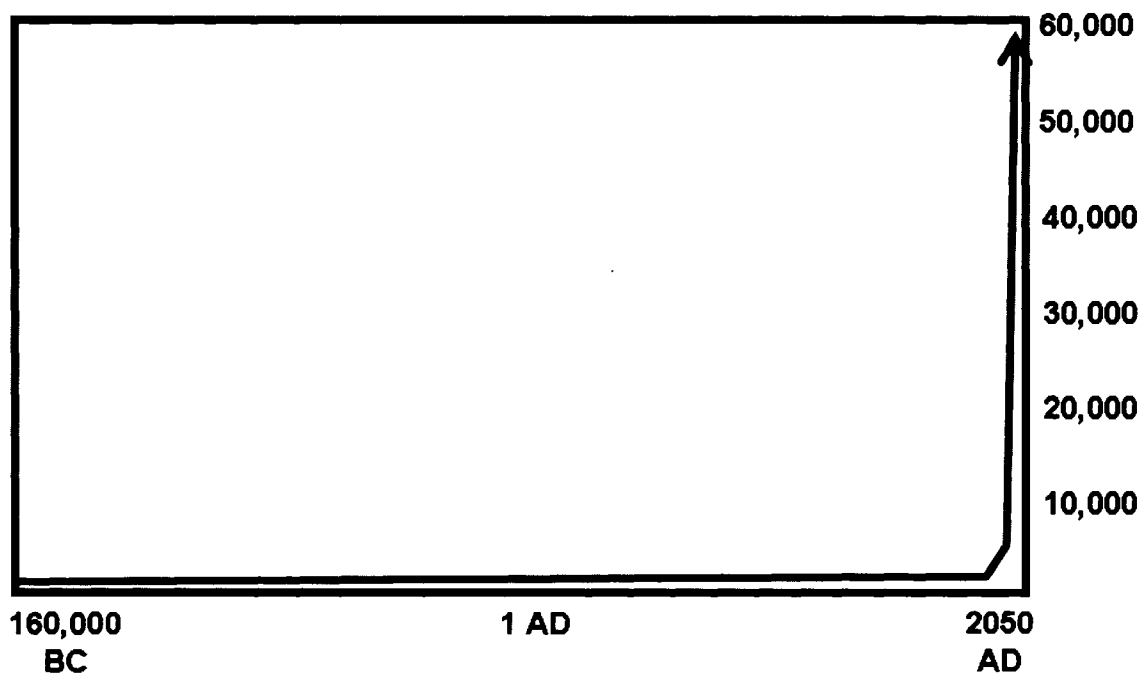


Figure 11. Species extinction over the last 160,000 years.

(Adapted from Ayres, 1999, p. 27 ; and Gore, 2006b, p. 163)

The vertical axis represents the number of species lost while the horizontal axis represents time. Ayers comments that in 2000 the number of species lost worldwide was approaching 25,000 per year. Gore notes that the climate crisis and species extinction are closely linked. For example, destruction of the rainforest causes species to die while also releasing carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. He also points out that current species extinction is occurring at a rate 1000 times faster than the average background rate.

Stating the earth will experience a massive die-back but not a complete die-off, Kunstler (2006) goes on to argue that species extinction will be even more dramatic than Gore predicts. Kunstler observes:

We are already experiencing huge cost externalities from population hypergrowth and profligate fossil fuel use in the form of environmental devastation. Of the earth's estimated 10 million species, 300,000 have vanished in the past fifty years. Each year, 3,000 to 30,000 species become extinct, an all-time high for the last 65



million years. Within one hundred years, between one-third and two-thirds of all birds, animals, plants, and other species will be lost. Nearly 25 percent of the 4,630 known mammal species are now threatened with extinction, along with 34 percent of fish, amphibians, 20 percent of reptiles, and 11 percent of birds. Even more species are having population declines. Environmental scientists speak of an “omega point” at which the vast interconnected networks of Earth’s ecologies are so weakened that human existence is no longer possible.

(Kunstler, 2006, p. 8)

Some species will be lost because they are being overexploited and overconsumed (E. Bailey, 2006; *Keeping fish on future menus*, 2006; McKay, 2004; *Overconsumption threatens ecological balance*, *WWF warns*, 2004; Randerson, 2006a; Scheer, 2006).

Some will be lost due to the environmental impact of human activity other than global warming, such as ocean acidification, pollution of all sorts, a scarcity of food and water, the destruction of other species on which they are interdependent, and the destruction or restriction of natural habitat (Cage, 2006; Galus, 2006; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Kovel, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; Leahy, 2006; Thorne-Miller & Earle, 1999). Some will be lost due to reduction in funding for conservation and a relaxation of environmental policy (Kennedy Jr., 2004; J. Lee, 2003; McQuillan, 2007; Sanger, Kirkpatrick, & Mouawad, 2006). And some, ironically, will simply be lost as an incidental effect of callous disregard. For example, 28 percent of the annual U.S. commercial catch of fish, 1 million tons, are wasted, usually thrown overboard, because they are not the desired species (“Numbers,” 2005).

In yet another sad observation, the human impact on species devastation will first be felt by the poor (Farmer, 2003), and this is an observation that can be made of all the sections in this chapter. Some claim that in the United States people want to make it better, but other forces seem to get in the way.

Duerksen and Snyder (2005) observe:

Survey after survey in cities as well as rural areas confirms that wildlife occupy a special place in the hearts of Americans of every age group, every income level, and every region of the country. Americans want wildlife protected and are willing to pay for it. And increasingly there is hard evidence that living in harmony with nature and protecting habitat make good sense in dollars and cents... protecting our natural habitat helps generate tourist dollars, can in fact save local governments money in terms of the cost of providing services and infrastructure, and actually increases private property values in many instances.

However, the signs are mounting that the country is truly at a crossroads when it comes to preservation of this largesse.... Today the main threat is well documented: the destruction and degradation of habitat, often associated with conversion of vast stretches of land to housing and commercial development and transportation projects. Scientists tell us that about one-third of the best-known groups of plants and animals are at risk and that more than 200 species of U.S. flora and fauna are already extinct. More worrisome is the fact that, according to a 1995 report issued by the National Biological Service, 27 ecosystems have declined by 98 percent or more since the European settlement of this country. Prairies, sagebrush steppe, and oak savannas are just a few of the ecosystems that have been almost completely wiped out, along with the wildlife that called them home. No part of the nation has been immune....

[Unfortunately] the Bush administration pushed through... numerous... changes in federal regulations that weakened habitat protection.... The pressures on wildlife and habitat are not likely to abate. Alone among Western industrialized nations, the population of the United States will continue to mushroom, growing from around 280 million people today to almost 400 million by 2050... In many places, the easy development sites are gone, and now projects are being proposed along streams, on steep slopes, and in other spots whose remoteness and inaccessibility provided protection for flora and fauna....

It may not be fashionable to argue that government is part of the solution to practically anything these days, but there is no arguing the point when it comes to protecting wildlife and natural resources.

pp. 1, 2, 5, 411

### *Water*

In the eighteenth century Adam Smith observed that water, although it is vital to life, costs almost nothing while diamonds, which have no survival value, cost a fortune (de Villiers, 2001). Since then, however, things have changed.

Shiva notes:

In 1995, Ismail Serageldin, vice president of the World Bank, made a much-quoted prediction about the future of the war: "If the wars of this century were fought over oil, the wars of the next century will be fought over water." Many of the signs suggest that Serageldin is on target. Stories of water shortages in Israel, India, China, Bolivia, Canada, Mexico, Ghana, and the United States are making headlines in major newspapers, magazines, and academic journals. On April 16, 2001, the *New York Times* featured a front-page story on water scarcity in Texas. Like Serageldin, the paper forecasted, "For Texas Now, Water, Not Oil, is Liquid Gold."

(2002, p. ix)

Water is something that life on this planet must have to survive; it is not a choice, but a necessity. Nonetheless, humanity seems bent on limiting the supply of this life sustaining liquid. The population is growing, pollution is accelerating, consumption is increasing, and the supply of useable water is drying up. In developed countries more water is used by far for the production and processing of food and the manufacture of goods and materials than is consumed by the population for their individual and home needs (Pearce, 2006; Schlosser, 2001; P. Singer & Mason, 2006). Unfortunately the poorer countries and communities will be the first to suffer the effects of water shortage (de Villiers, 2001; Rothfeder, 2001), but by 2050 it is estimated that 4.5 billion people on earth will be experiencing severe water shortages and everyone will begin to feel the effects (Baer, 1996; Engelman, 1993). Growth of water use was double that of the growth in population in the twentieth century and it is predicted that up to two thirds of earth's inhabitants will be without adequate water supplies by 2035 (Marsh & Grossa, 2004). Undaunted, the U.S. government seems to be determined to put water at risk by reinterpreting or gutting previous legislation designed to protect it (Alterman & Green, 2004; "Clean water at risk," 2006; Craig, 2004; Greider, 1992; Kennedy Jr., 2004).

In addition to the risks of lost governmental protection and increased pollution water is also in jeopardy of being privatized (Barlow, 1999; Kahn & Minnich, 2005; Rossi, 2005; Rothfeder, 2001; Shiva, 2002). The market appears to be working avidly at both the national and international level to make all water a privately owned and highly profitable commodity (Bakker, 2003; Barlow & Clarke, 2002; Cavanagh & Mander, 2002; T. Hartmann, 2002; Rossi, 2005; Shiva, 2005), often raising prices and concern over quality and supply (Bartram, 2002; Grover, 2006; Young, 2001). For example, in Cochabamba, Bolivia the government sold water rights to Bechtel, allowing it to privatize all of the city's water supplies, including water gathered by residents from rainfall. Subsequently the price of water doubled, causing a rebellion of locals who eventually overturned the corporatization and globalization of their water (T. Hartmann, 2002, 2004; Nellis & Birdsall, 2005; Olivera, 2004). But Bolivia is not, and will not be, the only example of conflict over the ever increasing scarcity of water (Barlow, 1999; Draper, 2006; Shiva, 2002; D. R. Ward, 2002). In the western United States, for example, conflict over water has a long and sordid history (Reisner, 1996).

To resolve the water distribution problem some suggest taking a softer path that would involve better using the water supplies that exist and keeping the water clean (P. Gleick, 2002). Others propose a contract between nations to manage the decreasing clean water supply more equitably (Petrella, 2001). This may be a laudable idea, but if that contract is based on privatization the results may be deleterious rather than helpful. Barlow notes that a worldwide privatized redistribution of water would benefit only the rich cities and countries that could pay for it, while taking water from the poor. She notes

that water flows uphill in this respect, drawn by the magnetism of money, and would not trickle down to those who most desperately need it. She continues:

We'd like to believe there's an infinite supply of fresh water on the planet. But the assumption is tragically false. Available fresh water amounts to less than one half of one percent of all the water on Earth. The rest is sea water, or is frozen in the polar ice. Fresh water is renewable only by rainfall, at the rate of 40-50,000 cubic km per year.

Global consumption of water is doubling every 20 years.... If current trends persist, by 2025 the demand for fresh water is expected to rise by 56 percent more than is currently available.

As the water crisis intensifies, governments around the world – under pressure from multinational corporations – are advocating a radical solution: the commodification and mass transport of water.... But, in fact, experience shows that selling water on the open market does not address the needs of poor, thirsty people.... The push to commodify water comes at a time when the social, political and economic impacts of water scarcity are rapidly becoming a destabilizing force, with water-related conflicts springing up around the globe.... Meanwhile, the future of one of the earth's most vital resources is being determined by those who profit from its overuse and abuse.... At the same time, governments are signing away their control over domestic water supplies by participating in trade treaties.... Already, corporations have started to sue governments in order to gain access to domestic water sources....

[But] selling water to the highest bidder will only exacerbate the worst impacts of the world water crisis....

- In India, some households pay a staggering 25 percent of their income on water.
- In the maquiladora zones of Mexico, water is so scarce that babies and children drink Coca-Cola and Pepsi instead....
- More than five million people, most of the children, die every year from illnesses caused by drinking poor-quality water....
- China is facing the likelihood of severe grain shortages because of water depletion and the current shift of limited water resources from agriculture to industry and cities. The resulting demand for grain in China could exceed the world's available exportable supply....

- Around the world, the answer to increase in water demand has been to build more environmentally destructive dams and divert more rivers....
- In the U.S., only 2 percent of the country's rivers and wetlands remain free-flowing and undeveloped; as a result, the country has lost more than half of its wetlands.
- Eighty percent of China's major rivers are so degraded they no longer support fish.
- In the U.S., the epicenter of freshwater diversity in the world, 37 percent of freshwater fish are at risk of extinction, 50 percent of crayfish and 40 percent of amphibians are imperiled, and 67 percent of freshwater mussels are extinct or vulnerable to extinction.
- In the Great Lakes system, the Nature Conservancy has identified 100 species and 31 ecological communities at risk.

(Barlow, 1999, pp. 1, 2)

Water supplies are in jeopardy in Africa, China, India, Japan, Spain, France, Australia, and other parts of Europe and Asia (de Villiers, 2001). But, as noted above, the United States has its own worries. Even without privatization, over-pumping water from the ground is depleting America's aquifers, making water-poor regions even more destitute (Brown, 1996; Glennon, 2002). Lying beneath six states the Ogallala Aquifer will likely run dry by 2020 (de Villiers, 2001). Rivers and lakes are drying up, and desertification and pollution will only make this problem worse (Pearce, 2006).

### *Food*

The Worldwatch Institute predicts that with the growing population, economic disparity, use of fossil fuels, weather related disasters, stress on global ecosystems, species endangerment and loss of biodiversity, loss of useable water, decline in fish harvests, and consumption of meat the availability of sufficient quantities and quality of

food for humanity is at risk (*Vital signs 2006 - 2007: The trends that are shaping our future*, 2006). Brown asserts that the scarcity of food will be the defining issue of the twenty-first century (Brown, 1996, 2005). The food supply in America, as well as in other parts of the world, is also becoming more toxic due to pollution, poor quality, and inappropriate processing (Baillie-Hamilton, 2005; Brownell & Horgen, 2004; Hirsch, 2006; Pawlick, 2006; Rapp, 2004; Schlosser, 2001; P. J. Sullivan, Clark, Agardy, & Rosenfeld, 2007; Watson & Caldwell, 2005). Food production and consumption has historically been, and will most likely continue to be, intrinsically tied with politics and the economic structure (Belasco, 2002; Millstone, 2003; Tannahill, 1995; Watson & Caldwell, 2005). To this point more emphasis has been placed on increasing yield and the redistribution of existing harvests rather than on abating the causes of future decimation of the food supply infrastructure (Catton, 1982; Lappe, Collins, Rosset, & Esparza, 1998; Lurquin, 2002; Scanes & Miranowski, 2004). Corporate globalization of the food supply, seen by many as essentially robbing from the poor to give to the rich, is also a threat to making good food available to everyone (D. Goodman & Watts, 1997; Shiva, 2000). Therefore, the potential for social conflict over food seems to be very great, as will the likely depletion of food sources due to population growth, pollution, and drought, requiring corporations and governments to behave very differently if humanity is to survive (Homer-Dixon, 1994, 1999; Kahl, 2006; Leisinger, Schmitt, & Pandya-Lorch, 2002; Postel, 1997, 1999; Shiva, 2000; R. D. Simpson, Toman, & Ayres, ; Uphoff, 2002).

## *Air*

In addition to food, water, and a planet with a suitable climate in which to live, air quality and availability seems the most logical candidate to qualify as a necessity for life as we know it on earth. But even though some assert that air quality is getting better (J. Schwartz, 2003), the planet's atmosphere, as already noted, is under aggressive attack. Historically a problem, human generated heat, deforestation, and pollution have recently had an even more profoundly negative impact on the air that people must breathe. Noticeable first in the cities, air pollution has become a concern across the globe, even affecting the poles (Cone, 2005; DuPuis, 2004; Flannery, 2005; Godish, 2004; Gonzalez, 2005; M. Z. Jacobson, 2002; McGranahan & Murray, 2003; Sturges, 2001; Wark, Warner, & Davis, 1997).

## *Pollution*

Although pollution is mentioned in many other parts of this chapter it deserves its own category because both human morbidity and human mortality rise and fall in concert with the level of pollution in the environment (Broderick, 2001; Colls, 1997; Watras & Huckabee, 1994). Although establishing causality is complex, there is strong expert opinion that human generated pollution, based on production and consumption, poses a serious threat to humans and many of the life forms that benefit them. From secular scientists to religious leaders people are complaining that: Hg; Pb, SO<sub>4</sub>; O<sub>3</sub>; CO<sub>2</sub>; oil spills; fertilizers; pesticides; particulates; sewage; nuclear radiation from spent weapons, power sources, and nuclear waste; medical refuse and garbage; to name a few, are poisoning the earth's air, water, soil, and food supply (*Alaska oil spill exposes "gentle*



*drilling" problems*, 2006; J. Brown, 2006; Caldicott, 2004; Colborn, Dumanoski, & Myers, 1997; Gore, 2006b; Gumbel, 2006; M. K. Hill, 2004; M. Z. Jacobson, 2002; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Koehler, 2006; Kunstler, 2006; Lodge & Hamlin, 2006; Mundy, 2006; Peirce, Weiner, & Vesilind, 1998; Pollan, 2006; F. A. Schaeffer & Middlemann, 1992; Schwela et al., 2006; Shiva, 2002; *Sierra Club Chronicles: The day the water died*, 2006; Speth, 2005; Takada, 2005; B. Ward, 1976; Wark et al., 1997; C. Warren, 2000; Watras & Huckabee, 1994).

(These do not include the nasty effects of noise, heat, and light pollution, and space junk, which are presently under study.)

Although the effects may be perilous, the current national government in the U.S. has done little to curb the poisoning of the air, water, soil, and food supply; has done much to allow it; and is misleading people about the hazard (Burger, Ostrom, Norgaard, Policansky, & Goldstein, 2001; T. Hartmann & Miller, 2006; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Kunstler, 2006; Markowitz & Rosner, 2002; Renner, 2005; Shiva, 2002). But political and corporate deception regarding pollution is not limited to the presidency of George W. Bush and have been going on, to a greater or lesser degree, for a long time (Carson, 1994; D. Davis, 2002; Dewey, 2000; J. Doyle, 2004; Gonzalez, 2005; Speth, 2005).

### *Summary of Environmental Issues*

There are other aspects of earth's environment that are endangered by the growth of humanity and its propensity to consume. But it would be easy to argue that without air, food, water, and a suitable climate relatively free of dangerous toxins there is little

point in talking about the rest. Therefore, I will conclude this portion on environmental contributions and impact with the following:

Although some believe that concern over the environment has been overblown (R. Bailey, 1994, 2002, 1999; Beckerman, 1996, 2002; Chase, 2001; P. Huber, 1999; Leroux, 2005; Lomborg, 2001; Mathiesen, 2004; Michaels, 2005a, 2005b; S. Moore & Simon, 2000; T. Moore, 2000; Wildavsky, 1997), it appears clear that the majority of scientists believe that a radical alteration in how people produce, distribute, and consume, especially in America, is vital (Kennedy, 2006). Encroachment upon public and private resources, especially those of poorer nations, including: land, air, water, and wildlife; the unraveling of legislation to improve the environment; the disregard of laws in place; and the placement of consumption and profit over anything else has made this change an imperative (*Agriculture, land and desertification: Report of the Secretary-General*, 2001; *Air officials track deaths tied to diesel: Study focusing on trains, boats aims to influence EPA rule making*, 2006; *Asian pollution may harm Washington air*, 2006; Bagnato, 2002; L. Beck, 2006; Bergin, 2006; *BP refinery in Texas called biggest polluter*, 2006; Bridges, 2006a; Cart, 2006; Charon, 2006; Cone, 2006; Connor, 2006; Daley, 2006a; Dodds & Pippard, 2005; Gore, 1992; Gore Jr., 1994; Goudarzi, 2006; Graham-Rowe, 2006; Hsu & Eilperin, 2006; Kennedy, 2006; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Lean, 2006a; *NOAA forecasts larger than normal "dead zone" for gulf this summer*, 2006; Patz, Engelberg, & Last, 2000; Perlez & Suhartono, 2006; K. Phillips, 2006; Polgreen & Simons, 2006; X. Rice, 2006; Rifkin & Howard, 1980; Rincon, 2006; *Scientists warn, "Don't pollute the Puget Sound"*, 2006; *Sierra Club Chronicles: The day the water died*, 2006; T. Smith, 1990; P. N. Spotts, 2006; A. Stern, 2006; Struck, 2006; Vidal, 2006; Williamson, 2006; D. Wilson,

2005; J. Wilson, 2006; *World resources 2000 - 2001: People and ecosystems: The fraying web of life*, 2000).

There are those, however, who do not argue that there is a problem, but rather that it will be easy to fix. Maurice and Smithson (1984) argue that over the last 10,000 years crises have come and gone, each with its predictions of doom, collapse, and the end of humanity. In each and every instance new technology and the utilization of new resources came to the rescue. They claim that modern crises are no different and will be resolved in the same manner.

Certainly advanced technology has much to offer, and the wonders that lie ahead may be of great significance in making the planet another Eden. But technology is a double edged sword, capable of doing great good or great harm. And how technology is used is determined by those who use it. Therefore, human advancement, in people, government, institutions, and business, is necessary to bring humanity to a point where it can use its toys appropriately. This also does not eliminate, unfortunately, the current scarcity of global resources. Humans have yet to conquer outer space in a way that would allow them to live in large populations on other planets and mine the resources there; nor are they likely to do so in the near future. Even though classical and neo-classical economics would have people believe otherwise, the earth is humanity's Petri dish for now and the supply of resources is not infinite.

Catton (1982) remarks:

Today mankind is locked into stealing ravenously from the future.... Famine in the modern world must be read as [only] one of several symptoms reflecting a deeper malady in the human condition – mainly, diachronic competition, a relationship whereby contemporary well-being is achieved at the expense of our descendants. By our sheer numbers, by the state of our technological development, and by being oblivious to differences between a method that

achieved lasting increments of human carrying capacity and one that achieves only temporary supplements, we have made satisfaction of today's human aspirations dependent upon massive deprivation for posterity.... The overlooked differences between methods that permanently enlarged human carrying capacity and more recent methods that have only enabled us temporarily to *evade* the world's limits can be seen if we contrast the way people *used* to seek the good life versus today's substitute expedient....

It has now become essential to recognize that all creatures, human or otherwise, impose a load upon their environment's ability to supply what they need and to absorb and transform what they excrete or discard.... Carrying capacity can be expressed quantitatively as the number of us, living in a given manner, which a given environment can support *indefinitely*.

When the load at a particular time happens to be appreciably less than the carrying capacity, there is room for expansion of numbers, for enhancement of living standards, or both. If the load increases until it exceeds carrying capacity, overuse of the environment *reduces* its carrying capacity. That is why it has become important to recognize the difference between increasing the number an environment can support indefinitely and surpassing that number by "accepting" environmental damage. Overuse of an environment sets up forces that will necessarily, in time, reduce the load to match the shrinkage of carrying capacity.

pp. 3 – 5

Myers and Kent (2004) agree, noting:

All too often, however, today's headlong consumption... means environmental problems such as grand-scale pollution, waste mountains, energy shortages, land degradation, water deficits, even climate upheavals. All of us contribute to these problems. A visit to the shopping mall often means more "stuff" with excess piled on excess in the hunt for a life that is better off though not always better. All of us want to put our car on the road, thus adding to traffic congestion and pollution. Even saints produce their share of rubbish....

We already consume over half of all available freshwater. By 2020 we shall have another 1.3 billion people on top of today's 6.3 billion, all looking for their "fair share" of limited water supplies – and many of them will likely be making still greater demands on every last precious drop. So tough is this prospect that certain policy leaders – not eco-alarmists – anticipate there could be water wars ahead. We are also consuming or otherwise co-opting so much of Earth's net plant growth that we leave less than half for the millions of other species. We have degraded 20 million square kilometers of land, and expanse equivalent to more than twice the United States. We are even dislocating our climate systems.

There are many other signs that our consumption is depleting the environmental resource base that underpins all our economies, our societies, our futures. A recent overview analysis shows that in 1960 we were exploiting 70% of our planet's resources, a figure that by 1999 had risen to 120%. We are bumping our heads against the ceiling with ever-greater vigor. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 issued a wake-up call to alert us to the imperative of environmental safeguards, yet by the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 the number of people lacking safe drinking water had risen from 1.1 billion to 1.2 billion, tropical forests were being destroyed faster than ever, deserts were expanding faster than ever, and carbon dioxide emissions had increased by 12%. Plus, the number of people enduring absolute poverty had risen from 1.1 billion to 1.3 billion.

pp. 4, 5

In a preceding quote Kofi Annan called for a new revolution in how people envision the environment and humanity's affect upon it.

Brown (2001) agrees, pointing out:

In 1543, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published "On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres," in which he challenged the view that the Sun revolved around the earth, arguing instead that the earth revolved around the Sun. With his new model of the solar system, he began a wide-ranging debate among scientists, theologians, and others. His alternative to the earlier Ptolemaic model, which had the earth at the center of the universe, led to a revolution in thinking, to a new worldview.

Today we need a similar shift in our worldview, in how we think about the relationship between the earth and the economy.... Economists see the environment as a subset of the economy. Ecologists, on the other hand, see the economy as a subset of the environment.

Like Ptolemy's view of the solar system, the economists' view is confusing efforts to understand our modern world. It has created an economy that is out of sync with the ecosystem on which it depends....

Evidence that the economy is in conflict with the earth's natural systems can be seen in the daily news reports of collapsing fisheries, shrinking forests, eroding soils, deteriorating rangelands, expanding deserts, rising carbon dioxide levels, falling water tables, rising temperatures, more destructive storms, melting glaciers, rising sea level, dying coral reefs, and disappearing species. These trends, which mark an increasingly stressed relationship between the economy and the earth's ecosystem, are taking a growing economic toll. At some point, this could overwhelm the worldwide forces of progress, leading to economic decline....

These increasingly visible trends indicate that if the operation of the subsystem, the economy, is not compatible with the behavior of the larger system – the earth's ecosystem – both will eventually suffer. The larger the economy becomes relative to the ecosystem, and the more it presses against the earth's natural limits, the more destructive this incompatibility will be.

An environmentally sustainable economy – an eco-economy – requires that the principles of ecology establish the framework for the formulation of economic policy....

Just as recognition that the earth was not the center of the solar system set the stage for advances in astronomy, physics, and related sciences, so will recognition that the economy is not the center of our world create the conditions to sustain economic progress and improve the human condition.

pp. 3 - 5

According to Princen (2001), each time a state of the environment report is published, writers across the ideological spectrum call for a fundamental change in how people relate to nature. He states that these authors typically call for a drastic economic overhaul, ending with weak prescriptions for changes in taxation. What he believes truly needs to happen is a social-ideological change in how consumption is perceived. Princen states that consumption has typically been seen as a black box, an indefinable and often invisible thing that is done at the end of material provisioning. It is the reason for production, and there is little interest in investigating consumption beyond an estimate of demand. This approach was appropriate in a world where survival dictated a need for improved production and there was ample room for waste. However, people are now causing irreversible damage to ecosystems and the economy is stressing society at every level. The focus on production, exclusive of a complete understanding of consumption, can now be viewed as instrumental in the creation of societal stress and the abuse of America's, as well as the planet's, resources and environment. But the solution, he notes, lies in an overhaul of the perspectives and goals of social science and economics:

Analytic and policy approaches to environmental problems can be roughly grouped into two categories. There are those that take current resource use practices as given and look for marginal improvements. And there are those that presume current practices are unsustainable, possibly catastrophic if pursued to their logical conclusions, and look for alternative forms of social organization. Research within the economic strands of social science disciplines such as political science, sociology, and anthropology has been preponderantly in the first category, what might be termed “environmental improvement.” Pollution control, environmental movements, and environmental organizations are common topics.

At the same time social science has focused on environmental improvement, those who chart biophysical trends say marginal change is not enough. Every time a “state of the environment” report comes out, authors across the ideological spectrum call for a fundamental shift in how humans relate to the natural world. Some call for global citizenship, others for spiritual awakening. But nearly all call for a drastic overhaul of the economic system....

When the prevailing social concern was insufficient production, shortages of food and shelter for a growing population, inadequate investment and risk-taking, this stress on production is understandable. It is also understandable when natural resource abundance and unending waste sink capacity, at home or abroad, could be safely assumed. But today, such an ecologically “empty world” cannot be reasonably assumed. Humans are stressing ecosystem services and causing irreversible declines around the world, on land and water and in the atmosphere. In addition, the contemporary economic system is stressing societies at the individual, family, community, and national levels. The biophysical and social trends are unsustainable and cannot be corrected through more tinkering, that is, more environmental improvement.

(Princen, 2001, pp. 11 - 12)

(Also see Durning, 1992; and Kovel, 2002)

Foster (2002) addresses capitalism’s crisis of accumulation and the effect on the environment noting that, while it has shown promise, the new science of ecological economics has yet to deliver. He notes that the environment is on the brink of collapse and that assigning market values to nature and introducing less harmful technology will not reverse the damage. He also criticizes Green Economics as merely a method for more efficiently exploiting the environment. Following the notion of elite deviance (D. R. Simon, 2005) Foster observes the higher immorality of accumulating large quantities of material goods and generating profits at the expense of the poor and the environment.

Complaining that the current environmental crisis is the product of overconsumption by the wealthy, he argues that the problem is not the poor, though the poor are often blamed. Foster promotes an ecosocialist solution versus the pro-capitalist one supported by government.

He asserts:

A shift toward a broad movement for ecological conversion and the creation of a sustainable society also means that the partnership between the state and the capitalist system must be loosened by degrees, as part of an overall social and environmental revolution. This partnership must be replaced, in the process of a radical transformation of the society, by a new partnership between democratized state power and popular power.... Such a shift requires revolutionary change that must be more than simply a rejection of capitalist methods of accumulation and their effects on people and the environment....

p. 132  
(Also see Salleh, 1994)

If the above assumptions are true, then an overhaul in academic, economic, and political thought will be necessary in the very near future – including, as many will attest, a radical revision of George W. Bush’s disastrous environmental policy (Alterman & Green, 2004; Devine, 2004; Gore, 2006b; Ingatius, 2006; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Linden, 2006b; Lynas, 2004; Orr, 2004; Pope & Rauber, 2004; Speth, 2005).

Some scientists are appealing to the Christian community, asking them to take action to save the environment (Chapman, Peterson, & Smith-Moran, 2000; E. O. Wilson, 2006), and they have been responding, if not already acting of their own accord (Bradley, 1990; Dewitt, 1994; D. Edwards, 2001; Gatta, 2004; Goodstein, 2006; Gottlieb, 2006; Gunther, 2006; B. Hill, 1998; Nash, 1991; Oelschlaeger, 1996; Palmer & Finlay, 2003; *Religious leaders step in: Some Evangelicals break from Bush policy to join fight against global warming*, 2006; Tri Robinson & Chatraw, 2006; Sleeth, 2006a, 2006b; Van Dyke, Mahan, Sheldon, & Brand, 1996; J. Wallis, 2006). It is yet to be seen,



however, if the weight of these Christians' environmental concern is enough to budge a president who claims to be an avid member and strong proponent of their community.

Regardless, until now the federal government under this administration, and to some extent the state governments as well, has shown great reluctance to support measures that would improve the environment and in many cases has actively worked to resist and undermine them (*10,000 EPA scientists protest library closures - Loss of access to collections will hamper emergency response and research*, 2006; Barnard, 2006; Barringer, 2006; Crenson, 2006b; *Curbing global warming: Bush's tepid strategy*, 2006; Daley, 2006b; Dean, 2006a; "Dubious choices," 2006; Egelko, 2006; Eilperin, 2006b; "Federal judge strikes down state's ban on nuclear waste," 2006; Harden, 2006; *House again votes for drilling in Arctic refuge: Republicans advance Bush energy plan; Senate support less certain*, 2006; Juel, 2006; Kennedy Jr., 2006; C. Paine, 2006; Pelley, 2006; Rosenberg, 2006; E. Schaeffer, 2006; *Scientists oppose grizzly "delisting" plan*, 2006; *Taking the "E" out of EPA*, 2006; *Ten states sue EPA over global warming*, 2006; Vartabedian, 2006; Werner, 2006). Also see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2006/05/03/LI2006050300853.html>.

## *Social Issues*

One has to be dumb, deaf and blind to not see that we are in the midst of a global institutional failure.... Society is in the midst of a millennial change that will dwarf the industrial revolution in a tenth of the time.

Dee Hock as quoted in (Joseph, Dempsey, & Bassett, 1998, p. 1)

### *Overpopulation*

Can you think of any problem in any area of human endeavor on any scale, from microscopic to global, whose long-term solution is in any demonstrable way aided, assisted, or advanced by further increases in population, locally, nationally, or globally?

Albert Allen Bartlett

found at [http://www.giga-usa.com/quotes/topics/overpopulation\\_t001.htm](http://www.giga-usa.com/quotes/topics/overpopulation_t001.htm)

There is an anonymous quip circulating around the Internet recently that, paraphrased, reads, “The person who can solve the population problem has yet to be born.” And still, all jokes aside, the population of earth has continued to grow unabated, at least so far. Even with the early warning provided by books such as *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich, 1968) and *Limits to Growth* (Meadows, 1972) the birthrate continued to climb.

Currently the population in the United States is not growing as rapidly as in other countries, but the growth has been remarkable nonetheless. In 1915, America reached its first 100 million mark in population, in 1967 a second 100 million was added, and the total came to 300 million in late 2006 (*Population and ecological footprints*, 2006). Hanauer (1998) suggests that by the next century the population in the United States will have exceeded 500 thousand. Globally the trend has been similar, if not more accelerated (see <http://www.npg.org/index.html>).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population in America was 300,206,323 by the middle of January, 2007 and the world population had reached 6,556,951,956 by

the same time (To see the population clock of the United States Census Bureau and others go to <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>.)

Figure 12 shows the world's population growth over 7,000 years. The vertical axis represents billions of people and the horizontal axis millennia. Ayres (1999) claims that population growth gained momentum in approximately 5000 B.C. as people made the slow transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture. He goes on to note that by 1650 A.D. humanity was participating in the Age of Exploration and population had approached 500 million. Humans then rapidly proceeded into the industrial era and by 1930 the population had reached 2 billion. Moving into the information age earth's population had exceeded 4 billion by 1975, then exceeded 5 billion by 1987, and then exceeded 6 billion in 1999. By 2050 it is expected to exceed 9 billion with most of the growth occurring in underdeveloped countries (Ayres, 1999; Cohen, 2005).

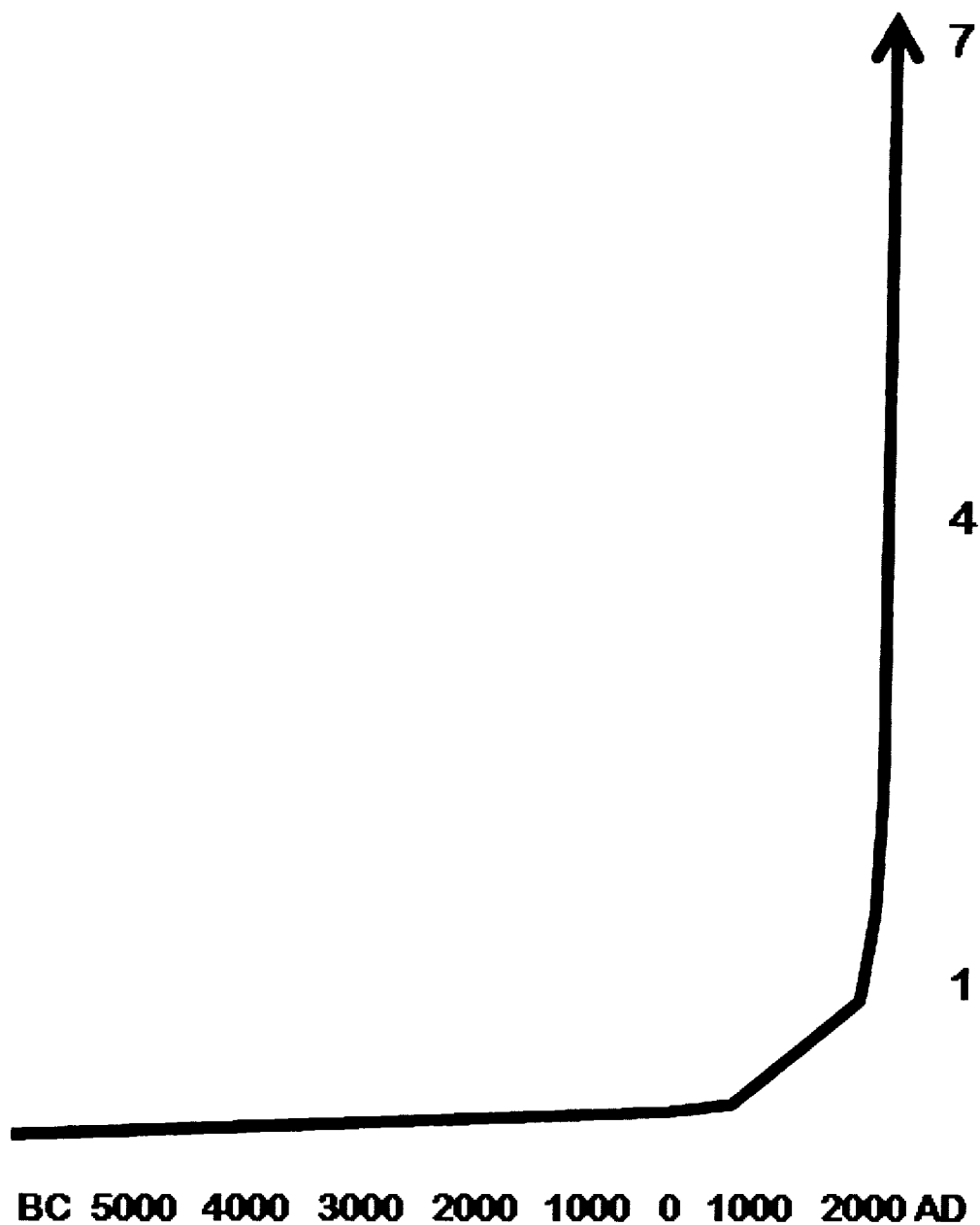


Figure 12. Population growth over the last 7,000 years.

(Adapted from Ayres, 1999, p. 44)

(Also see Bloom, Canning, & Sevilla, 2002; L. T. Evans, 1998; Gore, 2006b; Leisinger et al., 2002; Macunovich, 2002; Sagan, 1997; Segal, 2003; and Staton, 2004)

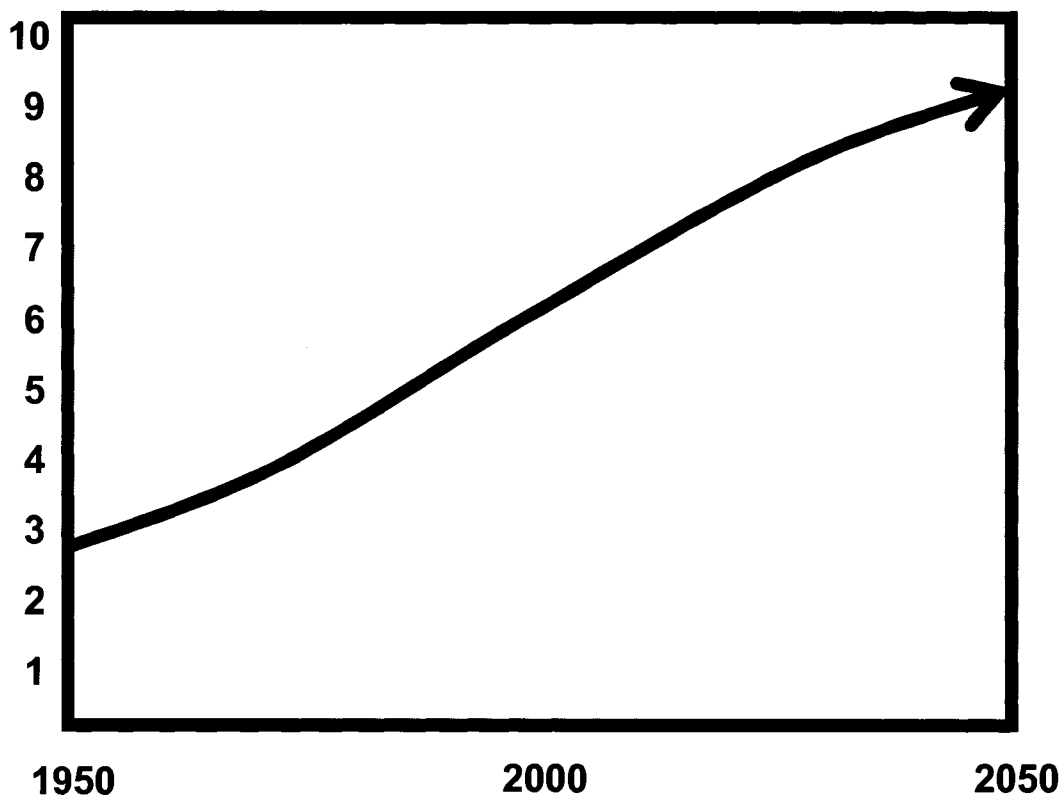


Figure 13. Population (in billions) since 1950 and projected to the year 2050.

Adapted from 2006 Census Bureau data found at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbprint.html>.

Figure 13 displays people in billions on the vertical axis and years on the horizontal axis. It is a very small segment of the previous graph and shows the increase in population from 1950 to 2050. As one can see, a hockey-stick spike becomes more apparent the more data one takes into account, but the growth even in this small section is substantial. For example, the baby boom generation is the first to see the population double within its lifetime.

The hockey-stick spike in earth's population is quite similar to those of technological innovation, species extinction, and carbon emission. It is no wonder that

they seem to go together. As a minor example, when the population on earth grew and people began to travel long distances they brought domestic species with them, intentionally or not, to the detriment of their new environment (Burdick, 2005). But there are bigger stakes involved. Overpopulation is taking a bite out of the supply of food and drinkable water (*Growing population strains water resources*, 2002; Leisinger et al., 2002). Also, as more land is being used for habitation and development the remaining farm land is being over-cultivated, which often results in poorer crops, depleted soil, more pollution, and diminished yields. Overuse of water and increased grazing stock, both due to overpopulation, is causing water supplies and native grasslands to disappear (L. R. Brown, 2002). As underdeveloped populations grow, industrialize, and increase their consumption pollution, desertification, and global warming will worsen (Brough, 2002). Growing populations are causing urban expansion, growing slums, and increased sprawl in addition to intensified unemployment, disease, and poverty (J. Vidal, 2002). Overpopulation is also contributing to the reduction of rainforests as trees are cut to clear land for agriculture and to be burnt as fuel, and as encroachment continues and resources are used up there is an increased risk and incidence of disease (Leisinger et al., 2002). (For a more comprehensive coverage of these and other issues concerning overpopulation and its impact on earth go to <http://www.pbs.org/journeytoplanetearth/index.html>.)

Species extinction and loss of biodiversity are also attributed to the overpopulation of humans. McKee (2003) claims that homo sapiens and its ancestors have been causing damage to biodiversity for nearly two million years and that the advent of agriculture accelerated species extinction. He observes that with a daily net gain of over 200,000 people, the population of the earth is literally pushing other life forms out

and limiting their variety. Even entire ecosystems have been imperiled due to human growth. He disagrees with those who suggest that nature can accommodate both diversity and an enormous expansion of a single species and insists that the growth of humanity must be reigned in, if only for the sake of its own survival.

Hanauer (1998) states that, using the Pareto principle, 80 percent of the environmental, social, and economic problems the world is experiencing are the result of only 20 percent of the usual suspects. That is, a reduction in the population of the planet would solve the majority of humanity's problems (also see Lader, 1971). He notes that overpopulation and overconsumption are interrelated. But overconsumption cannot be curtailed as quickly as population because people around the world, most of who have been deprived, have a right to expect an improvement in their standard of living – requiring an increase in overall expenditure of goods regardless of efforts to curtail needless consumption.

This perspective lends itself to debate, and there has been a considerable amount (Bhagwati, 2004; Brown, Gardner, & Halweil, 1999; J. Diamond, 2004; Easterly, 2006; Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2004; Landes, 1999; Sachs, 2005; Sen, 1999). For example, there are at least two ways in which happiness can be increased: by raising the happiness level of an existing population, or by adding many more people to the population even if the happiness of all individuals is diminished somewhat. To many the second option, at least beyond a certain point, is repugnant (Ryberg & Tannsio, 2004), which may explain why a reduced level of consumption is difficult to enforce.

Some, in fact, see a potential win-win scenario (Bornstein, 2004; Hart, 2005; Prahalad, 2005), bettering the lives of everyone through proactive economic practices.

However, even this optimistic perspective must keep the limitations of earth's resources in view. Civilizations, to paraphrase two very long, comprehensive, and delightful books, rise and fall based on their environmental resources and how well they care for them (J. Diamond, 1999, 2004).

From a human perspective the planet seems to be bending under the economic, social, and environmental weight of overpopulation, and many countries that continue to grow may do so at their peril. Because much of the growth in population has happened in poorer countries many are already experiencing a unique malady called demographic fatigue, the inability of poor governments with overburdening populations to cope with any additional or novel threats to their societies (Brown et al., 1999). This loss of social elasticity alone, regardless of the other dangers of overpopulation, would be cause for concern.

But some argue that the second derivative of birth rate is falling (Brown et al., 1999), meaning that the population on earth is still increasing, but the rate of increase is slowing down. Rather than punching the overpopulation alarm, Longman (2004) argues that the decrease in the second derivative is what will really spell tragedy, especially for America. He disputes the notion that humanity should cut back on its reproduction, noting that modern medicine is prolonging the life of the old and, coupled with reduced fertility, it will wreak havoc with healthcare and pensions for the aged because there will not be enough young people paying into the system to meet the demand. Longman also states that: a reduction in secular fertility could spur a fundamentalist revival due to their religious obligation to reproduce; a diminishing population could reduce the supply of consumers and producers, threatening the free market; and the health care system as



people know it could collapse. Wattenberg (2004) agrees, noting that a diminishing population will also change demographics, creating far more old people than young, and will threaten the government's ability to support the public good beyond healthcare and Social Security because the tax base will dwindle along with the percentage of the population that is young enough to work (also see Cohen, 2005; Day, 1995; French, 2006; and Livi-Bacci, 2001).

But if the birthrate stabilizes it may do so at a point where the world's population is far greater than the planet can support. As noted earlier by Catton (1982), the earth's carrying capacity and humanity's planetary footprint may be incompatible (A. A. D. Clarke, 2006).

According to Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1991) many think of overpopulation as a matter of overcrowding and cite the densities of Holland, Belgium, or certain cities in China while comparing them to the United States or Africa. But population density is, for the most part, irrelevant to the problem of overpopulation. The important factor to consider is the carrying capacity of a given environment. If the population cannot be maintained without rapid resource depletion and environmental degradation then the population is too large. Using this standard, nearly every nation on earth is already overpopulated.

When considering overpopulation from this viewpoint the rich countries are especially culpable because they drain the resources of the planet so quickly, often depleting the natural resources of other nations. For example, The Netherlands is able to support over one thousand people per square mile because they extract and import most of their resources from other countries, including water. They did not build their prosperity on the natural resources of their own land. And when the inflow of resources

fails their prosperity will be threatened because they have so greatly exceeded the carrying capacity of their own country.

As the current leader of the free world, the United States would do well to set an example of how to best balance population with carrying capacity. Interestingly, some believe that as people are lifted from poverty they typically begin to have smaller families (Bonitsis & Geithman, 1987; Leisinger & Schmitt, 1994; Repetto, 1978) although this is highly debated and does not necessarily hold true as income exceeds a baseline.

However, from this perspective one could conclude that all America must do is to insure that the world is well fed, clothed, educated, sheltered, and given adequate jobs and medical care to decrease population. As well it might. But a global view of carrying capacity still needs to be considered as the increase in consumption necessary to achieve this goal would be considerable. This paradox is exacerbated by the psychological benefits of consumption, often made necessary by the problems that overconsumption creates. Consumption helps to produce the cocooning effect mentioned earlier by Popcorn (1991) in which people wrap themselves in their possessions in order to shield themselves from a world that they perceive to be dangerous and out of control.

Walton (1997) observes one example:

The car had come to represent more than mere transportation or status. While always a symbol of independence, now it was a source of comfort – both physical and mental – in a world destabilized by drugs, crime, violence, sex, governmental corruption, racism, downsizing, spouse abuse, child abuse, political upheaval, terrorism, famine, exotic plagues, environmental scourges, climate devastation, ethnic warfare, overpopulation, grievous poverty, fractured families, mutations in health care, and a nervous economy. Their mood anxious, their spirits riven, Americans needed to trust someone or something. These days people looked to their cars for qualities missing in humans: reliability and integrity.

p. 64

Overall one could view the problems of overpopulation, overconsumption, and escalating environmental destruction as a simple equation: Environmental damage = population x consumption per person x environmental damage per unit of consumption. In this scenario large populations with low consumption are no more damaging than small populations with large consumption. Currently the most egregious damage is done by the wealthiest billion people who are exerting record breaking pressure on the earth's capacity to absorb waste and regenerate resources (Baltz, 1999; Leisinger & Schmitt, 1994). But as Schor (1993; 1999) previously observed, many people are being systematically programmed to seek the lifestyles of the wealthiest billion, often through overwork, and this influence is not limited to those in the United States. When underdeveloped countries strive for this lifestyle the consumption rate needed to meet their expectations will further exceed the planet's ability to provide.

Much of this expansion of consumption has led to, and is exemplified by, the rapid growth of urbanization. In recent history the industrial revolution was the greatest influence on the progress of urbanization. Prior to the early 1800s the world's urban population never exceeded 7 percent. Now it is 75 percent. Urban expansion began in the developed countries due to industrialization, but since the early 1900's the cities in the less developed countries have been growing at twice the pace, on average, of those in the developed regions. For example, it took approximately 150 years for New York City to grow by 8 million people. Mexico City, on the other hand, took only 50 years to add 16 million. This breathtaking urban growth, especially in underdeveloped countries, has made it difficult to provide appropriate services such as sewage disposal, clean water, and police protection (Rodger Doyle, 2005).

The problems of population growth have caused many to turn to government for a remedy, thus making overpopulation a political issue. And because of the political nature of overpopulation there have been heated debates regarding the relationship between population levels (and the resulting benefit or cost), and other politicized issues. These include: homosexuality, abstinence, abortion, teen pregnancies, female bondage, female autonomy, contraception, immigration, government regulation, and sex education, to name a few (Bouvier & Grant, 1995; Butler, 1994; Camarota, 2001; Cohen, 2005; Crtichlow, 1999; Dixon-Mueller, 1993; Eager, 2004; Fry, 2001; Graham Jr., 2006; Grant, 1992, 1996; Greenberg, 1988; Hardaway, 1994; N. Harris, 2002; B. Hartmann, 1995; *How immigration hastens destruction of the environment*, 2006; Kasun, 1999; Leisinger et al., 2002; Mann, 2006; McMichael, 1995; Mills, 1994; Petchesky & Judd, 2001; D. Poston, 2006; Rose, 2000; Tichenor, 2002; Tolbert, 2002). Each has been either reviled or extolled regarding their religious, secular, and-or environmental impact as methods for increasing or decreasing the population. More holistic, caring, and feminist approaches are being offered to help alter the problems of population growth and how people care for the planet (Henderson, 1983; Jiggins, 1994; M. Mellor, 1998; Mary Mellor, 2000; Merchant, 1990; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plant, 1989; K. J. Warren, 2000). But so are those that are more restrictive, traditional, dominating, and conservative with respect to change (Eaton & Lorntzen, 2003; Glazebrook, 2002; Merchant, 1990, 1992; Salleh, 1992). Some even claim that overpopulation is a hoax and has been perpetrated by the government to further control people (Kasun, 1999).

These controversies aside, many agree that after centuries of greater-than-exponential growth the population of the world is stabilizing and will plateau at around 9

to 10 billion (Cohen, 2005; K. McCarthy, 2001; *Population challenges and development goals*, 2005; *World population prospects: The 2002 revision volume III: Analytical report*, 2004). However, nothing in the science of population change is for certain, and if the fertility rate were altered by just one child per couple it could cause the world's population to range between 3.6 and 27 billion by 2150 (Chapman et al., 2000; *Consequences of rapid population growth in developing countries*, 1991; J. E. Jacobson, 1996).

Regardless, Musser (2005) observes that humanity is already pressing the limits of earth's resources. People are currently emitting carbon dioxide three times as fast as the oceans and land can absorb it and by 2050 the world's forests and fisheries will be exhausted (also see Cassel-Gintz & Petschel-Held, 2000; Colchester & Lohman, 1993). He claims that demographic, economic, and environmental transitions have intertwined to transform everything and have created problems on a scale that is, so far, beyond humanity's ability or willingness to overcome. According to many humanity is about to pass through a bottleneck where these problems will stress both the planet's natural resources and human ingenuity (Musser, 2005; Stennett, 2002; E. O. Wilson, 1993, 1999). Consequently there are several paths that the future could take. Poverty could increase or prosperity could spread. The population could swell, level off, or contract. Pollution could rise or drop dramatically. Consumption could increase or decrease. In other words, things could get a lot better, or they could get a lot worse. But a leveling off of population growth, pollution, resource depletion, and consumption is not a viable option as the carrying capacity of earth apparently cannot sustain it (Abernethy & Hardin,

2000; J. E. Cohen, 1995; Cohen, 2005; Wackernagel & Rees, 1995; Wackernagel et al., 2002).

## *War*

One could easily make the argument that escalating the frequency and impact of war fans the fire of entropy already fueled by social, economic, and environmental degradation. And yet America frequently engages in war and in the sale of arms that facilitate war. This does not mean that the majority of Americans desire war, rather they likely fall prey to the same forces, and people, that promote overwork and overconsumption.

This sentiment was famously expressed by the infamous Nazi, Hermann Goering:

Naturally, the common people don't want war... but after all it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.

Found at <http://quotes.prolix.nu/War/>.

Bringing this analysis home, Lapham (2003) observes:

After the election George W. Bush was so obviously in the service of the plutocracy that he could have been mistaken for a lawn jockey in the parking lot of a Houston golf club.... [But] on September 11, like Pinocchio brushed with the good fairy's wand on old Gepetto's shelf of toys, the wooden figure turned into flesh and blood. A great leader had been born, within a month compared to Abraham Lincoln.

Found at [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Democracy\\_America/America\\_Jihad\\_Lapham.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Democracy_America/America_Jihad_Lapham.html).

Whereas the real Abraham Lincoln states:

Allow the President to invade a neighboring nation, whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion, and you allow him to do so, whenever he may

choose to say he deems it necessary for such a purpose – and you allow him to make war at pleasure. If today, he should choose to say he thinks it necessary to invade Canada, to prevent the British from invading us, how could you stop him? You may say to him, “I see no probability of the British invading us,” but he will say to you, “Be silent; I see it, you don’t.”

Found at <http://quotes.prolix.nu/War/>.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn once observed that war serves only as an excuse for domestic tyranny (A. Jones, 2006), and it would appear to many that America has been trying to prove his point. Beginning with the overthrow of Hawaii’s monarchy in 1893 and continuing through the current war with Iraq the United States has almost seamlessly engaged in armed conflicts with other nations, all too often to remove democratically elected governments and to impose dictatorships that are more friendly to the interests of America (Chomsky, 2003, 2006; Foster, 2006; C. Johnson, 2000, 2004, 2006; A. Jones, 2006; Kinzer, 2003, 2006; Lando, 2007). Altogether, including those within as well as those outside of the country, the United States engaged in over 120 armed conflicts between 1800 and 1999 (see <http://www.onwar.com/aced/nation/uni/usa/index.htm>). Jeong (2000) asserts that between 1816 and 1976 the United States engaged in 118 militarized conflicts between nations and initiated 67 of those conflicts. Under the guise of promoting peace, American warfare seems to have become self-perpetuating (Carroll, 2006; Kolko, 2002, 2006; Mailer, 2003; G. Vidal, 2002b). But why?

While ideology and self-defense are often given as the excuse for war, they are seldom the reason (Chomsky, 2003; Kolko, 2002; Mailer, 2003; Power, 2002). Hedges (2003a) asserts that the real reason is that warfare helps to give meaning to people’s lives; that it helps to present an idealistic characterization of the people, their culture, and their leaders. Conversely it dehumanizes and demonizes the enemy, its culture, and its leaders, providing contrast between a self-concept of good and a projected concept of evil.

Within this context the perception of war is divided between the mythic and the sensory. Mythic war is imbued with a character and purpose that it does not really have. From this point of view each side reduces the other to mere objects and elevates themselves as the embodiment of absolute good. Defeats are seen as minor events on the road to ultimate victory. The moral darkness of the enemy must be vanquished at all cost and war is never exposed for what it really is, organized murder. A sensory perception of war is much the opposite and is far more complex. It makes far fewer distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, or enemy and friend, and is far more realistic about the horrors of war, but without it the warriors would not survive. When mythic reality rules the only apparent solution is the use of force against the enemy, but the myth is impossible to achieve. However, when the sensory reality of war takes hold, people lose their stomach for war. In an article in *Harper's Magazine* Lewis Lapham (2002) writes:

As a form of misgovernment.... I can think of none more disastrous than the failure to distinguish fiction from fact.... Mark Twain remarked on [this] stupidity in 1905 during the American occupation of the Philippines. Objecting to the fraudulent piety of statesmen who don't know what they're saying, Twain wrote a story, "The War Prayer," in which an "aged stranger" enters a church where the congregation has been listening to an heroic sermon about the glory to be won in battle by young patriots armed with the love of God. Motioning the startled minister to stand aside, the aged stranger improvises a bitter peroration that makes clear the true meaning of the prayer:

O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it – for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow



with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

p. 39

In light of the realities of war, therefore, those who wish to prosecute war, and preserve their power by doing so, must maintain the mythic quality which helps to perpetuate its existence (Hedges, 2003a, 2003b).

Illuminated by this perspective it is also important to note that war is both a means and a reason to perpetuate elite deviance (a topic that will be discussed further in a later chapter). In September of 1793 James Madison wrote:

Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. In war, too, the discretionary power of the Executive is extended; its influence in dealing out offices, honors and emoluments is multiplied; and all means of seducing the minds, are added to those of subduing the force, of the people. The same malignant aspect in republicanism may be traced in the inequality of fortunes, and the opportunities of fraud, growing out of a state of war, and in the degeneracy of manner and morals, engendered in both. No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.... War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war, a physical force is to be created; and it is the executive will, which is to direct it. In war, the public treasuries are to be unlocked; and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war, the honors and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed; and it is the executive brow they are to encircle. The strongest avarice, vanity, the honorable or venal love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.

(Mattern, 1997, p. 107)

There are also those who claim that warfare has been used as a very effective tool for reducing the population, especially the poor or the non-dominant race (Kunstler, 2006; Zinn, 2003), or by leaders to oppress and enslave their own countrymen (Chomsky, 2006; A. Jones, 2006; G. Vidal, 2002b). And although the notion is debated (Vayrynen,

2006), most believe that almost all wars, at some level, have been fought over geopolitical location, scarce resources, and-or for the purpose of increasing markets (Brzezinski, 1997; Kinzer, 2003; Kolko, 2002; Kunstler, 2006; Mailer, 2003; Schoonover & Lafeber, 2003; Toffler, 1980; G. Vidal, 2002a; Zinn, 2003, 2006). Even the word “war” is given semantic kinship with an attempt to expand and improve markets (Krippendorff, 2006).

This perpetuation and expansion of commerce appears to be at the root of overwork and overconsumption, and, as mentioned in earlier chapters, is seen as a manifest right for Americans. But this perception can be self-defeating, especially through warfare.

As quoted previously (in part) Smith (1994) claims:

We all want a peaceful and prosperous world, yet nations continually battle over the world’s wealth and keep the world impoverished. If the citizens of the industrialized world knew that poverty could be largely eliminated even as they worked fewer hours, politicians would have no choice but to work for peace and the prosperity that it would bring. The Cold War alone wasted five times the wealth necessary to industrialize the world and do away with most poverty. Likewise, just 14 percent of the industry producing arms at the peak of the Cold War would be enough to industrialize the world to a sustainable level and eliminate most poverty in only forty-five years....

Industrialized societies seem to be on a treadmill, apparently producing more and more but gaining little, and at times even regressing in standards of living. The rest of the world seems also to be on a permanent treadmill, one of endless poverty. With technology becoming ever more efficient and productive, why is this?

Part of the answer lies in our current system of distributing goods by wasted labor. Another part lies in the competitive battle over the world’s tools of production, and the control of its trade, which is destroying a large share of the world’s industries. When trade wars erupt into hot wars, social wealth is destroyed even faster than it is created.

These battles over wealth have occurred for centuries, and are consuming the Earth’s precious resources and leaving a destitute landscape in their place.

Increased technological efficiencies should be making societies increasingly secure, but most nations are struggling, many unsuccessfully, to prevent their living standards from falling. The cause of most poverty in the world is the waste of three foundations of production – labor, industrial capital, and resources.

Resources are becoming increasingly scarce, our land, water, and air have become polluted. The ozone layer that protects the Earth from ultraviolet rays is being depleted. We have destroyed habitats around the world, and animal and plant species are becoming extinct at the rate of over one an hour. The rate of species extinction is normally measured in centuries or millennia, but it is estimated that “the human species will experience the unfolding of an entire geologic epoch in less than one lifetime.”

Scientists have concluded that all life on Earth is interconnected in many ways not yet known. With climatic change and species extinctions of such magnitude, the human species will also come under extreme duress. Alleviating the crisis will require labor, resources, and industry....

Though most societies were probably efficient for the times in which they were formed, powerful nations disintegrated when too large a share of their labor was diverted to unnecessary tasks. Some societies, such as European aristocratic structures, needlessly expended labor, resources, and capital to support militaristic elite bent on plundering their neighbors and their own workers. Each of these societies became locked into a wasteful system of production and distribution. The United States is also locked into a wasteful expenditure of labor, resources, and industry....

[But the worker participates in this waste.] Their defense is based on natural alliances and loyalties.... The image of doing necessary and socially beneficial labor safeguards economic territories. To recognize that the work could be done with 50 to 80 percent less labor is to invite the elimination of one's job.... There is no consistent relationship between true production and income....

The reduction of working hours to twenty hours a week or less was a recognized possibility during the 1920's and 1930's; but then came World War II, the Cold War. Even as labor productivity doubled and then doubled again – the concept of drastically shorter working hours disappeared from the social mind....

pp. 3 – 6  
(Also see Alexander, 2001)

Even though peace and plenty may be brought about by the abolition of war, especially those fought over resources, many maintain that the current war in the Middle East is being fought over geopolitical location and natural resources such as oil, and

profess that future wars will likely be fought for the same reasons (Brzezinski, 1997; A. D. Clarke, 2006). But whether or not most conflicts are fought for wealth, they are unarguably fought for power and influence.

Bonner and Wiggins comment:

Reading Margaret Wilson Oliphant's... classic book... we felt as though someone should have sent a copy to George W. Bush.... for practically all the most preposterous ideas that emanate from the feverish swamps of the Potomac were tried out in the feverish swamps of Venice, hundreds of years ago....

The United States congratulates itself as being the finest democracy the world has ever seen, but the system for ruling Venice eight centuries ago was democratic. People voted for people who voted for other people, who then voted for yet more people who elected the doge. The whole idea was to allow ordinary people to believe that they ran the nation, while real authority remained in the hands of a few families – the Bushes, Kennedys, Gores, and Rockefellers of thirteenth-century Venice....

Today, rare are the Americans who are not victims of their own scams. They mortgage their homes and think they are getting richer. They buy Wall Street's products as though they were gambling in Las Vegas and believe they are as clever as Warren Buffett. They went to the polling stations in November 2004 and believed they were selecting the government they wanted, when the choice had already been reduced to two men of the same class, same age, same schooling, same wealth, same secret club, same society, with more or less the same ideas about how things should be run.

In Washington, DC, the United States Senate meets in the same solemn deceit as the Consiglio Maggiore – pretending to do the public's business. While down the street, America's own doge, George W. Bush, takes up where the Michiele and the Dandolo left off: trying to hustle the East.

Making a very long story short, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, as at the beginning of the twenty-first, many people saw a clash of civilizations coming and sharpened their swords. They were, then as now, the same civilizations, clashing in about the same part of the world – the Middle East.

(Bonner & Wiggin, 2006, pp. 24, 25)

Apparently America has not learned history's lessons. And for the populace in general, the price of whatever gains there are to be made through warfare appears to be entropy itself, rather than the sacrifices necessary to maintain a moral upper hand.

Arguably World War II was the most moral and justifiable war since the Revolutionary War in 1776. Yet, many also argue that using nuclear bombs against Nagasaki and Hiroshima were an inhumane and unnecessary atrocity (Holstock & Barnaby, 1995; Selden & Selden, 1997; Taylor Jr., 2005). Even against despots such as Saddam Hussein it is difficult to justify the damage caused by American intervention through warfare.

Richie (2003) claims:

Saddam killed and maimed more than one million people over... two dozen years in a ruthless quest to rule Iraq and make it the leading power in the Middle East. Many of the Iraqis who perished were the victims of political murders, massacres of rebellious villagers, and acts of torture. Others were soldiers who died in wars that Saddam started with Iran and Kuwait. The second of these conflicts led to the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Following the war, Kurds in the north and Shi'ah in the south rebelled. Each group hoped to break free of the murderous dictator and give form to its own vision of Iraq. But Saddam crushed the rebels, killing 80,000 and forcing millions to flee.

p. 6

In November of 2003, CBS News reported that Saddam had killed over 300,000 during his 24 year reign of terror (*US Honcho: We have Iraq momentum*, 2003). In the same year the New York Times suggested that it might be as high as one million (Burns, 2003; K. Phillips, 2006).

On the other hand, during the Gulf War of 1991 the United States dropped approximately ninety thousand tons of bombs on Iraq and continued routine bombings until the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The initial salvo lasting 43 days destroyed the civilian infrastructure including plants that generated electricity, purified and pumped water, and provided sanitation. Sanctions continued, embargoing Iraqi importation of almost all essentials including chlorine for water purification. Without chlorine, Iraq's water supplies are polluted with biological waste and bacteria. By 1995 epidemics of

cholera, gastroenteritis, and typhoid led to nearly 100,000 civilian deaths and doubled the infant mortality rate. Estimates suggested that at least 170,000 children under five years of age would die in the coming year (Chomsky, 2003; C. Johnson, 2006).

However, after America's invasion of Iraq the risk of Iraqi's dying through violence increased by 580 percent. According to The Lancet, John's Hopkins University, The Washington Post, and the BBC the United States has killed over 650,000 Iraqi's, including women and children, since the invasion in 2003, over 80 percent of which have been verified by death certificate (D. Brown, 2006b; *Iraq death toll "soared post-war"*, 2004; Parsons, 2006; Reynolds, 2006). This toll was achieved by the United States in only a few years whereas Saddam required 24, apparently leaving America on any footing other than the moral high ground.

This would be lamentable and embarrassing enough, but while Saddam was committing many of his atrocities he was considered an ally of the United States and was receiving American approval, money, weapons, and military support (P. W. Galbraith, 2006). As America was considering invading Iraq a dark joke was being circulated on the Internet which read, "We know that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. We have the receipts."

War, then, is a powerful contributor to entropy. Not only does it increase the entropy in human life and manmade artifacts, the entropy extends to the natural environment as well (Austin & Bruch, 2000; S. Goff, 2004; *The spoils of war*, 2003; Woodbridge, 2004). One could easily argue that war is only justified if the entropy that it prevents is greater than the entropy it causes.

Coker (2004) observes:

Entropy is not a bad way of looking at how industrialized warfare exhausted its own possibilities, especially with the greatest release of energy of all: the atomic bomb. With the atom... the purpose of war became its own negation.

p. 32

As does Beinhocker (2006) :

Warfare inevitably raises entropy as it turns the hard-won order of economies into rubble, and the biological order of human bodies into injury and death.

p. 307

But, as Smith noted earlier, even after the end of the cold war, when a period of peace was finally achieved, the United States continued to pump billions of dollars into the development of better and more destructive weapons rather than on the social ills that cause war. And this disparity continues to grow as the military expenses and military power have continued to grow (Carroll, 2006). In 2005 the on-budget estimation of military expenditure was 518.1, an amount 7,500 percent greater than that spent on economic aid to other countries (see

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/us.html>). In addition, the escalation in the number of wars in the world after the end of the cold war was supported by arms sales to warring countries, with the U.S. as principal provider (Berrigan, Hartung, & Heffel, 2005; Shah, 2006; Sivard, 1996). Admiral Eugene Carroll, Jr., U.S. Navy (Retired) comments:

For 45 years of the Cold War we were in an arms race with the Soviet Union. Now it appears we're in an arms race with ourselves.

Found at <http://www.cdi.org/budget/2004/world-military-spending.cfm>.

According to a 2003 report by the Center for Defense Information (*Last of the big time spenders: U.S. military budget still the world's largest, and growing*, 2003) the U.S. budgets nearly as much for its military as the rest of the world combined. In 2003 it reports that America spent 399.1 billion dollars on the military (not including the off-

budget expenses of the war in Iraq), Russia spent 65 billion, China 47 billion, Japan 42.6 billion, the United Kingdom 38.4 billion, France 29.5 billion, Germany 24.9 billion, and from there the numbers drop off rapidly. Since that time the overall yearly cost has increased (Pelofsky, 2004). Any United States federal budget over the last five years will show that on-budget military expenditures drastically exceed all other federal expenditures with the exception of Social Security, Medicare-Medicaid, and the national debt.

This, apparently, does not take into account the expenses for the current war in Iraq, which has largely been kept off-book. But the cost of this war is already hurting government funded social programs, especially for children (Giroux, 2004). As of February, 2007 this war has cost the American public over 600 billion dollars and the president is currently asking for an additional 100 billion slated to come from a 100 billion cut in Medicare and Medicaid (Barovick & Neuman, 2007; Tran, 2007).

According to the National Priorities Project, found at <http://costofwar.com/index-public-education.html>, the overall cost of the Iraq war is closer to 400 billion dollars.

Nonetheless, if one were to take this lower number as the actual cost the National Priorities Project asserts that it would still buy one of the following:

1. One year of Head Start for over 48 million children
2. One year of health insurance for over 218 million children
3. One year's salary for over 6 million additional teachers
4. Over 3 million new housing units
5. Over 18 million four-year public university scholarships



Ultimately the war is projected to cost over \$2 trillion (Bilmes & Stiglitz, 2006; *Iraq war could cost \$2.6 trillion*, 2006; Lambert, 2006; Regan, 2006). Unfortunately, all of this massive military expenditure seems to have only added to the overall entropy, which is multiplied if fought over resources or to expand commerce.

Dilloway (1999) explains:

In 1972 the international world finally awakened to a looming global catastrophe wrought by uncontrolled and uncompensated economic growth. Resources, and notably some minerals, oils, and other forms of energy, were being squandered, while natural and social habitats, an immense gene pool of wild life, climate-sensitive forests, oceans, soils, and an fresh water resources and even silence, the air, and protective layers of the stratosphere were all being dissipated at an alarming and often unknown rate.... [coupled with] an uncontrollable burgeoning of people world wide since 1950; [and] an uprush of fanatical and authoritarian religious bigotry that has sparked widespread civil and political strife....

p. 72

But Dilloway asks how humanity, existing in a world of endless promise and with the great contemporary expansion of knowledge and power, cannot seem to meet its individual and common needs? Answering his own question he notes that the Arab-Israeli war had eventually caused the OPEC cartel to triple and then quadruple crude petroleum prices. This produced a concurrent rise in the price of domestic oil. The additional revenue needed an outlet, and American banks found a solution through massive lending for Third-World development. The result, however, was a lasting and overwhelming burden of debt in the developing world that, while transferring great wealth to America through interest payments, crippled those countries that had borrowed money and radically reduced their per-capita income. However, Dilloway contends, the benefit for America did not last:

But the rich, too, were now caught in a lasting decline. Throughout the 1980s, market-mad Western states sought to respond by cutting all restraint, burning controls on finance, mushrooming credit for property purchase, and then turning

to savage depressive policies to halt the resulting price inflation. Surpluses in Western budgets and balance-of-payment accounts turned into massive indebtedness to a few more effective performers – notably Japan and Germany. Commodity prices became depressed, thereby impoverishing still further a debt-ridden Third World. This, of course, was the era of gross anti-human madness – the dogma-driven era of Thatcherite-Reaganite ultraconservatism. That final outcome of market capitalism and political imperialism, so supremely exemplified in the Anglo-Saxon world....

p. 73

Dilloway then harkens back to the rural world of American in 1776 and the philosopher Adam Smith who proclaimed that if each producer sought his own interest and each consumer did likewise, an “invisible hand” would ensure a balanced equilibrium of prices and goods in which the needs and wants of all would best be satisfied. He observes, however, that fifty years later the same principle was applied to the theory of government, leading to a parliamentary democracy based on political parties with opposing interests, each competing with each other in a market for votes. But the contemporary world is far different from that of 1776. He observes that producers, consumers, and states differ greatly in their power, wealth, and sophistication and that trade is controlled by private transnational organizations which are independent of any government. The conventional wisdom, however, is still derived from assumptions that are now antiquated, producing long-term decline, poverty, pollution, secrecy, and corruption. Free market economics relies on insatiable and constantly rising consumption for anything saleable, placing bombs and hospitals at equal value.

He continues:

But competition, where it exists, fires ever-rising productivity per head – at and now *above* the rate of output – so that a frantic search for gain at once reduces total employment and negates natural and social environments. Today, when every competitive ploy has been tried, there is an urge to cut corners in new ways – leading to short-term thinking, staff-cutting, low capital investment, wild credit inducements... hidden state-business corruption, and rapid obsolescence.... Governments are forced both to go soft on private business interests and to

connive at bribery to induce developing states to buy sophisticated arms. In summary, this combative ethos of free-market economics and adversarial government must not only hazard livelihoods and destroy habitats. It must equally hazard our deep social urges for affection, mutual aid, and cooperation....

By definition, the whole political system has to oppose any looking ahead to seek generally desired aims. Essential public services, the lifeblood of human rights, are being “privatized” [also see (Shiva, 1997, 2000, 2002)] in a desperate but unavailing bid to shore up an unstable, non-viable system. Like an earlier push for financial deregulation, massive credit, and enforced house purchase, that effort too is doomed to failure.... While we urgently need common policies for conserving resources, for full employment, for at least minimally fair distribution, and for some serious concerted effort at looking ahead, today’s state model, and the overriding world system that dictates each state’s behavior, has to exclude them almost completely from practical politics. To promote basic rights and duties – whether economic and social or civic and political – effectively demands some overall regard for the mechanisms at work and the motives they set in train. To promote a real code of rights and duties in an ill-socialized world, cooperative behavior has to be encouraged and antisocial behavior discouraged.

pp. 73 – 74

Therefore warfare, powered by a drive to increase economic activity, appears to multiply entropy at an impressive rate and eventually becomes self-defeating.

Commenting on the dubious benefits of war, an arguable oxymoron, von Mises concludes:

War prosperity is like the prosperity that an earthquake or a plague brings. The earthquake means good business for construction workers, and cholera improves the business of physicians, pharmacists, and undertakers; but no one has for that reason yet sought to celebrate earthquakes and cholera as stimulators of the productive forces in the general interest.

(Ludwig von Mises as quoted in Vance, 2005, p. 2)

In 1625, Hugo Grotius (2004), a man recognized as the father of international law, discussed the laws of war and peace, stating that in order for a war to be just it must exhibit the following characteristics:

1. There must be just cause, generally considered to be self-defense

2. There must be proportionality, i.e. the situation must be severe enough to warrant war
3. There must be a reasonable chance for success
4. There must be a public declaration by a legitimate authority
5. War must be a last resort

He goes on to say that a war can be called just if a people are attempting to quell the threat of coercive domination by others or to overthrow a domination that already exists. An unjust war, Grotius suggests, is one in which the people attempt to impose domination on others or to maintain an existent domination.

War defined by the characteristics of justice, it could be argued, might prevent more entropy than it produces. Therefore America would likely do well to consider its campaigns in this light.

### *Quality of Life*

Happiness, stress, healthcare, poverty, and a host of other considerations are all part of one's quality of life. However, in this section I will address only two of these, happiness and stress, as healthcare, poverty, and other issues that intersect with quality of life will be addressed in the section on economic issues.

### *Happiness*

The Constitution of the United States recognizes its citizens' right to pursue happiness, and happiness has been shown to be good for people's overall well-being (Lemonick, 2005). But a people's happiness and quality of life can be measured in many

ways, and there are many ways of finding fulfillment and well-being that have been recommended throughout history (Argyle, 2001; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Diener & Suh, 2000; Haidt, 2006; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003; D. G. Myers & Diener, 1997b; Russell, 1996). For example, if the current federal government and the preponderance of corporate America had its way life quality would likely be measured only in GNP, on-record employment, and customer confidence (Gunnell & Asthana, 2002; Layard, 2005; Palca, 2005). And being happy does not always correlate with the absence of sadness, but does correlate with an improved perception of one's quality of life (Coles, 2002; "Subtract rows, add sex: "Happiness economics" has arrived: Will public policy be the same again?," 2002). Some even suggest that happiness is not normal (Cloud, 2006), or that the notion of happiness in this life is a relatively recent idea (McMahon, 2006), or that people don't really know what makes them happy because the evolution of their brains cloud their perception (Gilbert, 2006).

Often, the best measure of people's happiness and satisfaction with the quality of their lives is better measured by the level of depression and anxiety they are experiencing. Many people regardless of their circumstances will indicate that they are moderately happy (Nettle, 2005; C. Wallis, 2005). But when reporting their state of anxiety and depression people's responses can show that they are becoming more depressed and distraught. This is currently true in America as the incidence of anxiety and depression are rapidly climbing, even though most claim that they are moderately happy (Easterbrook, 2005; Gunnell & Asthana, 2002; Layard, 2005; D. G. Myers, 2000; D. G. Myers & Diener, 1997b; B. Schwartz, 2004a, 2004b; C. Wallis, 2005). A recent Gallup poll indicates, however, that Americans are expressing a marked decrease in their

happiness with the nation and with the path that the United States is taking overall as only 29 percent approve of the current situation (J. M. Jones, 2006).

Gibbs (2006) comments:

In the weeks after 9/11 out of the pain and the fear there arose also grace and gratitude, eruption of intense kindness that occurred everywhere, a sharp resolve to just be better, bigger, to shed the nonsense, rise to the occasion. And yet five years later, more than two-thirds of Americans say they are unhappy with how things are going – exactly the opposite of the weeks after the attacks, when people were crushed but hopeful. We saw back then what we were capable of at our best, and now find ourselves just moving on, willing to listen to our leaders but not necessarily believe them, supporting the troops but disputing their mission, waiting, more resigned than resolved, for the next twist in the plot.

p. 34

Nevertheless, at the individual level most people are encouraged by the market to measure the quality of their lives by the amount of money they make and the sheer amount, and price, of things that they possess – especially if they are unnecessary (Rosenblatt, 1999; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999; B. Schwartz, 2004a; Toms & Holland, 1998; Twitchell, 2002). However, when polled, people place money and possessions at lower priorities, although their outward behavior is often a contradiction. Even though people often spend the majority of their time pursuing money and possessions, they claim that other things, such as faith, friends, family, freedom, control, meaningful work, health, love, and time are far more important (Argyle, 2001; Easterbrook, 2003; Futrelle, 2006; D. G. Myers & Diener, 1996, 1997a, 1997b; "Subtract rows, add sex: "Happiness economics" has arrived: Will public policy be the same again?," 2002; Thottam, 2005; C. Wallis, 2005). Some studies even suggest the altruistic notion that people are not happy unless others are as well (Layard, 2005; Popper, 2002; Toynbee, 2003).

This professed hierarchy is also much more in keeping with most of the world's religions, to which most of the world's people profess (Bhaskarananda, 2002; Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998; Hagen, 1997; *The Holy Bible: King James version*, 1989; Orlinsky, 1992; Razwy, 1999).

In addition, it would appear that money and possessions can take people only so far on the road to happiness before becoming less and less of a necessity (Futrelle, 2006; Gunnell & Asthana, 2002; D. G. Myers, 2000, 2005; D. G. Myers & Diener, 1996, 1997a, 1997b; Surowiecki, 2006). Eventually money and possessions can become a burden (de Graaf, 2003; Hamilton & Denniss, 2006; Kasser, 2002). This notion is illustrated in Figure 14.

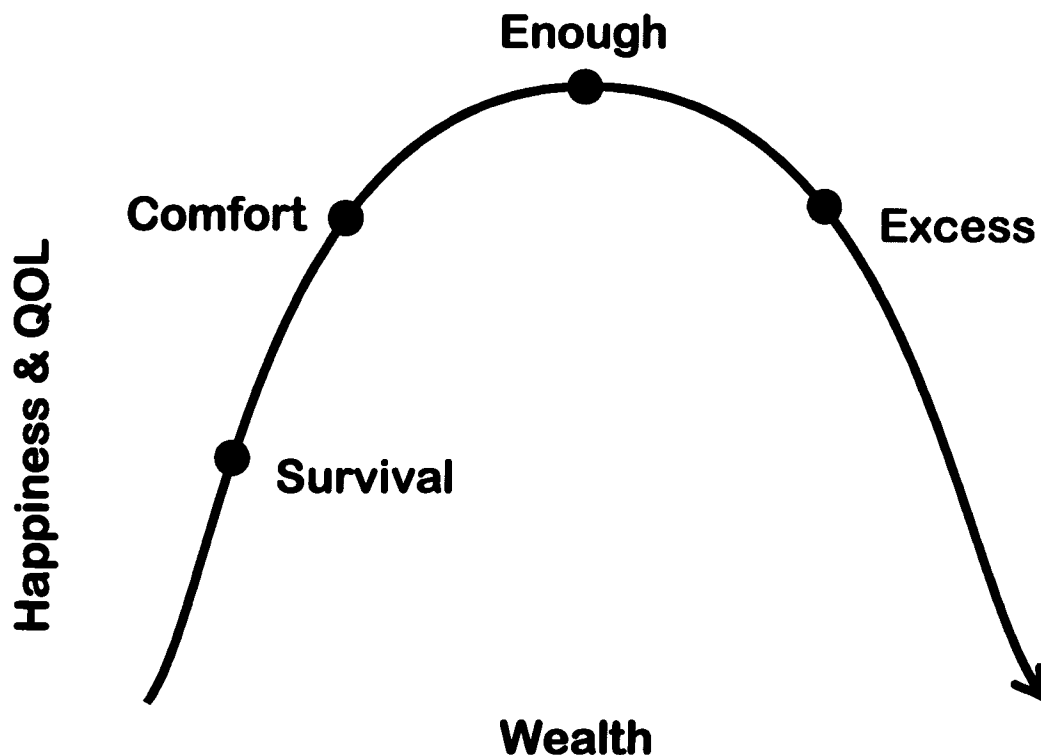


Figure 14. Relationship of wealth to happiness and quality of life.

(Adapted from Dominguez & Robin, 1992, pp. 22 - 26)

In Figure 14, the vertical axis, moving from the bottom to the top, represents an increase in fulfillment, happiness, and overall quality of life. The horizontal axis, moving from left to right, represents increased wealth. Dominguez and Robin (1992) suggest that, although people clearly define this differently, there is an optimal point at which more wealth accumulation causes a decrease in one's subjective quality of life.

There are also potential problems with the very physical fact of owning too many things, as Figure 15 demonstrates:

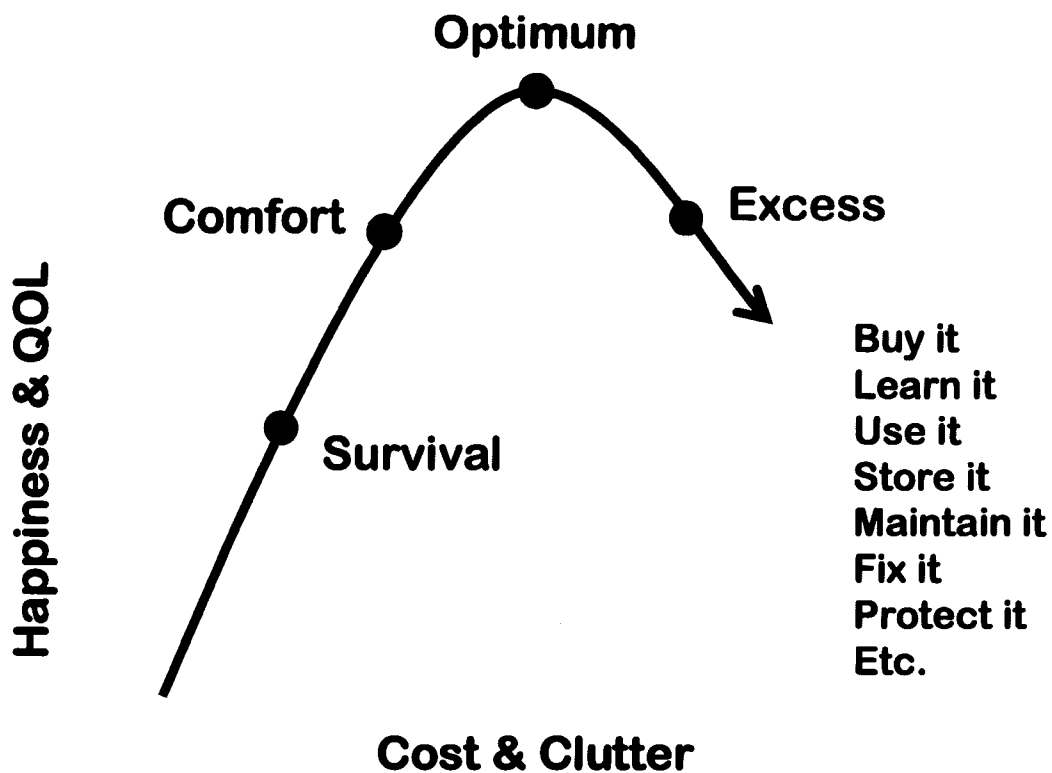


Figure15. Relationship of happiness and quality of life to the cost and clutter associated with material possessions.

(Adapted from Dominguez & Robin, 1992; B. Schwartz, 2004a, 2004b; and Sirgy, 2001)



In Figure 15, the horizontal axis represents the cost of things and the clutter that they produce and increases from left to right. The vertical axis represents happiness and quality of life increasing from bottom to top. If one begins at the survival level, gains in possessions add comfort to one's life and increase happiness. However, and this point as variable, one reaches a level of possession at which optimum happiness and quality of life are attained. Any increase in possessions after this point become more of a drag on the owner and less of a benefit as one becomes consumed with buying, learning how to use, storing, maintaining, repairing, and safeguarding one's possessions.

This apparent dilemma also holds true for the number of consumer choices with which people are presented:

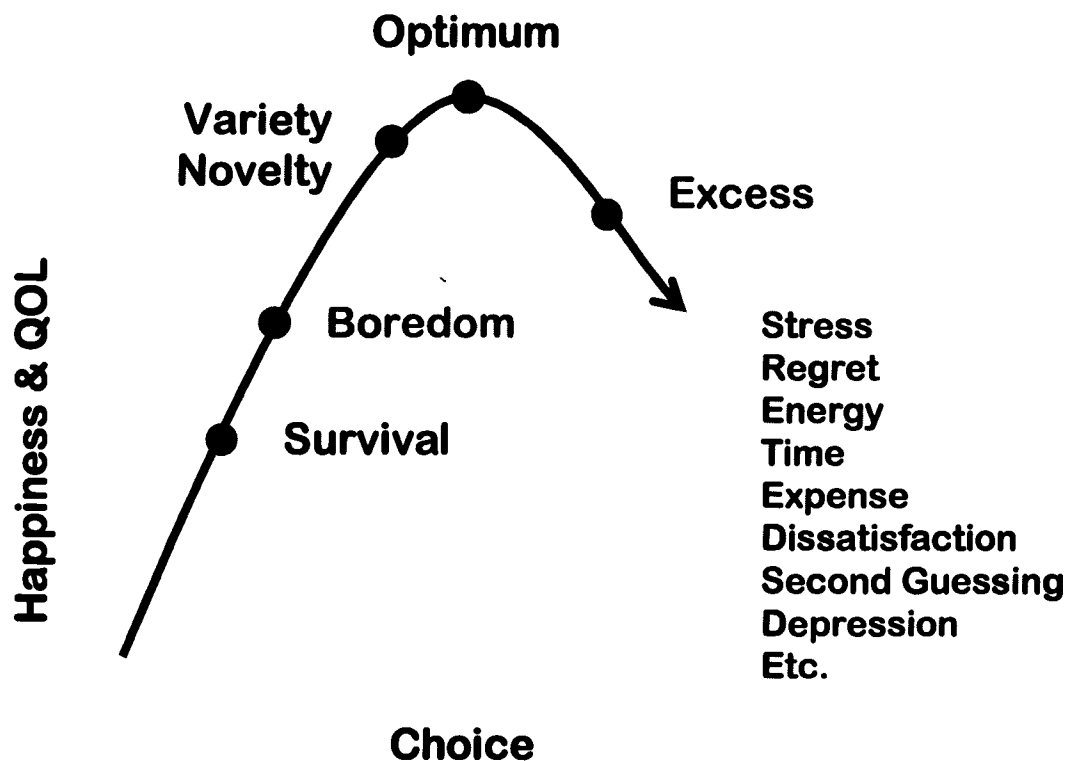


Figure 16. Relationship between quality of life and number of choices.

(Adapted from B. Schwartz, 2004a, 2004b)

In Figure 16, the horizontal axis represents, from left to right, increasing choices while the vertical axis represents increased happiness and quality of life from bottom to top. If one begins at the level of survival, as in the graph illustrating possessions, an increase in choice is very beneficial. After one satisfies survival needs one has still to obtain enough choice to avoid boredom and achieve a sufficient level of novelty and variety to remain actively engaged. Beyond this point, however, is an optimum level, also variable, beyond which increased choice becomes bothersome and dysfunctional. Excess choice can overwhelm the decision maker and render them unable to choose. Excess choice can also drain one's time and energy, creating stress, dissatisfaction with one's final choice, and sometimes depression. It has been argued that many of the problems with American culture is due to too many possessions and too many consumer choices, the very artifacts lauded by a capitalistic market culture (de Graaf et al., 2002; R. H. Frank, 1999; J. Schor, et.al., 2000; J. B. Schor, 1999; B. Schwartz, 2004a).

Fortunately the other things that enhance one's quality of life seem to never lose their luster no matter how much one has, as Figure 17 illustrates:

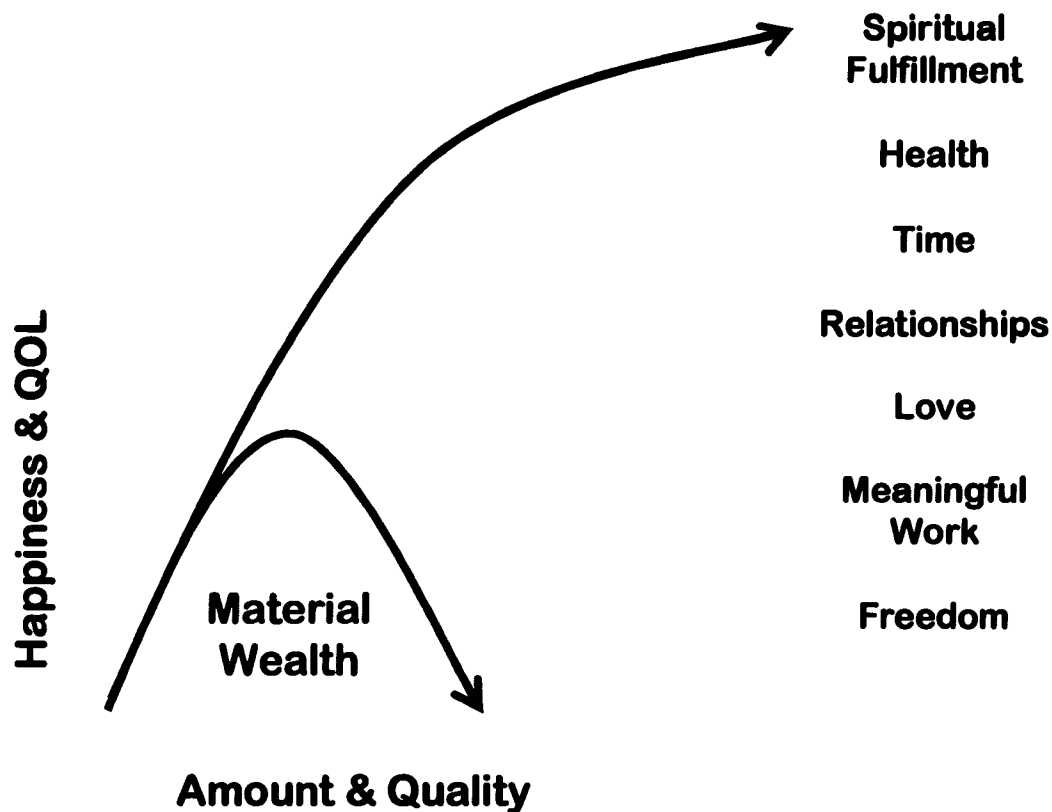


Figure 17. Effect of material wealth versus that of less tangible factors on happiness and quality of life.

Figure 17 shows how material wealth and possessions at first increase happiness and quality of life. Beyond a point, however, happiness and quality of life peak and then decrease as wealth and possessions continue to accumulate. On the other hand this figure also illustrates how an abundance of health, time, love, freedom, and other non-material experiences continue to add to one's happiness and overall quality of life.

In support of this notion Lane (2001) contends that one's level of income may have an inverse relation to happiness. He notes that in some studies groups who experience a decline in income demonstrate greater happiness, on the whole, than do groups whose incomes increase. Lane goes on to say that in advanced countries, the

correlation between income and happiness is very near zero and in some cases is negative. For example, factors other than income, such as close friendships and family, are far more important in the United States in explaining happiness, and as America's material prosperity rises the divide between happiness and income appears to widen. Unhappily, he notes, as wealth increases for individuals the quality of relationships often declines. Lane asserts that capitalism's forte is creating material prosperity, but it falls far from the goal in protecting families and fostering companionable societies. And while America still needs to help poorer countries to raise their happiness and quality of life through economic development, America's internal focus needs a shift in priorities. Lane notes that Karl Marx may have been correct in relegating capitalism to a mere step taken on the road from feudalism. But he also observes that the cultivation of arts and of life predicted by John Maynard Keynes was more prescient than a purely socialist destination. Lane suggests that enjoying one's wealth in good company, and sharing one's wealth for the betterment of others, is far more satisfying than wealth's accumulation.

In keeping with this idea some suggest that once personal fulfillment has peaked through the accumulation of material wealth one can enhance the other things that bring continued happiness and quality of life by giving one's excess material wealth away, especially to those who desperately need it (C. Wallis, 2005), as illustrated in Figure 18:

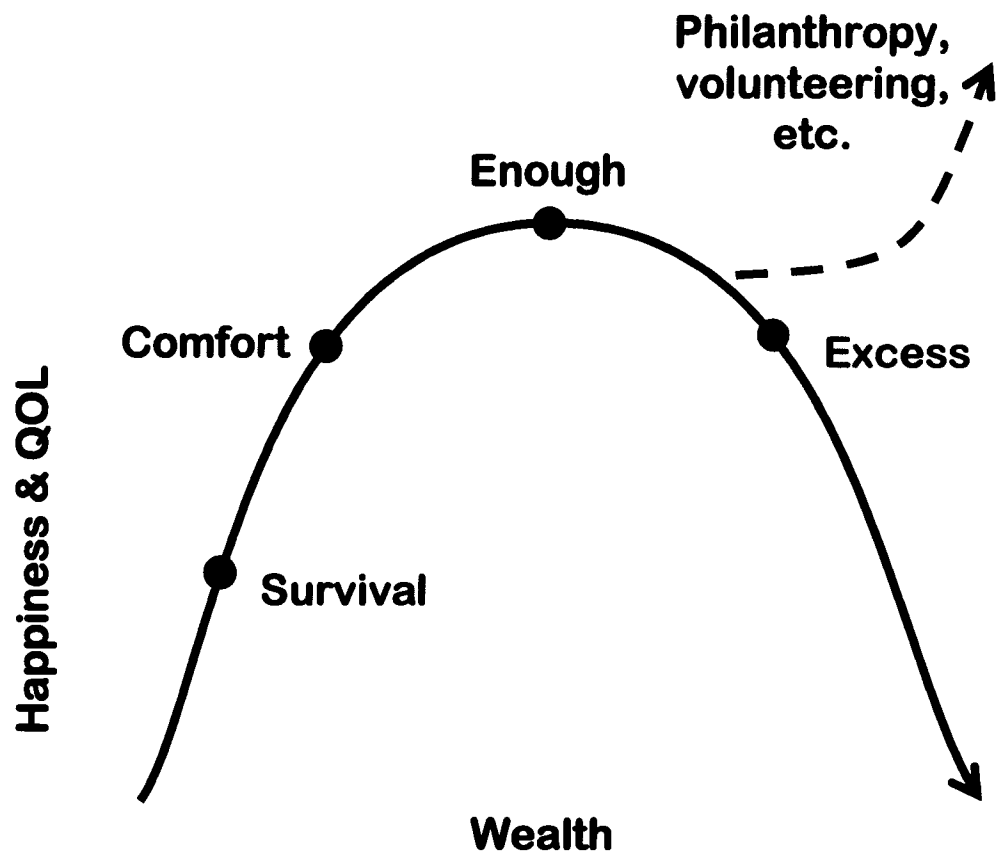


Figure 18. Effect of wealth and social contribution on happiness and quality of life.

(Adapted from Dominguez & Robin, 1992, pp. 22 - 26)

Therefore, it would appear that a better way to boost everyone's quality of life is through social activism, voluntary civic work, charity, and other ways of doing for others (Burlingame & Hodge, 1997; de Graaf, 2003; Gaudiani, 2003; Welch, 2006).

Doing for others can also boost one's self-esteem and high self-esteem improves happiness and lessens the risk of depression. But too many Americans use different tactics for feeling better about themselves. For example, visibly having and displaying more wealth than others has been a staple in America for boosting one's self-esteem, at least in the short term (de Graaf et al., 2002; Veblen, 1943). Unfortunately this same self-esteem can also increase one's tendency to bully, have sex at an early age, and

engage in substance abuse (R. F. Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2005; R. R. Baumeister, 2001). After all, one of the more tried and true ways to become a millionaire in America appears to be the ability to also become selfish and uncharitable (Stanley & Danko, 1996). But, gaining wealth and success, and the concurrent short-term self-esteem, often makes people less happy and more anxious, producing what some call a collapse anxiety, because they are afraid that they will lose what they have gained, or a catalog-induced anxiety based on the fear that they will not be able to purchase all that they might desire from the cornucopia of available products and services (Easterbrook, 2003; Ehrenreich, 1989; Graham & Pettinato, 2002).

As mentioned previously, another nasty side effect of this conspicuous consumption seems to be that, rather than finding happiness in the absolute value of their possessions, most people in contemporary America seem to gage the benefit of their wealth, or lack of it, based on the observation of other people that they frequently encounter (Brooks, 2004; A. E. Clark & Oswald, 1995; Easterlin, 1974; R. H. Frank, 1985; Kahneman et al., 2003; B. Schwartz, 2004a), whether in person or in the media (J. B. Schor, 1999). Supporting this idea are the findings that the marked inequality in America is having a negative effect on people's happiness. For people who are younger than 30, laborers, and those with lower education levels this effect is the strongest, but most people in the United States are affected to some degree (D. Blanchflower & Oswald, 2003). Based on these observations one could make the argument that reducing inequality would benefit everyone and make everybody happier. But this argument has been met with much resistance, especially from those people and institutions whose material wealth might decrease as a result.

The struggle individuals experience with wealth, happiness, and charity seem to be reflected at the national level as well. Diener and Diener (1995) observe that in one study 32 indices reflecting a representative sample of universal human values, including happiness, were analyzed across 101 nations. Subsequently wealth correlated significantly with 26 of the 32 indices, indicating a higher quality of life in wealthier nations, although suicide and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were worse in those same nations than in others. This study recognized, as one might suspect, that a fulfillment of higher order needs occurs only after the basic physical needs were satisfied, indicating that improved economic viability was very important in poorer nations.

But beyond a very basic stage an increase in affluence does little to improve happiness and quality of life, even at the national level ("Bhutan: Gross national happiness in Bhutan," 2006; Rowley, 2005). Keely (2005) makes the point that since World War II the impressive increase in growth and consumption in developed countries has not made their citizens any happier. And among some less developed countries the effect of increased consumption and modernization may even be worse. Among the countries of the world Bhutan has one of the highest levels of subjective well-being. However, the recent introduction of modern culture and technology has increased distress, social discord, and dissatisfaction among its people (Schell, 2002).

Regarding America, a very brief scattershot of the literature would show that:

- America is three times richer than it was in during the depression, but people are no happier. Because one gets what one measures, the government needs to measure Gross Domestic Happiness rather than Gross Domestic Product (C. Cobb, Halstead, & Rowe, 1995; Pink, 2004).

- People in America are no happier than they were 50 years ago and by many indicators happiness is in decline (D. G. Blanchflower & Oswald, 2002; Layard, 2005).
- The country overall is richer, but individuals evaluate their wealth by comparing themselves to others, and having less than others is dissatisfying and often stressful. This reference anxiety is exacerbated by the increasing centralization of wealth in America (Harford, 2006; Layard, 2005; Ospina, 1996).
- Though richer and healthier people in America are now less happy (Honigsbaum, 2004), and the process of striving for money can cause anxiety and ill health (Easterbrook, 2005).

Easterbrook (2003) observes:

Throughout the United States... the incidence of clinical melancholy has been rising in eerie synchronization with rising prosperity: Adjusting for population growth, “unipolar” depression, the condition in which a person simply always feels blue, is today ten times as prevalent as it was half a century ago.

p. xvi

Apparently the supreme affluence of the United States among other nations has not placed it at the top of the happiness hierarchy. Rather, American comes in at around 14<sup>th</sup> in happiness compared to other nations (D. Altman, 2004). Instead of promoting national affluence to improve happiness, many contend that it is the societies that care for their people and the environment, that promote freedom and participation in decision making, support individual expression, have greater equality and lower militarization, and are populated with people who cooperate and care for each other, that seem to be happier ("An anthropology of happiness: Out of misery, some extraordinary lessons,"



2001; R. Doyle, 2002; B. S. Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Glatzer, Von Below, & Stoffregen, 2004; and Sirgy, 2001). The song *You're Nobody 'Till Somebody Loves You* (Stock, Morgan, & Caranaugh, 1961), the one that drives so many psychotherapists mad – especially those who are invested in getting their clients out of a state of dependence and into one of independence, but don't have a clue about interdependence or transcendence – makes a point. It would seem likely that America, in order to be a happier nation, should emulate happier countries – especially those in Scandinavia which have the highest scores on most if not all of the quality of life parameters – promoting cooperation and mutual caring without negating the appropriate level of value for individualism and democracy (Easton, 2006; M. Edwards, 2004; B. S. Frey & Stutzer, 2002; *Nothing is rotten in the State of Denmark*, 2006; Ouweneel & Veenhoven, 1991; Toynbee, 2003; Veenhoven, 1999; A. G. White, 2006). (Also see [http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap\\_nat/nat\\_fp.htm](http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/nat_fp.htm).)

Unfortunately, even though the evidence suggests that striving for money and possessions beyond a certain point – and having money and possessions beyond a certain point – seem to be very counterproductive, Americans are continuing their overconsumption with an apparently unbridled zeal. In addition, and contrary to common belief, Americans are not very generous with those who have less. Sadly but predictably this trend in overconsumption is spreading to other nations and may eventually bring about universal ruin.

Dominguez and Robin (1992) observe:

Distinguished members of the United Nations... after three years of study and public hearings around the world, agree: on of the primary engines driving global environmental problems is North American patterns of excess consumption. Couple this consumption with the understandable envy and yearning growing in the “have-nots” to acquire the same luxuries that we enjoy, and you have a scenario for disaster. And this disaster isn’t in the future. It has already begun.

p. 10

So why do Americans continue on their apparent overwork and overconsumption binge?

It could be that times are confusing; that the benefit derived from America’s history of overwork and overconsumption is obscuring the future cost. Charles Dickens may have said it best:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

(Dickens, 1997, p. 13)

These attributes fit the America in which most of its citizens now live.

Technological advances have led to great progress in transportation, communication, medical science, and scientists’ understanding of how the universe works. At the same time there is social strife, political corruption, rampant inequality, and the ongoing rape of the environment. Knowledge has been greatly expanded and made more available, but people are overloaded with information and its sources are indicted with bias. Sexuality and its expression have been liberated but there is a renewed hatred of homosexuality, a repression of sex education and contraception, and a malignant growth of new sexually

transmitted diseases. Since the 1960s the social safety net has been torn and plundered. Prosperity had doubled and then doubled again, but only for a few. Divorce is epidemic, as is teen suicide and crime in general. The prison population has quintupled, the number of people with diagnosed depression has soared, and the number of babies born out of wedlock has increased 600 percent. Houses are bigger, but families are smaller and the relationships among family members are shallower. Wealth in capital has increased, but social capital is on the decline. Possessions are at an all time high, as is lifespan, but so is the feeling of emptiness (Coontz, 1997, 2000; Easterbrook, 2003; Lane, 2001; D. G. Myers, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Templeton, 1997).

Bertrand Russell is often given credit for the following quotation, “The mark of a civilized human is the capacity to read a column of numbers and weep.” And although I cannot find the original source, the sentiment is quite appropriate all the same. The advancement of wealth and technology seems to have been accompanied by a sort of cultural erosion that has taken its toll on almost everyone, but the greatest toll has been levied upon the youth of America. While the objective data for children’s well-being is often looking better and better, the subjective data seems to be getting worse by the minute (Levine, 2006; D. G. Myers, 2000; M. E. Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1996; Skolnick, 1991).

There are those, however, who argue that little is available to affect people’s long-term happiness. Even though external events affect subjective well-being (Di Tella, MacCulloch, & Oswald, 2000, 2002; Oswald, 1997, 2002), and there have even been economic values assigned to these life events (A. E. Clark & Oswald, 2002), they argue that people adapt to changes in their environment and return to a previously set point of

happiness regardless of changes in life's circumstances (Bruni & Porta, 2005; Kahneman et al., 2003; Lykken, 1999). They also suggest that most people will always live on a kind of hedonic treadmill (hopefully the allusion to the rat race are obvious) where increased happiness is only temporary and one must always go faster and faster to regain the thrill (Dan Baker & Stauth, 2004; P. Brickman & Campbell, 1971; Philip Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; Haidt, 2006; Keely, 2005).

Unfortunately this kind of thinking has led some governments and institutions to assume a sort of nihilistic irresponsibility for social well-being. However, under many circumstances subjective happiness may be more malleable, and adaptation less complete, than previously thought (Byrnes & Strohming, 2005). Beyond the use of psychopharmaceuticals people's levels of happiness can respond positively and permanently to changes in their environment and-or their mode of attention, and visa versa. And these changes can be monitored through observing the neuroplasticity (structure and function) of the brain (Begley, 2007a, 2007b; Bruni & Porta, 2005; Doidge, 2007; Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999; J. M. Schwartz & Begley, 2003; M. Seligman, 2002; M. E. P. Seligman, 2006; Wallace, 2006).

Myers (2000) asserts that America needs to transition from what he calls the old American Dream to a new one. The old American Dream was built on the foundation of life, liberty, and the purchase of happiness. And while it is true that those with nothing or very little are made happier when they move up the first few rungs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, when one moves beyond survival and security the act of becoming better off materially does not insure greater well-being. Once people are comfortable and

are able to afford life's necessities, an absolute increase in affluence matters very little. Poverty can bring misery, but wealth is no guarantee of happiness.

In the late 1950's Galbraith (1958) proclaimed that the United States had become an affluent society. But Myers (2000) and Easterbrook (2003) both agree that since 1957 Americans have come to live the lifestyle of the doubly-affluent. Americans have over twice the money and their money buys twice as much; they have twice as many cars per person and eat out over twice as much. Americans now have dishwashers and wide-screen televisions and the Internet and espresso coffee and a host of other conveniences that were completely absent in 1957. But after over four decades of rising affluence, Meyers and Easterbrook reckon, people are not only no happier, they are less happy and more often seriously depressed.

Radical individualism and materialism seems to have distinguished the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in America and have apparently continued into the next millennium. However, people who strive the hardest for affluence appear to live with decreased well-being whereas those who seek intimacy, personal growth, and to contribute to the good of others experience an increased quality of life (Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Kanner, 2003; D. G. Myers, 2000, 2004; Perkins, 1991; Wuthnow, 1994). While adaptation seems to account for some of America's need to consume more and more, people's penchant for social comparison could likely be a stronger factor, especially the current phenomenon of upward comparison (Easterbrook, 2005; R. H. Frank, 1999; Kahneman et al., 2003; J. B. Schor, 1999; M. J. Silverstein & Fiske, 2003).

But Myers argues that more Americans are beginning to move away from a materialistic and individualistic lifestyle due to a piqued social conscience. He argues that

a new American Dream is awakening that will be focused more on those things which bring true and lasting happiness and well-being, including: the welfare of one's community, a value for family, caring for the environment, supporting justice and liberty, close relationships, empathy, honesty, kindness and civility, and spiritual awareness. He notes that signs of this renewal may already be emerging because people are experiencing the costs of an unbridled pursuit of the individually achieved wealth that is characteristic of the old American Dream.

Monbiot (2002) agrees that a new perspective is required, claiming that quality of life in the United States and Britain peaked in the early 1970's and that it has been a downward spiral since then. He argues that for things to change the development of a social conscience must be accompanied by the elimination of overconsumption and a reordering of the economic value system:

With the turning of every year, we expect our lives to improve. As long as the economy continues to grow, we imagine, the world will become a more congenial place in which to live. There is no basis for this belief. If we take into account such factors as pollution and the depletion of natural capital, we see that the quality of life peaked in the UK in 1974 and in the US in 1968, and has been falling ever since. We are going backwards.

The reason should not be hard to grasp. Our economic system depends upon never-ending growth, yet we live in a world with finite resources. Our expectation of progress is, as a result, a delusion.

This is the great heresy of our times, the fundamental truth which cannot be spoken. It is dismissed as furiously by those who possess power today – governments, business, the media – as the discovery that the earth orbits the sun was denounced by the late medieval church. Speak this truth in public and you are dismissed as a crank, a prig, a lunatic....

One reason why we fail to understand a concept as simple as finity is that our religion was founded upon the use of other people's resources: the gold, rubber and timber of Latin America; the spices, cotton and dyes of the East Indies; the labor and land of Africa. The frontier of exploitation seemed, to the early colonists, infinitely expandable. Now that geographical expansion has reached its

limits, capitalism has moved its frontier from space to time: seizing resources from an infinite future...An entire industry has been built upon the denial of ecological constraints....

Partly because they have been brainwashed by the corporate media, partly because of the scale of the moral challenge with which finity confronts them, many people respond to the heresy with unmediated savagery.... everyone who holds power today knows that her political survival depends upon stealing from the future to give to the present....

Overturing this calculation is the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. We need to reverse not only the fundamental presumptions of political and economic life, but also the polarity of our moral compass.

(Monbiot, 2002)

The synthesized world of overwork and overconsumption may be overthrown by a new world view. However, it seems to be so embedded in the American culture and its institutions that it may be very difficult to change.

The ubiquitous milieu of consumption and overwork create many roadblocks to achieving happiness and a satisfying quality of life. And as economic activity can be and usually is entropic, so overwork and overconsumption reduce entropy for the few while increasing it for the many (Beinhocker, 2006). Regardless, since 911 the American people have not shown the internalization of new values for which Myers hoped. This, in part, may be due to the ease with which Americans are distracted and encouraged to occupy their time with meaningless tasks, which, they are told, will lead to happiness.

## *Busy-stress*

The stress and busyness of the workplace have extended themselves to the entire arena of daily living in America and few have the luxury of immunity. This invasion of frantic activity, and the anxiety that it creates, into every corner of life I call busy-stress, and it is a syndrome that seems to both keep people from enjoying those things that would truly make them happy and blind them to the damage that is being done by ignoring those same things. Popular authors frequently complain that people in the United States have become addicted to hurry (J. Bailey, 1999; Jones, 2003); that they are disconnected from their biological clock as well as those things that bring fulfillment, and are experiencing the resulting social, mental, and physical decline (J. Bailey, 2003; Carlson & Bailey, 1997).

Hallowell (2006) comments:

Being too busy, which can seem necessary and unavoidable, can become a habit so entrenched that it leads you to postpone or cut short what really matters to you, making you a slave to a lifestyle you don't like but can't escape.... Unaware of the hidden consequences, and without making a conscious decision to do so, soon you found that you and your family had joined right in. It happened slowly.... Busy. Fast. Wired. Going who knows where. Welcome to our attention deficit world.... Its energy, excitement, and excess... its novelty, speed, chaos, and confusion... its dust storm of data... its creative spirit and freedom from convention... its emphasis on adaptability and on the *now*... its ever changing nature... its irreverence and incoherence.... [Suffering from a case of modern life] people... rush around a lot, feel impatient wherever they are, love speed, get frustrated easily, lose focus in the middle of a task or a conversation because some other thought catches their attention, bubble with energy but struggle to pay attention to one issue for more than a few seconds, talk fast or feel at a loss for words, often forget where they're going or what they're going to get, have bright ideas but can't implement them, fail to complete what they're doing, have many projects going simultaneously but chronically postpone completing them, make decisions impulsively because their brain's circuitry is overloaded, feel they could do a lot more if they could just get it together, get angry easily when interrupted, feel powerless over the piles of *stuff* that surround them, resolve each day to do better tomorrow, and in general feel busy beyond belief but not all that productive....



Paradoxically enough, it is in part the desire for control that has led people to lose it.... Modern life makes us feel as if we can be everywhere and do everything, and it gives us magical tools that heighten that illusion.... Of course, many practical concerns keep people busy, but behind all of them lies a reason most people don't acknowledge or even perceive. At the deepest level – the level we rarely visit – we stay busy to *avoid* looking into the abyss.

pp. 5 - 17

Levine (2006) observes that today's culture of affluence and busy-stress is having an especially nasty effect on families and children. She notes that in America's affluent culture certain characteristics prevail:

When a family is affluent someone is usually working overtime. Often this means long hours and excessive time away from the family.... Busy schedules and/or preoccupation with material things interfere with those factors that are known to increase quality of life: friendships, spirituality, and community involvement.... Expecting excessively high levels of achievement, both from themselves [parents] and their children, cultivates perfectionism, a well-documented precursor of depression. Affluent communities emphasize competition and extrinsic markers of success such as grades, trophies, and admission to prestigious schools. This cultivates external, as opposed to internal, motivation, putting children at risk for a host of psychological difficulties. Substance use/abuse rates are high in affluent families.

p. 171

Some kids are even falling into what is called a hyper-motivational syndrome, doing anything to do well, which includes taking drugs to do better in school (Tenner, 2005). In the meantime overworked and over-scheduled parents are overworking and over-scheduling their kids with activities such as private tutoring, music lessons, martial arts classes, hockey, ballet, gymnastics, dance and acting classes, plays and performances, little league and soccer. These parents typically don't do this for their own pleasure; they do it because they are afraid of what might happen to their children if they didn't. These parents feel that they must do whatever it takes to give their children the best start in life possible. The problem, though, is that it's hurting the kids (Beckford,

2006; Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003; Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Eyer, 2004; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Rosenfeld & Wise, 2000).

According to Olfman (2005) American kids who are twelve years old and under spend nearly twice as much time in structured, supervised activities than children did twenty years ago. She also notes that children's diaries reveal that programmed activities during the workweek takes up 75 percent of children's time whereas it to only 40 percent in 1981. She claims:

Investigators attribute this change to a growing 'time crunch' in families – parents' efforts to schedule children while they themselves are scheduled. As children make multiple transitions among school, aftercare, and diverse lessons each day, they lead increasingly hectic, adult-planned lives.

p. 20

This results in reduced family meals, family vacations, playtime, religious involvement, outdoor activities, and family conversations – all things that can contribute to one's quality of life (Doherty & Carlson, 2002; Olfman, 2005). Olfman continues:

Family togetherness, community participation, and wholesome leisure activities are being sacrificed in favor of a new cultural emphasis on "being busy" – a tradeoff that, very likely, compromises children's development.

p. 20

On the other hand, some parents hurry their kids because they are hurried themselves and need the help. Elkind (2001) writes:

The concept of childhood, so vital to the traditional American way of life, is threatened with extinction in the society we have created. Today's child has become the unwilling, unintended victim of overwhelming stress – the stress borne of rapid, bewildering social change and constantly rising expectations. The contemporary parent dwells in a pressure-cooker of competing demands, transitions, role changes, personal and professional uncertainties, over which he or she exerts slight direction. We seek release from stress whenever we can, and usually the one sure ambit of our control is the home. Here, if nowhere else, we enjoy the fact (or illusion) of playing a determining role. If child-rearing necessarily entails stress, then by hurrying children to grow up, or by treating them as adults, we hope to remove a portion of our burden of worry and anxiety and to enlist our children's aid in carrying life's load. We do not mean our

children harm in acting thus – on the contrary, as a society we have come to imagine that it is good for young people to mature rapidly. Yet we do our children harm when we hurry them through childhood.

p. 3

(Also see Elkind, 1988; and Hine, 1999)

Therefore, at a time when looking beyond today and beyond oneself are more important than ever in order to avoid catastrophe, Americans are becoming more myopic in almost every respect. Pressed and stressed by the demands of simple existence, as they see it, people live with the feeling of being caught in perpetual survival, whether or not they truly are. Borrowing again from Abraham Maslow's now ubiquitous hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1998) and Elliot Jaques' seminal research on logic and abstraction (Jaques, Gibson, & Isaac, 1978) one finds that the space, time, and complexity horizons necessary to attend to self actualization and the more spiritual transcendent needs, whose fulfillment would help to remedy the problems discussed so far, are being severely curtailed by a culture that promotes fear and the perception of scarcity. Figure 19 helps to illustrate the point.

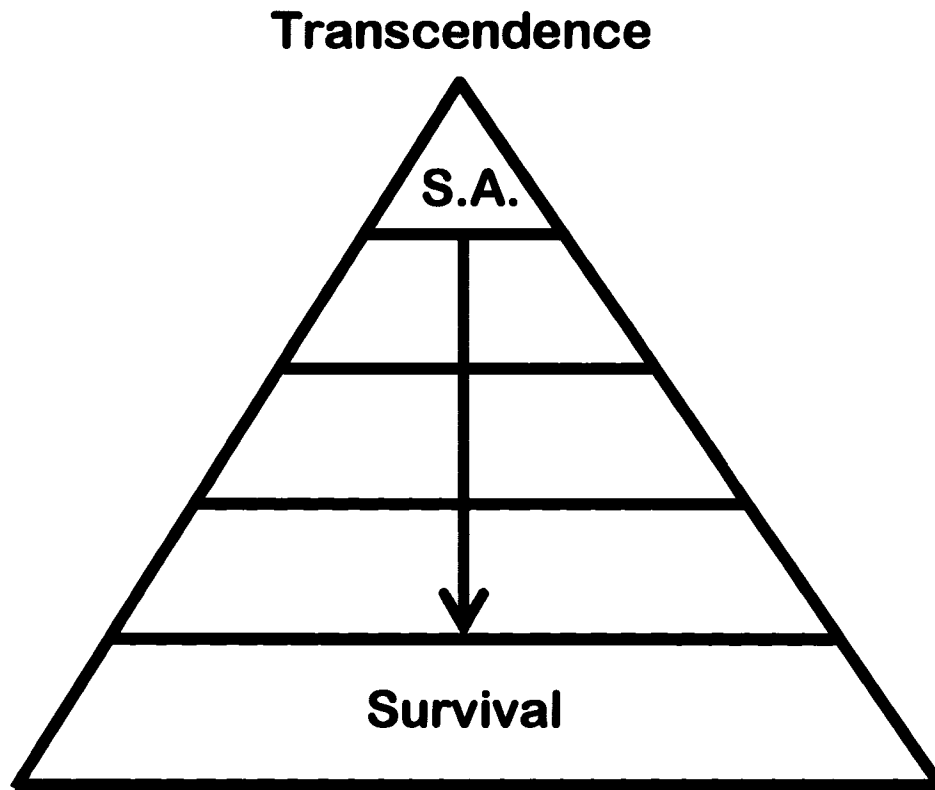


Figure 19. Effect of a culture of fear and scarcity on the hierarchy of needs.

In the above figure the hierarchy of needs moves upward, beginning with survival needs and subsequently progressing through safety and security needs, the need to belong, ego and differentiation needs, the need for self-actualization, and finally transcendent needs. (In his later years Maslow alluded to the transcendent level and other models of human development, as articulated in chapter 7, parallel this progression.) The orange arrow indicates the pressure apparently being placed upon Americans to live in a perceived world of survival, which appears to strongly influence people in seeking simple and immediate personal gratification with little consideration for the common good, the long term, or the complexity of life.

### *Summary of Social Issues*

There is a well worn story circling the Internet that is appropriate to repeat here:

The American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, “Only a little while.”

The American then asked, “Why didn’t you stay out longer and catch more fish?”

The Mexican said, “With this I have more than enough to support my family’s needs.”

The American then asked, “But what do you do with the rest of your time?”

The Mexican fisherman said, “I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life.”

The American scoffed, “I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing; and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat: With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor; eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then Los

Angeles and eventually New York where you will run your ever-expanding enterprise.”

The Mexican fisherman asked, “But, how long will this all take?”

To which the American replied, “15 to 20 years.”

“But what then?” asked the Mexican.

The American laughed and said that’s the best part. “When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions.”

“Millions?...Then what?”

The American said, “Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos.”

Found at <http://www.basicjokes.com/djoke.php?id=1172>.

The story makes the point, of course, that if one has found happiness one should look no further, and certainly avoid working any harder to get the same thing. It is pertinent because Americans seem to be on the path of working harder and consuming more but finding less and less happiness. To find fulfillment people in the United States appear to want to grow everything; the amount of stuff they own, the cost of the stuff they own, the size of the stuff they own, the money they make to buy the stuff, and more and better and bigger ways to distract themselves from the world they have created all because they want to be like someone else who has more stuff, or fear not being like them, and they’re willing to go into debt and risk all their stuff to do it. Beyond a certain

point, however, this frenzy of work and consumption can bring pain rather than pleasure. But people seemingly keep reproducing so that there will be more folks around to share their stuff and to fight wars to protect their stuff or to get the stuff that somebody else somewhere else has. Ironically, working less and consuming less and fighting less and reproducing less would arguably bring more happiness with far less effort, and stuff. But the lesson seems far from learned.

### *Economic Issues*

The economic issues that currently appear to be the most pressing and to have the greatest potential for devastating the American economy include wealth and income inequality, wage and social immobility, the decimation and looting of social programs, poverty, household and national debt, the trade imbalance, globalization, unemployment and underemployment, the cost and availability of healthcare, energy consumption, and the vanishing middle class. They are not isolated from the social and environmental issues covered previously, and they are interdependent with each other to varying degrees. However, most, if not all, of these issues have apparently culminated in a devastating blow to America's middle-income earners.

### *The Shrinking Middle Class*

The topic of America's shrinking middle class, and its possible extinction, has been debated at great length in the literature and other media. Each commentator seems to take a slightly different tack and to use slightly varying data, making simple statements backed by consistent data difficult. However, the overlap among these commentaries

reveals a coherent trend even if it is not finely articulated. The first task, then, is to better define the subject under scrutiny.

Almost from the time there was a middle class people have been speculating as to how to define it. Youmans (1997) notes that most Americans, when casually asked, would define their wealth and social status as middle class. Unfortunately there is no standard definition of middle class, but a few have attempted to establish some guidelines. Youmans points out that many studies agree that, on the basis of annual household after-tax income, the middle class is grouped around the national average, with the lower and upper ends of the range at the 20<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles respectively. (The average income in this instance includes all sources of income, including Social Security and food stamps.) Others suggest that 75 percent and 125 percent of the median national income should be the parameters of the middle class, placing approximately 25 percent of the population in this category. Additional methods include determining social criteria, such as level of occupation and occupation, as well as income. Some use an income-to-need ratio, which places approximately 50 percent of American households in the middle class. Other choose to measure the notion of middle class through the eyes of Americans themselves (also see J. Scott & Leonhardt, 2005). Perhaps an even better model for identifying class structure would be a term that became popular in the early twentieth century, standard of living. But its definition is also ambiguous, in large part because it is constantly changing as those things that are common in the upper class become more available and more affordable to the middle class. Therefore, it is not a precise measure of how people live, but rather how they would wish to live. In the Gilded Age and Progressive Era the standard of living became an important expression of national culture



as wages increased and consumer goods became mass produced. Therefore, a key concern for those who wish to equitably define these middle class aspirations is that of who will decide what the standard is and how it will be promoted (Moskowitz, 2004). In most cases the standard and its promotion is decided by those who will benefit most, which is usually not the middle class. Therefore, for purely academic purposes, households with pre-tax incomes of between \$25,000 and \$75,000 in 2003 dollars, a group occupying roughly the middle half of the 2003 Census income distribution tables, will be designated as the middle class, although the upper- and lower-middle class can on occasion be extended beyond these parameters for specific purposes (also see Moyers, 2004).

It is generally accepted that a healthy and robust middle class is necessary for the well being of America's economy (Drum, 2004; Robert H. Frank, 2004; Hare, 2005; Iceland, 2003; Krugman, 2000; Reich, 2002b; Sanders, 2003). However, the well being of the middle class is now in question. In 2004 the Demos organization writes:

Many citizens are anxious not just about the security of their jobs and adequacy of their incomes, but also about related issues: high levels of credit card debt, healthcare and childcare costs, and the affordability of homes and college tuition. These day-to-day worries are increasingly accompanied by a deeper anxiety — that the middle class way of life in America is endangered; that it is harder for many Americans to get into the middle class, and harder for those in the middle class to stay there and feel truly secure.

*(Opportunity 2004: Growing and protecting the middle class, 2004)*

They point out that the average American family is paying an increasing premium for things such as healthcare and college tuition while concurrently America has lost 1.9 million private sector jobs and personal bankruptcy filings have increased 33 percent. They agree that a thriving middle class is the backbone of America's economy and democracy, yet they worry that too many families are now trying to make a living by

working in lower-paying jobs with fewer benefits. Rather than moving ahead, Americans are often falling deeper into debt while working harder than ever.

In addition, the middle class grew smaller during the economic recession of 2001 and the slow recovery that began in 2002. It continued to decline in 2003, and while some of the middle group were moving up, a larger portion were moving down in relative ranking. Table A – 1 in the Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the U.S report for 2003 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Mills, 2004) shows that since Bush took office in 2000, the middle-income group has declined by 1.2 percent, and by 2003 it comprised less than 45 percent of all households. Simultaneously, households with less than \$25,000 in income grew by 1.5 percent and made up 29 percent of all households. Therefore a large number of households slipped out of the middle group and into the lower-income range from 2000 until 2003 with a commensurate decline in median household income of 3.4 percent. Unfortunately the decline in income for the middle class did not abate throughout 2003, showing a 0.4 percentage point loss, despite a resumption of job growth in the last third of the year and 4.4 percent growth in the economy as measured by Gross Domestic Product. A further indication that the middle class continued to shrink in 2003 was the increase of number and percentage of people living in poverty, which grew by 1.3 million to a total of 39.5 million, nearly 4.3 million more than when Bush took office in 2000, an increase of nearly 14 percent (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2004).

There are those, however, who vehemently disagree with the idea that the middle class is shrinking, at least in a bad way, or that it is a result of Republican policy. Bartlett (2004) debates points made in a New York Times article claiming that their data is faulty.

He notes that the Times claims that the percentage of households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$75,000, adjusted for inflation, has fallen from 51.9 percent in 1980 to 44.9 percent in 2003, implying that the middle class had suffered under Republican policies. He counters by stating that the middle class is better off than in 1980, that the ranks of the poor have diminished, and that the percentage of people making more than \$75,000 has increased. He concludes that the only reason the ranks of the poor and middle class have diminished is because more of them are rich.

Some agree in principle with Bartlett, noting that while there is virtually no economic story about the past 20 years that is more widely accepted than that of increasing wage and income inequality in the U.S., incomes have not truly stagnated:

It is now widely accepted that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is upwardly biased, and that there has been a bias for at least the past 20 years. Economists Michael Boskin of Stanford and Dale Jorgenson of Harvard show that, once errors in the measurement of changes in the cost of living are corrected, average real earnings grew by more than 12 percent between 1973 and 1995. Furthermore, median real income rose by nearly 36 percent, and the true poverty rate in 1995 was only 9 percent. As a special commission headed by Boskin noted in its 1996 final report, “the pace of improvement in standards of living in the industrialized world clearly has slowed, [but] it has neither fallen or stagnated,”....

Most research into the causes of increased inequality emphasize technological change, international trade, migration, deregulation, erosion in the real value of the minimum wage, and the decline in unionization. Little significance is attached to changes in family or household composition, changes in work effort, and changes in the characteristics of the workforce. However, researchers who have examined these issues find that they are quite important....

As more and more married couple families came to have two workers, they pulled significantly ahead of other families in income. By 1996, more than 70 percent of all married couple families had both spouses working, and this family type had become “typical,” representing over one-half of all families. Real income for these families soared between 1979 and 1996, growing by more than 35 percent....

For reasons that are not well understood, non-work among working-age adults increased over the past 20 years in the U.S. and elsewhere. By 1996, nearly 7.5 percent of U.S. families headed by an adult had no adult worker....

Robert Haveman, an economist at the University of Wisconsin, has analyzed trends in income inequality among males, examining changes in hourly wage

rates and hours of work as explanations for increased inequality. He concludes that one-third of the increase in income inequality for employed males between 1973 and 1991 can be explained by changes in work hours – an increase in part-time or part-year work. In a similar analysis of all working age males, in and out of the workforce, he concludes that as much as 95 percent of the increase in income inequality for them can be explained by changes in work effort. Haveman argues that these are largely voluntary choices....

Compared to most other developed countries, the U.S. has high levels of legal immigration (as well as a high level of illegal immigration).... Lerman finds that, including recent immigrants in the 1979 workforce at wages that comparable individuals were earning in their home countries ‘reverses the conventional conclusion’ that median wage growth was slow, and that earnings inequality increased. Lerman reports that the median wage increased by 5.6 percent, rather than falling between 1979 and 1996....

There is little doubt that increases in returns to high level skills and education have been to the disadvantage of workers without such skills-whose real wage and income growth has fallen behind. At the same time, too little attention has been paid to the impact that choices of family structure and work effort have had on inequality, and to the income gains experienced by recent immigrants....

*(Fact & fallacy: Common myths about U.S. wage and income inequality, 1999, pp. 1 - 4)*

*(Also see Easterbrook, 2003)*

Most of the literature, however, would likely turn a cynical eye on these conclusions. A more simple way of stating Bartlett’s argument might be to say that middle-class America is making more money because both mom and dad both feel that they have to work now, immigrants are making more in the United States than they made in their home country, and if someone is not doing so well it is because he or she either isn’t working, for some vague, unknown reason, or doesn’t want to work very hard. Stated this way it is easier to see the potential shortcomings in this rationale. Is the middle class really better off because husband and wife must both work now? Is the notion of inequality skewed because the rich pay more of a premium for their luxuries? Have so many people simply given up on finding a job because they are shiftless or incompetent or have bad intentions? Does the fact that people can make more money in the United States than they can in their home country help to mitigate income inequality

in America? Is the fact that people have lost good full-time work and now must work multiple part-time jobs a sign of laziness? Unfortunately, apples and oranges are often compared on both sides of an economic debate.

Yet the debate continues and attempting to debunk income inequality in order to preserve the status quo has caused many to cry class warfare, a term coined by the rich to note their persecution by the poor (likely an artifact from the French, Bolshevik, and American revolutions). Rector and Hedeman (2004) observe that class warfare has always been a mainstay of liberal politicians who depict America as a nation starkly divided between the rich and poor. But, they argue, this characterization is inaccurate.

Defining income as the amount that can be consumed in a given period while keeping real wealth unchanged (Ruser, Pilot, & Nelson, 2004), Rector and Hedeman point out that discussions of income distribution typically start with annual data provided by the Census Bureau, where households are first ranked by income and then divided into five groups, or quintiles (*Income in the United States: Current population reports: Series P60-221*, 2003). They note that at first the Census data appear clear and easy to understand. However, the data are flawed in a way that leads to an overstatement of inequality because:

- Census figures are incomplete and leave out many types of income
- Census figures do not account for the equalizing effects of taxation
- Census quintiles contain unequal numbers of people
- Differences in income are affected by differences in the amount of work performed within each quintile

(Rector and Hedeman analyze the distribution of income in the United States based on data taken from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 2003 which covers incomes for 2002.)

The Census Bureau, as noted earlier, divides American households into five groups in order to demonstrate income distribution. In 2001, the Census reported that the top quintile had 49.7 percent of income, while the bottom quintile had only 3.5 percent. Therefore, the top fifth of households would have 14.3 times more income than the bottom fifth. Census income data are based on cash income which includes earnings, interest, dividends, rents, Social Security benefits, pension or retirement income, survivors' benefits, disability benefits, veterans' benefits, workers' compensation, alimony, and some cash welfare benefits. However, some note that the Census money income figures drastically underreport the economic resources available to Americans (Slesnick, 1993). For example, the aggregate income data reported by the Census in 1996 equaled only 70 percent of the comparable income data reported in the Commerce Department's National Income and Production Accounts (NIPA), which serve as the basis for measuring gross national product.

Therefore, Rector and Hedeman argue, people in America receive incomes that are not included in the Census data because they are not based on cash, such as employer provided health insurance and government benefits including food, housing, day care, and medical care. Virtually none of this assistance is included in the Census data. America's social safety net provides for a huge transfer of economic resources away from affluent families to the poor and elderly to the tune of over \$750 billion per year, more

than 8 percent of total personal income. Yet hardly any of this enormous redistribution of income is recorded in the Census income distribution figures.

(The Census Bureau's annual Current Population Survey does, collect information on taxes and on the receipt of many additional types of income. And although these additional income figures are excluded from the Census' conventional income distribution figures, they are available in electronic form. In addition, Rector and Hedeman used data from the Internal Revenue Service to compensate for the Census' top coding restriction. Top coding limits the maximum value of capital gains to \$99,999, that is, capital gains values that exceed this limit are simply reported as \$99,999. This adjustment primarily increases reported incomes in the top quintile.)

Rector and Hedeman point out that if one were to add capital gains and losses, health benefits, the earned income tax credit, food stamps, school lunch programs, public housing, Medicaid, and Medicare to the Census data it would add nearly \$700 billion to total annual income and would decrease inequality. If one were then to factor in the effects of federal income tax, state income tax, and Social Security taxes the resulting adjustment would reduce annual total income by some \$1.4 trillion and dramatically decreases inequality. Overall this reassessment of household income would raise the lowest quintile to 5.25 percent of income and lower the top quintile to 46.16 percent.

They also argue that there is a common assumption that the quintiles used in Census data contain equal shares of the population. However, the official Census income quintiles do not contain equal shares of the population. There are 69.4 million individuals in the top quintile compared to 40.3 million in the bottom. Therefore, for every person in the lowest quintile there are 1.7 people in the top quintile. This imbalance in population

has a very large influence on the apparent levels of inequality. The Census Bureau quintiles are unequal in size because they are based on the number of households rather than the number of people. A household is defined as a person or group living in a single housing unit. High-income households in the United States typically consist of married couples with many members and earners. Low-income households, on the other hand, tend to be single persons with little or no earnings. The average household in the top quintile contains 3.2 persons, but the average household in the bottom quintile contains only 1.8 persons. Therefore, the relative poverty of the bottom quintile results from the lack of people within the quintile rather than from other economic factors.

A more accurate representation of income inequality, Rector and Hedeman argue, could be obtained by adjusting the quintiles so that each contains exactly 20 percent of the population. If one were to do this, the share of total income in the bottom quintile rises to 9.4 percent and the share of the top quintile falls to 39.6 percent.

In addition, they note that economic disparities among the quintiles are a direct result of disparities in work performed. The Census data show that in 2002, those in the bottom quintile performed 4.3 percent of all the work hours in America, while people in the top quintile performed 33.9 percent, indicating that the top quintile performed nearly eight times as much labor as did the bottom. To a certain degree, the low numbers of working-age adults within the lowest quintile accounts for the low levels of paid employment in this group. In the Census data, the bottom quintile contains 11.2 percent of all working-age adults, while the top quintile contains 27.6 percent. Also, each working-age adult works, on average, fewer hours during the year than his or her counterpart in the top quintile. On average, working-age adults in the bottom quintile



worked about half as many hours during the year as did adults in the top quintile.

Therefore, the low income levels in the bottom quintile can, in part, be accounted for by the smaller number working-age adults and the lower number of work hours they perform.

They also suggest that if all of the previous adjustments to the Census data had been made and the poor also worked as many hours as the rich, the bottom quintile would share 12.3 percent of total income while the top quintile would have only 35.8 percent. In this scenario, the wealthy in the top quintile would only make \$2.91 for every \$1.00 the poor in the bottom quintile received, while in the original Census data the wealthy would make \$14.30 for every \$1.00 earned by the poor.

Rector and Hedeman conclude that the Census income data are the basis of most class-warfare rhetoric, but this data is flawed by unequal numbers of people in the quintiles and by the exclusion taxes and social spending. The remaining inequality is exacerbated by the lack of work at the bottom, while the top 20 percent of U.S. households perform 33 percent of all labor in the economy. The top quintile has the best educated and most productive workers. They also provide an inordinate share of investment for job creation and economic growth and pay 82.5 percent of all federal income taxes and 66 percent of total federal taxes (*Effective tax rates under current law: 2001 to 2014*, 2004). Still, the top 20 percent of households in America are the constant target of class warfare.

Finally they argue that the higher-income families are the ones who work hard and pay most of the taxes. To raise taxes even higher on these hard-working families

would be unfair. But to reduce future investments through tax hikes would only reduce economic growth, harming everyone in the long run.

Again, the majority of the literature reviewed would take exception to this assessment, although it is highly popular among the more conservative commentators on the American condition. But if one were to look at what is not being said, one's conclusions could be quite different. For example, the observation that the lowest quintile has fewer people than the top, that they have fewer people of working age, and that those who are of working age work less, might simply indicate that many families are composed of children and the elderly with few working-age adults around to take care of them. One might even find that 25 percent of children in America live in poverty. Or, one might find that there are plenty of perks that the wealthy enjoy that are not counted as income of any sort. For example, flying on a private jet, taking a vacation at someone else's expense, getting free insurance or legal counsel or prostitutes or drugs or a health club membership or entrée to an exclusive golf club or free personal security or free investment advice or access to special investment deals or any of a myriad perks that are often available to the very rich on a quid pro quo or corporate expensed basis.

Many others suggest a different reality than the one portrayed by those who deny that the middle class is shrinking or who would obfuscate an obscenely disproportional distribution of income and wealth. For example, Djurdjevic (1998) points to what he considers to be an average, young, lower middle-class couple: Dawn, a preschool teacher, is 25, Marty, a laborer at a retail distribution center, is 27. Together they bring home around \$30,000 a year, yet they cannot afford to buy Christmas presents. They are on a constant treadmill just to make ends meet. Often, they must resort to using credit to buy

bread and milk. While areas of the country certainly differ, if this couple were living in Washington, D.C. the level of income needed to achieve a middle-class standard of living with no frills would be about \$80,000 per year. Meanwhile, Djurdjevic laments, the plutocrats in Washington are building mansions with more square footage than a small English castle, driving two or three luxury cars and paying the high price of keeping their kids out of public schools. The rich are clearly getting richer and the poor are clearly getting poorer, creating, for most American cities, a great American divide.

Djurdjevic notes that between 1977 and 1994 - the first and last years for which the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) issued such statistics – the bottom 35 percent of the population went from having nearly twice the amount of after-tax income as the top one percent of the population, to having essentially the same. The CBPP analysis showed that in 1994, the top 1 percent of the population (the 2.6 million wealthiest Americans) had as much after-tax income as the bottom 35 percent (88 million with the lowest incomes). Similarly, the 52 million Americans with the highest income (top fifth) received 49 percent of the nation's after-tax income, nearly as much as the other 206 million Americans. In addition, the CBPP studies understate the great American divide because the census data used for its report did not include capital gains as family income. This, then, understated the incomes of the top fifth of families who receive most of the capital gains. The underestimation also occurred because the CBPP did not include earnings above \$100,000 for any individual worker. (On the other hand, there was a corresponding omission of welfare benefits from the data. But that was not enough to offset the data omitted from the richest Americans.)

Djurdjevic argues that it will not take long for America's class disparity and age disparity to split the population not just along class lines but also along generational lines. And it may happen sooner if the Baby Boomers attempt to cash their retirement checks and send in their Medicare bills en masse.

Lui (2004) observes that "While some Americans luxuriate in thousand-dollar-a-night suites at Palm Beach Four Seasons Hotel and in \$30,000-cars, those in the middle class – America's pride and joy – are struggling just to stay in the middle class." She states that since 2001 there have been massive job losses, especially in the manufacturing sector, which helped to sustain middle-class families. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, she notes, 2.8 million out of 2.9 million private sector jobs lost, or 96 percent, have been factory jobs. These were unionized jobs in industries such as autos and steel that helped to create the middle class after World War II. Fingleton (2003) points out that exportation of manufacturing does not simply cost Americans the jobs related to final assembly, but the process and product engineering jobs and other maintenance and design jobs that are peripheral to the actual manufacture of a product. These jobs, white- and gold-collar as well as blue, are forfeited when manufacturing is outsourced, and the problem is doubled by the fact that manufacturing has been the most profitable industry in the history of the American economy.

Mishel, Ettlinger, and Gould (2004) note that the recession starting in 2001 was followed by 2.5 years of job losses even though there was an increased output of goods and services. Also, job growth has not increased at a sufficient rate to make up for the labor slack generated by the 2001 downturn. Consequently, pre-tax incomes fell for three years in a row, leaving the typical household with \$1,535 less income in 2003 than in

2000, a drop of 3.4 percent. This decline resulted primarily from lost work, fewer family members working, and fewer hours worked per family member.

Lui (2004) agrees and notes that African-Americans have been hit especially hard by the loss of jobs. When discrimination in the auto and steel industries was curtailed by the federal government, many African-Americans were able to buy homes and send their kids to college. But now almost one in 11, or 9 percent of African-Americans are out of work, which also means that they are out of the middle class.

When and if people who have been laid-off find a new job, Lui continues, chances are they will be taking a big cut in pay and benefits. According to the North American Alliance for Fair Employment the jobs in industries that are growing pay 21 percent less than those in industries that are declining. As a result, at least in large part, family income has fallen in 39 states. Lui agrees with Fingleton (2003) that white- and gold-collar jobs are also on the chopping block. She estimates that 14 million professionals will lose their jobs in the next few years as companies move these jobs overseas. But the problem is not limited to wages. In 44 states the percentage of people with employer-provided health insurance has decreased, and the stress associated with an unexpected health crisis, according to Lui, affected nearly 75 million Americans in 2003.

Also, the move by employers from defined-benefit pension plans to defined-contribution plans has adversely affected older Americans and made them less secure (Kiyosaki, 2000; Lui, 2004; Munnell & Sunden, 2004). Often, if there is an employer based contribution it is in the form of stock investments which are quite volatile and risk the future of the retiree. In the meantime, Lui notes, profits for corporations are up 25 percent and the CEOs of America's largest corporations are paid 301 times more than the

average worker in their organization. After World War II the government helped to create a thriving middle class where work and wealth were more widely shared. Today, unfortunately, government policies have divided people through massive tax breaks for the wealthy and the erosion of the public services that all but the very wealthy rely upon. This, Lui states, is not the American Dream.

Related to Lui's comments on CEO compensation an April NPR radio program in 2004 interviewed James Galbraith, among others, noting that:

Compensation committees are still doling out a flush of perks to chief executives. Those executives, in turn, are turning the screws on their own workforces - moving jobs to low-cost countries and freezing wages. The pay of chief executives, on average, is 531 times that of their lowest-paid workers.

(J. Galbraith, Sum, & Murnane, 2004)

In addition to Lui, many others have asked how much the middle class is impacted when jobs are sent abroad, and some of those who are the most worried come from the typically business friendly political right (Buchholz, 2004; Dobbs, 2004; Hira & Hira, 2005). It seems that in many cases liberal, centrist, and conservative alike have similar concerns regarding this one issue. Raynor (2003) observes that since 2001 there had been a dramatic increase in offshoring of professional jobs which has limited the number of jobs being created in the United States. Many engineering, accounting, medical, and architectural jobs are gone forever. And while GDP and productivity have improved, other factors have declined for the working American. New jobs are falling far short of national goals to bring unemployment to pre-recession levels. According to the staff at zFacts.com the real problem is missing jobs rather than lost jobs. Since January 2001, the economy should have added 7.9 million jobs according to the

President's Council of Economic advisors, but they were not (*The problem is "missing jobs," not "lost jobs."* 2005).

Raynor (2003) and Roberts (2003a; 2003b) observe that not only did the number of jobs fall, the quality of jobs diminished as well. They note that only a few of the newly created private sector jobs provide good incomes. The remaining jobs consist mostly of retail, telephone marketing, temporary positions, private education, health services, and the like. They also point out that productivity gains can be misleading because it is often associated with manufacturing, but the manufacturing sector of the economy is where many of the jobs were lost. In addition, many domestic professional jobs from information technology workers to engineers to accountants to radiologists are being outsourced to equally qualified but much less expensive professionals overseas, often endangering America's control over core technologies, and also avoiding the cost of compliance with OSHA, EEOC, EPA and other regulators in the United States (Kripalani, Engardio, & Hamm, 2003; Raynor, 2003). In the same way that outsourcing to China has driven down the cost of manufacturing, outsourcing to India has driven down the cost of services.

While news stories have focused on the robust economic activity, the Fed has taken a guarded position, noting that structural change, a permanent relocation of workers from some industries to others, may help to explain the weak growth in jobs (Groshen & Potter, 2003). Jubak (2003) also takes note of the Fed's position, stating that its reports go out of the way to differentiate this recession from past downturns, observing that there are trends working their way through this economy that are not cyclical. He argues that

some of the jobs lost in the recent economic downturn will not be coming back because they are permanently lost to low wage countries.

Raynor identifies several other implications for middle-class America noting that even if there is a short-term increase in inflation, there is nothing in place to stop long-term downward pressures on costs and prices; i.e., deflation. He states that India and other countries will simply encourage more job outsourcing from the U.S. and add to capacity, while technology will continue to evolve, making it possible for businesses to produce more with less. Therefore, if interventions are not made into outsourcing and offshoring, it is questionable how long middle-class America can continue to have healthcare linked to jobs.

The benefit of outsourcing to producers is lower cost of production, and, conversely, the benefit to consumers is lower cost. But, Raynor asks, what is the optimal balance between lower prices and jobs that pay well? The nation is suffering from the anxiety over tradeoffs between consumer prices and decent-paying jobs (Daniel Wood, 2003). And while some jobs are not being outsourced, the same underlying reasons for moving jobs offshore, cost reduction, is still a central issue.

Thayer (2003) also writes about the disappearing middle class and its relationship to the relentless efforts corporate America is making to reduce cost.

He asserts:

I think it obvious that the pension schemes of the post-World War II period will ultimately be radically downsized. This is less a matter of a national inability to support such pensions than the inability of individual corporations to do that. The deficits and national debt that financed victory in World War II demonstrated a national capacity to treat its citizens well, no matter textbook theories that say otherwise.



Global competition now compels corporations to adhere to standard economic principles by drastically reducing costs by punishing workers and retirees in order to sell their output at the lowest possible prices. This trend will inevitably spill over into public and nonprofit sectors via privatization mania, and some of the actions now being taken are indeed tragic. Already highlighted on national television are the firings of disabled workers who incur new medical expenses rather than putting them on unpaid leave while maintaining their health insurance....

I am old enough to remember when streets were full of disabled people, many of them amputees, who themselves had no choice but to beg for assistance from passersby who themselves had little or nothing spare. That world is returning.

(Thayer, 2003)

Drum (2004) asserts that every state except Nevada and Nebraska is experiencing a shift from high-paying industries which are losing jobs to low paying industries which are gaining them. All in all he feels that there are far too many trends that are squeezing the wages of traditional working- and middle-class families. He notes that during the past 30 years or so workers in the lower half of the income distribution have experienced wage increases of only 10 percent, with the earnings of males barely moving at all. The issue is not a need for economic growth, per capita GDP grew around 60 percent over this period. The problem is that virtually all of the increase in wealth went to those who were already wealthy. Therefore, instead of a growing middle class that is looking forward optimistically to the future, the American middle class is stagnating and increasingly concerned about survival.

The typical conservative response to all of this is a collective shrug or a wagging finger (Fogel, 2000; B. Goff & Fleisher III, 1999; Marber, 2003; Samuelson, 1997): things really aren't that bad, are they? After all, the poor in America are far better off than the poor who live in other countries and the rest of us live better than kings did a few hundred years ago! America's poverty is not material, it is spiritual and moral!

However, Drum responds, a healthy economy is described not by current living standards for the middle class, but by a middle class whose living standards are improving across generations. This is not the case, unfortunately, when there is increasing income inequality and decreasing income mobility. The middle class stagnates while surrounded by stratospheric wealth. He asks how people can construe this as a sign that things are getting better.

And the problem appears to be a political one as well. Drum observes that one of the apparently counterintuitive aspects of the American economy is that pundits and researchers continue to independently discover that most of the economic indicators of the last half century have been healthier during the influence of Democrats and poorer under the direction of Republicans. And although the data is not entirely conclusive, the best explanation is that Democrats simply care more about the middle class. Tax cuts, a Republican mainstay, show no evidence of increasing economic growth. Supply-side economics, another Republican bastion since the Reagan years, fail to perform. But a large and robust middle class will have a direct and positive impact on the economy and demand-side, trickle-up economics is far better in times of recession (Krugman, 2000).

In agreement Kitchell (2005) comments on a report issued by the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy which evaluated all members of Congress, finding that both parties have lower overall scores for their votes in favor of the middle class in 2004 than they did in 2003. He notes that for those who have had to work at more than one job, take out a second mortgage, delay retirement and-or dip into retirement savings, this new evidence is far less than reassuring.

Least reassuring was a score of zero for then House Republican Leader, Tom Delay. But Delay was not alone in his disregard for the middle class. Overall, the House Republicans had an average of only 10 percent of the points that could be scored in favor of the middle class.

On the other hand, Democratic members of Congress had an average score of 73 percent. 98 percent of Democratic senators and 100 percent of Democratic House members received passing grades, and 49 percent of the Democrats in the House and 47 percent of the Democrats in the Senate received superior grades for supporting middle-class policy votes 90 percent or more during the year.

In a statement released by Andrea Batista Schlesinger, executive director of the Drum Major Institute, she notes that members of Congress had repeatedly promised to support policy that would strengthen and expand the middle class. But the study showed that Congress gave priority to corporate tax cuts and ideologically driven legislation over addressing the concerns of middle-class families – families that are struggling with debt and the rapidly climbing costs of education and healthcare. In the same year the votes supporting the middle class dropped from 61 percent to 43 percent in the House and from 76 percent to 52 percent in the Senate.

According to Kitchell, the middle class has apparently become the forgotten class by design. He notes that much is reported about the wealthiest Americans and the tax revenue they generate, or about those at or below poverty level because they often cannot help themselves. But who takes care of the middle class? They want the American dream as much as anyone else. But if they begin to wake up to the nightmare of what is happening to them through energy prices, interest rates, property taxes, lost jobs, and the

myriad of other things that are putting the squeeze on the middle class they might wake up angry and ready to take power away from both political parties.

Therefore, the squeeze that the middle class is experiencing is of concern for everybody in the long term. The middle class is the engine of economic growth, the goose that laid the golden egg, and it needs a lifeline before it's too late (Drum, 2004). One could extend the metaphor by noting that what's good for the middle class is good for the rich, the goose and the gander, but the gander appears ready to butcher the goose at any moment.

Youmans (1997) agrees, noting that many studies have shown a significant reduction in the size of the middle class from the late 1980's until the late 1990's. Using a broad definition that includes 70 percent of American households, he shows that there has been a five to seven percent drop in the middle class during this period. And while some households leave the middle class as a result of newfound prosperity, an equal number of households slipped into lower-income brackets, mainly due to stagnation of real earnings.

Nevertheless, Youmans notes, the squeeze continues. He observes that in 1994, the Gini index for income was .456, an increase of 17 percent over the index in 1969. The primary reason for this shift, he poses, was the increase in aggregate income controlled by the highest 20 percent of the population, from 43 percent to 49.1 percent of national income, and, more specifically, the change in the share of the top 5 percent, from 16.6 percent to 21.2 percent. This trend adds credibility to the notion that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, while the middle class simply continues to shrink.

Sanders (2003) points out that the corporate media doesn't talk about it much, but the United States is rapidly on its way to becoming three separate nations:

1. A small group of incredibly wealthy people who own and control more and more of America;
2. A shrinking middle class composed of people who are working longer and harder for lower wages and benefits; and
3. An increasing number of people who are living in abject poverty.

He states that there has always been an elite group in America who controlled the wealth, just as there has always been a gap between the rich and the poor. But the disparities in wealth and income that exist in 2003 have not been seen in over a century. The richest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 95 percent and the CEOs of large corporations earn more than 500 times that of their average employees. The nation's 13,000 wealthiest families, 1/100th of one percent of the population, receive almost as much income as 20 million of America's poorest families.

Sanders laments that the poor are out of luck and the middle class struggles while the rich relax and receive huge tax breaks. In June of 2003 the unemployment rate rose to a nine-year high of 6.4 percent. By this time there were 9.4 million unemployed, an increase of over 3 million since Bush became President. Since March, 2001, over 2.7 million jobs were lost in the private sector, including two million well-paying jobs in manufacturing, and the loss of decent paying jobs is moving quickly into the white-collar sector. Sanders points out that Forrester Research Inc. predicts that, with the expansion of data networks, the Internet, and digitization, at least 3.3 million information technology jobs will be lost to low-wage countries by 2015.

Those who remain employed are suffering as well. Tens of millions of Americans who work full time earn, in inflation adjusted-dollars, less than they did 30 years ago. In

1973, private-sector workers in America made an average of \$9.08 an hour. In 2003, in normalized dollars, they are paid \$8.33 per hour - more than 8 percent lower.

Manufacturing jobs that once paid a living wage are now being outsourced overseas to low-wage countries. And with Wal-Mart replacing General Motors as America's largest employer, many workers in the service economy not only earn low wages but also receive minimal benefits. To the smaller provider, and to its competition, Wal-Mart is a juggernaut, plowing through the countryside and driving all before it. If one wants to compete, one has to match Wal-Mart's subsistence wages and benefits, and that means the race to the bottom is in full swing everywhere Wal-Mart has a store, which is almost everywhere (Bianco, 2006; Drum, 2004; Fishman, 2006; G. Lee, 2004; Norman, 2004; Quinn, 2005; G. Spotts, 2005).

Sanders notes further that as the cost of health insurance and prescription drugs soar, many employers are forcing the workforce to take on much more of the cost of healthcare. Increases in newly assumed healthcare costs that surpass wage increases are not uncommon. And with the full support of the Bush administration many companies are also reducing the pensions they promised to their older workers. Another manifestation of the middle class collapse is the greater number of hours people must work in order to pay their bills. In 2003, the average American employee works, by far, the longest hours of any worker in the industrialized world. And the situation is getting worse. Statistics from the International Labor Organization indicate that the average American worked 1,978 hours in 2003, up from 1,942 hours in 1990 - an increase of almost a week of work. People are working more hours than at any time since the 1920s. 65 years after the Fair

Labor Standards Act established the 40-hour work week, nearly 40 percent of people in the United States work more than 50 hours a week.

Bernstein, Rasell, Schmitt, and Scott (1999) argue that the wealthy, have continued to enjoy wage and income growth since the beginning of the technology bubble, reaping huge profits from the rabid growth in the stock market. But what, they query, about those in the middle? The middle class does not benefit much from a bullish market. From 1989 (the year the economy peaked before slipping into a recession) to 1993, the income of the median family fell. It began to rise again in 1994, and by 1997 it finally rose above its 1989 level. However, hourly wages for the middle-class were stagnant from 1989 through 1997. Therefore, the gains in income made by the middle-class came primarily from working more and longer hours. Additionally, living standards for the middle class have not improved as much as the recent overall economic growth might suggest.

According to these authors there are several aspects of the labor market that continue to slow the progress of middle-class families even as the economy improves:

1. Stagnant or decreasing wage trends
2. Loss of jobs in manufacturing
3. Loss of employer provided health insurance

They note that the consequences for the middle class due to trends in these areas include:

- Inflation adjusted hourly wages for men were lower in 1999 than in 1989.

- The 62 percent of the male workforce with only a high school degree made 2.7 percent lower wages in 1999 than in 1989, and those with some college had wages that were 0.5 percent lower in 1999 than in 1989.
- Women with a high school degree or some college experienced little real wage growth. By 1999 those with high school degrees made only 3.9 percent above what they made in 1989 and those with some college made only 2.2 percent more.
- The typical middle-income family with children worked 256 more hours per year in 1997 than in 1989.
- For those working full time the entire year, the percentage of workers with employer-provided health insurance fell from 66.0 percent to 60.7 percent between 1989 and 1997.
- Growth in the U.S. trade deficit have contributed to the loss of 491,000 manufacturing jobs since March 1998, comprising 2.6 percent of total manufacturing employment.
- Productivity in the United States grew by 12 percent from 1989 to 1998, but the wage growth for many middle-class workers lags behind the overall economy.
- Income tax is progressive, but most of the other taxes are regressive. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that middle-class families pay only 5.4 percent in federal income tax, which is too small an amount for tax cuts to help. And since the labor market problems facing middle-class families are experienced long before any taxes are taken out of their paycheck, a cut would be neither sufficient nor timely.



Zunz, Schappa, and Hiwatri (2002) comment that shortly after World War II America experienced a great expansion of the middle class as it moved to absorb a significant portion of blue-collar workers. Although never formalized explicitly, the post-war social contract called for business, labor, and government to work cooperatively for greater political freedom and more broadly shared prosperity. To a large degree it succeeded. But uneven economic growth and increasing globalization have taken their toll in recent years. Globalization, especially, has been a major force in moving people out of the middle class. As a result America will need to reopen the middle class, making it more comprehensive and inclusive even in the face of economic and competitive pressures.

Phillips (1993) points out that the push to greatly benefit America's richest people at the expense of the middle class began in the Ronald Reagan-George H. W. Bush era. The combined efforts of these two presidents benefited the wealthiest 1 percent of the population while battering the middle class with inequitable taxes, deteriorating public services, increasingly unaffordable healthcare, costly education, shrinking employee benefits, job cutbacks, and declining household net worth. Sullivan, Warren, and Westbrook (2000) show that by 2000 a large portion of the middle class in America were teetering on the brink of economic failure. Although the overall economy was experiencing prolonged prosperity through the 1990's, there was a 340 percent increase in bankruptcy between 1981 and 1999. Sullivan, Warren, and Westbrook (1989) note that during this time personal bankruptcies had reached record levels for those in the middle class and that this downward spiral of financial disaster was typically caused by unemployment, being forced to take a lower-paying job or to move to part-time work,

divorce, medical expenses, income lost to illness or accident, credit card and personal debt, and the increasing cost of home ownership. In addition, they show that Americans filing for bankruptcy differed from the stereotype of the irresponsible spendthrift. Rather, bankruptcy was a last resort and a preponderance of applications came from single women – who would be the most devastated by any federal bankruptcy reform.

In the same time period Ehrenreich (1989) wrote the book *Fear of Falling*, defining the middle class as those in management and professional positions. They were the executives, doctors, analysts, and lawyers who, at the time, comprised nearly 50 percent of the population of the United States. In addition she saw the rich upper class as representing roughly 3 percent of the population and the poor and working class as the remainder. She also described the middle class as somewhat selfish and elitist (also see Wynne, 1998), unaware, because of the great compression that had brought so many into the middle class, of the real poverty that still existed in America. From 1960 until the 1980's Ehrenreich viewed the middle class as becoming disinterested in the plight of the lower classes, becoming more self-centered and focused on its own ambition to achieve, and perhaps to become rich. There was, however, an existential angst beneath the veneer of achievement and status, the fear of falling. By the 1980's middle class standing had already become precarious, and the fear of losing this standing became more pervasive. Awareness of the working class and poor, who at one time were those who the middle class saw as downtrodden and in need of their assistance, now became a specter of something that was only to be avoided. Those in the middle feared slipping somehow into becoming WalMart workers living in trailer parks. The egalitarian movement of the

1960's, in which many in the middle class had taken part, had lost its social conscience and turned into something fearful and ugly.

However, by 2005 she found that the middle class resembled those they had pitied in the 1960's. Fearful and downtrodden themselves, the middle class was ailing and in need of assistance (Ehrenreich, 2005). Bruised by offshoring and downsizing, living with survivor guilt if they did keep their jobs, overworked, overstressed, and pressed to be pathologically cheerful by their employers or robbed of their remaining funds by a growing parasitic and predatory industry ostensibly offering services to ease the transition between careers, the middle class quest for status had become a desperate and losing struggle to maintain the status quo. While corporations place success or failure fully on the shoulders of the individual, removing whatever support structure that used to be in place for health, development, and job security, the middle class finds itself in a position of where dressing for success and thinking successful thoughts make them a parody of something that used to matter rather than what they are, mere commodities.

Mishel (2005) asserts that from 2000-2003, average income fell for middle-income families. This was due primarily to a slack labor market with diminishing employment opportunities. In some cases, this meant that at least one person in the household was unemployed or underemployed, but in either case families were left with reduced purchasing power. They state that looking ahead, if nothing changes, young families can expect to see their incomes grow more slowly than in previous generations.

- In terms of real data, from 2000 to 2003 real family income declined 0.9 percent per year, a three year decrease of \$1,500 in 2003 dollars. For the family in the middle fifth of the income range, income dropped by 2.0 percent during the same

time period. Roughly 80 percent of that decrease occurred because of a decline in annual hours worked. 2002 had the slowest growth in nominal income for the median family since 1954. The cumulative two-year real income decline for 2000-2002 reached 2.4 percent, the largest two-year percentage loss since 1992.

- Historically, an increase in productivity meant a comparable increase in median family income. However, from 1973 until 2003 median family income grew at a rate less than one-third that of productivity. And, minority families lost income in the 2000 to 2003 downturn three times as quickly as whites, -1.5 percent for blacks and -2.3 percent for Hispanics compared to -0.5 percent for whites – this on top of the fact that the black median income never reached two-thirds of the white.
- The incomes of median families beginning in 1949 grew 38.1 percent over the course of their working lifetimes. The total growth was 100.7 percent for families starting out in 1959; 61.7 percent for 1969; and 59 percent for 1979's young families, demonstrating a comparative percentage decline of roughly 79 percent. The slower growth of median income indicates that the standard of living for contemporary working families is improving less as these families age as compared with families from earlier times.
- Overall, the middle-earning group, defined as those households with income from one-half to double the median, shrank to 60.7 percent in 2002 from 68.0 percent in 1979. In contrast, from 1989 to 2000, the compensation of the average chief executive officer grew 342 percent. Although CEO compensation dropped somewhat in 2003, CEOs in major companies still earned 185 times more than the

average worker, up from 71 times in 1989. From 1992, the first year this data was available, until 2003 the median CEO received an 80.8 percent raise. Compare this to the hourly wage increase of 8.7 percent that the median worker received over the same time period.

- Additionally, the most recent recovery has demonstrated an unprecedented lack of job creation. In 2005 the employment level still remains 1.2 million jobs below the March 2001 peak. This long-term unemployment combined with the increase in part-time work have contributed to a labor slump that continues to affect workers. And, greater unemployment damages lowest-income families the worst. Families in the lowest fifth of income experienced a 4.1 percent decrease in earnings with a 1 percent increase in unemployment, estimated over the 1973-2000 period. Whereas, families in the highest fifth experienced only a 0.9 percent decrease in earnings.
- The 1.6 percent increase in the unemployment rate to 5.6 percent (from 4.0 percent in 2000) is associated with a 2.2 percent decline in family income for a middle-class family and a 2.9 percent family income decline for the poorest fifth of families. While the economy lost manufacturing jobs for 41 months in a row from August 2001 to January 2004, white-collar workers were hit particularly hard and their share of long-term unemployment was the highest in 20 years. From 2000 to 2003, long-term unemployment increased 198 percent. Surprisingly, for those with a Bachelor's degree or more, the increase was 299 percent. As of June 2004, the average period of unemployment reached 19.9

weeks. By this time the economy still needed 1.2 million jobs to reach the March 2001 figures.

- As of June 2004, the underemployment rate, which includes part-time workers who want to work full-time and discouraged workers who've given up looking for jobs, increased to 9.6 percent. While in 2003 the labor force participation rate had declined to 66.2 percent from the March 2001 level of 67 percent. This may seem small until one realizes that this represents 2.5 million people. Therefore, if the official unemployment rate included this missing labor force, the overall unemployment rate would have been 7.4 percent instead of 5.6 percent.
- Approximately 13 percent of all jobs created since the recession have been in the temporary employment industry. Part-time, self-employed, contract, and other nonstandard workers are less likely than regular full-time workers to have any health insurance coverage. About 90 percent of women and 87 percent of men who work full-time at regular jobs are insured, but only 78 percent of women and 73 percent of men in nonstandard jobs have the same kind of coverage. Additionally, nonstandard workers typically earn less than their full-time counterparts. The wage gap between temporary and regular workers is usually 10 percent, and for part-time male workers, that gap is closer to 25 percent.
- Productivity growth accelerated in the mid-1990s and continued into the most recent recession. This led to an historically high growth in average wages, however, the shift in income from labor to capital intensified from 2000 to 2003, resulting in the benefits of faster productivity growth going disproportionately to capital. This trend may signal a return to the 1980s pattern of widening wage

inequality. After 1999 the gap between those with wages at the 50th and 10th percentiles grew among women and stopped falling among men. At the same time the wage gap between the 90th percentile and the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile spiked upward sharply among men while among women it grew more moderately. From 2000 to 2003 entry-level high school graduates' experienced stunted wage growth and high unemployment. At the same time entry-level college graduates' wages fell 3.5 percent for men and 1.2 percent for women. In 2002, jobs overall will require that 26.9 percent of the workforce have a college degree or more, but by 2012 this requirement is expected to rise to only 27.9 percent.

- About one-third of the growing wage inequality can be explained by shifts in the labor market, such as the precipitous drop in the minimum wage and the loss of unions. Much of the rest can be explained by increasing globalization – immigration, capital mobility, and trade – and the shift in employment toward lower-paying service industries and away from manufacturing.
- From 1979 until 2002, employer provided health insurance coverage declined significantly and less than half the workforce retained their employer-provided pensions. Pension coverage overall fell to 45.5 percent in 2002, while the highest paid wage workers were nearly five times as likely to have pension coverage as low-wage workers. (15.0 percent).
- In 2003, the ratio between the minimum wage and what an average worker earned per hour was only 34 percent, the lowest percentage in 40 years. In the late 1960's it was roughly 50 percent, in the mid-1970's it was around 45 percent, and in the early 1990's it was about 45 percent.

- The rising income of families is often touted as vindicating economic policy. But, at bottom, the real story about rising family income is a story about rising annual work hours – particularly among women. For working wives, between the ages of 25 and 54, in two-parent families with children, the annual work hours rose significantly from 1979 to 2000. Compared to 1979, the extra hours worked by wives in 2000 translates into 8 additional full-time workweeks in the bottom quintile, 12.9 additional weeks in the second, 12.5 weeks in the third, 9.2 in the fourth, and 8.3 in the top. However, after 2000 the recession and jobless recovery had a significantly negative impact on these families, reducing work hours for both husbands and wives. When husbands' and wives' hours are combined, the reduction in work hours from 2000-2002 was -6.7 percent for the bottom quintile, -2.9 percent for the second, -1.8 percent for the third, -2.3 percent for the fourth; and -1.7 percent for the top. The most recent recession and jobless recovery brought higher unemployment and less opportunity for additional work hours. For working wives in the bottom 40 percent of families, this meant a significant loss of earnings.

Mishel points out that Labor Day 2004 found many working families still waiting for the benefits of an economic recovery. After almost three years of increased productivity, the labor market is still too weak to share the benefits of the growing economy to any other than those at the top. Unemployment has changed little, job growth is stalled, and real wages have fallen behind inflation. This picture is very different from the days of full employment before the recession, when a tight labor market ensured that



the benefits of growth were broadly distributed. Prolonged weakness in the labor market has left the nation with over a million fewer jobs than when the recession began, a poorer recovery, in terms of recouping lost jobs, than any recession since the 1930s.

He contends that the only positive development for most Americans over the recovery was the 3.8 percent annual productivity growth between 2000 and 2003, which was up from the 2.4 percent growth in the late 1990s. This growth could be laying a foundation for improved living standards in the future. However, the slack in the labor market and the very unbalanced nature of the growth have checked these improvements. As of 2004, employment remained down while unemployment and underemployment were up. The unemployment rate remained 1.3 points higher than the beginning of the recession when it was at 4.3 percent. In June of 2004, greater than 20 percent of the jobless were experiencing long-term unemployment and underemployment has increased to 9.6 percent. Overall, 2.5 million jobs are missing from the labor force.

Frank (2004) observes that during the 1970s the trends in balanced economic growth previously brought about by the great compression underwent a drastic change. Families in the bottom 20 percent experienced a decline in real income of more than 4 percent from 1978 to 1998 and those families in the middle 20 percent saw gains of less than 10 percent. But in the same period the real income of families in the top 20 percent jumped by more than 40 percent, and by 68 percent for families in the top 5 percent of the income distribution. Frank notes that recent growth in income has been astronomical for those higher up the income ladder. No American CEO earned a yearly salary of a million dollars in 1978, but as of 2004 earnings of hundreds of millions of dollars per year for America's top executives was not uncommon. Top CEOs earned 42 times, on

average, that of their average employee in 1980, but in 1999 this figure rose to 475 times as much. In 2004 the richest 1 percent held as much wealth as the bottom 95 percent of Americans, and this disparity continues to grow.

However, Frank asks, do relative standards of living matter? He answers that they certainly do for those at the bottom of the income distribution, but a high price is also being paid by those in the middle, with incomes that are arguably higher in absolute terms than 20 years ago but much lower in a relative sense. He observes that most people, when given the choice between earning \$110,000 per year while others earn \$200,000 and earning \$100,000 per year while others earn \$85,000, would choose the second option. Assuming that these figures represent real purchasing power, one loses \$10,000 by choosing the second option. So why would people choose it?

Frank argues that neoclassical economics rests on the assumption that the first choice is the correct choice. The neoclassical theory assumes that people derive pleasure from the absolute quantity and quality of their consumption. The first choice, then, would offer more to the consumer. But, Frank asserts, there are psychological costs associated with inequality. After the basic economic needs are satisfied, people typically make comparisons, and feel good or bad about their position, based on their relative well-being. The discomfort of the growing gap between those who are doing all right versus those who are doing fabulously has been visited on the middle class.

Frank also makes the case that spending at the top has often increased the cost of achieving basic goals for those in the middle of the income distribution. Growing distinctions in the quality of schools, housing, dress, and transportation, caused by the increased spending of the rich, have only made it more difficult for middle-class families

that want to avoid lifestyles and resources that are below average. This aspirational gap has been noted by Shor (1999) and Kahneman (2003), and are exemplified by people's apparent need to not only achieve a more affluent lifestyle, but also to abate the fear of being left at the gate. Frank comments that lavish consumption, especially consumption that the middle class cannot afford, may be less frivolous than it seems. If wearing the right watch, driving the right car, wearing the right clothes, sending one's children to the right schools, or living in the right neighborhood helps one land the right job or helps one's children to succeed, then the expenditure may be an investment rather than a luxury. But the cost often includes working longer hours, saving less, borrowing more, and the risk of bankruptcy. From a larger social perspective, this also includes a reluctance to contribute, either in time or money, to projects for the public good. This has resulted in a decline in services that benefit not only the poor, but middle-income families as well.

I began this section by noting that there was variability in both the perspectives and the data used to comment on the shrinking middle class, but that there were consistent themes. In keeping with this idea, if one were to make a Venn diagram of data from private analysts and government resources, one would likely find that, although there are differences, there would also be a large area of overlap. Areas of agreement among the preponderance of data sources reviewed suggests that the middle class is shrinking in terms of numbers and in their ability to maintain a middle-class standard of living due to:

- Debt incurred while trying to improve or maintain a middle-class lifestyle, especially for one's children (de Graaf et al., 2002; Dominguez & Robin, 1992;

- Dugas, 2003; Gardner, 2003; L. Kelley, 1998; Leone, 2004; Manning, 2000; McGhee, 2005; Mishel et al., 2004; Moyers, 2004; Nocera, 1994; J. B. Schor, 1999; T. A. Sullivan et al., 2000; Teicher, 2004; Warren & Tyagi, 2003; Weller & Chaurushiya, 2004)
- Unemployment and underemployment (Blumberg & Holahan, 2004; Faux, 2004; Leonhardt, 2004; *The middle-class squeeze: An overview*, 2005; Mishel et al., 2004; Moyers, 2004; E. Porter, 2004; T. A. Sullivan et al., 2000; Weller & Chaurushiya, 2004; Yates, 1994)
  - Cutbacks on employee and government provided benefits (Dube, Jacobs, Muller, Brownstein, & Ellis-Lamkins, 2005; *The incredible shrinking benefits*, 2005; Krim & Witte, 2004; Max, 2003a; Mishel et al., 2004; Nicholson, 2002, 2004; Podesta & Sirota, 2004; Taub, 2004)
  - Greater tax burden, both federal and state (E. Christianson, 1998; Hacker, 2004; Johnston, 2003; Leone, 2004; B. McIntyre, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Milbank & Weisman, 2003; Mishel et al., 2004; S. Moore, 1998; Nader, 2004; Podesta & Sirota, 2004; Povich, 2005; *Study: Tax burden growing heavier for middle class*, 2004; Weisman, 2004b)
  - Having to take a lesser job and/or lesser pay and/or work fewer or longer hours (Baumol, Blinder, & Wolff, 2003; *Bush's economic failure weakens middle class, deepens poverty and harms women and families*, 2004; Danaher, 1996; Faux, 2004; Krim & Witte, 2004; Mishel et al., 2004; T. A. Sullivan et al., 2000; Weismantle, 2001; Williams, 2005; Yates, 1994)

- Needing more than one income earner per household (Dominguez & Robin, 1992; Dugas, 2003; Hacker, 2004; R. Hertz & Marshall, 2001; Hochschild, 1997; Hochschild & Machung, 2003; L. Kelley, 1998; Mishel et al., 2004; J. B. Schor, 1999; T. A. Sullivan et al., 2000; Warren & Tyagi, 2003)
- Health insurance and healthcare expenses (Blumberg & Holahan, 2004; Daniel Callahan, 2002; Daniels, Kennedy, & Kawachi, 2000; Dube et al., 2005; Halvorson & Isham, 2003; "Health care: Are you better off today than you were four years ago?," 2004; Holtz-Eakin, 2004; Krim & Witte, 2004; Leone, 2004; Lipsey & Tice, 1989; Mishel et al., 2004; R. Stevens, 1989; Zwillich, 2004)
- Negative effects on health due to loss of money and/or job and/or social status (Berkman, 1995; Cottle, 2001; Daniels et al., 2000; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Kawachi & Kennedy, 2002; m. Marmot, Bosma, Hemingway, Brunner, & Stansfeld, 1997; Powell, 2001; Wilkinson, 1996, 1999)
- The high risk and cost of children, child care, and their education (Hacker, 2004; Hawkins, 2003; Schulman, 1998; Warren, 2004b; Warren & Tyagi, 2003; Weismantle, 2001)
- Getting divorced (Bianchi, Subaiya, & Kahn, 1999; Boots, 2005; Popenoe, 2005; Tobias, 1997; Warren & Tyagi, 2003)

Also see <http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/middleclass.html>

Not only did the literature demonstrate saturation regarding these problems, there also appeared to be a spiraling interaction among them that created a mutual exacerbation. For example, the loss of a job and extended unemployment might cause a divorce which might precipitate poor health and unaffordable medical expenses. Or,

having a sick child might cause a parent to quit his or her job to provide long-term child care, while the other parent discovers that his or her health insurance benefits have been cut by his or her employer, which might force the family into bankruptcy. One could imagine many more similar scenarios.

Ultimately, however, the culmination of these problems appears to be a very likely demise of the middle class. An idealized representation of income distribution is offered in Figure 20.

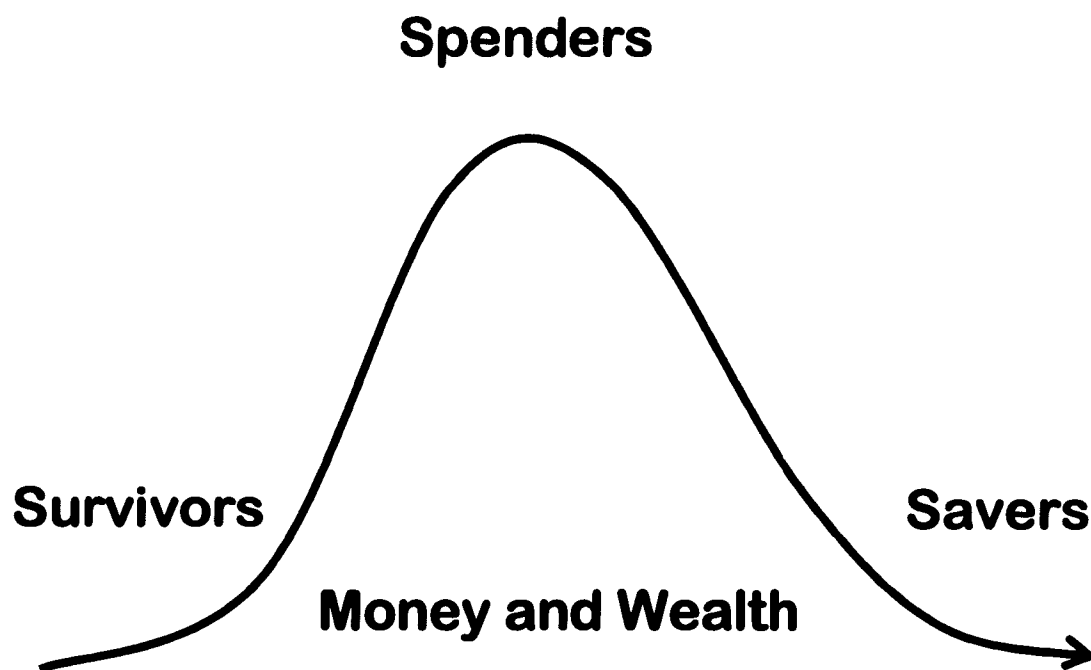


Figure 20. A normal distribution of spending patterns and wealth.

Figure 20 represents a normal distribution, with people represented on the vertical axis and economic assets on the horizontal. It also represents spending behavior. People to the far left of center are designated as survivors – people in debt and living pretty much hand-to-mouth with very little to spend. These relatively few people would

have far less money than the rest and would exist primarily at the survival level. (In an ideal setting, however, the circumstances of this group could be improved through the generosity of the state, private organizations, and the individual.) Those in the middle of the distribution, the spenders, represent the majority of the people, the middle class, who spend more in aggregate than other groups and who bolster the economy with their consumption. Towards the far right, no pun intended, are the savers. They are the leisure class. These few represent the very rich, those whose needs and desires have been nearly sated; with fortunes so great that most of the things they want or need have already been purchased. Therefore, rather than using their money for consumption, they invest and save the bulk of their money so that they, or their families, will never have to labor.

In the above model, the capitalist economy is made vital by the consumption of the middle class, who are relatively well off and constitute a large majority of the population. However, America appears to be rapidly moving away from this model, squeezing the middle class out of existence, as in the following illustration:

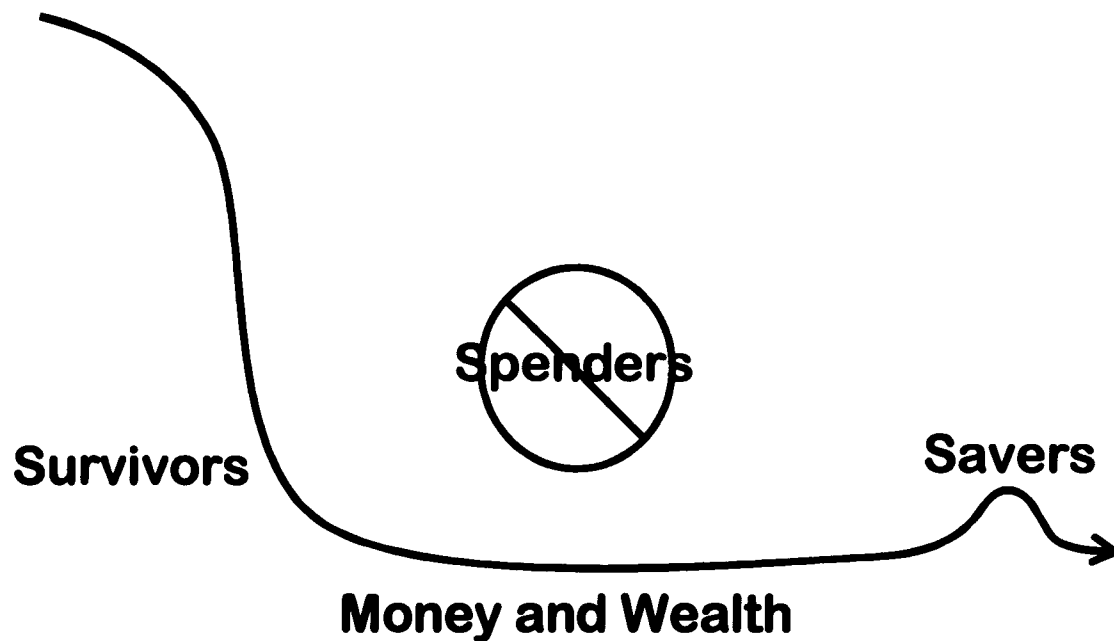


Figure 21. The trend in the distribution of spending patterns and wealth.

As in Figure 20, the vertical axis in Figure 21 represents people and the horizontal economic assets. However, this figure illustrates the potential outcome for a decimated middle class. With no middle, the distribution of people becomes bimodal, with the majority of people living in a mode of survival and a few enjoying the luxury of hyper-wealth. Unfortunately, nobody exists in the middle to support the economy with their consumption or production. Ironically, the acts of overconsumption and overproduction in the United States, accompanied by the extreme centralization of wealth, are producing downward pressure on the middle class and causing a few to escape to wealth but many to slip into poverty. Without the middle class, the economy suggested by capitalism appears to collapse into feudalism. Therefore, it could be argued that extreme capitalism ultimately becomes self-defeating and forces the economy to regress into a pre-capitalist and pre-socialist state of lordship and serfdom.



Not only is this perception dysfunctional, as it fools people into thinking that they are relatively better off than they are, but as income continues to concentrate the middle class will very likely collapse. Since 2001 the economy has been propped up by consumer spending, but this spending has for the most part been fueled by consumer debt. This debt burden cannot last. And when the loans are defaulted upon and bankruptcies rise and credit crashes, the center will fold. This collapse of the middle class will move most people into the survivor portion of the curve, leaving only a small group at the opposite end controlling the vast majority of wealth and income. This Poisson Curve, named in part because it looks like a fish, is the curve that humanity has been described by for millennia. It is a return to the bimodal distribution of royalty and slaves, of the aristocracy and the serfs. If this occurs in the United States the democratic experiment of America will enter history as an unfortunate failure, but still merely a blip on the radar screen of economic memory. For America to survive as a global power the middle class must be revived. Unless, of course, technology advances to the point that all goods are manufactured by autonomous machines and all services are provided by artificial intelligence. If this becomes the case, then money may become irrelevant and the economy of the planet will need to be overhauled.

Also, it has been argued that the globalization of trade and corporations has begun to remedy the inequality among nations (Bhagwati, 2004; Friedman, 2000, 2006). And for some countries, notably India and China, this is arguably the case. However, economies tend to recreate themselves when exported, and the offshoring of jobs has, in many cases, created a greater gap between rich and poor. Nonetheless, the potential equalizing function of globalization is made possible by moving of wages from the

middle class in America to the new emerging middle class of underdeveloped countries. The rich and the multinational corporations do not lose their income or wealth in this process, otherwise it would not continue. Wealthy individuals and corporations that are reaping the benefits of globalization will continue to reap these benefits regardless of the cost to America's middle class, or anyone else for that matter. Globalization does not produce a redistribution of wealth from the top to the bottom, but from the middle of America to somewhere and someone else (Bauman, 2000; Bovard, 1992; Buchdahl, 2004; Danaher, 1996; Faux, 2006; Frieden, 2006; Greider, 1997; Isaak, 2005; Kuttner, 1999; B. Lindsey, 2002; Mander & Goldsmith, 1997; Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003; Norberg, 2003; Palast, 2002; Ridrik, 1997; Rosen, 2002; Sachs, 2005; Soros, 1998, 2002; Stiglitz, 2003).

Therefore, the extreme inequality fostered by unchecked capitalism seems worthy of further examination.

### *Inequality*

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. A revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast between poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look....

Martin Luther King Jr. in *The Trumpet of Conscience* found at [www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net).

Income inequality in the United States has risen over the past two decades. Its very persistence means that this trend will be difficult to change. Even recognizing the reversal when it does occur will be difficult enough, because statistical analysis cannot easily distinguish a decisive turnaround in inequality from a relatively brief pause in its rise. Because of this uncertainty, continued vigilance is required to find ways to help alleviate inequality, particularly to the extent that it can reduce hardship for those at the bottom of the economic ladder.

*(Economic report of the president 1997)*

Trying to find comprehensive economic data accurately describing income and wealth in America, or the lack of it, is much like trying to catch a greased pig. It runs from place to place, hides, squeals when grabbed, kicks and tries to bite, slips from the hands, evacuates its bowels, and most decidedly does not want to be caught. In part this elusive pig seems to have been intentionally kept hidden. The pig is not pretty, and those who wish to pretend otherwise apparently do not want the pig exposed to daylight or direct examination. In some cases the records which most closely examine the pig have been removed from public purview, in others the data is relegated to such special cases that it makes piecing the pig together a Herculean task, a form of reassembly after butchering, so to speak. In most instances the situation resembles the old story of the blind men examining an elephant (pig). One feels a leg and says it is a tree, another one feels the tusk and claims it to be a spear, another holds the tail and declares that it is a snake, and so on.

The Survey of Consumer Finances, the Joint Tax Committee, the Federal Reserve Board, the United States Census, the Congressional Budget Office, and many other reputable sources of income and wealth data use differing parameters and sample populations in many different ways (E. N. Wolff, 2000a). Be that as it may, it appears that the most ubiquitous model used in the economic literature to analyze and describe inequality is called the Gini ratio, named after Corrado Gini (1884 -1965), a man with four honorary degrees in separate disciplines and who was often concerned with measures of variability. In 1921 (Gini) he published the basic concepts for the graphical measure that was later to bear his name (it is often called the Gini Coefficient, but that term is mathematically incorrect). This Gini ratio is illustrated in Figure 22.

The horizontal axis (X) in Figure 22 is the cumulative percentage of the population ranging from 0 to 100 percent. The vertical axis (Y) is the cumulative percentage of wealth or income, depending on which is being measured, ranging from 0 to 100 percent. The green arrow describes  $X = Y$ . That is to say that each person on this line has exactly the same amount of money or wealth as any other. The red Lorentz-Curve arrow describes the distribution of money if the market is, hypothetically, allowed to operate completely freely. This curve most closely matches the real distribution of wealth and income in the United States, although the curvature of the wealth curve is more acute than the curvature of the income curve.

# Gini Ratio

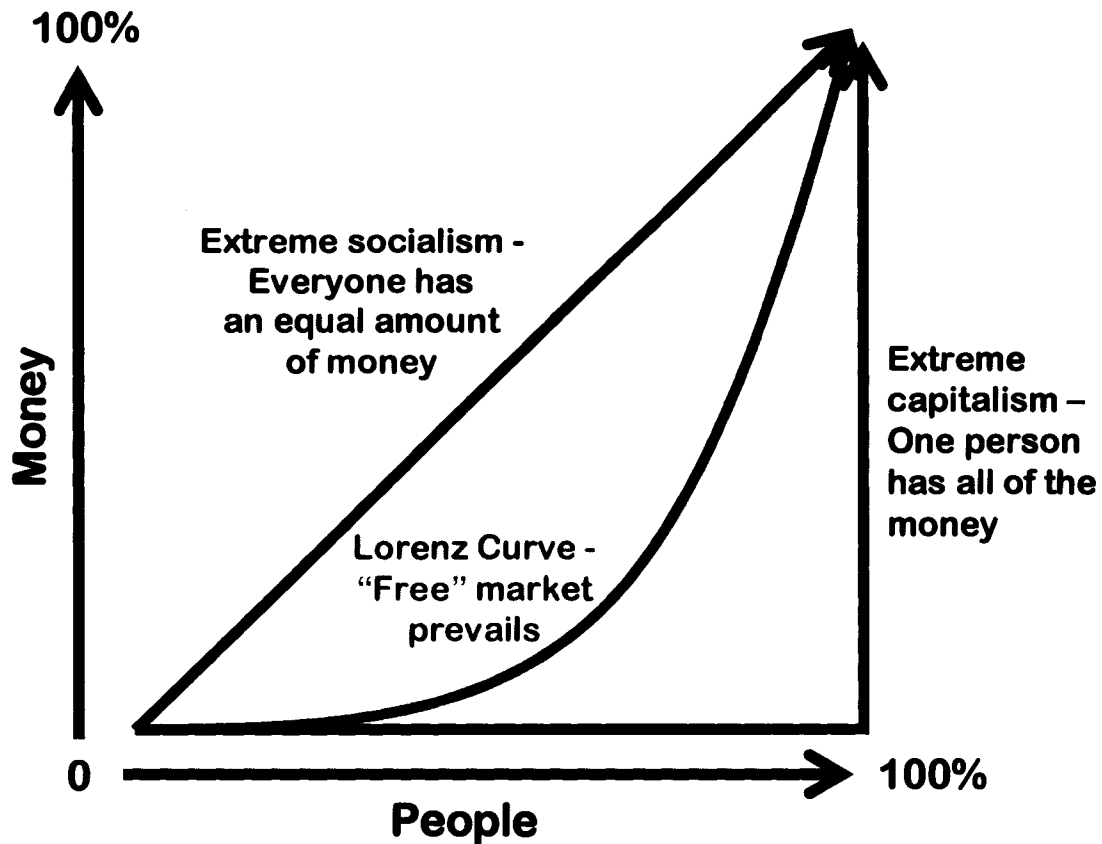


Figure 22. Gini ratio showing the relationship between the Lorenz curve and the extremes of wealth distribution across the population.

It is generally accepted under the free market hypothesis, that the distribution of the lowest incomes and the middle range of incomes approximate respectively a normal to lognormal distribution, whereas the highest incomes are best approximated by a Pareto distribution. This means that the Lorenz curve plotted on the Gini for real incomes (and wealth) accelerates slowly at the bottom end, moderately in the middle, and rapidly towards the top end, which experiences the most volatility compared to the other parts of the curve (Aghion & Bolton, 1992; Silva & Yakovenko, 2005). To determine the Gini

Ratio one simply divides the area between the Equality Line and the Lorentz Curve by the entire area under the Equality Line. The Gini Ratio, then, is  $A / A + B$  as in Figure 23:

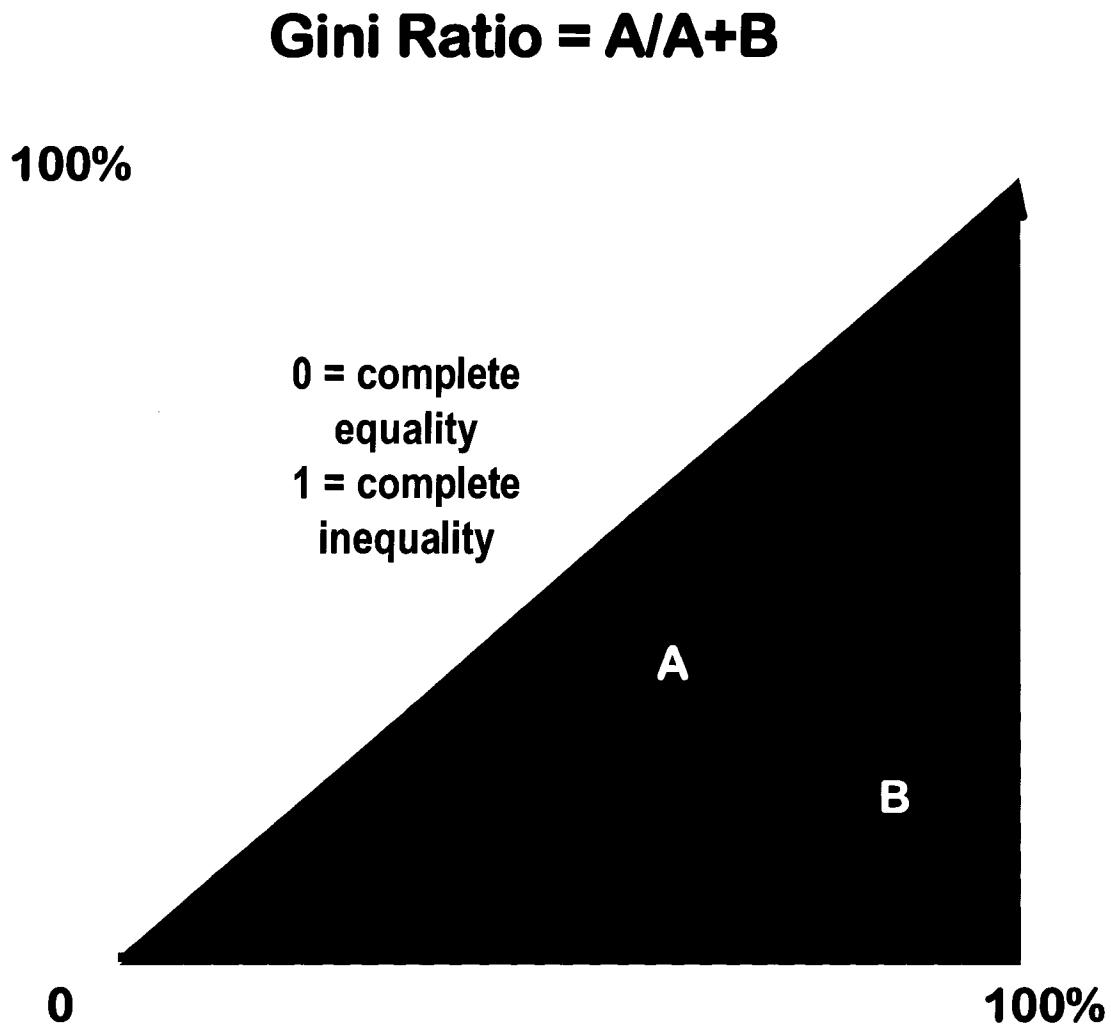


Figure 23. Calculation of the Gini ratio.

If the Gini ratio were 0, then everyone would have the same amount of income or wealth, depending on which was being measured. This would be an example of extreme socialism. If the Gini ratio were 1, it would mean that one person would have all of the income or wealth, an example of extreme capitalism. Capitalism seems to produce wealth but fails to distribute it equitably while socialism distributes wealth but has been

criticized for poor wealth generation. (Also see <http://www.econweb.com/texts/current/Mansions/inequality-measure.html> for an animated model.)

Before 1970 the Gini had been in decline, giving evidence to the great post-WWII compression, a term denoting the movement of many people into the middle class from both the bottom and the top of the economic distribution (Bradbury & Katz, 2002; David Callahan, 2004; Ehrenreich, 1989; Goldin & Margo, 1992; Margo & Finegan, 2002; Swenson, 2002). However, since the mid-1970s the trend in income and wealth inequality has become increasingly positive, i.e. income and wealth inequalities have become more pronounced (Braun, 1991). In 1970 the Gini hovered around 0.35 for family income, while in 2002 it was near 0.44. More importantly, recent data shows that in 2001 the wealthiest 1 percent of households controlled over 33 percent of national wealth, accompanied by a Gini of over 0.8 since 1998, which, apparently, is close to the maximum inequality a modern society can sustain without experiencing some sort of breakdown (E. Wolff, 2003). At the same time the lower 80 percent of households held only 16 percent (Mishel et al., 2005). More specifically:

| Table 1                        |                           |                    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Wealth and Income Distribution |                           |                    |
| Population:                    | Percent Household Income: | Percent Net Worth: |
| Top 1 percent                  | 20.0                      | 33.4               |
| Next 9 percent                 | 25.2                      | 38.1               |
| Bottom 90 percent              | 54.8                      | 28.5               |

The more detailed data for wealth in 2001 (Mishel et al., 2005) are:

Table 2

| Wealth Distribution |                                               |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Top Fifth           | 84.4 percent (includes next four data points) |
| Top 1 percent       | 33.4 percent                                  |
| 96 - 99 percent     | 25.8 percent                                  |
| 91 - 95 percent     | 12.3 percent                                  |
| 81 - 90 percent     | 12.9 percent                                  |
| Fourth Fifth        | 15.6 percent                                  |
| Middle Fifth        | 3.9 percent                                   |
| Second Fifth        | 0.7 percent                                   |
| Lowest Fifth        | -0.7 percent                                  |

The more detailed data for income in 2001 (Mishel et al., 2005) are:

Table 3

| Income Distribution |                                                |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Top Fifth           | 52.4 percent (includes next three data points) |
| Top 1 percent       | 14.8 percent                                   |
| 95 - 99 percent     | 12.7 percent                                   |
| 80 - 95 percent     | 24.9 percent                                   |
| Middle Fifth        | 14.2 percent                                   |
| Lowest Fifth        | 4.2 percent                                    |

And yes, the percentage groupings vary within the same reference between wealth and income for the same year. The data also vary somewhat by source. For example, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau the 2001 share of aggregate income was



as follows: the richest five percent of Americans made 22.4 percent of the income; the richest 20 percent of Americans made 50.1 percent of the income; the next 20 percent of Americans made 23 percent of the income; the next 20 percent made 8.7 percent; and the poorest 20 percent made 3.5 percent of the income (*Historical Income Tables: Households: Table H - 2*, 2001). This disparity is largely due to how income or wealth is measured and by the composition and size of the groups as they are divided and analyzed. However, there is consistent agreement that the distribution of income and wealth is heavily concentrated at the top. In addition, as of late 2006, the data indicate that inequality in the distribution of wealth and income is even more pronounced and that this trend will very likely continue (Mishel, Bernstein, & Allegretto, 2006).

Historically many economists have written about income disparity in the United States. However, there appears to be growing concern since the late 1970s. In 1977 the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) began recording data on after-tax income that included various forms of income that standard Census data miss, such as capital gains and income from the Earned Income Tax Credit. In the late 1990's Shapiro and Greenstein (1997; 1999) noted that after-tax income had increased dramatically since 1977 for the highest one percent in the income distribution of the American population but it had risen only modestly for those in the middle and declined for those in the bottom fifth. The CBO data show that after-tax income is more concentrated among the richest one percent of the population, and also among the most affluent 20 percent of the population, than any other time since 1977. Census data on before-tax income, which goes back to 1947, indicate that income is also more concentrated than any other time in over fifty years. Shapiro and Greenstein point out that while the trend in inequality has

been driven by underlying economic developments, an important reason for the increase in after-tax income to the top of the distribution has been due to substantial net tax cuts that these households have received since the late 1970's. Including the tax increases that were part of the 1990 and 1993 deficit reduction packages, high-income households in 1999 paid a substantially smaller percentage of their income in federal taxes than they did in 1977. The richest one percent would pay at least \$40,000 more in 1999 if they were held to the same tax rate that existed in 1977. In other words, these households have received more than a \$40,000 tax cut in 1999 dollars. This tax cut for the top one percent of households is greater than the entire average before-tax income of households in the middle fifth of the distribution. They also point out that if Americans' share of after-tax income was the same as it was in 1977, the amount by which a group's income would benefit or suffer in 1999 would be as follows: the top 1 percent would lose \$225,900 per person; the highest fifth would lose \$12,500 per person; the fourth fifth would gain \$3,400 per person; the middle fifth would gain \$3,500 per person; the second fifth would gain \$3,700 per person; and the bottom fifth would gain \$3,300 per person.

Shapiro and Greenstein (1999) warn:

These exceptional income gains at the pinnacle of the income spectrum – along with the increasing disparities in income between the very wealthy and other Americans and the growing concentration of income among the most well-to-do – should be considered as the nation enters a debate over competing uses for projected budget surpluses, including a debate over whether to provide substantial tax cuts and to whom to direct any tax cuts that are provided. The tax bill Congress approved August 5 would direct the lion's share of its tax cuts to those with high incomes, which would further increase the concentration of after-tax income among those at the top of the income scale.

p. 3

Although the amount or even the existence of a surplus in government revenues was hotly debated, from 2001 to 2003 President George W. Bush pushed through tax cuts

that awarded the lion's share of what was believed to be the nation's surplus to the richest Americans (B. Bartlett, 2006; Franken, 2003; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Johnston, 2003; Krugman, 2003b; Reich, 2002b). In 2001 Bush signed into law a \$1.3 trillion tax cut, with roughly 40 percent slated for the wealthiest 1 percent of households, those earning more than \$300,000 per year (Robert H. Frank, 2004). In addition, the tax cuts only made the income gap worse by redistributing income from lower to higher-income households. The tax savings for the top 1 percent was around \$67,000 per household. But for middle-income families the cuts added just under \$600 in savings, and for the bottom 20 percent the average household benefit was \$61. The overall result was a shift of 0.8 percent of after-tax income from the bottom 99 percent to the top 1 percent (Mishel et al., 2005). Beginning in early 2001, 85 percent of the growth of corporate income accrued to profits, and 15 percent to compensation. However, in the eight prior business cycles, compensation comprised 79 percent of income growth in the corporate sector with profits making up only 21 percent of the growth. In 2006 these cuts, while still touted as benefiting everyday Americans, gave the richest 1 percent of Americans an average tax break of \$44,477, the next richest 4 percent received an average of \$5,160, the next 15 percent received an average of \$2,547, the next 20 percent received an average of \$1,113, the next 20 percent received an average of \$665, the next 20 percent received an average of \$393, and the poorest 20 percent of Americans received an average of \$63. Apparently to add insult to injury, the top 1 percent of Americans who already had the highest incomes, who controlled the most wealth, and who had the fastest growing income and wealth, received a 2.9 percent cut in their income tax, very nearly five times

the size of the cut offered to the poorest 20 percent (Huffington, 2003; Mishel et al., 2006; Sahadi, 2006a).

From a different angle Wolff observes that even though income is an important indicator of economic inequality, and has been the subject of most studies on economic disparity, family wealth is a more vital indicator of well-being because it is independent of the financial income it provides. A house provides direct service to the owner, wealth is a source of consumption because assets can be converted into cash, financial assets can provide liquidity in a time of economic stress, and in a representative democracy the distribution of power is often related to the distribution of wealth (E. N. Wolff, 2000a). In this sense, net worth, composed of assets that can be readily converted to cash, reflects wealth as a store of value and therefore a source of potential consumption.

In agreement, Hodgson (1997) comments that in 1997 the Survey of Consumer Finances indicated that 0.5 percent of the personal wealth was owned by the bottom 40 percent of the American population, 15.20 percent of wealth resided with the next 40 percent of folks, 11.5 percent went to the next 10 percent, 11.4 percent went to the next 5 percent, 22.3 percent went to the next 4 percent, and the top 1 percent of the population held 39.1 percent of personal wealth in America. He also states that if the population is divided into five equal groups, the data in percentile will fall out as shown in Table 4.

| Table 4                                |           |           |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Percent Wealth and Income Distribution |           |           |
| Population:                            | % Income: | % Wealth: |
| Top Fifth                              | 47.2      | 84.3      |
| Fourth Fifth                           | 23.0      | 10.8      |
| Middle Fifth                           | 15.7      | 4.4       |
| Second Fifth                           | 9.9       | 1.0       |
| Bottom Fifth                           | 4.2       | -0.5      |
| Total:                                 | 100.0     | 100.0     |

Looking at a similar timeframe Wolff asserts that most American families experienced only slow increase, if any, in their net worth from 1989 to 1998, while large gains in wealth accrued to the richest 20 percent, with a concurrent increase in income concentration. In addition the overall wealth holdings of most families have fallen since 1989. Indebtedness has continued to rise and stock (which remains highly concentrated in the hands of the rich) and pension accounts have begun to replace bank deposits, financial securities, and investment real estate as a total of household wealth. One potential reason for the growing anxiety among the middle class may be its falling financial reserves, resulting in the ability of middle income families to sustain their normal consumption out of financial savings to significantly deteriorate. In fact, the portion of household recording zero or negative net worth jumped from 15.5 percent in 1983 to 18.0 percent in 1998, and the young, especially, are getting poorer (Gouskova & Stafford, 2002; Hacker, 2004; T. Hartmann & Miller, 2006; Hurst, Luoh, & Stafford,

1998; Sahadi, 2006a, 2006b; Weicher, 1995, 1996; E. N. Wolff, 1987a, 1987b, 1996, 1998).

Another pointed observation is the extreme concentration of stock ownership among the wealthy, as the distribution of financial assets such as stocks and bonds is even more skewed than that of overall wealth. The richest 1 percent of Americans own 53 percent of the stocks, the next 4 percent own 25 percent, the next 5 percent own 10 percent, the next 40 percent own 11 percent, and the poorest 50 percent own less than 1 percent (Collins et al., 2004).

There is also an interesting, and arguably significant, disparity between the metrics used to describe the economic data and the message that they convey. For example, using current U.S. Census data one finds that there is a 31 percent difference between the median and the mean for family income in 2001: the mean family income was \$66,836 (*Historical Income Tables: Households: Table H - 3*, 2001), while the median family income was \$50,844 (*American Community Survey*, 2001). In the 1970s a rapid separation of mean and median wage began to manifest (Eckstein & Nagypal, 2004). And while the mean is arguably a much better indicator of economic disparity, in most government analysis the median is emphasized while the mean is often omitted.

The disparity between the median and the mean seems especially evident when analyzing that of income vs. that of wealth. Wolf notes that in 1998 median income was \$33,400 while mean income was \$52,300. But in the same year median net worth was \$60,700 while mean net worth was \$270,300. Data from the Consumer Finance Survey (Aizcorbe, Kennickell, & Moore, 2003) showed that in 2001 there was a 323 percent gap between the median and the mean for family wealth even after stock ownership had been

adjusted for devaluation, with median family wealth equaling \$80,700 and mean family wealth equaling \$341,300. This study also showed that from 1998 to 2001, inflation-adjusted family incomes rose notably faster than they did in the 1995–98 period, with the median rising 9.6 percent and the mean increasing 17.4 percent. This rapidly widening gap between median and mean income is also illustrated by Eckstein and Nagypal (2004).

Using data from Schmitt, Mishel, & Bernstein (Mishel et al., 2006; 1998), Wolff (1998), and the 2001 U.S. Census reports, Figures 24 and 25 map historical trends in income and wealth inequality:

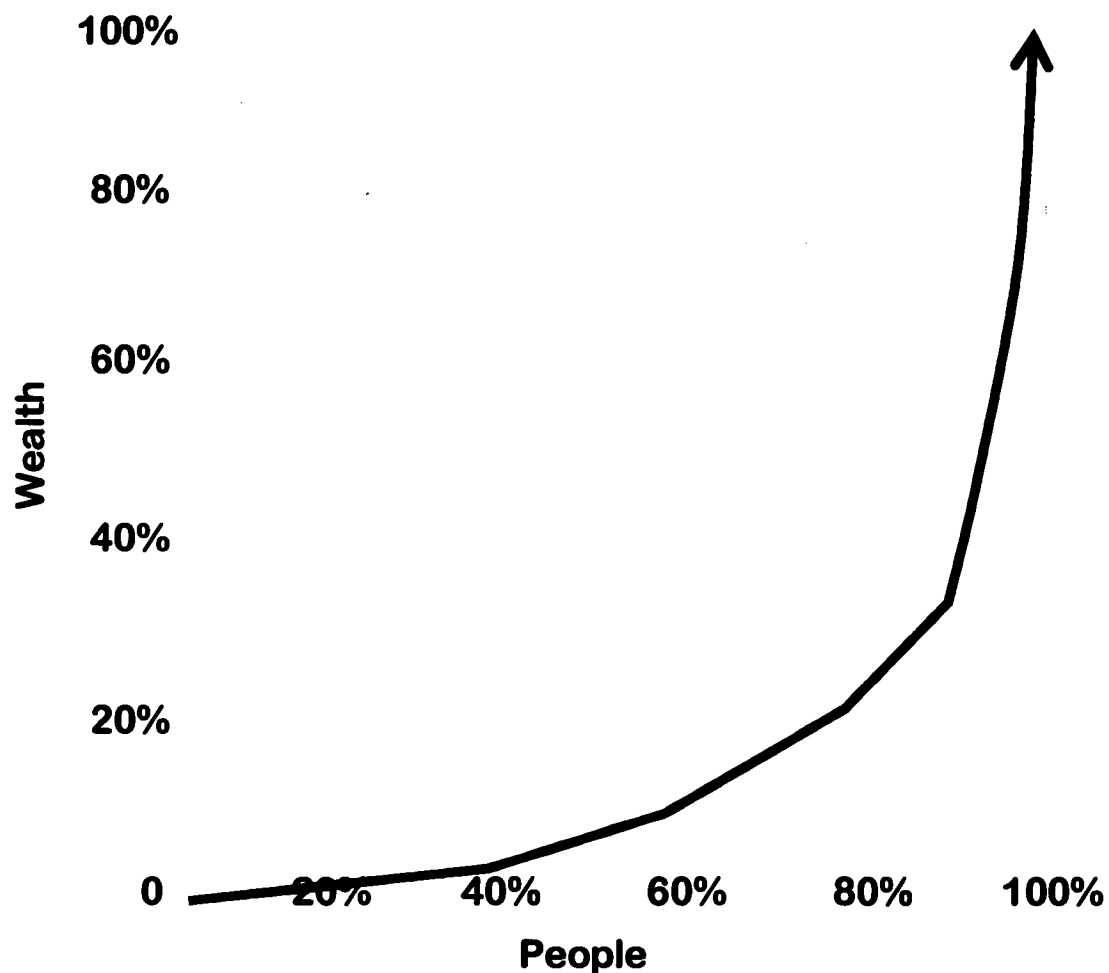


Figure 24. Cumulative wealth in relation to cumulative population.

Just as in the Gini Ratio, Figure 24 illustrates the concentration of wealth as a function of cumulative percentage of people and wealth. If the distribution of wealth were graphed according to absolute percentages for each quintile it would look very similar to Figure 25:

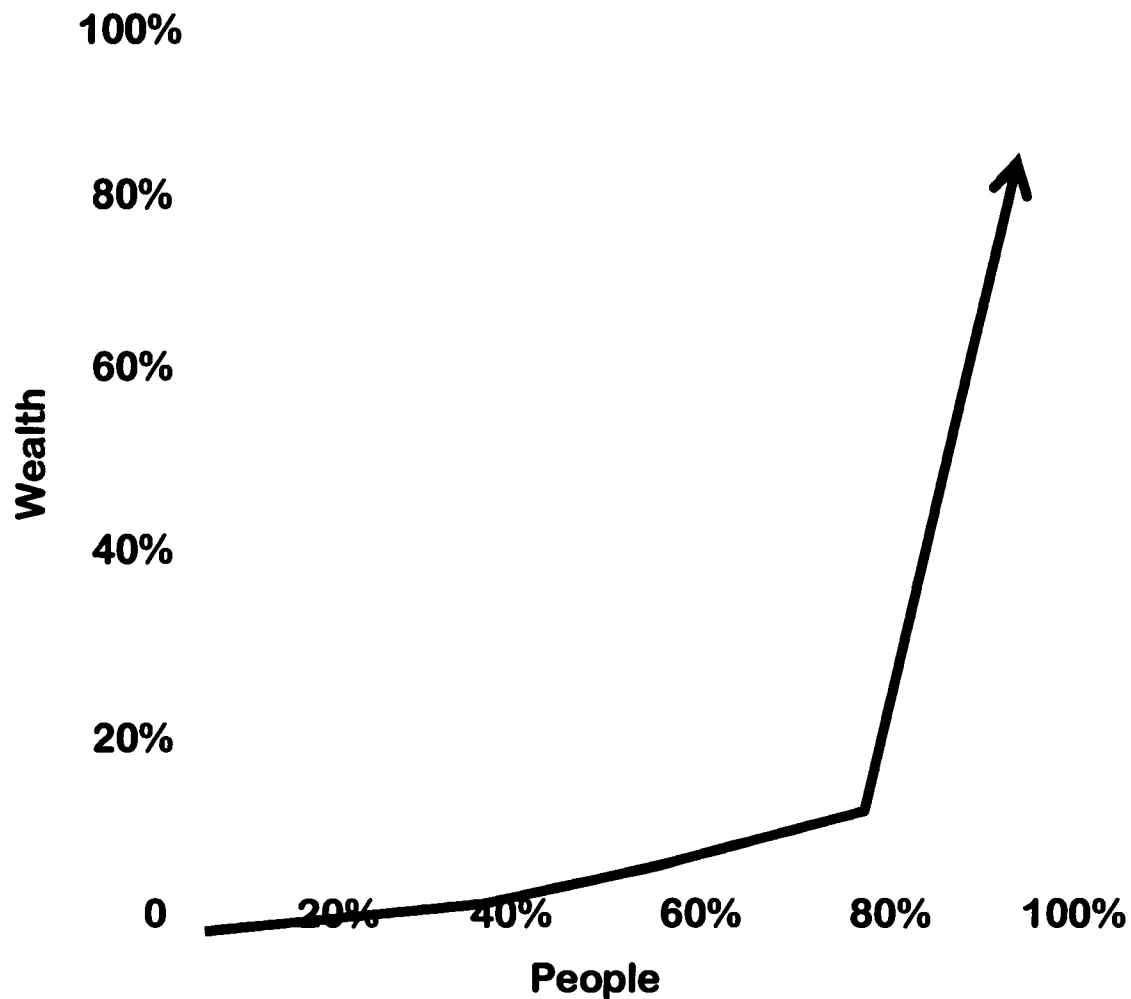


Figure 25. Cumulative wealth in relation to cumulative population by quintile.

The beginning of the red arrow on both Figure 24 and Figure 25 dips below zero. This indicates that those in the bottom quintile have negative wealth on average. Hopefully these graphs illustrate that while the upper fifth of the population in America



may make an impressive percentage of total income, it controls an intimidating percentage of the wealth, with nearly half of its wealth concentrated in the top one percent (Mishel et al., 2006).

Summarizing to this point, between the 1970s and the 1990s broad-based income growth was highly unusual. For example, between 1979 and 2000 the real income of households in the lowest 20 percentile grew 6.4 percent while those in the top 20 percent grew 70 percent and those in the top 1 percent grew 184 percent. In contrast, in the 1950s and 1960s real incomes nearly doubled for each income level. Also, between 1947 and 1973 family income and productivity both grew by 104 percent, but in the mid-1970s the parallel growth between the two decoupled. From 1973 to 2002 median family income grew at about one-third the rate of productivity, leading to an income inequality marked by those at the top of the income scale grabbing the lion's share of the larger economic pie that resulted from the increase in productivity. Therefore, there is far greater income inequality since the 1970s and the concentration of income among the top 1 percent of households is as great in 2005 as it was in the period just before the Great Depression, which was the worst period of income disparity in the twentieth century. Recent regressive changes in federal taxation will push income inequality further. For those in the top 1 percent the 2001 to 2003 tax cuts provided around \$67,000 in additional savings, for the middle class the cuts provided just under \$600 and for the lowest 20 percent the savings was \$61. This has redistributed after-tax income from the bottom 99 percent to the top 1 percent (Johnston, 2003; B. McIntyre, 2003d; Mishel et al., 2005; Suskind, 2004).

But beyond uneven tax benefits, what other factors are causing the growing economic disparity in America?

Many argue that the culprits are economic recession, deteriorating wages and benefits, unemployment, poor mobility, and a shift in necessary skills.

### *Recession*

A review of recent economic history shows that during the late 1990s the technology bubble resulted in a rapid growth in real wages across all levels, poverty rates fell, and the growth of income inequality was dampened. In 2001, however, the economy took a decided downturn, and although in 2005 America was supposedly well into an economic recovery, it was still beset with many of the problems of the 2001 recession. The economic downturn in 2001 stopped, and in some cases reversed, most of the positive economic trends of the technology bubble. Since 2000 unemployment has remained high compared to the full employment of the late 1990s, eliciting a relatively jobless recovery that has de-linked growth from job creation (Aronowitz, 2005). For a rather sad topic, it is humorously exposed at the popular level by the novel *Jobless Recovery* (L. C. Evans, 2005). Nevertheless, the highly touted increases in productivity were primarily due to both efficiencies and better use of technologies and to permanent vs. cyclical layoffs caused by structural changes such as permanent fall in demand, technological change, reorganization of production, and local or international outsourcing (Groshen & Potter, 2003; Osenton, 2004; Sahadi, 2006a; Schreft & Singh, 2003). The persistence of the labor market slack has had a very negative effect on wages and income for the American worker, where often reemployment requires a significant cut in pay if

one can find a job at all. The 2001 recession caused real median family incomes to fall by over 2.4 percent from 2000 to 2002. The lower 20<sup>th</sup> percentile took an even larger hit with a decrease of 4.2 percent in income (Mishel et al., 2005).

### *Unemployment*

In March of 2001 unemployment was 4.3 percent. It trended upward until it peaked in June of 2003 at 6.3 percent, then dropped and remained at around 5.6 percent until dropping again to around 5 percent in July of 2005. Due to the lack of jobs, many potential job seekers left the labor market and were not counted in the unemployment rate, which only measures people actively seeking employment. The lack of job creation during this latest recovery was unprecedented and has led to unemployment spells that are much longer than would be expected (Mishel et al., 2005).

### *Wages*

The persistent labor slack of the early 2000's has knocked down the wage growth of the late 1990's, having a particularly nasty impact on low-wage workers. This has greatly contributed to the wage inequality between low- and middle-wage workers, a rare phenomenon since the late 1980's. Several contributing factors include:

- Wages were stagnant overall and median wages fell from the early 1970's until 1995. Wages then rose strongly in response to faster productivity growth and consistent unemployment.
- The wage inequality of the 1980's dramatically widened and caused an erosion of real wages, but the wage inequality of the 1990's took on a new visage

characterized by a growing inequality between the top and the middle, with a steady, if not weakening, gap between the middle and the bottom.

- Accumulation of money shifted very rapidly from labor compensation to capital income, sending the benefits of increased productivity to profits and interest.

Mishel, Bernstein, and Allegretto note:

Explaining the shifts in wage inequality requires attention to several factors that affect low-, middle-, and high-wage workers differently. The experience of the late 1990's should remind us of the great extent to which a low unemployment rate benefits workers, especially low-wage earners. Correspondingly, the high levels of unemployment in the early and mid-1980's and in recent years disempowered wage earners and provided the context in which other forces – specifically, a weakening of labor market institutions and globalization – could drive up wage inequality. Significant shifts in the labor market, such as the weakening of unions and the severe drop in the real value of the minimum wage, can explain one-third of the growing wage inequality. Similarly, the increasing globalization of the economy – specifically with regard to immigration, trade, and capital mobility – and the employment shift toward lower-paying service industries (such as retail trade) and away from manufacturing can explain, in combination, another third of the total growth in wage inequality. Macroeconomic factors also played an important role: as high unemployment in the early 1980's greatly increased wage inequality, the low unemployment of the late 1990's reduced it. High unemployment has renewed growing wage inequality since 2000.

(Mishel et al., 2005, p. 5)

Adding even more insult to injury, as wages for the typical worker fell, pay for executives soared. From 1989 to 2000 the median wage for a CEO grew 79.9 percent and average compensation rose 342 percent. CEO's in 1965 made 26 times more than a typical worker, but in 2003 they made 185 times as much, down from a peak of 300 in 1999, but still three times as much as their peers abroad (Mishel et al., 2005).

## *Job Skills*

A popular belief regarding wage inequality is that a technology-driven market has demanded more skilled and educated workers (Levy & Murnane, 2004; Murnane & Levy, 1996; Reich, 2002a). However, the overall impact of technology on the wage and employment structure shows no difference between the 1970's, 1980's, or 1990's, and skill demand has little to do with wage inequality among workers with similar levels of experience and education, a type of group whose wage inequality accounted for half of the growth of inequality in the 1980's and 1990's. Therefore, the workers of the 1980's and 1990's experienced no technology shock (Mishel et al., 2005).

Mishel, Bernstein, and Allegretto point out:

The conventional story about technology leading to increased demand for skills and the erosion of wages among the less-skilled does not readily explain the pattern of growth in wage inequality. In particular, the late 1990's are seen as a period of rapid technological change, yet during that period wage inequality diminished at the bottom. Similarly, education differentials grew slowly during most of the 1990's and declined in the early 2000's, a trend incompatible with rapid technological change driving up demand for skills. The decline in the wage payoff for experience in the later 1990's also runs counter to the technology story. Moreover, it was the growth of wage inequality among workers of similar education and experience, not easily linked to technology, which accounted for all of the wage inequality growth since 1995.

(Mishel et al., 2005, p. 6)  
(Also see Rattner, 2005)

A better suggestion for developing successful future skills may be that one should be extremely good at fending for oneself, positioning oneself as a free agent, selling one's skills and abilities on the open market, and taking responsibility for one's own success and security when one is fortunate enough to be employed (Tulgan, 2000).

## *Mobility*

In its annual survey of the world's richest people Forbes magazine (Holloway, 2003) suggests that inequality is good, as long as there is income mobility, the ability of people to move up the economic ladder. They argue that all societies fall between a zero and a one on the Gini, but that if one lives in a country where there are lots of rich people one has a better chance of doing well oneself rather than in socialist countries where everyone does poorly. They note that the United States is a great example of a country with lots of rich people, 222 billionaires compared to the country with the next highest number on their list; Germany with 43 billionaires. Paradoxically they point out that the United States, with a Gini of 40.8 for income, is very near that of Venezuela with a Gini of 49.5 and whose income disparity is so high Forbes states that the country is virtually impossible to govern. They suggest that inequality has two effects, one good, and one bad. Inequality is good, they propose, because it encourages everyone to be successful. Wealth can be shared with the poor, but doing so provides a disincentive to achieve. But inequality is also bad, they conclude, because becoming successful when one is poor presents more difficulty than if one were rich. This is where mobility comes into the picture.

Those who support the U.S. economic model claim that greater employment opportunities and greater income mobility more than offset inequality. One argues:

The dynamic U.S. economy is characterized by an extraordinary degree of income mobility that has been all but ignored in the recent debate on reducing federal income tax rates and phasing out the death (estate) tax. Opponents of tax relief are criticizing commonsense reforms because they claim that "only the rich" will benefit. Yet the notion that low-income or high-income groups are composed mostly of the same people over time is an illusion.

The comparison of average incomes and taxes paid by groups would be meaningful only if America were a caste society in which the people comprising one group remained constant over time. Most Americans, however, understand that family incomes change frequently, and the research on income mobility reveals that most family incomes increase significantly over time.

This is one reason why Americans with modest incomes tend to resist “soak the rich” class-warfare arguments: They hope to be rich themselves one day.... Much of the debate and political rhetoric on tax relief have focused on how much income the top one-fifth or 1 percent of families would receive versus the bottom one-fifth and other fifths. Yet this approach is statistically meaningless because the mix of individuals and families who make up the various income groups changes constantly.

The fact is that the U.S. economy, while not without its problems, remains dynamic, open, and productive enough to enable Americans to rise as far and as fast as their dreams, hard work, and perseverance will take them. What is needed is commonsense tax reform that reduces the burden of excess taxation for all Americans.

(D. M. Wilson, 2001)

Wilson cites McMurrer and Sawhill (1996) to illustrate that many academic studies have found, in his opinion, remarkably consistent results that suggest there is substantial income mobility in the United States. He also notes:

- In 1992 a Treasury Department study showed that between 1979 and 1988, 86 percent of those in the bottom income quintile moved to a higher quintile, and 35 percent in the top income quintile moved to a lower quintile (*Income mobility and the U.S. economy: Open society or caste system?*, 1992).
- In 1995 a Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas report showed that almost three-quarters of those in the bottom quintile in 1975 were in a higher quintile by 1991, and almost 40 percent in the top quintile moved down to a lower quintile over the same period (W. M. Cox & Alm, 1995).
- In 1996 an Urban Institute study showed that many Americans move into a new income quintile, with estimates ranging from 25 percent to 40 percent in a single

year, and even higher mobility rates over longer periods: about 45 percent over five years and 60 percent over 9-year and 17-year periods (McMurrer & Sawhill, 1996).

- In 1998 the Census Bureau reported that, on average, over 41 percent of Americans increased their inflation-adjusted income by 5 percent or more per year from 1984 to 1994 (*Moving up and down the income ladder: No. P70-65*, 1998). (Wilson argues that the primary reasons for changes in income from year to year were changes in the number of workers in the household, marital status, and moving into or out of full-time employment.)
- A 2000 Economic Policy Institute study showed that almost 60 percent of Americans in the lowest income quintile in 1969 were in a higher quintile in 1996, and over 61 percent in the highest income quintile had moved down into a lower income quintile during the same period (Mishel, Bernstein, & Schmitt, 2000).

Others disagree, however, and note that the bulk of the evidence offers little support for the view that mobility is a mitigating factor for inequality (Bradbury & Katz, 2002). First mobility among quintiles comes from those whose incomes are closest to the borders of the quintiles and are likely to experience mobility between income groups with potentially little change in actual income. Second, the bulk of income and wealth reside at the top, so mobility in the lower portions of the distribution is not as consequential. Third, there is less mobility in the United States than in the other nations of the OEDC and the percentage of people who are always poor is greater. Disturbingly, 21.9 percent of children in America live in households facing severe financial distress, higher than any



country in the OECD, while social expenditures as a percentage of GDP were the lowest for any country. The American economy is a shining example of capitalism as it is quite capable of generating fabulous wealth. However, there is no guarantee that this wealth will reach those responsible for its growth. The American economy has been expanding consistently for years, yet the real wages of the average American worker have been falling, with virtually all of the benefits of growth flowing to profits rather than labor (Mishel et al., 2005).

Rattner (2005) complains that American is rapidly moving towards a second Gilded Age in which the benefits of economic success go only to a tiny group at the top, providing them with mega-fortunes. For the rest of America there is only economic stagnation. He notes that much of the justification offered for this disparity focuses on class mobility, the opportunity for anyone to climb the economic ladder. But this argument, he claims, is a chimera. Even if the questionable assertion of mobility is true, it hardly compensates those at the bottom. Rattner observes that economic inequality is no longer a topic for debate. Not since the Great Depression has the share of income been so concentrated at the top. He continues:

Just how dramatic a shift over the past three decades? Economists Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez calculated (using data from the Internal Revenue Service, hardly a hotbed of partisanship) that the share of income going to the top 1 percent of households nearly doubled, to 14.7 percent in 2002, up from a low of 7.7 percent in the early 1970s. By comparison, the income share for the top 1 percent peaked at 19.6 percent in 1928 before beginning its long slide. What is particularly alarming is that at every step up the ladder, the disparity has progressively widened. Over the past 30 years, the share of income garnered by the top 10 percent of Americans has grown by about a third; the share of the top 0.01 percent - the 13,000 or so households with an average income of \$10.8 million in 2002 - has multiplied nearly four times.

What's to blame for this sorry situation? Certainly globalization has taken its toll. Cheaper labor in emerging markets means relentless wage pressure on U.S.

workers. Meanwhile, the fruits of American success in fast-growing services and technology remain available only to the slice of our workforce with the necessary skills. Other factors, such as an increasingly regressive tax code, have also played a role.... These pressures are exacerbated by another evident trend: greater income insecurity, a result of the decreasing percentage of Americans who have certainty of pension and health-care benefits to cushion them against a loss of wages.

The renewed attention to the glacial progress of all but a few has drawn fire from an eclectic mix of those who say it isn't true, those who say it is true but it doesn't matter, and those who say we don't know enough to know whether it's true, so let's not worry about it. But a common thread among these naysayers is the fear that fretting about income disparities could lead to the redistributionist and suffocating slow-growth policies of Old Europe.... Income inequality is now wider in America than anywhere else in the industrialized world and on a par with that of a Third World country. Is this the American Dream?

(Rattner, 2005, p. 90)

(Also see Aghion, 2002; Card & DiNardo, 2002; Gottschalk, 1997; Juhn, Murphy, & Pierce, 1993; and Katz & Autor, 1999)

In agreement, Krugman (2003a) observes that America is becoming a society in which children inherit their parent's socioeconomic status and where the poor tend to stay poor regardless of how hard they work. He states that over the past few decades social mobility has been in serious decline. Coupled with the recent drastic increase in wealth and income inequality, this situation leads one to conclude that America is becoming a class-ridden society. Although thirty years ago America was considered a middle-class society Krugman accuses America's current political leaders of fortifying this new class inequality and of denouncing those who complain as practitioners of class warfare, but also notes that thirty years ago America was a middle-class nation. He notes that between 1973 and 2000 the average income of the bottom 90 percent of Americans fell by 7 percent while the income of the top 1 percent increased by 148 percent, the income of the top 0.1 percent rose 343 percent, and the income of the top 0.01 percent rose by 599 percent. This brings America back to the economic inequality levels of the Gilded Age.

(He points out that these increases exclude capital gains, so the stock market bubble was not a factor.) Krugman points out that the myth of mobility, or pseudo-mobility, has always been greater than the actuality. The first few decades after World War II saw a real opportunity for upward mobility. But now people typically don't move much on the income ladder once they have reached their thirties, and rags to riches stories are becoming exceedingly rare.

Krugman asserts that the Wal-Martization of America, that is, the proliferation of low-wage, dead-end jobs accompanied by higher paying jobs is certainly a part of the problem. But public policy is also important and will play an even bigger role in the future. He points out that if one is benefiting from a class-society one would eliminate the estate tax in order to better pass along the wealth to one's family, reduce tax rates on corporate profits and on dividends and capital gains, create tax shelters for the rich, and reduce tax rates on high incomes, shifting the burden to those with lower incomes. One would also privatize government functions, eliminate unions, and reduce spending for such things as healthcare for the poor or public education, thus reducing economic mobility. And Krugman notes that this is in fact what is happening as he bids goodbye to Horatio Alger and also to the American Dream.

#### Other Factors

A decline in non-wage compensation has also contributed to inequality. While benefit coverage declined in general during the early 2000s and health insurance coverage declined for all wage groups from 2000 through 2002, pension coverage also receded leaving less than half of the workforce covered by employer-provided pensions. The rising trade deficit was also responsible for a major loss of jobs, especially in

manufacturing where over 4 million jobs were lost. Commensurately, the offshoring of white-collar and gold-collar jobs became more prominent over the same period and continues to climb in the number of jobs sourced overseas (Batra, 1993; Buchdahl, 2004; Fingleton, 2003; Hira & Hira, 2005; Mishel et al., 2005; Tonelson, 2002).

In part the skewed distribution of wealth is perpetuated by the passing of wealth within families from generation to generation. This is a key issue because the amount of wealth that one acquires is largely determined by where one begins on the wealth ladder. It is difficult for middle- and lower-income families to accumulate sufficient wealth, and those with little wealth can be financially devastated by economic setbacks. Of note, 17.6 percent of families had zero or negative net wealth in 2001. Wealth is measured in more than stock ownership, but the distribution of stock wealth is indicative of wealth distribution in general. In 2001, the top 1 percent of stockowners held 33.6 percent of all stocks by value, while the lowest 80 percent of stockholders owned only 10.7 percent of total stock value. The wealthiest 1 percent of households owned \$3.5 million in stocks on average, while the average household in the bottom 40 percent owned an average of \$1,800. 48.1 percent of households owned no stock at all while another 11.8 percent had less than \$5,000 worth, leaving a mere 40.1 percent of all households with at least \$5,000 in stock assets. Therefore, the wealthiest households stand to gain the most when there is growth in the stock market. From 1989 to 2001, the top 10 percent of wealth holders garnered 74.9 percent of the profit from growth in stocks, while the bottom 80 percent gained only 11.1 percent (Mishel et al., 2005).

As mentioned previously, many wealthy people contribute heavily to charity, and many others do not. For example, Bill Gates, the world's richest man, has pledged 95

percent of his wealth to charitable causes ("Microsofty," 2005), while the Walton's, five of the top 10 richest people in America and the inheritors of the Wal-Mart empire, have evidenced little generosity. Just to lend perspective, in 2004 the top ten richest people in America had a combined wealth of \$226.9 billion. The combined wealth of the Fortune 400 richest in America including 313 billionaires, was \$1 trillion (*Forbes 400: Record 313 U.S. billionaires*, 2004). It is very likely that the bulk of this fortune will be passed down to future generations within the respective families.

Finally, while differences in individual human capital is often used to explain roughly 60 percent of the differences in American income (Juster, 1975; Mincer, 1993), the economy is embedded in its society and the reciprocal influence of that society is great (K. Basu, 2000). For example, people do not have equal information, nor are they always rational and free from the influence of their relationships, which makes imperfect the capital market (Aghion & Bolton, 1992).

What, then, is an equitable distribution?

There are many in this old world of ours who hold that things break about even for all of us. I have observed for example that we all get the same amount of ice. The rich get it in the summertime and the poor get it in the winter.

Bat Masterson as quoted in Wonnacott (1979, p. 666)

Wonnacott and Wonnacott (1979) suggest that the possibilities lie among the distribution that results from the free play of the marketplace, a completely equal distribution of income, or some compromise between the two. They note that free markets will, even when perfectly competitive, efficiently produce in a way that maximizes total income. This efficiency, however, only maximizes income and production; it does not divide income in an equitable way. Income is typically maximized for those who have the income to pay for it. Complete income equality, on the other

hand, seems hardly attainable. They point out that considerations of equity rarely lead to complete equality, because, strangely, this also leads to inequalities. For example, should little babies or very old or infirm people be required to work the same way that a healthy adult does? Wonnacott and Wonnacott suggest that the best course is a compromise between absolute equality and the free market. One example of this compromise is the notion that the race, if one may call it that, should be fair. Nobody should begin the race handicapped because they are a minority or the child of parents who are not influential. Everyone should have the right to an equal start.

Bradbury and Katz (2002) illustrate this point by asking the reader to imagine two different economies. They suggest that both of these economies are experiencing increasing inequality, but differ in how inequality manifests over time for individual families. In the first economy the broad income inequality is merely a factor of chance. Some people win the lottery, others get sick; some farmers have good weather, others bad. In any case, random events determine income and this income varies from year to year. In an economy such as this mobility is likely to be very high and variations in luck will, over the long run, provide families with roughly equal lifetime incomes.

The second economy also has wide income inequality; however, rather than being relegated to the caprice of chance, the differences in incomes are permanent. There is no economic mobility. This may be due to social discrimination; or the society might enforce a class system; or talent, motivation to work hard, and-or access to a high-quality education or a high paying job persist only within certain families. But in this economy, regardless of the specific cause, the inequality will increase over time, providing families at the top with both large and growing advantages over those at the bottom.

Bradbury and Katz suggest that the increasing inequality experienced in the United States since the early 1970s has not been accompanied by increasing mobility and that lifetime incomes will grow increasingly unequal. They note that some consider a growing gap between the top and bottom acceptable so long as everyone's income is rising in real terms. But they also argue that people often judge their well-being by comparison with others, making relative improvement more important than absolute improvement beyond a basic.

Vilfredo Pareto (1848 – 1923) was the first to formally introduce the observation that the wealth and income of many nations approximated an 80-20 distribution (Aruka, 2001). That is 20 percent of the people have 80 percent of the wealth or income. Since that time this observation has been used to establish this disparity as what people should expect and as what is normal. However, if one were to ask most people their idea of what normally distributed wealth should be they would likely state that some people would be poor and some rich, but most would be in the middle. This is consistent with what statisticians and other scientists observe in nature and in natural systems. For example, people's height approximates a bell curve; some are very short, some are very tall, but most are somewhere in the middle. Over time this observation of natural systems came to be represented in the standard normal curve, which is used to compare results obtained in scientific research against what would happen "normally" in most situations (J. Mandel, 1964; Patel & Read, 2006). A standard normal curve is described by a curve with a standard deviation of 1 and the mean, median, and mode occurring at the same point.

As noted earlier, the Gini is configured to represent absolute equality in income or wealth, extreme socialism, as a diagonal line bisecting the graph. Absolute inequality, extreme capitalism, is depicted by a 90 degree angle to the right of the graph. And finally the current state is depicted as a Lorenz curve lying between extreme socialism and extreme capitalism, as in Figure 26:

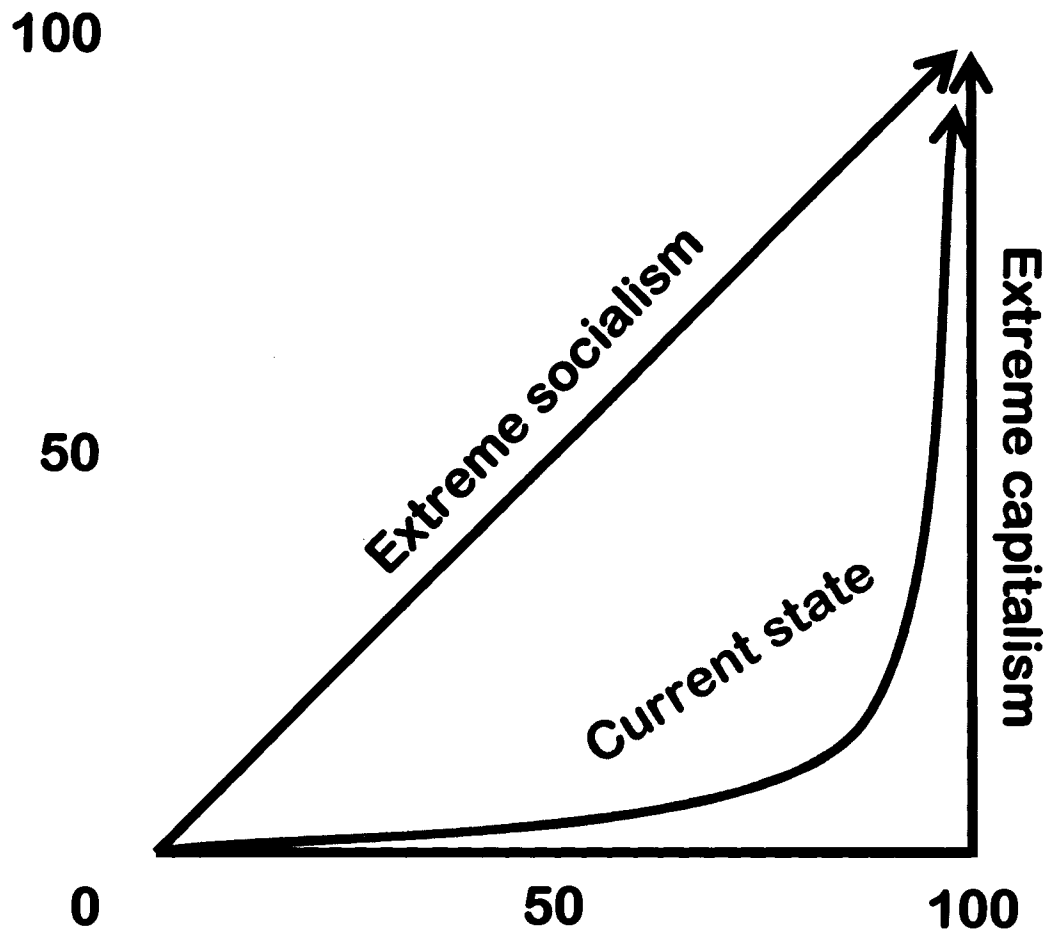


Figure 26. Extremes of wealth distribution versus the current state.

In the resources I have researched it is strongly implied, if not outright stated, that the normal economic state lies along some iteration of the Lorenz curve situated between



extreme socialism and extreme capitalism. This, I believe, is a fallacious assumption. And although I have not found an instance of the standard normal curve being applied to the Gini, I believe that the cumulative standard normal curve so applied is the most accurate measure of normalcy. This is illustrated in Figure 27:

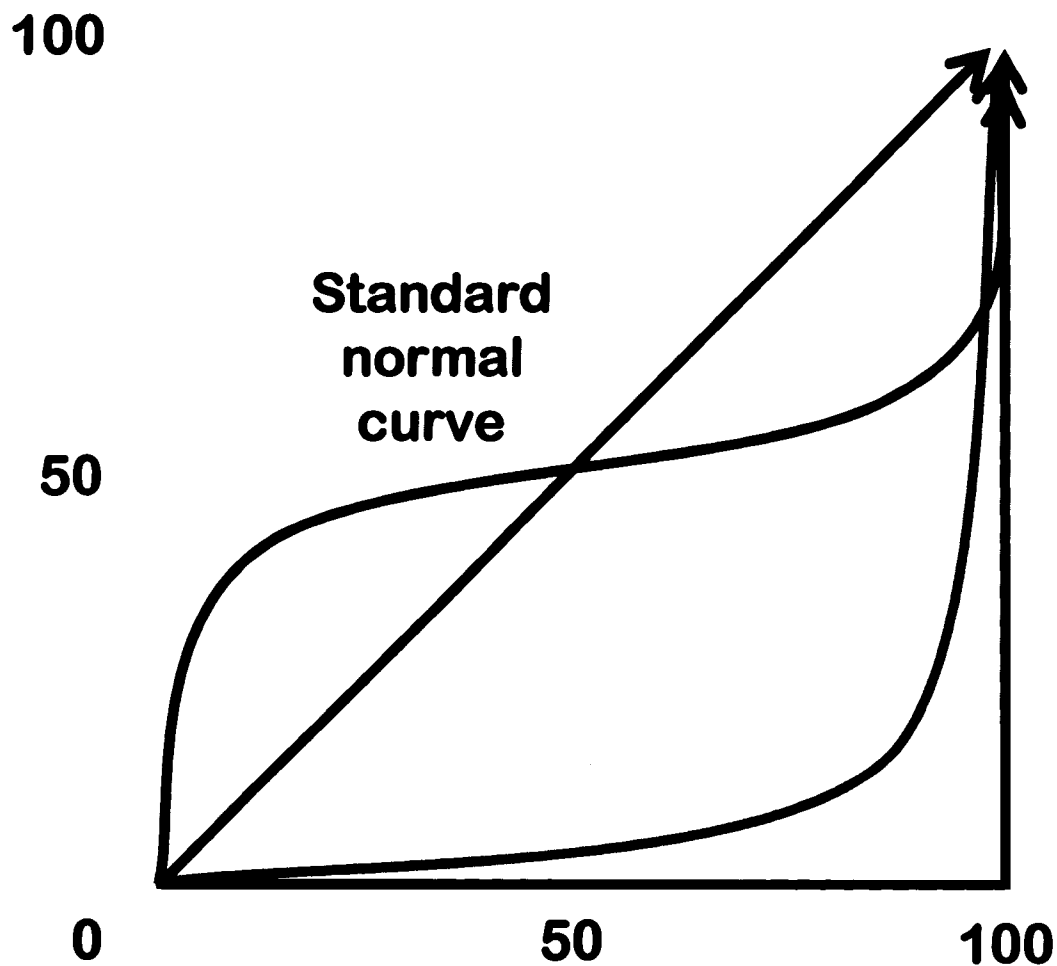


Figure 27. Cumulative standard normal curve superimposed on wealth distribution curves.

The cumulative standard normal curve would appear as the green arrow in the above graph. The cumulative aspect of the standard normal curve is used as the other

parameters on the Gini are cumulative as well. If this application is correct, and I currently have no information that would contradict it, it radically alters what should be considered normal in this context. In addition, because wealth is so concentrated to the right of this graph it may well be that the act of changing the Lorenz curve at the upper end to match the cumulative standard normal curve would cause the rest of the Lorenz curve to approximate the cumulative standard normal curve. I realize that in this observation I depart from conventional economic wisdom, as far as I have been exposed to it. But to me the notion seems appropriate and convincing. On the Lorenz curve as it is applied to the Gini there is a disconcerting disparity between the median and the mean. Axiomatically, however, the cumulative standard normal curve would have normal variability and a single locale for the median and the mean, rather than the disparity seen in the Lorenz curve, as illustrated in the next figure. In other words, it would more truly define average.

As noted before, socialism and capitalism have mirror-like failings in the creation of wealth and its equitable distribution. But rather than socialism, capitalism, or some chimera in between; the cumulative standard normal curve could define a new “normalism,” or that benchmark for which Americans should aspire. Unfortunately, according to many, economics has performed rather poorly in its overall ability to predict America’s economic behavior, and often builds its foundations with assumptions that are patently incorrect (Keen, 2001; Omerod, 1997, 2000, 2006). When imperfections in the economy are found they are often used to offer a patina of respectability, if not an outright excuse, for economic inequality rather than to inspire a prescription for change (Champekowne, 1953; Kuznets, 1979; Landes, 1999; Loury, 1981; Malthus, 1986;

Pareto, 1991). Perhaps, though, the real purpose of economic study is to clarify how America should behave in order to have a vital and long-lasting democratic economy, one that provides a level playing field for everyone.

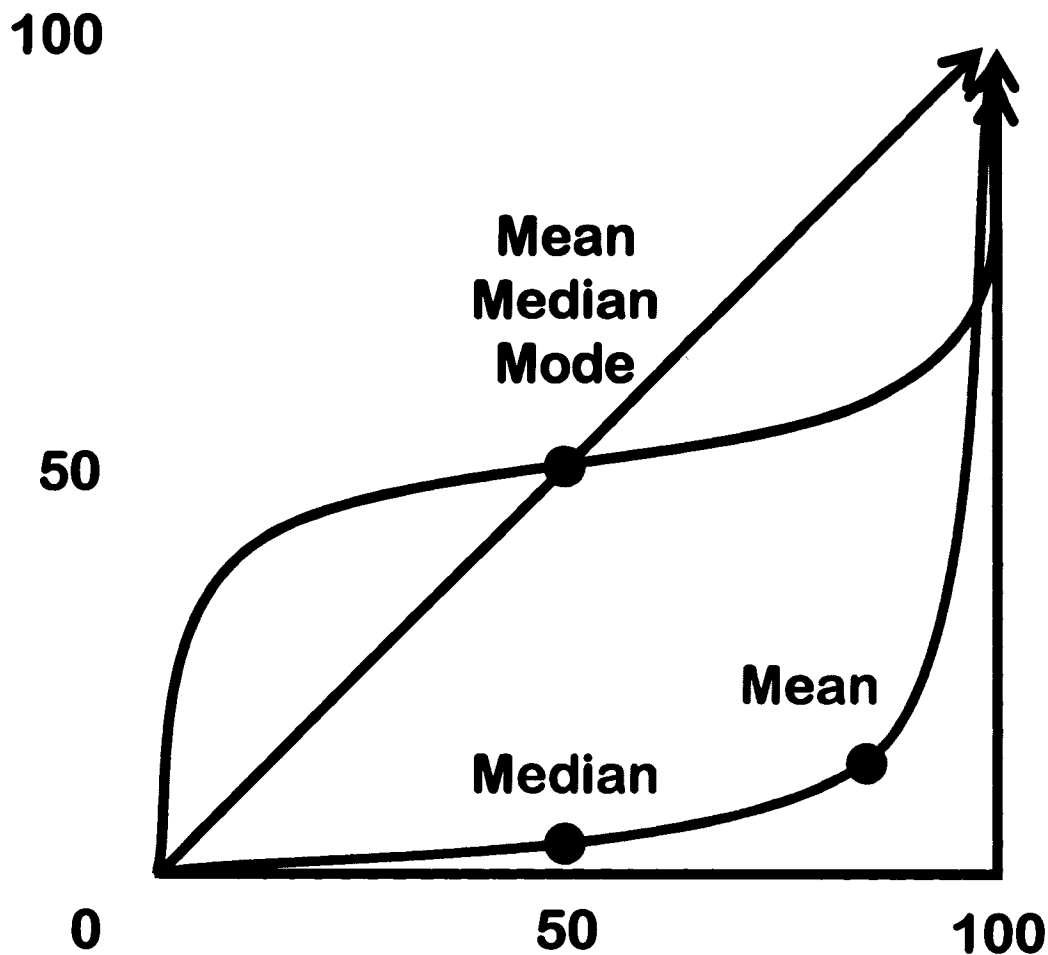


Figure 28. Cumulative standard normal curve superimposed on current wealth distribution with mean, median, and mode indicated.

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So often Americans are handed the party line; told in seminars, on TV, in books, and by their churches that if they will only persevere, work hard, get smart, and behave themselves that they will have as much chance of prospering as anyone else who has triumphed in the American economy. But the mere fact that America's economic distribution is described by a Lorenz curve begs these propositions to reveal themselves for what they truly are – illusions fashioned to keep people motivated and distracted while maintaining the status quo (T. Hartmann, 2002; T. Hartmann & Miller, 2006; Hedges, 2007; Martin, 2005; K. Phillips, 2006; J. B. Schor, 1993; Warren & Tyagi, 2003).

The field on which the American people play out their lives is, apparently, far more tilted toward those who already have the advantage. For better or for worse, real success is all too often determined by one's birth and one's social capital (W. Baker, 2000; R. Cross & Parker, 2004; Laird, 2006; Lin, 2001), giving credence to the popular idea that it is not what one knows, but who one knows that makes all the difference.

Being a moral person, working hard, persevering, and having intelligence may be necessary for economic success, but it is very often not sufficient. And in some cases, it may not even be necessary (K. Kelley, 2004; Minutaglio, 2001; Phillips, 2002, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, there are key problems that seem to have a strong potential for negatively affecting America's economic well-being. Besides the problems already addressed involving inequality; healthcare, energy cost and availability, military expenditure and the cost of war, the potential collapse of social security and Medicare-Medicaid, national and household debt, and poverty will likely have a detrimental effect on everyone in America, not just the middle class.

### *Energy Use*

Phillips (2006) observes that just as Holland's empire relied on water and wood, and just as the British Empire relied on coal, the American empire is dependent on oil. Eventually the English were able to supersede the Dutch through the use of coal, which was abundant and more efficient than wood; and America was able to do the same to the English through their use of petroleum. However, he contends that both the Dutch and the English lost their empires because, to an important degree, they were dependent on an energy source that was at one time cheap and available but eventually became more expensive and less available. To an important degree their empires became imperiled because they refused to change to a more efficient and available resource.

Phillips observes that the United States is now at a very similar crossroads. The American oil reserves are now at risk and the United States seems to have developed a very unhealthy dependence on foreign oil. According to many this dependence, and a

doctrine of “last man standing,” has seriously depleted America’s human and material capital through fighting wars over oil and maintaining a petroleum infrastructure that is greatly damaging the environment. Unfortunately, the peak of oil production has already been reached for most oil rich countries. And this peak will likely happen very soon for every nation, if it has not already. This peak in production, named Hubbert’s Peak, occurs when the petroleum in the earth becomes more difficult to retrieve – to the point that the remaining oil will become more and more costly to extract. When extracting a barrel of oil requires the same or more energy that it contains, oil extraction will no longer be economically feasible. And although there are a few that debate the point (P. W. Huber & Mills, 2005), since the early days of oil production the acceleration towards Hubbert’s Peak has been breathtaking and seems to represent yet another unsustainable spike (Campbell, 2005; W. R. Clark, 2005; Darley, 2004; Deffeyes, 2003, 2005; Fox, 2006; Grant, 2005; Heinberg, 2004, 2005; Hiro, 2007; Klare, 2002, 2004; Kunstler, 2006; Learsy, 2005; Leeb & Strathy, 2006; J. Leggett, 2005; Mast, 2005; Mauqeri, 2006; McKillop & Newman, 2005; "Peak America - is our time up?," 2005; Princen, 2001; P. Roberts, 2005; Ruppert, 2004; Simmons, 2005; Sweet, 2006; Tertzakian, 2006; Webb & Morrison, 2002).

### *Healthcare*

Given the potential mental, emotional, and physical trauma that can occur as a result of environmental degradation, overwork, overconsumption, social upheaval, stress, and unhappiness it would seem reasonable that Americans would be afforded the best medical care possible at a price that everyone could afford. Sadly, this is not the case.

A recent article by the editors of AARP Magazine reads:

The fastest-growing item in this year's \$2.8 trillion federal budget is the \$249 billion we pay for interest on the national debt. That figure has grown 35 percent since 2005. With the prospect of budget deficits for years to come, these skyrocketing interest costs reflect the sad state of government in Washington in 2007. The system is broken and drastically out of balance.... Budget deficits, trade deficits, a savings deficit, healthcare costs increasing twice as fast as inflation, and rising numbers of people losing pension coverage and health insurance.... Americans are facing the likelihood that they will outlive whatever savings they have accumulated....

Half of the country's workers lack pensions or aren't adequately saving for retirement. Sixteen percent of the national economy is consumed by healthcare. People over 65 occupy 40 percent of hospitals' acute care beds, spend 50 percent of U.S. healthcare dollars and buy 25 percent of prescription drugs. The number of people without health insurance has grown to 46.6 million.

The federal budget deficit has exploded since 2001; the nation's overall indebtedness and dependence on overseas financiers and energy are approaching a dangerous breaking point; and the cost of the nation's losing battle for affordable healthcare accelerates. And for the first time since the Depression, Americans are spending more than they earn.

The combined costs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid – the foundations of health and economic security for older Americans – are on track to grow from \$1.1 trillion in 2006 to \$2.27 trillion in 2016. At that rate, funds set aside for Social security will be exhausted in four decades – within the life span of half of today's boomers. Medicare's finances are even more precarious; the program's trust funds could vanish within a decade.... [and] there is the deficit of knowledge about the future that older Americans face.... Most boomers do not know the actual cost of nursing homes (\$74,000 a year on average) or professional care (\$35,000 a year) and believe mistakenly that Medicare covers most long-term healthcare costs. It doesn't.

Another dynamic is the inefficiency of the healthcare system. Compared to other industrial nations, all of which have government-financed systems, the per capita health spending in the United States (\$6,102) is about twice as high.... Yet our life expectancy is lower... and our infant mortality rate is higher.... Still, any attempt to effect change has been derailed.

("Divided we fail," 2007, pp. 3 - 5)

A summary of the literature reviewed would include the following:

- The United States is the only nation among the developed countries to refuse universal healthcare to its citizens, even though universal healthcare would be cheaper and better, providing care for all.
- The healthcare in America is the most expensive of any place in the world but it ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in quality compared to other nations.
- Nearly 50 million Americans are without health insurance, many of them children.
- People without health insurance and who cannot afford healthcare are guaranteed basic care at hospital emergency rooms. However, this is the most expensive alternative and the costs are passed on to those who can pay. In essence, this is already a very expensive form of socialized medicine. As a result many hospitals are shutting down their emergency rooms because they have become bogged down with providing non-emergency care to people without health insurance and are unable to properly treat emergency cases.
- There is strong effort in government to privatize healthcare. But privatized healthcare would be more expensive, would deprive even more people of the care they need, and would cheat many who have already paid a great deal of their earnings in taxes for Medicare and Medicaid.
- Business in America is suffering under the weight of providing health insurance to employees, causing staff reductions, lower wages, offshored production, and cuts in employee benefits.



- The cost of universal healthcare to the citizen would be less in increased taxes, if taxes were increased, than what one pays already in healthcare cost and insurance.
- The cost of healthcare, for those who can afford it, has become one of the largest household expenses, equal to housing and far exceeding inflation. Many are simply forced into bankruptcy if serious illness strikes their family.
- National healthcare could reduce the liability of doctors and promote preventive care rather than treating after the fact and expensive but unnecessary test procedures. Research on stem cell therapy and other less expensive and more effective methods would be supported rather than inhibited because of special interests.
- On average families spend as much on healthcare as they do on housing.
- Even when people can more than afford medical care, as in the case of the wealthy, on average they are afforded only 50 percent of the healthcare they need.
- Americans have become virtually addicted to the products of a pharmaceutical industry that is afforded special protection and aid from the government at the expense of the consumer.
- The rich live longer and are healthier, in general, than the poor.
- The poor have difficulty accessing healthcare and often go untreated.
- The untreated or poorly treated diseases of the poor could become drug resistant and epidemic, affecting everyone.
- Only 10 percent of America's medical research and development is dedicated to the problems that affect 90 percent of the poor.
- America's newborn baby survival rate ranks second to last among developed nations.

- People in America are becoming obese, too often eat poor quality fast food, are overly stressed and depressed, and are less protected by a Food and Drug Administration that is compromised by government pressure and special interests. (See Abramson, 2005; Angell, 2004; Ashton & Laura, 1999; Dean Baker, 2006; D. L. Bartlett & Steele, 2004; Blazer, 2005; D. Brown, 2006a; Daniel Callahan, 2002; Carrington & Jones, 2006; Counihan, 2002; Gretg Critser, 2003; Greg Critser, 2005; Cutler, 2004; Daly III, Oblak, Seifert, & Shellenberger, 2002; Derickson, 2005; Farmer, 2003; Franken, 2003, 2005; W. H. Frey, Abresch, & Yeasting, 2001; Goozner, 2004; G. Harris, 2006; Hawthorne, 2005; Kassirer, 2005; Kawachi & Kennedy, 2002; M. Marmot & Wilkinson, 2001; Max, 2003b; McLellan, 2002; Monroe & Jacobs, 2005; Moynihan & Cassels, 2005; Nestle, 2002; R. O'Connor, 2005; Quadagno, 2005; Schlosser, 2001; Schlosser & Wilson, 2006; Sered & Fernandopulle, 2005; M. Simon, 2006; Spurlock, 2004, 2005; P. Stevens, 2004; Volpe, 2005; and Zwillich, 2004)

Also see:

[http://search.who.int/search?ie=utf8&site=default\\_collection&client=WHO&proxystylesheet=WHO&output=xml\\_no\\_dtd&oe=utf8&q=10%2F90&Search=Search&sitesearch;](http://search.who.int/search?ie=utf8&site=default_collection&client=WHO&proxystylesheet=WHO&output=xml_no_dtd&oe=utf8&q=10%2F90&Search=Search&sitesearch;)  
<http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=22069>, <http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/59/18906/prINTER>; <http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/60/19674/prINTER>, <http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/60/19923/prINTER>;  
<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines06/0418-09.htm>;  
<http://www.alternet.org/envirohealth/37024/>;  
and <http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/2628/>

Not only does healthcare in America appear to be in crisis, placing those who cannot access or afford it at risk and diminishing human capital, it also seems to be exacerbating debt at both the individual and national level.

### *Individual and Household Debt*

A man in debt is so far a slave.

Ralph Waldo Emerson found at  
<http://www.geocities.com/~spanoudi/topic-d1.html#debt>.

The other side of the asset coin, as noted in the discussion on inequality, is debt (Feighan & King, 2002). In 2003 household debt, as a share of assets, averaged 18 percent and debt burden continued to disproportionately plague lower-income families, although it was clearly a factor for middle-income families as well. 16 percent of households in the \$20,000 - \$39,999 range were spending over 40 percent of their income simply servicing their debt. Also, these households increasingly acquire money and loans from predatory institutions such as check-cashing centers and pawn shops (Mishel et al., 2005; Mishel et al., 2004). As of 2007, these trends had worsened (*Federal Reserve statistical release: Flow of funds accounts of the United States: Flows and outstandings fourth quarter 2006*, 2007).

Part of the problem for both middle- and lower-income families is credit card debt (Karger, 2005). The 1998 Survey of Consumer Finances (Kennickell, Starr-McCluer, & Surette, 1998) indicates that 44.1 percent of all households have unpaid credit card debt with debt-to-income ratios increased from 12.7 to 14.5 between 1989 and 1998. But by 2006 home refinancing to cover debt, credit abuse, hidden and predatory fees, and reduced employment, among others, had pushed household debt in America beyond

household income (Cooper & Madigan, 2003; Coy, 2003; Coy, Timmons, Grow, Welch, & McNamee, 2002; Kadlec, 2006; Lim & Benjamin, 2001; Thornton, 2003). Sullivan (1989; 2000) emphasizes that, unlike other forms of consumer credit, credit card debt can incur without the debtor fully realizing it and the threshold for using credit cards seems lower than for other types of purchases. Credit card use seems often to be irrational, hitting young people hardest, and characterized first by denial and later by regret (Calder, 1999; Carpenter, 2001; Christie, Munro, & Rettig, 2001; Chucala, 2002; Susan Cole, 2002; *Credit card noose still tight: Survey finds card issuers are quicker to penalize consumers with higher rates and higher late fees*, 2003; Dugas, 2001; D. S. Evans & Schmalensee, 2005; R. A. Henry, Weber, & Yarbrough, 2001; M. Lewis, 2002; Lim, 2002; Lords, 2001; Loyal, 2002; Manning, 2000; "The money report: Tip sheet: Grads must learn how to manage debt," 2002; Sherry, 2003; S. Stern, 2002; *U.S. behind on credit cards: Delinquencies hit record high*, 2004; Wenske, 2000, 2001; *Working class households and the burden of debt*, 2000).

For almost all families the increase in credit card use can be accounted for by the aspirational gap which is exacerbated by an elevation in buying norms that exceeds rising incomes, and to cultural shifts that raise the importance of consumption in defining personal identity (Chien & Devaney, 2001; J. B. Schor, 1999). According to Schor, the upscaling of middle class aspirations has been facilitated by easy credit. She also notes that the increased working hours of the middle class have created the need to buy goods and services that were previously unnecessary, such as valet service, catering, professional house cleaning, and childcare. In addition some families use credit cards to pay household expenses, which can be very risky (Castellani & DeVaney, 2001). But for

those who have suddenly lost their jobs, suffered severe illness, or have recently become divorced a credit card is often seen as a temporary lifeline. Unfortunately it is often a line that is not long enough.

Sadly, in 2001 personal bankruptcy, one of the best indicators of American's perilous debt, reached a record high and likely will continue to climb (Mishel et al., 2005; Yeoman, 2006). However, this relief valve is coming under attack.

Warren (2004a) comments:

With consumer debt higher than ever, many thousands of middle class families face financial disaster. Home mortgage foreclosures, car repossessions, and credit card defaults are all at record levels. Last year alone, 9 million families entered credit counseling in an effort to straighten out their finances, and 1.6 million just gave up and filed for bankruptcy. Congress's response? The House of Representatives decided it was time to try once more to push a bankruptcy bill that credit industry lobbyists have been peddling since 1997, a bill designed to boost profits for consumer lenders by making it tougher for troubled families to get any relief in bankruptcy....

A well-financed lobbying effort has reduced it to a tasty sound bite: People should repay their debts if they can. The problem, of course, is that the sound bite deliberately obscures the reality. The biggest problem is not people who can repay, it is people who are desperately trying to repay and who can't make it....

If this bill passed, who would pay the price? First, families with children. Today, people with children at home are nearly three times more likely to file for bankruptcy.... Among older Americans, the most likely filers are those who cannot pay for prescription drugs or meet other medical costs....

If American families were simply on a spending spree, perhaps the fact that millions are in trouble with debt should be treated as little more than their just desserts. But the data are irrefutable: families are in financial trouble for the most basic reasons. Among those who have filed for bankruptcy, two-thirds have suffered a job loss – that means last year alone 1.1 million families walked into the bankruptcy courts after mom or dad (or both) was laid off, downsized, or otherwise put out of work. Lack of health insurance is also taking its toll. About 800,000 of the families in bankruptcy have had serious medical problems.... About 160,000 people filed for bankruptcy after the family broke apart, a condition that fell disproportionately on women trying to raise their children. Altogether, more than 90 percent of the families fell into one or more of these three categories - job loss, medical problems or family break up.... In short,

families are heading to bankruptcy when their incomes and debts get badly out of balance following a serious economic disruption.

Real abuses, however, escape attention in this legislation. Despite all the provisions to make personal bankruptcy more difficult, the amendments were carefully tailored to preserve loopholes for corporate executives because they have “business debts” instead of “consumer debts.” Similarly, provisions to protect multimillion dollar homes in Texas, Florida, and other states remain virtually intact. Special exemptions for the rich remain because they rarely owe credit card debt, while the bill zeroes in on ordinary, wage-earning families.

This bill treats bankruptcy as something debtors alone create; creditors are treated as innocent victims. Last year, the credit industry mailed five billion credit card solicitations, but the bill imposes not a single new constraint on the credit industry. Instead, the House has embraced a bill that is widely described as “a creditor’s wish list,”.... What gives this bill renewed momentum at a time when tens of millions of families are out of work and have no health insurance? The financial services industry has pressed a well-funded lobbying effort, giving more money in Washington than almost any other interest group.... Executives from credit card giant MBNA were the single largest contributors to George Bush’s presidential campaign, and he... has announced his unwavering support for the bill.

In a brazen abuse of the language, the bill has been named a “reform” act. Its supporters claim that it will help women, support families, and cut abuse. In fact, this bill is designed to do just one thing: Squeeze middle class families a little harder to increase the profits for already-profitable consumer lenders.

(Warren, 2004a)

(Also see Nunez & Rosenthal, 2002)

In her book, *The Fragile Middle Class: Americans in Debt*, Sullivan (2000)

comments on the positive trend in the number of bankruptcies filed in America and states that large numbers of middle class Americans are now at risk for bankruptcy. These individuals, Sullivan notes, do not fit the stigmatized and stereotypical bankruptcy applicant who is both somewhat stupid and irresponsible, or someone who deliberately runs up credit card debt with the hope of protecting his or her ill-gotten assets without repayment. Rather, this population is quite ordinary. In terms of race, gender, ethnicity, education, age, and occupation these people are representative of a normal cross-section of middle class America. According to Sullivan, these people are buffeted by financial,

health, and occupational challenges that are largely beyond their control, their bankruptcies demonstrating a desperate attempt to hang on to their fragile position in the middle class. In other words, bankruptcy can now happen to almost anyone. This is due, in part, to the fact that the notion of widespread prosperity has been greatly exaggerated. In the 1980's and 1990's the middle class was in a more precarious and less prosperous position than has been generally believed (J. B. Schor, 1999), with economic gain going disproportionately to the top 20 percent of the income distribution and the bottom 80 percent experiencing stagnation in net worth and income accompanied by increasing debt. In addition, Wolff (2000b) notes that most households have had little reserve during this time and are saving very little. Most middle-income households can sustain their standard of living for a mere 2.2 months if they were to lose their income stream, while the top 20 percent in the income distribution can sustain their standard of living for an average of 25.2 months.

Therefore, the tide in consumer debt apparently continues to rise and to say that people in the United States are already awash in debt seems to be no overstatement. If Americans continue the flood of borrowing to support a lifestyle they can no longer afford, if they ever could, there will most likely be a massive default on loans and credit regardless of new bankruptcy laws, causing severe damage to America's financial institutions and the economy. With no pun intended, America seems to be living on borrowed time and its dependence on easy credit is exacerbating the already growing problem of poverty (Bennett, 2006; Boss, 2006; Caplow, Hicks, & Wattenberg, 2001; de Graaf, 1998, 2003; Del Giudice, 2006; Hamilton & Denniss, 2006; Kasser, 2002; Lahart, 2003; Laurier, 2004; J. B. Schor, 1999; T. A. Sullivan et al., 2000). (Also see

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/Releases/housedebt/>. And for a romp through what the rich consider downsizing to a middle class lifestyle in rural America to be, see

[http://realestate.aol.com/article/\\_a/150-cheap-places-to-live/20060713184809990001](http://realestate.aol.com/article/_a/150-cheap-places-to-live/20060713184809990001).

Laugh or cry, it's a fun read.)

### *Poverty*

In America poverty is rising while the number of millionaires grows ("Ever-rising hunger and homelessness," 2003; P. Harris, 2006; Sahadi, 2003). Though the United States is the wealthiest among nations, America seems to be suffering from increasing poverty in the midst of great prosperity. Despite the fact that per capita income grew 66 percent from 1973 to 2000, those living below the poverty threshold also grew as a percent of the population. In 2002 more than 34.6 million Americans faced serious material deprivation (Mishel et al., 2005). Embarrassingly, overall income inequality in America is currently much greater than in all other advanced countries and less than 29 percent of the poor in America are able to escape their economic condition (D. K. Davis, 2002). Although there are fewer Americans on welfare, there are no fewer people in poverty and the education, counseling, and child care resources needed to raise oneself out of poverty are available to only a few (Atkinson, 1999; Polakow, Butler, Deprez, & Kahn, 2004).

This is especially painful for young children, who are experiencing the greatest growth in poverty, as they must live in the midst of a society whose affluence is made evident on a daily basis at home, at play, and at school (Bowles, Gintis, & Groves, 2005; Lareau, 2003; D. Lindsey, 2004; Mishel et al., 2005; Rainwater & Smeeding, 2003). But



it is likely that the poverty statistics underestimate the extent of hardship in the United States. Thresholds used to gauge poverty status, updated only for inflation, were developed over 50 years ago. According the Economic Policy Institute, twice the poverty threshold more closely conforms to a family's ability to meet basic needs. In addition, welfare benefits have fallen steeply and no longer play a countercyclical role against recession. Furthermore, fewer hours are available for the poor to work, leading to lower earnings and less income from the Earned Income Tax Credit. For the poor and near-poor in America the safety net is increasingly filled with gaping holes. The rise in single-mother families, often touted as the primary reason for increased poverty, was only applicable in the 1970's and was a very short-lived factor. The more recent indicators point to population growth, inequality, low wages, unemployment (and in many cases welfare reform without adequate childcare, job training or job availability) as the primary causes of the poverty now being experienced in America (Applebaum, Bernhardt, & Murnane, 2006; Boushey, Brocht, Gundersen, & Bernstein, 2001; Danziger & Haveman, 2002; DeParle, 2004; Ehrenreich, 2001; Hays, 2003; Kazis & Miller, 2001; Krugman, 2002; Mishel et al., 2005; Shipler, 2005; B. Shulman, 2003; W. J. Wilson, 1997).

Sanders (2003) notes that the middle class is the backbone of America and must not be allowed to collapse, but also asks what should be done about the 33 million Americans living in poverty (an increase in 1.3 million since 2001), or the 11 million Americans trying to exist on minimum wage, or the 42 million who are without health insurance, or the 3.5 million homeless, or the 1.3 million of these homeless who are children, or the elderly who cannot afford prescription drugs, or the veterans who are on a waiting list for their healthcare (also see Dreier & Atlas, 2006)? These concerns issue a

challenge to every American, especially to those working in human capital development (Heckman & Krueger, 2005), and ultimately increasing poverty will have detrimental effects on everyone (Farmer, 2003; Rank, 2004). Yet, apparently, there is little being done.

Iceland (2003) observes that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century various politicians have announced that poverty would be eradicated within a short time, only to be proven naïve and very wrong. In part this is because the standard by which poverty is defined has varied over time and place, because many seem to have difficulty in understanding the systemic structural and institutional factors that produce poverty, and because many are confused as to which groups of people represent the poor. For example, not all of the poor, or even most of the poor, are black people living in ghettos, but many believe that this is true. Other common misperceptions include the notion that the poor avoid work or that economic growth will eventually lift people out of poverty. However, fast economic growth by itself is unlikely to move the wages of the lowest-paid workers and the poor often overwork at low-wage jobs that provide no benefits (Iceland, 2003; Mishel et al., 2005, 2006).

Be that as it may, poverty still exists and has far reaching ramifications and is persistent in the face of perception, whether the perception is true or false. And the overall ramifications are insidious. Poverty damages the physical and psychological well-being of the poor; shortens their lifespan, encourages crime, provokes social disorder, and promotes alienation. And, perhaps most importantly, it begets more poverty.

Iceland comments:

Economies thrive in societies with a vibrant middle class. Much of the strong economic growth in the United States in the twentieth century was fueled by the

expansion of consumer markets. As the demand for new products soared, so did technological innovation, productivity, and wages and benefits. Declining levels of poverty contribute to a healthy economy by increasing the number of people who can purchase goods and services; that increase, in turn, stimulates economic growth and raises average standards of living.

(Iceland, 2003, p. 3)

Unfortunately, he continues, with an increase in poverty the reverse is true.

Increasing or persistent poverty over the long term eventually decreases both the size and vitality of the middle class, and damages the economy for all but the very few.

But will America's existing poverty turn out to be a persistent phenomenon?

According to Mishel, as recently as the second half of the 1990s, poverty rates fell sharply, especially for minorities and single-mother families, and incomes rose quickly, not just at the top of the distribution, but across the income spectrum. However, the poverty rate has risen again and real incomes have fallen most quickly for the least well off. From 1995 until 2000 the poverty rate dropped 2.5 percentage points. But from 2000 until 2002 the poverty rate rose 0.8 percentage points, increasing the ranks of the poor by three million. After rising 2.6 percent every year from 1994 until 2000, the real income of low-wage, single-mother families fell 0.8 percent per year from 2000 through 2002.

Although these changes may seem slight, in the same time frame the share of income held by the top 1 percent in the income distribution became the largest since the run-up to the Great Depression and this trend in increasing income and wealth disparity appears to be robust (Mishel et al., 2005; Mishel et al., 2000). In this scenario the demise of the middle class would likely flood the ranks of the poor, make their plight far worse, and virtually demolish the chance of any timely remediation.

In addition, Doyle (2003) contends that more recent methods for assessing the poverty rate are more accurate. Using metrics such as liquid wealth and net worth the

new thresholds for poverty would assign between 20 and 45 percent of Americans as living in poverty, whereas the 2003 official data assesses approximately 12 to 13 percent (also see Moraff, 2006; Venkatesh, 2006).

Another comparison of note is the performance of America against the other 19 countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, similar economies facing the same global conditions regarding investment, trade, technology, and the environment. In 2002, per capita income in America was more than a third greater than the other OECD countries, but the gap is closing. OECD countries are also catching up with and surpassing the United States in output per hour worked. Despite this, the gap between the richest and poorest workers in these countries does not surpass that of America, and are, in fact, lower, with the United States posting the largest Gini ratio of all the OEDC countries.

Reich (2001) argues that there is reason to expect that job cuts at the lower end of the wage scale will get even larger and occur even faster than in the manufacturing sector. In addition, lower-income workers have fewer means of softening the blow of an economic downturn than they had in past recessions. Most have no savings and are more deeply in debt than the last time because inflation-adjusted earnings for this group never truly improved in the 1990's. An influx of immigration and a decline in higher-paying manufacturing jobs combined to keep wages stagnant.

Reich also observes that government will be less helpful this time around. Welfare-to-work programs no longer make sense when work is not available, and those who are no longer eligible for welfare have little else to which they can turn. Even those who still qualify for assistance will find welfare payments in most states worth less than

before. In addition, unemployment insurance is more difficult to obtain and eligibility rules have grown stricter. Fewer than 30 percent of people who become unemployed will receive it, and those who move in and out of employment will frequently face disqualification. Many who do not qualify are part-time workers, temporary workers, the self-employed, and, sadly, many women with young children.

Meanwhile, he points out, budget cuts have curtailed federal programs for job training and low-income housing and state and local governments are hemorrhaging funds so badly that they cannot pick up the slack. Rather than bolstering social services, they're cutting them. Unfortunately, the go-go years of the technology bubble left America woefully unprepared for a deep recession that will likely take large tolls on low-wage workers and the poor. Ironically, in the midst of these troubles the White House, backed by Congress, has conferred its blessing upon large corporations and the rich through generous tax breaks, exactly the opposite of what seems to be needed. Big companies, already reeling from too much capacity, won't be induced to add more. Wealthy households, already spending whatever they want, won't be inspired to spend more. Inevitably it will be the bottom half of the economy who will need the help, and they are most likely to spend whatever extra they get and desperately need whatever the government can give.

### *Social Security*

How to be a good Republican:

1. You have to believe that the nation's current 8-year prosperity was due to the work of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, but yesterday's gasoline prices are all Clinton's fault.

2. You have to believe that those privileged from birth achieve success all on their own.
3. You have to be against all government programs, but expect Social Security checks on time.

Ann Richards

May 15, 2000 – All Social Security funds in the federal surplus must stay where they belong dedicated to Social Security. In my economic plan, more than \$2 trillion of the federal surplus is locked away for Social Security. For years, politicians in both parties have dipped into the trust fund to pay for more spending. And I will stop it.

March 3, 2001 – We're going to keep the promise of Social Security and keep the government from raiding the Social Security surplus.

April 28, 2005 – We've got a lot of debt out there, a lot of unfunded liabilities.... Our system here is called pay-as-you-go. You pay into the system through your payroll taxes, and the government spends it. It spends the money on the current retirees, and with the money left over, it funds other government programs. And all that's left behind is file cabinets full of IOUs [Treasury bonds]....

April 28, 2005 – Any reform of Social Security must replace the empty promises being made to younger workers with real assets, real money. I know some Americans have reservations about investing in the stock market, so I propose that one investment option consist entirely of Treasury bonds, which are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government.

George W. Bush

Found at <http://zfacts.com/p/481.html>

During the Regan presidency Social Security was hotly debated and made a strong showing in many periodicals including the cover article in the May 24, 1982 issue of Time. Although President Regan viewed Social Security as a Ponzi scheme, poorly administered and an unnecessary drag on the economy, the issue was, as the most popular social program in history, far too off limits in congress for any significant changes to be made. Recently, however, Social Security has resurfaced as both a political football and a sacred cow as George W. Bush made Social Security reform a central issue, although unsuccessfully, for his second term.

While there is strong contemporary debate as to whether Social Security is truly in crisis and in need of radical reform (N. J. Altman, 2005; Beland, 2005; A. Bernstein, 2005; Borrus, 2005; Franken, 2005; Gleckman, 2005; Hudson, 2005; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Krugman, 2003b; Tumulty & Roston, 2005), there seems to be little doubt, upon review of America's current economic dilemmas, that Social Security stands out as a particularly thorny issue and deserves both scrutiny of cause and remedy. Recently much attention has been given to the "pig-in-the-python" nature of the baby boomers (Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Krugman, 2003b; Parker, 2002; Pink, 2001; Sterling & Waite, 1998; Wheelan, 2002; Wright, 1981). While this largest generation in history was younger and paying lots of taxes there were significant surpluses generated for Social Security. However, with the aging of the boomers there is the threat that the generation that created the surpluses will become the generation that taps Social Security out when it retires. Although the retirement of this particular pig will, apparently, be very problematic (and although President Bush's suggestions for reform may or may not have merit) there appears to be a deeper and more historic cause of Social Security's woes, namely, the long-term theft of Social Security surpluses.

With this in mind, a diagnostic chronology of Social Security's past, present, and potential future would seem useful:

1935 Original Social Security Legislation providing for payments to retired employees age 65 or over covered under the system. Social Security funds were to be kept separate from general revenue funds. Payments made into the system were to be credited to accounts for the individuals who had paid them.

1939 Survivor's benefits added to Social Security.

Minimum retirement age for women decreased from 65 years to 62, with decreased benefits.

- 1961 Minimum retirement age for men decreased from 65 to 62, with decreased benefits.
- 1965 Medicare added to Social Security.
- 1969 Johnson administration begins counting Social Security finds in the federal budget.
- 1974 With passage of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, Congress adopts a process for developing budget goals that officially count Social Security as part of the unified budget.
- 1976-1982 Small annual deficits occur in the Social Security fund.
- 1982 Greenspan National Commission recommends that the operations of the Social Security trust fund be removed from the unified budget, restoring its pre-1969 status.
- Greenspan Commission recommends legislation that would increase Social Security payroll taxes in order to build up the fund in preparation for the baby-boomer retirement surge beginning in 2010.
- 1983 Recommendations of Greenspan Commission that Social Security taxes be raised are enacted into law to ensure solvency of the reserve fund after 2010. Revenue from the Social Security payroll tax is to be used for Social Security and for Social Security alone.
- 1983-1988 Gradual increase in annual Social Security surpluses.
- 1989 Social Security surplus exceeds \$50 billion for the first time, and government use of Social Security money for non-Social Security purposes begins to become a controversial political issue.
- 1990 Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan proposes that Social Security taxes be cut, and the “pay-as-you-go” system be restored so that there will be no surplus funds to tempt poaching politicians.
- The Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 becomes law. It removes the income and outgo of the Social Security trust fund from all calculations of the federal budget, including the budget deficit or surplus. This law made it illegal to include Social Security in the federal budget or to use it in calculating budget deficits or surpluses.
- 1999 President Clinton announces the first true budget surplus (excluding Social Security) in 40 years. The on-budget surplus was \$1.9 billion.



- 2000 Second Clinton true budget surplus. The government ran an \$86.6 billion on-budget surplus.
- 2001 President George W. Bush pushes through a \$1.35 trillion ten-year tax cut based on his assertion that the government has massive amounts of surplus money, not counting the Social Security surplus.
- The on-budget deficit for President Bush's first year in office is \$33.5 billion.
- 2002 The on-budget deficit soars to \$261.7 billion during Bush's second year in office.
- 2003 President George W. Bush pushes through an additional tax cut of \$350 billion despite a petition against it signed by more than 400 of the nation's top economists, including 10 winners of the Nobel Prize in economics.
- The Bush administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) releases a report in July acknowledging the ballooning deficit. The report estimates a unified budget deficit of \$455 billion for fiscal year 2003. This translates into an estimated on-budget deficit of more than \$600 billion for the year.
- 2010 The baby-boom generation will begin to retire causing a surge in Social Security benefit payments.
- 2018 Social Security benefits are expected to exceed Social Security revenue, and from that point on there will be growing annual budget deficits in the Social Security trust fund.
- 2042 The Social Security trust fund is expected to go broke, even if the government has repaid all the funds it has borrowed from Social Security over the decades. This means that, although the Social Security program will continue to receive revenue, the revenue will not be enough to cover the benefits due, and there will be no reserves left in the trust fund, not even in the form of government IOU's. It is estimated that the revenue during 2042 would be enough to pay approximately 72 percent of the benefits due that year. The situation would then deteriorate annually from that point on.

(A. W. Smith, 2004, pp. xi - xiv)

In March of 2004 Allen Greenspan announced that cutbacks should be made in Social Security benefits due to the lack of sufficient funding to meet future needs (R. Miller, 2004). Accused of being a partisan foe of the elderly for advocating these cuts,

Greenspan has, instead, consistently attempted to shore up the system. He was head of the Presidential Commission that created the Social Security Amendments of 1983, providing additional taxes to alleviate the burden of retiring baby boomers in 2010. He also fought, along with Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill, to save social security by funneling nearly half of the surplus, estimated at approximately \$5 trillion over the next five years, into Social Security and Medicare. Both Greenspan and O'Neill were eventually thwarted in their plans in favor of the massive tax cuts initiated by President George W. Bush (Gregg & Rozell, 2004; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Krugman, 2003b; Suskind, 2004). As a result of the ongoing debate over tax cuts and other related issues Paul O'Neill was later fired.

It is more likely that what has been perceived as an attack on Social Security benefits by Chairman Greenspan was rather a last-ditch attempt to raise the visibility of the issues surrounding Social Security, perhaps at his own expense.

However, some continue to admonish other more clearly established Social Security foes by noting that:

The fiscal crisis of Social Security is grossly exaggerated by its political enemies. The trustees project Social Security balances forward for 75 years. Their report uses pessimistic annual growth assumptions of just 1.6 percent. Even so, the 75-year shortfall is projected at just \$3.8 trillion, or just 0.73 percent of gross domestic product over this time. By contrast, the Bush tax cuts equal \$8.7 trillion, or 1.68 percent of GDP over 75 years, according to Peter Orszag of the Brookings Institution, and new proposed tax cuts would push the cost to over \$12 trillion.

If the Bush tax cuts are pared back by less than half, the money can be used to replenish Social Security, and the vaunted "crisis" disappears. Whether to cut Social Security benefits for the 96 percent of Americans in the system or reduce tax cuts for the top 2 percent is, of course, a political choice. But it's one that the Bush Administration would rather not squarely face....

Higher growth rates could also solve the problem. In their 1997 report, the trustees projected that the trust funds would need supplements by 2029. Thanks

to higher growth, last year's report extended that horizon to 2042. With productivity and the economy growing at a faster rate than assumed by the trustees, the year of Social Security insolvency could be pushed out even further to 2050, 2060, or maybe never.

When the President's Committee on Economic Security reported to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935, the committee recommended that once the system matured and more Americans were benefiting, payroll tax receipts should be supplemented by contributions from general revenues. Were it not for the wildly irresponsible permanent tax cuts, which blow a structural hole in the revenue system, this would be the time to add that revenue stream, and there would be ample funds to plug a manageable gap....

(Kuttner, 2004, p. 24)

But even among those who disagree as to when the problem will occur there seems to be many who agree that there will be a problem with the balance of Social Security funds in the near future (Schieber & Shoven, 1999). Because of this the forecasts for Social Security's demise are mitigated primarily by how much the government continues to plunder the account and whether or not, and how much, it chooses to put the money back. And, of course, it is also affected by how quickly the baby boomers retire. Kotlikoff and Burns (2004) assert that in 2030, as 77 million baby boomers enter into old age, walkers will outnumber strollers, that is, there will be twice as many retirees as there are today but only 18 percent more workers. This will create a demographic overload that will force Social Security and Medicare to function with fewer and fewer working taxpayers. They note that if our government continues on the course it has set, America will see skyrocketing tax rates, drastically lower retirement and health benefits, high inflation, a rapidly depreciating dollar, unemployment, and political instability. This coupled with America's apparent delusion regarding the national debt will likely precipitate an unprecedented taxation of the next generation of workers, perpetrating what they call a form of fiscal child abuse.

Some even suggest that Social Security will no longer be available by the time the baby boom generation completely retires. Advocates of private savings accounts, Schieber and Shoven (1999) argue that the public has been duped and that retirees have gotten \$11.4 trillion of unwarranted benefits, noting, among other things, that in the early days of Social Security retirees received orders of magnitude more money than they had paid into the system. However, they also observe that there will be fewer workers in future generations to cover the cost of the people retiring today, rendering the pay-as-you-go system unsustainable.

On the other hand, there are still those who claim that no problem exists, or at least not much of one. They argue that advocates of Social Security reform are merely crying wolf, wishing only to score ideological points, make fortunes on the privatization of Social Security, or take advantage of new and massive taxes that might be allocated to replenish the system. For example, Wall Street would enjoy an influx of approximately \$1.8 trillion in new assets if Social Security were privatized and invested in stocks. But In the opinion of those who oppose reform, privatization offers false promise because of the investment naiveté of most citizens and the instability of the market, therefore only Social Security will offer a guaranteed income (Dean Baker & Weisbrot, 2001; Franken, 2005). Some pundits also argue that additional taxation is unnecessary and that the Social Security system is the most efficient insurance program in the history of the world (Dean Baker & Weisbrot, 2001; Skidmore, 1999; J. White, 2003). Skidmore (1999) argues that the influx of women into the workforce will shore up the dwindling number of contributors, that the economy cannot perform poorly forever, that the numbers aren't that bad to begin with, and that if the United States government has to borrow, it should

borrow from its citizens rather than from foreigners. (This argument, however, does not take into account the data suggesting that life expectancy is increasing, that retirement wealth for most is decreasing, that the dollar is losing value, that huge tax cuts for the wealthy and the government debt have directly and indirectly hurt Social Security, that many jobs are being sent offshore, that the generations following the Baby Boomers are fewer in their number of potential workers, that the jobs they will hold are likely to be, on average, poorer paying, and that paying the unfunded portion of Social Security will require money from somewhere, likely the taxpayer (see [http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/issueguide\\_socialsecurity](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/issueguide_socialsecurity) and <http://www.ctj.org>).

Although the efficiency of the Social Security program may in fact be laudable, if it is left to operate as intended, a strong argument continues to be made that certain alterations may eventually need to be implemented given the current and possible future state of the system – especially as the deficit of funds spirals early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; M. Tanner, 2004).

But at a deeper level, Smith (2004) contends, the criminal behavior seemingly exhibited by the America government regarding its plunder of the Social Security surpluses is difficult to ignore and requires immediate remediation even if the Social Security system may not. He laments that since the passage of the 1983 Social Security amendments the federal government has been engaged in fraud against the American people. The result is that there is currently nothing in the Social Security fund but non-marketable government IOU's, every dollar of revenue in any given year is spent, including surpluses, and people who retired many years ago are being paid with revenues

from this year, while people who retire even 10 years from now will find none of their contributions available. In short, whether or not the Social Security system continues to operate, the American people have been robbed. And, as an ironic consequence, it may be likely that the Social Security system will be privatized. This result would apparently be popular among conservatives, libertarians, and young people who fear that Social Security will not be available to them when they retire. Privatization would offer workers the opportunity to invest in private individual accounts some or all of the money they would normally pay to Social Security (Schieber & Shoven, 1999; M. Tanner, 2004; M. D. Tanner, 2004). The alternatives would include raising taxes, taking on more government debt, selling national assets, moving to a means-tested welfare program that benefits only the poor, or, seemingly the more reasonable, stopping the use of Social Security as an additional revenue source for government spending.

On July 30, 2002 President George W. Bush made the following pledge:

No more easy money for corporate criminals. Just hard time. This law says to every dishonest corporate leader, you'll be exposed and punished. The era of low standards and false profits are over.

As quoted in Smith (2004, p. 1)

When it was discovered that the retirement funds, college funds, and other stock investments that were to support the American Dream had been hijacked by companies such as Enron and World Com, President Bush promised to clean up the fraud in America's corporations, showing no mercy for the wrongdoers. However, the CEO of the largest firm in the world, President Bush, was apparently perpetrating massive illegal fraud against the American people, as had President Bill Clinton and President George H. W. Bush before him.

The Social Security Amendments of 1983, enacted to build a surplus in preparation for the retirement of the baby-boom generation, generated a Social Security surplus of \$9.4 billion in 1985, a \$38.8 billion surplus in 1988, \$56.6 billion in 1990, and \$99.2 billion in 1998. However, in 1998 President Clinton broke the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, which prohibited the commingling of the government's general operating fund with the Social Security fund, by announcing that the government had a surplus of \$69.2 billion, when in fact there was a deficit of over \$30 billion. The announced surplus was the result of combining Social Security surplus with the deficit of the general fund. The American people, who had been told that Social Security taxes would go into a trust fund for future retirement benefits, were quite arguably being lied to. By that time all Social Security taxes were being spent in the same year that they were collected. After benefits were paid, the government spent the remainder on other programs or on tax cuts. Nothing was reserved to pay for future retirement benefits. The money from workers currently paying payroll taxes was and is used to pay for the benefits of retired workers. Generally the taxes paid by workers are already gone by the time they retire. On or around 2010, when baby boomers begin to retire, the fund will likely begin to run deficits. In 2018 the annual benefits are expected to exceed the annual revenue, with a widening deficit in each subsequent year (A. W. Smith, 2004).

According to Smith the government has chosen to perpetrate this fraud by devising a misleading measure called the unified budget. This budget combines the budgets of Social Security and the general fund. By combining the two funds the surplus in Social Security can offset the on-budget deficit and create a surplus in the unified budget. This makes it appear that there is a surplus in the operating budget when there is

really no surplus or even a deficit. When the unified budget showed a \$69 billion surplus in 1998, the on-budget accounts demonstrated a \$30 billion deficit. In 1999 the unified budget booked a surplus of \$124 billion, while the on-budget accounts were very nearly in balance. The surplus in the unified budget was the result of a surplus in Social Security. Yet, on June 26, 2000 President Clinton announced a projected surplus over the next decade of \$1.9 trillion, leading people to believe that the surplus was in the operating budget. Thus, the massive surplus myth was born (Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Krugman, 2003b).

However, when President George W. Bush was elected he continued the deception by proposing tax cuts based on the budget surplus. He noted that the surplus belonged to the American taxpayers and should be returned. But the money did not belong to the American taxpayer or to the American government; it belonged to the Social Security trust fund. Even more unfortunately the nation had just recovered from the massive deficits resulting from President Reagan's tax cuts, which had quadrupled the national debt, and was still facing more than \$5 trillion in unpaid bills.

George W. Bush's father, President George H. W. Bush, had already set the precedent for using Social Security dollars for other purposes. During Bush senior's one term presidency the Social Security fund ran surpluses totaling \$211.7 billion dollars. Every surplus dollar was spent on other government programs, while the average annual on-budget deficit was more than \$286 billion a year. During the first four years of the Reagan administration, the Social Security system ran a \$12.4 billion net deficit. Therefore, only with the advent of Reagan's second term, accompanied by then Vice President George H. W. Bush, was it possible to misappropriate surpluses from Social



Security. Economists note in retrospect that if funds were to be misappropriated, it would likely have served America far better if the money were used to pay down the national debt (R. S. McIntyre, 2003; Suskind, 2004). Unfortunately, this was not to be.

Smith (2004) notes that in an address to a joint session of Congress on February 27, 2001 President George W. Bush asserted that his budget would protect all \$2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus and would allocate the surplus for Social Security alone. On the following day the Office of Management and Budget stated that none of the Social Security or Medicare trust funds would be used for other special initiatives or tax relief. Then Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan teamed up to propose triggers in Bush's proposed tax cuts that would reduce these cuts if the projected surplus, determined when the economy was at the peak of the business cycle and when unemployment was at a 30 year low, proved to be insufficient or even illusory (Suskind, 2004). President Bush rejected this proposal out of hand while securing for the American people a non-Social Security deficit of \$33.4 billion in fiscal year 2001 and a non-Social Security deficit of \$317.5 billion in 2002. This required the government to borrow the entire Social Security surplus (Krugman, 2003b; A. W. Smith, 2004). Future projections more than double the annual deficit of 2002 *without* taking into account the expense of the war against terrorism.

The \$1.35 trillion tax cut in 2001 was followed by an additional \$350 billion tax cut in 2003. At the same time the economy stalled and unemployment rose to 6 percent, with between 2 and 3 million jobs lost. As a remedy to this dire situation President Bush suggested still more tax relief, including the elimination of tax on dividends, and

increasing the national debt ceiling by nearly \$1 trillion, defying the objection of over 400 of the nation's top economists, including 10 Nobel Laureates (A. W. Smith, 2004).

Some argue that Bush was able to achieve his tax cuts because over several decades people have been completely misled regarding Social Security and the use of its funds. During George W. Bush's first term the large tax cuts he enacted were touted by the White House as benefiting the entire tax paying public who were told that they deserved to have the surpluses on their hard-earned taxes returned (Conason, 2003, 2005; Franken, 2003, 2005; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Johnston, 2003; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Picca, 2005; A. W. Smith, 2004).

Smith (2000) observes:

There is no mystery as to where the public got the idea that government has somehow stumbled onto a gigantic windfall of excess money. They have been told this over and over by [government].... The existence of a real budget surplus is in the best interests of both political parties, and the voters love the idea that the government has become so rich that it can give money back to the people. It is like believing in Santa Claus.... But there is no "real" budget surplus in any meaningful sense of the term!

In order to have any credibility, these people must have a way to "prove" that there is a budget surplus. So they take the annual total dollar inflow of funds to the federal government, including the Social Security tax revenue, and subtract from that number the annual total dollar outflow of funds, including the benefits that Social Security is currently paying out. The net result from this calculation shows that the total receipts flowing into the federal government exceed the total expenditures flowing out by a substantial amount.... [However] funds flowing into and out of the Social Security Trust Fund are by law supposed to be kept separate from other government expenditures.

pp. 8 - 9

Frustratingly, it appears that the tax breaks have gone mainly to the rich (Alterman & Green, 2004; Conason, 2003; Fritz, Keefer, & Nyhan, 2004; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Huberman, 2006; Johnston, 2003; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004), especially to those whose campaign contributions put President Bush into office, and often to the same

companies he so forcefully denounced as wrongdoers (Abraham, 2000; Corn, 2003; Franken, 2003; Huffington, 2003; Krugman, 2003b; C. Lewis, 2004; M. Moore, 2003; Phillips, 2004; A. W. Smith, 2004; Soros, 2004; G. Vidal, 2002a).

But George W. Bush was not the only offender. Presidents Clinton and Bush senior seemingly were not only deceitful; they were apparently deliberate in their violation of federal law as well. However, the offenses have become far more egregious since George W. Bush assumed office. As a point of comparison, during the last year of the Clinton presidency Smith (2004) notes that the unemployment rate was the lowest it had been in 30 years, 22 million new jobs had been created, and the non-Social Security surplus was \$86.6 billion. He asserts that even though President Clinton allegedly misled the American people about the economy, by the time he handed the country over to George W. Bush the economy was in better shape than it had been in a long, long time.

Section 13301 of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, which President George H. W. Bush signed into law, explicitly states:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the receipts and disbursements of the Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund shall not be counted as new budget authority, outlays, receipts, or deficit or surplus for purposes of (1) the budget of the United States Government as submitted by the President, (2) the Congressional budget, or (3) the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

But this law (not a guideline) was evidently ignored without apology. According to the Economic Report of the President, the surpluses of 1999 and 2000 were the only true surpluses in the operating budget in the past 40 years. The Social Security system, however, has continued to accrue surpluses. The \$9.4 billion surplus of 1985 increased tenfold by 1998. By 2003 the cumulative surplus was approaching \$1.5 trillion. Unfortunately, not a dollar of this money has been left in the fund to accrue interest and

bolster the Social Security system. The fact that the government has issued IOU's for the amount they borrowed offers little hope to those who wish to see the Social Security system function as it was intended. So far, the apparent trend in larceny appears to be quite clear (A. W. Smith, 2004).

According to Smith, George W. Bush appears determined to use every dollar of the Social Security surplus to repay his political supporters with tax cuts. And if the money is never repaid, then the money was stolen not borrowed. In fact, he contends, it is likely not an exaggeration to say that recent presidents and members of Congress have embezzled at least \$1.5 trillion of the revenue generated by the 1983 Social Security tax increase.

As early as October 9, 1990 Senator Moynihan, then chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security, expressed his anger and dismay in a speech on the Senate floor:

The fact... is that in an absolutely unprecedented pattern not known to any modern State of which I am aware and certainly never known to the Social Security System which is now in its second half century... the U.S. Government has begun to use a surplus in the fund as if it were general revenue.

This is not just a small stream of general revenue which could be thought of as incidental for maintenance of a large system. To the contrary, it is one of the primary sources of revenue of the Federal Government.

The trust funds are now rising at approximately \$1.5 billion a week, and will shortly be rising at \$2 billion, soon \$3 billion, then \$4 billion a week. They will, in sum, accumulate a surplus of some \$3 trillion in the next 30 years. Three trillion dollars is a sizable sum. The stocks of all the companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange would sell for about \$3 trillion....

The point about these moneys, Mr. President, is that we refer to them as taxes, as payroll taxes, and yet they are not taxes. They are payments, payments into an insurance fund.

As quoted in Smith (2004, p. 36)

On the same day Senator Reid also expressed his sentiments:

That is what this discussion is all about. The discussion is are we as a country violating a trust by spending Social Security trust fund moneys for some purpose other than for which they were intended. The obvious answer is yes.... Mr. President, what you have done is illegal. But the fact is it is wrong; what has taken place is wrong ....

I think that is a very good illustration of what I was talking about, embezzlement, thievery. Because that, Mr. President, is what we are talking about here ... During the period of growth we have had during the past 10 years, the growth has been from two sources. One, a large credit card with no limits on it, and, two, we have been stealing money from the Social Security recipients of this country....

Maybe what we should do in conjunction with the president, to really carry this conspiracy to its appropriate end, is rather than having it called the Social Security trust fund, why do we not change it and call it the "Social Security slush fund?"

As quoted in Smith (2004, pp. 37, 38)

According to Smith, the only fiscally responsible alternative to leaving surpluses in the Social Security account would be to use the funds to pay down the impressively large national debt during the years of Social Security surplus, but then borrow those dollars back during the Social Security deficit years that will come after 2018. In this way, the surplus would be invested in government securities as required by law, but would not be available for pilfering. However, the long-term deficits in the Social security system that will likely occur after 2018 far outweigh the surpluses America is currently experiencing. After 2018, Congress will very probably need to cut spending for other programs, raise taxes, borrow from the public, or some combination thereof. Between 2004 and 2018 Social Security is projected to generate a surplus of \$1.1 trillion, but from 2018 through 2077 the cumulative Social Security deficit, based primarily on the retirement of the baby boomers, will reach \$26 trillion. By 2042, a failure to remediate this deficit would result in a 26 percent cut in benefits or a 34 percent increase in taxes. If the government were to borrow money to pay for benefits nearly \$7 trillion

would be added to the national debt in the same year and by 2077 the national debt would be increased by \$52 trillion, including interest.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century interest rates were lower than they had been in over 40 years. However, when interest rates inevitably rise, the government will have to pay more interest on the same principal. If the principal increases then interest will increase even without a rise in interest rate. It is likely, unfortunately, that both will occur. In the year 2000 the American people paid \$362 billion dollars in interest on the national debt. This approximates a billion dollars a day, including weekends. Since then the daily rate has only gotten higher. According to Smith (2004) official projections by the Congressional Budget Office national debt would have increased by \$1.16 trillion dollars by the end of 2004 without counting the cost of war with Iraq. As of late December, 2006 the national debt had reached \$8.617 trillion and the cost of the Iraq war was conservatively estimated to be nearly \$355 billion (see <http://costofwar.com>, and [http://www.brillig.com/debt\\_clock](http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock)). However, as mentioned before, newer calculations suggest that the Iraq war will, in the final analysis, likely cost tax payers over \$2 trillion, as the length of the war and unexpected and unpredicted expenses continue to mount (Engler, 2005; Gutman, 2006; Weisman, 2006; *Where your income tax money really goes: U.S. federal budget 2007 fiscal year*, 2006).

Why did Americans allow this to happen?

The economic world view that set the stage for much of the abuse of Social Security surpluses began in the Reagan administration with a concept called supply-side economics. This approach, which had not undergone practical scrutiny or the test of time, focused on the interrelationship between the total supply of goods and services and

the taxing and spending policies of the government. President Reagan promoted the belief that taxes had become so high that there was poor incentive to work or to produce. A complementary belief was that subsidies to the poor discouraged them from increasing their income for fear of losing generous government aid. Reagan proposed that a tax cut of 30 percent would substantially increase the total supply of goods and services because people would be motivated to take fewer long vacations, work more overtime, and retire later. He believed that he could cut taxes and take in more revenue because more people would be working and they would be working harder, therefore paying more taxes. Because of this he promised that the budget would be balanced by 1984. Congress bought the story, reduced the tax cut to 25 percent, and enacted the President's proposal (Johnston, 2003; Krugman, 1994; A. W. Smith, 2004).

Shortly after taxes were cut the economy dove into the worst recession in 50 years. Civilian unemployment rose to 10.7 percent in December, 1982, and millions of Americans lost their jobs. The federal deficit skyrocketed from \$73.8 billion in 1980 to a record \$221.7 billion in 1985. Many economists note that President Reagan added more to the national debt than all of the previous presidents combined. During his presidency the United States transitioned from being the world's largest lender to the world's largest borrower. In 1984 President Reagan abolished the Council of Economic Advisers because he believed that it served no further purpose (Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Johnston, 2003; Krugman, 1994; A. W. Smith, 2000, 2004).

Smith (2004) notes that President Reagan was determined to reduce social programs while increasing national defense. He was also determined to reduce taxes for the very wealthy. If mainstream economics did not support his goals it was ignored, and

drastically reducing government spending became the primary goal. He believed that a reduction in available funds through taxation would reduce spending. However, he ignored the ease in which money could be borrowed for government programs.

Ultimately supply-side economics was revealed to be merely a new argument for the old Republican doctrine of trickle-down economics, a rather incestuous perversion of the Laffer curve (Laffer, 2004). This orthodoxy argued that tax cuts to the richest individuals and the largest corporations would eventually trickle down to benefit everyone else. The new king was wearing old clothes. Unfortunately, the benefits proved not to trickle down, and many of the programs designed to assist the poor were cut or eliminated to pay for the big tax cuts to the wealthy (Krugman, 1994, 2000; A. W. Smith, 2004).

Because President Reagan had the worst unemployment record of any modern president, according to Smith (2004), he tried to blame former President Jimmy Carter claiming that the economy was already in a recession when he (Reagan) took office. (Much as President George W. Bush later tried to blame President Clinton.) However, President Carter improved the 7.7 percent unemployment rate left to him by the exiting Ford administration, and the economy was expanding and the unemployment rate was declining when President Reagan took office. Also, President Reagan harshly criticized the deficit of the previous presidency by noting that it was mortgaging the future of America's children. However, the average deficit of the 1980's, \$168.87 billion, greatly overshadowed the average deficit of the previous decade, \$35.38 billion.

The national debt was less than \$1 trillion when Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency, but quadrupled to over \$4 trillion before Bill Clinton won the presidency from George H. W. Bush. During the Clinton years a surplus in the operating budget of



\$86.6 billion was finally achieved although the national debt topped \$5 trillion.

According to Smith the overall performance of the economy during the last four years of Clinton's presidency was the best in the history of the nation. The greatest misfortune of his administration was that President Clinton told the American people that the surpluses would multiply and extend into the foreseeable future, thus creating the surplus myth upon which President Bush would justify his economic program to further support the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans.

Bonner and Wiggin note of the time:

It had all seemed so logical, obvious, and agreeable back in the last five years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stocks went up year after year. The Cold War had been won. There was a new "Information Age" making everything and everybody so much smarter – and richer, too. The world was a happy place and Americans were its happiest people. American consumer capitalism was the envy of all mankind. The United States guaranteed the peace and freedom of the entire species, if not with goodness, intelligence, and foresight – at least with its military arsenal, which could blow any adversary to kingdom come. People believed that Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History" had indeed arrived, for it scarcely seemed possible that there could be any major improvement....

The World never works the way people think it does. That is not to say that every idea about how the world works is wrong, but that often particular ideas about how it works will prove to be wrong if they are held in common. For only simple ideas can be held by large groups of people. Commonly held ideas are almost always dumbed down until they are practically lies... and often dangerous ones. Once vast numbers of people have come to believe the lie, they adjust their own behavior to bring themselves into sync with it, and thereby change the world itself. The world, then, no longer resembles the one that gave rise to the original insight. Soon, a person's situation is so at odds with the world as it really is that a crisis develops, and he or she must seek a new metaphor for explanation and guidance....

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a half-century of progress and a 25-year-long bull market had created a race of geniuses. Americans were on top of the world. Their armies were unbeatable. Their currency was accepted everywhere as though it had real value. Dollars were the United States' most successful export, with a net outflow of nearly \$1.5 billion per day....

But America's greatest strength was its economy. It was not only the strongest in the world, but the strongest the world had ever seen. The United States had increased its economic lead over the competition in the 10 years running up to the end of the century. In the minds of many, the U.S. economy was unstoppable, and its continued success inevitable. They believed that the nation's leadership position was not merely cyclical, but eternal. It had achieved a state so nearly perfect that improvement was hardly imaginable. American music, art, films, democracy, and American-style market capitalism were everywhere triumphant.

"America is the world's only surviving model of human progress," President George W. Bush told the graduating class of West Point in June 2002. America has its faults, wrote Thomas L. Friedman in the *New York Times* at about the same time, but without it, "nothing good happens."

Societies, like markets and individual humans, are infinitely complex. The harder you look, the more you see. When things go well, people are content not to ask questions and not to look too hard. They think they know how the world works and are happy with the jingles and simple metaphors that explain it.

The new information technology, it was claimed, would boost productivity and the growth rate. Few people doubted it. More information would make things better; it seemed as simple as that.

(Bonner & Wiggin, 2003, pp. 1 - 7)

And so, finding the firmest footing in this not-as-yet-exhausted irrational exuberance, President George W. Bush in his February 27, 2001 State of the Union address presented the following:

Our new governing vision says government should be active, but limited; engaged, but not overbearing. And my budget is based on that philosophy. It is reasonable, and it is responsible.... My plan pays down an unprecedented amount of our national debt. And then, when money is still left over, my plan returns it to the people who earned it in the first place....

To make sure the retirement savings of America's seniors are not diverted in any other program, my budget protects all \$2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus for Social Security, and for Social Security alone....

My budget has funded a responsible increase in our ongoing operations. It has funded our nation's important priorities, it has protected Social Security and Medicare. And our surpluses are big enough that there is still money left over.

Many of you have talked about the need to pay down our national debt. I listened and I agree. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now, and I hope

you will join me to pay down \$2 trillion in debt during the next 10 years... That is more debt, repaid more quickly than has ever been repaid by any nation at any time in history.

We should also prepare for the unexpected, for the uncertainties of the future. We should approach our nation's budget as any prudent family would, with a contingency fund for emergencies or additional spending needs. For example, after a strategic review, we may need to increase defense spending. We may need to increase spending for our farmers or additional money to reform Medicare. And so, my budget sets aside almost a trillion dollars over 10 years for additional needs. That is one trillion additional reasons you can feel comfortable supporting this budget. We have increased our budget at a responsible 4 percent. We have funded our priorities. We paid down all the available debt. We have prepared for contingencies. And we still have money left over.

Now we come to a fork in the road; we have two choices.... We could spend the money on more and bigger government. That's the road our nation has traveled in recent years....

If you continue on that road, you will spend the surplus and have to dip into Social Security to pay other bills. Unrestrained government spending is a dangerous road to deficits, so we must take a different path. The other choice is to let the American people spend their own money to meet their own needs.

I hope you will join me in standing firmly on the side of the people. You see, the growing surplus exists because taxes are too high and government is charging more than it needs. The people of America have been overcharged and, on their behalf, I am here asking for a refund.

Excerpts from <http://www.newsabc.com/ressou2001.html>

Disturbingly, at the same time many economists were saying that there was no true budget surplus and that the government had for too long been tapping the reserves of Social Security to pay for other programs (Krugman, 2001; A. W. Smith, 2000, 2004). At the time of this address President Bush had not achieved any of the goals he referred to, nor has he achieved them since. Ironically, in 2006 the nation already appeared to be moving rapidly towards bankruptcy, and just seven months after his 2001 address President Bush, against his promise, was already dipping into the Social Security cookie jar.

President Bush's tax cut proposal also stated that the purpose of these cuts was to permanently change the tax structure and to downsize the government, not to create jobs. As the American economy is recuperating from a recession marked by a relatively jobless recovery – coupled with lower pay and benefits for new jobs – it will be demand rather than supply that will more than likely be the source of employment growth. Therefore, the application of demand-side economics, rather than supply-side, appears to be the better option for creating jobs and lifting the economy for everyone (Johnston, 2003; Krugman, 2000, 2001; A. W. Smith, 2004).

An additional irony was lavished upon America when, as is often the case, the wealthy in America receive money in the form of large tax cuts and invested it in Treasury notes and bonds. In effect this loans the money right back to the government. Money that was once coming in to the government in the form of revenues is transformed into loans that must be repaid with interest. Because of this, tax cuts to the wealthy rarely create jobs.

400 top economists agree, stating:

Passing these tax cuts will worsen the long-term budget outlook, adding to the nation's projected chronic deficits. This fiscal deterioration will reduce the capacity of the government to finance Social Security and Medicare benefits as well as investments in schools, health, infrastructure, and basic research. Moreover, the proposed tax cuts will generate further inequalities in after-tax income.

To be effective, a stimulus plan should rely on immediate but temporary spending and tax measures to expand demand, and it should also rely on immediate but temporary incentives for investment. Such a stimulus plan would spur growth and jobs in the short term without exacerbating the long-term budget outlook.

(A. W. Smith, 2004, p. 139)

Diamond and Orszag (2005) also agree and express concern over the impact on both Social Security and the average worker if the President's plans for Social Security

were to be carried out in full. Under the proposed plan workers would be given the option of putting part of their payroll taxes into individual accounts. This diverted portion would then accumulate in the account during the worker's career and become available upon retirement. However, the money diverted from the Social Security system would reduce funds traditionally available to retirees. Therefore a liability account would be created that would track a worker's debt owed to Social Security based on the funds diverted. Every year Social Security would charge interest on the balance of this debt at three percent above inflation. Upon retirement, this debt and interest would be repaid by reducing the benefits of the traditional Social Security system paid to the worker. The interest charged to the worker on diverted funds would reduce their value, thus the return on investment of diverted funds must be greater than three percent per year to make them worthwhile. If the diverted funds earned less than three percent per year the worker would lose money.

In addition, individual investment accounts would be limited to a prearranged menu of options arranged by the government and the accounts could not be accessed before retirement. It remains unclear what would happen to the funds if the worker died before retirement.

They predict:

The aggregate cash flow from the individual accounts is negative over a period of about forty-five years, because the diverted revenue exceeds the benefit offsets until about 2050. This extended period of negative cash flow creates significant problems.

Currently, roughly 85 cents of every dollar in non-interest Social Security revenue is used to pay benefits during the same year. If revenue was diverted into individual accounts, the reduced cash flow would drive the trust fund balance to exhaustion sooner than currently projected, requiring either some source of additional revenue to continue paying current benefits or a reduction in current

benefits to offset the reduced revenue flow. Indeed, the net cash outflow... causes the trust fund to be exhausted more than a decade earlier than in the absence of the accounts....

(P. A. Diamond & Orszag, 2005, pp. x - xi)

Given the strong likelihood that Al Gore received approximately 500,000 more popular votes than George W. Bush (Dershowitz, 2001; Nakashima et al., 2001; Rakove, 2001; Sunstein & Epstein, 2001; Toobin, 2001), it was difficult to imagine that Bush had a mandate from the American people to directly change the government or the economy. Arguably this made it difficult for him to initiate an open campaign to downsize the government. However, getting support for a large tax cut was easier and provided an alternate route to diminished government by cutting off the funds necessary for social programs. Smith argues that Bush's tax cuts were a deliberate effort to create such dire circumstances for the budget of the United States that Congress would have no choice but to dismantle the social safety net, thus circumventing the democratic process. President Bush claimed that his tax cuts would stimulate the economy and create jobs. However, as the deficits became larger the government had to borrow more, thus forcing interest rates up. Higher interest rates generally lead to higher unemployment. Higher unemployment will generally decrease tax revenue and increase expenditures on government programs such as unemployment. Declining tax revenue and increasing government spending will generally create even larger deficits, and thus the process becomes circular.

A study commissioned in 2002 by Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill revealed that the United States faces a future of chronic budget deficits totaling at least \$44 trillion (Suskind, 2004). The report estimates that a permanent and immediate 66 percent across-the-board income tax increase would be required to close the chasm between revenue and

expenditures. Unfortunately for the American people, the Bush administration excluded the study from the annual budget report as President Bush was campaigning for his 2003 tax cut.

Smith argues that without a change in fiscal policy, the United States will be vulnerable to three different crises; a consumer crisis, a crisis of artificially high interest rates, and a crisis of Social Security insolvency:

He begins by first noting that when consumers fear losing their jobs they eventually cut back on spending and start saving what they can. This reduces orders to producers who then lay off workers. Unemployed workers reduce spending and the cycle continues. Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11 consumer confidence was extremely low. The attacks and the war against Iraq simply shifted the focus away from the economy. During the Clinton administration the economy was booming and consumer confidence was high. But when Bush took office he almost immediately began scaring consumers. On February 8, 2001 he told the American people that a warning light was flashing on the dashboard of the economy and that America could not just drive on and hope for the best. He noted that Americans must act without delay. This was a poor confidence builder, and subsequent economic policies further eroded confidence, even as many of the wealthy were becoming wealthier through tax relief.

Secondly, interest rates in 2003 were lower than they had been in over 40 years. However, this trend did not last. As deficits rose the government had to borrow more to cover the rising debt and interest, therefore driving the interest rates up. In 1960 the prime rate was 4.5 percent. But it jumped to 21.5 percent in 1981 before returning to 4.0 percent in 2003. As of December, 2006, the prime rate had risen again to 8.25 percent.

People in 1960 probably thought that the future interest rate would remain low, as the people in 1981 likely thought that there would be little relief in their future. Interest rates naturally fluctuate, but as the deficit rises interest rates are most likely to rise in tandem, and past fluctuations were certainly due, to a large degree, to the prevailing fiscal policy and philosophy.

On July 16, 2003 Alan Greenspan presented the perils of ongoing deficits in his testimony before the House Financial Services Committee:

There is no question that if you run substantial and excessive deficits over time you are draining savings from the private sector... There is no question that we need to come to grips with this deficit question.

As quoted in Smith (2004, p. 177)

This announcement came two days after the White House released figures that forecast a record deficit of \$455 billion. A figure masked by adding the Social Security surplus to the operating budget. The real on-budget deficit was estimated as more than \$600 billion.

Therefore, thirdly, the Social Security system arguably has two major problems. It apparently cannot sustain itself over the long run without reform, and the government has likely defrauded the American people and cheated them of the surplus that would have helped to make the system sustainable (Bandow, 1990; Carville & Nussbaum, 2003). The current administration seems to be the most egregious of the offenders, although the neoconservative, supply-side, trickle-down approach to making the wealthy wealthier and making the government smaller, except for a marked buildup of the military, has certainly been a major contributor since Reagan. Unfortunately, it appears that none of the potential outcomes – privatization, reducing the program to a form of



means-tested welfare, tax increases, or increased borrowing – would serve those who have already paid into the system.

A general revamping of government economic policy seems to be in order, rather than merely a change in the administration of Social Security. Also, if financial wrongdoers in the private sector are to be held to the law, which is still in some doubt, then the financial wrongdoers in government, including the President, arguably should be judged by the law and receive the same or greater punishment.

### *Medicare and Medicaid*

Medicare and Medicaid seem to be suffering many of the ills experienced by Social Security and have operated under the threat of radical reform for many years. The primary difference between Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid is that their demise seems to be approaching more quickly and the economic and social consequences if these programs fail or falter could be far more devastating. A list of their ailments include:

- Although this is debated, Medicare and Medicaid seem to be headed toward bankruptcy as early as 2019.
- In the early years of George W. Bush's presidency funds were siphoned from Medicare.
- In 2004, for the first time ever, outflow of expenses for Medicare exceeded revenue, eliminating any surplus revenue to tap.
- Some physicians are refusing to see Medicare patients because reimbursements from the government are often late and fall short of costs.

- There will be a huge disparity between what will be required in Medicare and Medicaid payments and what is and will be paid into the system. Medicare and Medicaid now constitute 19 percent of federal spending, but the percentage is growing every year. Between 2005 and 2030 Medicaid spending is expected to increase 166 percent while Medicare spending is expected to rise 331 percent. Even though the revenues are expected to remain flat, the future Medicare burden is expected to exceed \$30 trillion (some suggest up to \$46 trillion), roughly 59 to 99 percent of total household wealth in America, depending on the source.
- Medicare and Medicaid are slated to go under the knife as cuts in payments are planned.
- The new Medicare drug provisions will cost tax payers far more than predicted by the White House.
- Under the current plan, the government cannot bargain with drug companies for lower costs on bulk purchases, ensuring huge profits for these providers.
- There is a dangerous new “doughnut hole” in the Medicare drug provision that allows many to go without drug coverage.
- Faster economic growth will not fix the problem.

(See Abel, 2006; Appleby, 2005; Begala, 2002; Blumenthal, 2006; *The budget and economic outlook: An update*, 2006; Cass, 2006; Conason, 2005; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Himelfarb, 1995; Kogan, Park, & Greenstein, 2003; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Mitchell, 2004; Oberlander, 2003; Pear, 2006a, 2006b; *Report of massive deficit in Bush budget sets off new alarms for Medicare*, 2006; L. D. Scott, 2004; Shaviro, 2004; Sidel, 2006; P. Singer, 2004; Strobe, 2004; Theobald, 2006; Walker, 2006; and J. White, 2003)

### *Other Social Programs*

Although of lesser economic impact, other social programs for the benefit of the American people have been either reduced or eliminated in recent years so that other government projects, such as the war in Iraq, could be funded. Thus the struggle between guns and butter continue, although in apparently new and ironic ways:

- Disturbingly the troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan complain that they are operating with sub-standard equipment including personal and vehicular armor. In addition they complain that the private contractors such as KBR are cheating the soldiers of services that the taxpayers are funding. Also, during the first years of the Bush administration veterans' benefits were cut by roughly 30 percent and many of the wounded from the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns have had difficulty receiving appropriate medical care. This is especially disturbing because military personnel are required to serve extended stays without relief and have been subjected to radiation poisoning, among other things, from armaments using shells made from the spent radioactive elements used in nuclear reactors.
- Although innovation is touted as the remedy for the loss of manufacturing in America and the outsourcing of jobs overseas, research and development grants and government funding of innovation have been cut by the current administration, as has support for science in general.
- Underfunded for a long time; education, student loans, and job training have all had new parts lopped off at the economic chopping block, although education is not paying off as well as it used to.

(See Caldicott, 2004; Chaiker, 2005; Coy, 2000; Crane, 2006; Davila, Epstein, & Shelton, 2006; Draut, 2006; Engardio & Einhorn, 2005; Fredman, 2002; Greenwald, 2006; Gupta, 2006; D. Henry, 2006; Kamenetz, 2006; T. Kelley & Littman, 2001; Kher, 2006; Kogan & Kamin, 2004; M. Mandel, 2004; McGregor, 2006; Merritt & Lavelle, 2005; Mooney, 2005; M. Moore, 2004; *More promises than funding: The House adopts an irresponsible 2007 budget*, 2006; Nussbaum, 2006; Palmisano, 2003; Reich, 2001, 2002b; Rushkoff, 2005; S. Shulman, 2006; St. George, 2006; *U.S. war spending to rise 44% to \$9.8 Bln a month, report says*, 2006; *US war costs could hit \$811 bn*, 2006; Weisman, 2004a; Wong, 2006; Zernike, 2006; and Zunz et al., 2002)

### *Government Debt*

The United States is now the world's largest debtor nation. This is a cataclysmic shift from its once held position of being the world's largest lender. And although it is argued that fiscal policy is more about the psychological and ideological makeup of government, it also appears to be influenced by outside interests and to have a greater effect on the overall economy than the government admits. In brief:

- The national debt of the United States is rapidly accelerating.
- Interest paid on the national debt is growing as fast as the debt itself, with interest rates currently vacillating between 4 and 5 percent.
- Large deficits of hundreds of billions of dollars continue to manifest every year since the beginning of the George W. Bush administration.
- Roughly 45 percent of America's national debt is held by other countries, notably China and Japan.

- The interest on the national debt is regressive.
- The national debt will create an undue burden on future generations.

(See B. Bartlett, 2006; Bonner & Wiggin, 2006; Buchdahl, 2004; Cavanaugh, 1996; Greider, 1989; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Hixson, 1991; Ince, 2006; Karger, 2005; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Krugman, 2003b; Macdonald, 2003; Parenti, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Steadman, 1993; Trumbull, 2006; and Wegman, Chapman, & Johnson, 1989)

The growing national-federal debt in America is illustrated in Figure 29:

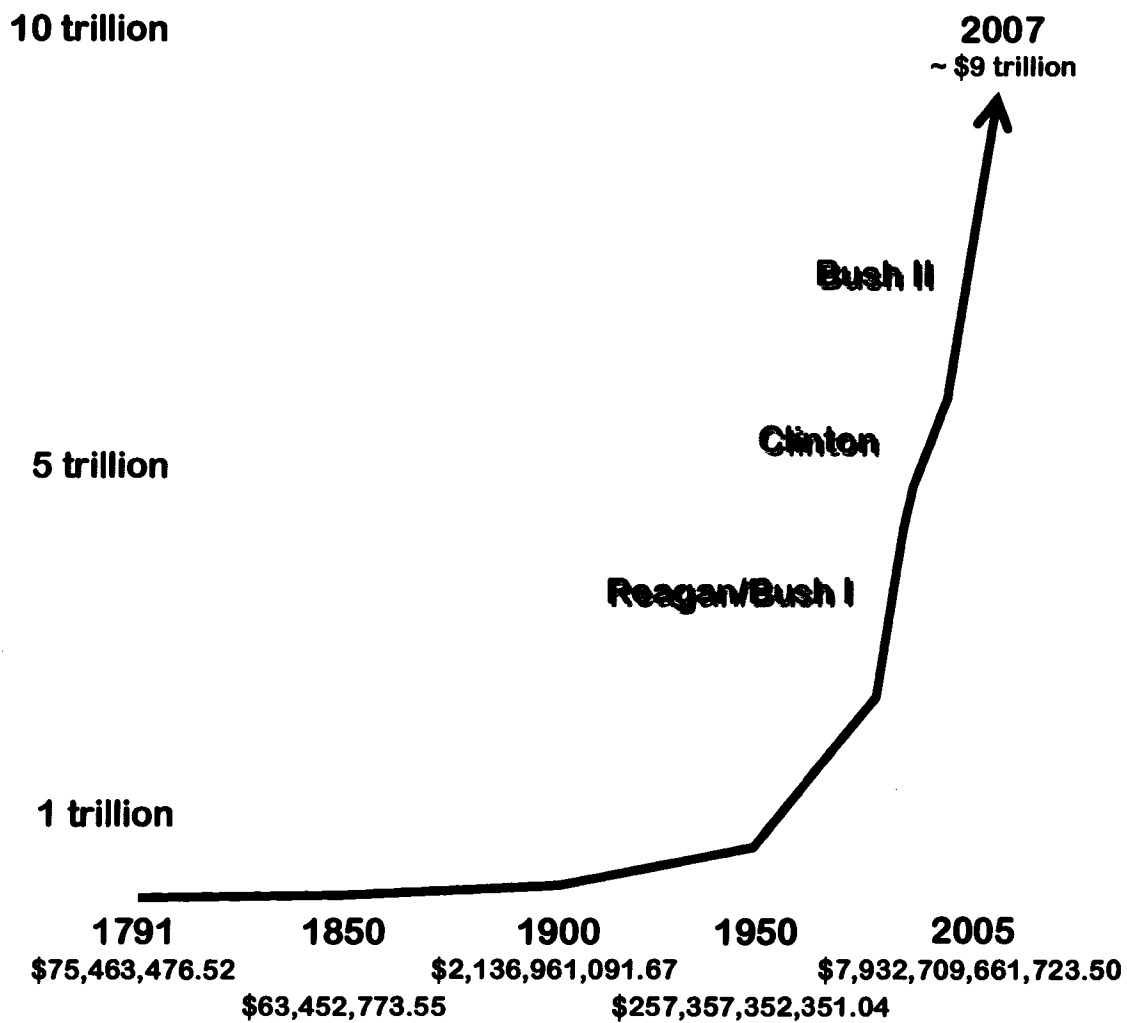


Figure 29. National debt of the United States.

(Adapted from U.S. Treasury data found at <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np>)

Figure 29 illustrates the now familiar hockey-stick nature of this debt. The horizontal axis represents time and the vertical axis represents debt in trillions of dollars. Although there were small relative blips in the debt line before 1950, the debt began to visibly rise after 1950 and began its steepest ascent after President Reagan was elected. This trend continued through the presidency of George H. W. Bush, was slowed during

the Clinton administration, and renewed its attempt to achieve escape velocity after the election of George W. Bush (Rothbard, 2004).

The national debt peaked during World War II to over 120 percent of GDP, after which it fell to around 33 percent during the presidency of Jimmy Carter. After the election of Ronald Reagan, however, the debt to GDP ratio began to climb. The debt peaked at around 67 percent of GDP during the Reagan-Bush era but dropped to 57 percent during the Clinton presidency, after which it began to rise again.

Before Reagan there did not seem to be much difference between the Democrats and Republicans with respect to the national debt, they both worked together to minimize it. Since 1981, however, the Republicans appear to be the most committed to rapidly increasing the national debt, contrary to their historical ideology. The tax-and-spend rhetoric employed to indict the Democrats simply failed to address either the cause or the responsibility for overspending.

Although he repeatedly called for a balanced budget amendment, Reagan never personally submitted a balanced budget. Rather, he pushed tax cuts through Congress without any concomitant spending reductions. During Reagan's administration the national debt increased 260 percent, unprecedented since WWII, with an average debt increase of 13.8 percent for every year he was in office. George Bush Sr. pursued closely behind, with an average of 11.8 percent increase for each year he was in office.

By eventually eliminating the deficit, President Clinton reduced the growth in national debt to nearly zero, but Bush Jr. reversed that trend after entering office, enacting huge tax cuts and borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars at the same time. The tax cuts were rationalized as a stimulus to the economy, but this type of trickle-down

thinking had previously fallen on its own sword during the Reagan presidency, and possibly during the Hoover administration before President Roosevelt enacted the New Deal and helped to turn the depression-era economy around.

(See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/pdf/hist.pdf>, and <http://www.cedarcomm.com/~stevelm1/usdebt.xls>.)

### *The Trade Deficit*

The George W. Bush administration's lack of consideration in making trade agreements appears to be causing a huge trade deficit and costing America jobs (Ryan, 2007). Irritatingly, Wal-Mart alone seems to be a large contributor to this problem (R. E. Scott, 2005), although certainly not the only one. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce (*U.S. international trade in goods and services: November 2006*, 2007) in 2004 the trade deficit in goods and services was \$611.296 billion; in 2005 it was \$716.730 billion; and in 2006 it was closer to \$800 billion, although the December data is not yet available. If one includes money flows the deficit is even higher (*US trade deficit soared to record*, 2006). The magnitude of America's growing debt and trade deficit are likely to contribute strongly to a devaluation of the dollar which, in turn, will worsen other aspects of America's economic disaster (B. Bartlett, 2006; Bonner & Wiggin, 2003, 2006; Duncan, 2003; Greider, 1998; Havemann, 2006a, 2006b; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Turk & Rubino, 2004; Wiggin, 2005).



### *Summary of Economic Issues*

By leaps and bounds the nation's debt, the cost of the military including the war, Medicare and Medicaid, and Social Security are the four greatest burdens on the American taxpayer. However, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, are being bled of funds and their benefits are either being reduced or slated for privatization. Other social programs such as general education and student loans are also feeling the squeeze, not that they ever had that much compared to the big four. Also, if the bulk of the money paid to the treasury is used to maintain the debt, where is all of the money going? America is far less generous in its charity as a percent of GDP than many other countries. For example, the United States is having great difficulty, apparently, even meeting half of the puny percentage (around 1.5 percent) requested by the U.N. of all developed countries to meet its Millennium Goals aimed at eradicating poverty. And this includes America's private donations to boot! So where is the money going? Apparently not to education, or housing, or food, or clothing for the poor; not for reasonably priced medicine or healthcare; not for the welfare of the poor, although almost certainly to the welfare of the corporation and tax breaks for the rich; and not, ironically, for homeland security. So what is left? Militarization and military contracts seem to be at the head of the list. So it would appear that beyond what is actually spent on social programs, earmarked projects, pork, and interest on the national debt, taxes primarily go to pay for the military and its lucrative and non-competitive deals for private contractors (see chapter on elite deviance). This, coupled with the other issues discussed so far, is leading America to a very critical and dangerous fork in the road.

## *Conclusion*

In the previous two chapters overwork and overconsumption were presented as likely and interlocking causes for much of the unhappiness, servitude, and other social, political, and environmental ills experienced by many American workers. To a great degree the socialization of these phenomena appeared to be the product of a twentieth-century-capitalist promotion of human subjugation (Beder, 2000).

In alignment with this idea Cross (2000) recalls that:

The twentieth century was an especially ironic time. Despite clashes of ideologies, two devastating world wars, and a forty-five-year cold war that ultimately made the United States the leading global power, the century did not culminate in the victory of American political ideas. Rather, the real winner of the century was consumerism. Visions of a political community of stable, shared values and active citizenship have given way to a dynamic but seemingly passive society of consumption in America, and increasingly across the globe....

p. 1

He claims that this occurred because consumerism superseded other ideologies, giving a concrete expression to liberty and democracy and delivering Americans from their closed communities into a dynamic mass society that allowed for new identities. Cross believes that consumerism redefined democracy, replacing the old notion of America as a republic of producers with a vision of an America where everyone had access to a plethora of goods, America as a republic of consumers. Democracy and liberty became the right to express oneself and derive pleasure through the consumption of goods, rather than the freedoms offered in the Constitution. They became the right to share in the ownership and purchase of commodities rather equality under the law.

Cross continues:

In other ways, however, consumerism has been a threat to the kind of individual responsibilities and social solidarities that made political democracy work in the past. The fixation on personal goods has denied the necessity of sacrifice beyond the family. It has allowed little space for social conscience and confined

aspiration to the personal realm.... Unfortunately, the family has hardly been a constraint on consumption – the home long ago was conquered by the market with mass circulation magazines, radio, TV, and other outlets for advertising domestic goods....

Participation in the consumer culture requires wage work, time, and effort, often given without enthusiasm or interest. But this tradeoff seems natural today, an inevitable compromise between freedom and necessity. Maintaining a reciprocal relationship between consumption and work keeps the economic system running and orders daily life. This society of goods is not merely the inevitable consequence of mass production or the manipulation of merchandisers. It is choice, never consciously made, to define self and community through the ownership of goods....

According to this common view, the consumer society today is merely the arena in which people have gotten on with life.... Consumer culture may be the fate of modern democracies unable or unwilling to provide their members with deeper and more direct means of expressing individuality and sociability.... Of course, consumerism has done this without challenging manipulative power and inherited money. Indeed, the American Way of Life in the twentieth century, based on popular access to consumer goods, has replaced the older American Dream of property and independence. It has provided meaning while magnifying the power and wealth of American elites....

pp. 1 – 12

The basis of the above sentiments is illustrated in Figure 30. The horizontal axis represents time from approximately 1 A.D. until 2000 A.D. and the vertical axis represents the world's consumption based on the purchasing equivalent of the U.S. dollar circa 1997. As a point of reference, in the 1980s Americans began trying to keep up with the rich rather than merely keeping up with the Joneses, while the rest of the world tried to keep up with the Americans. By the early 1990s consumption grew more each year than it did in any century before 1900 (Ayres, 1999).

But while capitalism in the United States appears to promote overconsumption, it also seems strongly linked to the futility of a type of overwork that ultimately creates poverty rather than consumers.

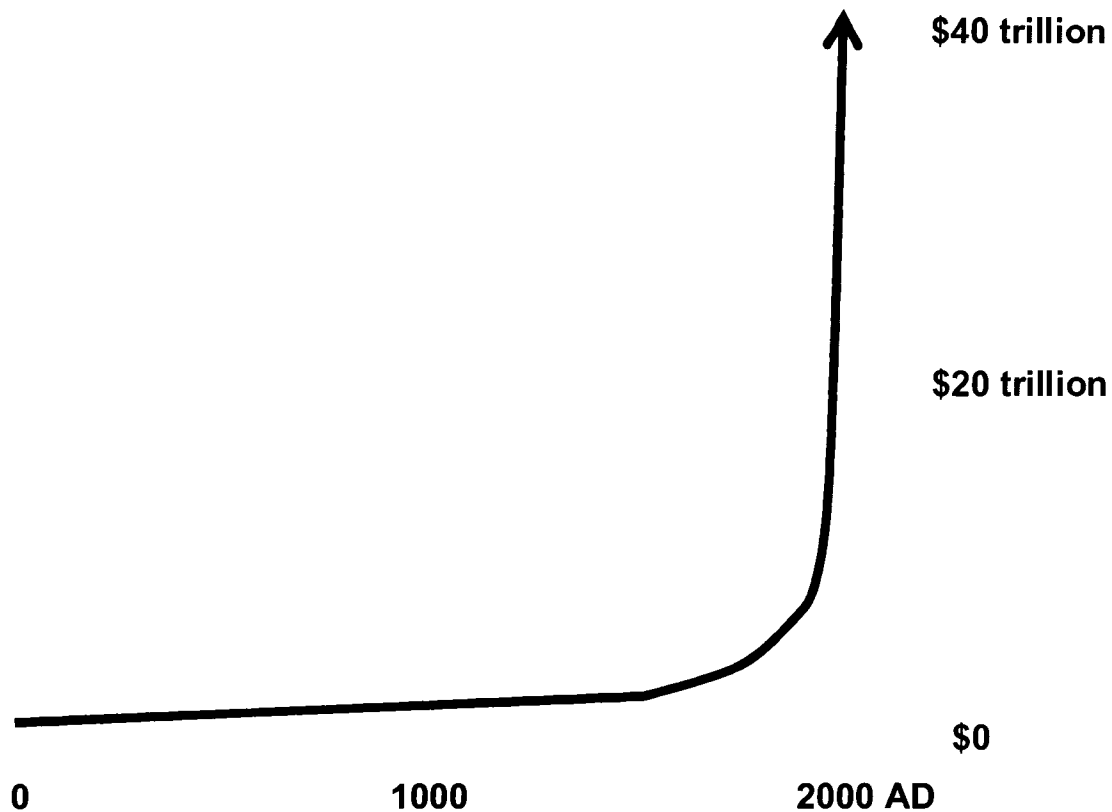


Figure30. World's consumption based on the purchasing equivalent of the U.S. dollar circa 1997.

(Adapted from Ayres, 1999, p. 39)

Marx (2000) comments:

It is in the nature of capitalism to overwork one section of the working population while it turns another into paupers.

p. 306

Marx also notes:

The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois.

The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth.

(Smelser, 1973, p. 85)

Overwork, America's other addiction, seems also to have taken a remarkable toll on both the individual and society. Robinson declares:

Overwork is this decade's cocaine....

(Bryan Robinson as quoted in Loehr & Schwartz, 2003, p. 40)

And Putnam concurs:

We certainly *feel* busier now than Americans did a generation ago: the proportion of us who say we "always feel rushed" jumped by more than half between the mid-1960's and the mid-1990's. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's more and more of us reported that we "work very hard most of the time" and that we frequently "stayed late at work." ....These patterns are hardly surprising.... Perhaps the villain... is simply overwork.

(2000, p. 189)

Seemingly, though, nothing much is being done to improve the situation.

Although some predicted it (Hamel & Prahalad, 1996; Naisbitt, 1988, 1994; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1985; T. J. Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982; Toffler, 1990) the corporation apparently was not re-invented nor was it in search of excellence, power did not shift, the Bush Jr. administration ignored the emerging megatrends, America has not been competing for the future, and the smallest player did not gain preeminence in the global marketplace. To Toffler's credit, however, the holy frenzy arguably did happen and America seems to be on the verge of a very, very dark age. And while some see heady growth ahead for America's economy, others see a rapidly saturating global market and a rapidly approaching death of demand (M. Mandel, 2004; Osenton, 2004) that will disrupt America's economy in very nasty ways. Others simply point out that since the economy is typically far from equilibrium most of the time, prediction is a crap shoot (Omerod, 2006).

Nonetheless, America's lack of both work-life balance and constraint in consumption appear to be wreaking havoc on the earth and its ability to sustain life as

people have known it throughout the twentieth century. In his book, *Work, leisure, and the environment: The vicious cycle of overwork and over-consumption* Robinson (2006) asserts that the twin-headed monster of working and consuming too much are the final cause of environmental degradation. He notes that contemporary economic thinking is flawed because it causes people to unknowingly reduce their well-being through excessive work and consumption. Robinson argues that people lack the insight to accurately assess the benefits and costs which are derived from their lifestyles, thereby overestimating the benefits and ignoring the harmful environmental and human consequences (Also see Gershuny, 2000). Unfortunately, the desire to overconsume and the willingness to overwork in order to do so are spreading to other countries.

Overby (1997) notes:

If Earth's entire population were to begin today to consume the Earth's resources at the same rate as did the US in 1972... assuming that the entire globe were composed of suitably consumable materials... it would take only about 430 years for Earth's people to consume half the weight of the Earth and reduce it to high-entropy irretrievable wastes. From this we might conclude that it is probably impossible for the teeming billions on Earth to enjoy the lifestyle of we, "the rich" – and yet that is exactly what these teeming billions seek.

p. 175

A chapter in the book *The World According to Pimm* (Pimm & Jenkins, 2005) is entitled "Man Eats Planet! Two-Fifths Already Gone!" In it Pimm explains the chapter title through calculating how much biomass humanity uses compared to how much the planet is capable of producing:

Each year, we use 26 billion tons of plant production for crops, 14 billion tons from forests, use and forgo 17 billion tons for grazing, and forgo 3 billion tons for urban areas. That comes to a total of 60 billion tons.... [But] the land produces 132 billion tons even after these activities. Were we not to have cities, roads, desertification, and conversion of productive forests to poor grazing lands, the land would produce even more.... about 10 billion tons more, for a total of 141 billion tons. The 60 tons from the 141 gives us – yes, you guessed it – 42 percent....

What we appropriate for agriculture is the largest piece: 26 billion tons from the total of 60 billion. The area of cropland that produces this tonnage is not increasing by much. In the 30 years since 1970, a period when the human population nearly doubled, the area of crops grew from less than 14 million km. Agriculture feeds far more people from almost the same area of land. In this statistic, eternally optimistic Panglossians see continuing progress that allows us to push the envelope of our environmental constraints. In the same statistic, worried Cassandras notice the constraints on the area of croplands that prevent it from expanding with our growing population....

The 6 billion of us are already inflicting continuing damage. The larger pieces of the remaining 34 billion tons include the massive shrinkage of tropical forests and the large amounts of production that we forgo due to damage done to tropical forests and drylands....

Developing nations increase in population: their citizens aspire to the same standards as the ones in developed nations (grain-fed beef and the rest of it). Countries with established market economies continue to demand ever more resources from these nations. Our withdrawals of biological interest from the planet's savings account will increase, and they will do so faster than the rise in human population.

The richer nations have taken the most productive land; that is an important reason for why they became rich. The developing nations have the poorer land; that is why they have not developed so quickly.... From deserts to rainforests the conversion of poor land to crops and pastures does not usually mimic the fate of converting the best land. We damage the poorer land far more in the process. Yet it is from the poorer land that the increasing withdrawals must come.

In a metaphorical sense, Gaia, our hostess at the global cocktail party, is not happy. There are always people who high-grade the cashews from bowls of mixed nuts. Not for them the lowly sunflower seeds, still in their husks. Now this is all that remains. Those who did not get the cashews are asking for them. The high-graders who did get them are now demanding the even more expensive Macadamia nuts. The doorbell is ringing, announcing the arrival of more guests. Dr. Pangloss is telling her in one ear that everything will be OK. In her other ear Cassandra is assuring her that everything is not OK. What Gaia knows for certain is that in cracking the sunflower seeds, the guests will make one hell of a mess, drop bunches of them on the carper, and spoil the party for everyone.

pp. 105 – 107

Sadly, many of the human practices that hurt people and damage the planet don't even provide a benefit in the short term. For example, cutting down the rain forest to

expand farming and grazing has not paid off because the soil in the rain forest is extremely poor and vulnerable to erosion. Once production crops are planted they do poorly and the soil does not last (Pimm & Jenkins, 2005). This example illustrates accelerated entropy, an acceleration of the second law of Thermodynamics. And all of the problems discussed in this chapter involve entropy in some way.

So what is entropy? It is described by the second law of Thermodynamics which, simply put, states that order will eventually proceed to disorder, and on ignoring this law many have commented:

The Second Law is the tax Mother Nature imposes on the conversion of energy to work. A simple statement of the Second Law is: The energy output of work is always less than the energy transformed to accomplish it....

Whenever the limitations implied by the Second Law are ignored, expect folly to follow.

(Kirwan Jr., 2002, p. 5)

If your theory is found to be against the second law of Thermodynamics I can give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation.

(Eddington, 1930, p.74)

Therefore, entropy should be employed very carefully, though this care seems to be absent in America's current economy. As noted, all of the problems and issues addressed so far are entropic in nature. But at some level they are also grounded in economic activity, which is itself a producer of entropy. In addition this economic activity is in an accelerated and substantial ascent, as shown in Figure 31.



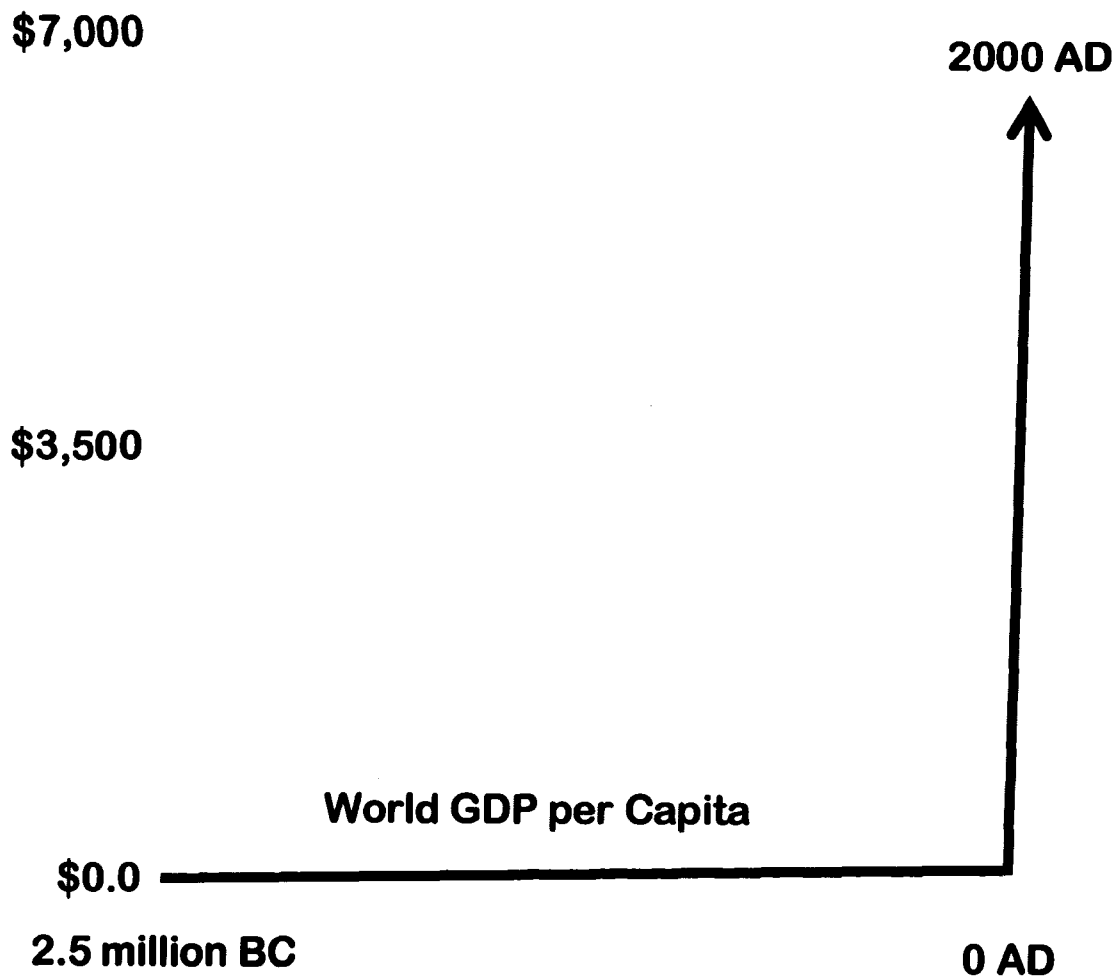


Figure 31. World GDP per capita in constant dollars over time.

(Adapted from Beinhocker, 2006, p. 10)

In Figure 31, the vertical axis is the ascending value of world GDP per capita in constant dollars. The horizontal axis is time progressing from left to right. According to Beinhocker (2006), the same process driving the growing order and complexity of the biosphere is also driving the order and complexity of economic activity, or the econosphere. The breathtaking acceleration of economic activity, however, is a very recent phenomenon:

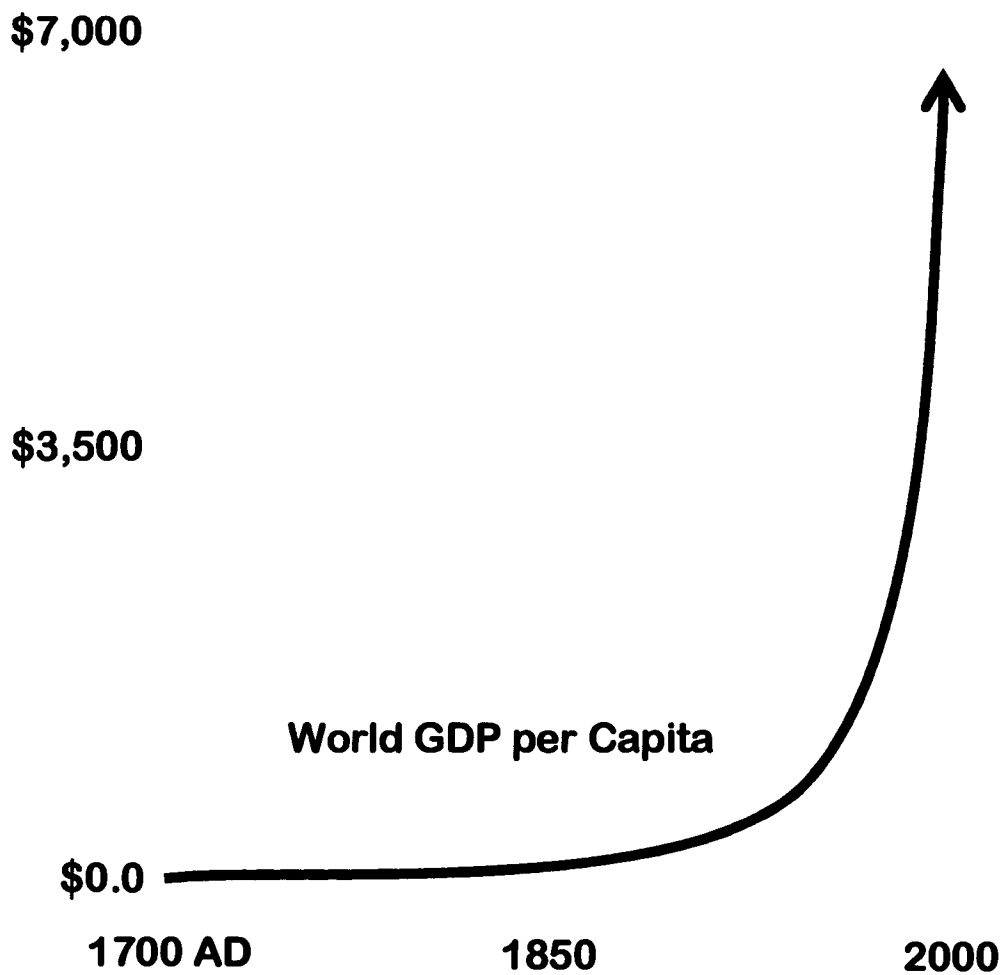


Figure 32. World GDP per capita in constant dollars since 1700.

(Adapted from Beinhocker, 2006, p. 10)

Figure 32 shows the same graph of the world's GDP per capita, but this time the period is between 1700 AD and 2000 AD., the time in which most of the world's economic activity occurred. Because economic activity has accelerated, so has entropy.

Overby (1997) elucidates:

In recent times a few insightful economists such as the late Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the late Kenneth Boulding, and Herman Daly have sought to call our attention to the entropic nature of economic process. The economic process is entropic in that we extract high quality (low entropy) non-renewable resources

from nature and diffuse them in extraction, production, consumption, and disposal into irretrievable waste products (high-entropy) in the air, water and land....

As Georgescu-Roegen said, “ An unorthodox economist – such as myself – would say, what goes into the economic processes represents ‘valuable natural resources’ and what is thrown out of it is ‘valueless waste.’ But this qualitative difference is confirmed, albeit in different terms, by a particular (and peculiar) branch of physics known as thermodynamics. From the viewpoint of thermodynamics, matter-energy enters the economic process in a state of ‘low entropy’ and comes out of it in a state of ‘high entropy.’”

The idea that the economic process is an entropic one that proceeds from order to disorder and chaos, from valuable natural resources to valueless waste, is not a happy one. Most economists do not integrate ideas of entropy into their economic models.... Some think that order might arise out of this chaos through self-organizing social systems so as to reduce fears of resource depletion and environmental pollution.... [We must] demonstrate a self-organizing social system which takes its most precious resources, its gifted and talented people, and puts them to work to slow entropic and economic growth and give us healthier models of non-material-consumptive growth. More resource wars await us if we are unable to do this.

pp. 181 – 183

(Also see Boulding, 1965; Daly & Townsend, 1993; Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, 1976; Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen, 1999; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Rifkin, 1980; and Rifkin, 1989)

Some, however, fear that humanity will either resist the creative use of human capital or it will be too late in doing so. Why? Because the economy would be required to turn on its head.

Kunstler (2006) observes:

The industrial revolution had already begun when the United States formed in the late 1700s, and even before Americans exploited coal, oil, and gas, we had other resources to plunder, notably land. The American economy has historically been about moving incrementally away from natural patterns of living off solar energy to artificial patterns of living subsidized by cheap fossil fuel. Through the tumultuous twentieth century to now, the American economy has moved insidiously from the sustainable to the virtual, and from the actual to the abstract. All these transactions embody a particular loss of one kind or another, but they add up to a general loss of the potential to continue the way we have been living. This loss can be described as entropy....

The reason that everything in the real world does not fall apart at once is that the flow of entropy faces obstructions or constraints. The more complex the system,

the more constraints.... The creation of ever more efficient ordered flows in American society, the removal of constraints, has accelerated the winding down of American potential, which is exactly why a Wal-Mart economy will bring us to grief more rapidly than a national agglomeration of diverse independent small-town economies. Efficiency is the straightest path to hell.... Everything that we identify with nature takes the form of inefficient systems. Biogenic or living systems are self-stabilizing. They are self-buffered.... Entropy is stalled within them.... Everything we identify with the man-made substitutes for natural bioeconomies... is self-amplifying, self-reinforcing, and destabilizing, featuring the removal of constraints to entropy flows and leading to the certain eventual destruction of that system....

Economic growth that has appeared normative and desirable during the story of industrialism is already becoming pathogenic.... The collective imagination of the public cannot process the notion of a nongrowth economy.... We are hostages to our own system.... The human race living off the “drawdown” of nonrenewable... resources is the equivalent of the algae in a pond enjoying a temporary rush of nutrients in one brief season.... Further entropic by-products [include] the “death” of optimism.... An ecological view of history could interpret the rise of totalitarian government as yet another byproduct of high entropy.... the extreme regimentation of... citizens as a defense against disorder – against entropy.

pp. 191 -210

According to Beinhocker (2006) the whole economy feeds on low entropy, that is, all economic transformations and transactions reduce entropy locally while increasing entropy globally. This is good for some but not for others. Usually the benefit of decreased local entropy goes to those who can most successfully use the economy to their advantage – generally the powerful, influential, and rich. The byproduct of this lowering of local entropy for the few means an increase in entropy for everyone else. Even more unfortunately, however, some economic activity adds no value to anyone and represents the most egregious and purposeless exploitation of resources.

Ophuls (1998) laments:

The Enlightenment believed it had found a cure for the worst ills of traditional civilization: economic development via the technological conquest of nature. The resulting abundance would eliminate poverty, alleviate (or at least rationalize) inequality, and make possible the overthrow of tyranny. Reasonable in theory, the cure has failed in practice. First, economic development is predatory: it is a war

on nature that also fuels the fires of human aggression. In addition, it attacks living communities of human beings, grinding them down into social atoms forced to fend for themselves within an impersonal market system. Worse, the affluence produced by development is fallacious: it fosters addiction instead of satisfaction. Moreover, far from moderating inequality, greater affluence only increases the extent of relative deprivation. And rationalizing inequality makes it paradoxically more odious, not less. An even greater paradox is that, in the end, when all the costs and benefits are fully and fairly accounted for, economic development magnifies scarcity instead of reducing it. The seeming abundance produced by energy slavery is fraudulent; it rests on a foundation of stolen goods, deferred payments, and hidden costs. It is also dangerous; the political concomitant of energy slavery is energy despotism, a technocratic regime that organizes and maintains the slavery and thereby enslaves the citizens. Hence we are no longer our own masters, politically or spiritually; our excessive devotion to self-enrichment has carried us away, and we now find ourselves in Weber's "iron cage."

We are enacting a great tragedy – a remorseless working of things that is bringing us exactly the opposite of what we intended – because the Enlightenment's purported cure for the ills of civilization is only a more virulent form of the disease. This tragedy cuts across every political and ideological boundary.... "Conservatives" who thought that economic development would bring social stability and political peace are rewarded with moral entropy and factional war instead: "liberals" who believed it would eliminate poverty and inequality watch helplessly as these become more deeply entrenched despite every effort to combat them. But neither conservative nor liberal will abandon the Enlightenment faith of salvation by economic development, and so we march ever deeper into a quagmire of scarcity that will swallow up the possibility of economic plenitude and political freedom....

The fallacy of developmentalism, the ideological conviction that the solution to human problems and the path to human happiness lie in making humankind richer and more powerful, is that it tries to substitute having for being. The result is a moral and political debacle.... It is not that we shall one day be rich enough to afford morality but, rather, the reverse. The pursuit of riches without regard to moral purpose simply unleashes a self-devouring wolf of appetite within the human community; insatiable wants fuel a vicious circle of limitless Hobbesian power seeking, until man finds himself sole master of a ruined universe.

pp. 174, 175

Therefore, one could argue that economic activity, especially capitalistic economic activity, generates entropy globally while minimizing it locally only for the very few. Going further one could say that wealth centralization creates a form of global

entropy that eventually affects even the fortunate few because Earth has relatively limited resources except for those which come in through the atmosphere, such as sunlight. This makes it a somewhat closed system and gravity makes it difficult to dissipate entropy at the rate that it is created. The struggle, then, appears to be between entropy and syntropy – life and death – and if entropy proceeds unabated the wealthy will eventually suffer, too.

But those in power in the United States all too often seek to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions; doing more of the same harder. Daly (2005) states that although growth is seen as the panacea for every major economic ill, the global economy has grown so large that one would think humanity could no longer deny that the ecosystem is limited. Unfortunately, he laments, some do:

Poverty? Just grow the economy (that is, increase the production of goods and services and spur consumer spending) and watch wealth trickle down. Don't try to redistribute wealth from rich to poor, because that slows growth. Unemployment? Increase demand for goods and services by lowering interest rates on loans and stimulating investment, which leads to more jobs as well as growth. Overpopulation? Just push economic growth and rely on the resulting demographic transition to reduce birth rates, as it did in the industrial nations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Environmental degradation? Trust in the environmental Kuznets curve, an empirical relation purporting to show that with ongoing growth in gross domestic product... pollution at first increases but then reaches a maximum and declines.

Relying on growth in this way might be fine if the global economy existed in a void, but it does not. Rather the economy is a subsystem of the finite biosphere that supports it. When the economy's expansion encroaches too much on its surrounding ecosystem, we will begin to sacrifice natural capital... that is worth more than the man-made capital... added by the growth. We will then have what I call uneconomic growth, producing "bads" faster than goods – making us poorer, not richer.... Once we pass the optimal scale, growth becomes stupid in the short run and impossible to maintain in the long run. Evidence suggests that the U.S. may already have entered the uneconomic growth phase....

Recognizing and avoiding uneconomic growth are not easy. One problem is that some people benefit from uneconomic growth and thus have no incentive for

change. In addition, our national accounts do not register the costs of growth for all to see.

Humankind must make the transition to a sustainable economy – one that takes heed of the inherent biophysical limits of the global ecosystem so that it can continue to operate long into the future. If we do not make that transition, we may be cursed not just with uneconomic growth but with an ecological catastrophe....

p. 100

Figure 33 illustrates his assertions:

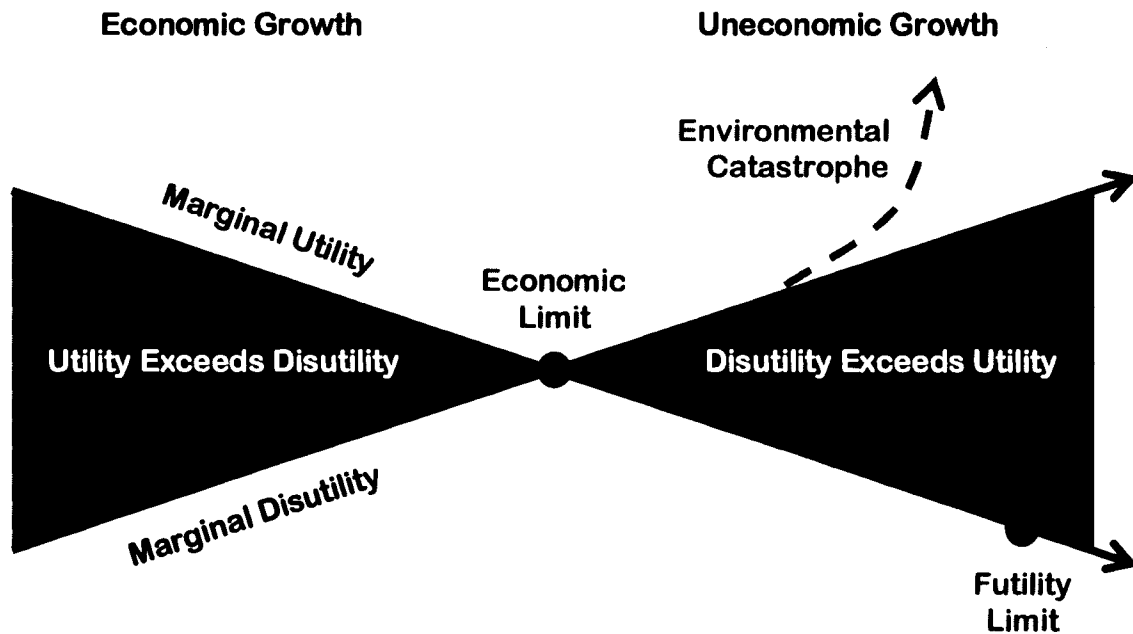


Figure 33. Marginal utility of economic growth and consumption.

(Adapted from Daly, 2005, p. 103)

Marginal utility is the benefit gained by consuming one more unit of a certain thing. Marginal disutility is the amount of sacrifice needed to produce one more unit of a certain thing. Daly points out that uneconomic growth takes place when the cost in resources and well-being for production are greater than the value of the items produced. The above illustration shows how economic growth in an environment of limited resources reduces marginal utility and increases marginal disutility. At a certain point

marginal utility and disutility converge, signaling the economic limit. This point indicates that society is maximizing its returns without causing the cost to exceed the benefit. Beyond this point growth becomes uneconomic and the cost exceeds the overall benefit (although there may be short-term benefit still enjoyed by the few). Further growth eventually brings about environmental depletion and catastrophe. The futility point occurs when no further utility is gained by increased consumption, eventually creating nihilistic outcomes for everyone. According to Daily this tragic endpoint may be very near for rich countries, including the United States.

Because the sun is the source of most input into the earth's field of resources (some water and minerals also come from space), all other resources are limited to what is already available on the planet. Currently resource use and entropy production are greater than the resources gained by the biosphere. Defining sustainability in terms of constant Gross Domestic Product creates problems as it confuses quantitative growth with qualitative improvement. A quality of life index, as mentioned many times before, would be a more appropriate indicator of progress and well-being. Unfortunately, neoclassical economics define well-being as the increase of utility over time. But the type of utility of which they speak is subjective and has no unit of measure, whereas natural resources can be measured and bequeathed. Therefore, sustainability must be defined, in large part, by measuring the planet's ability to provide natural low-entropy resources and to absorb the waste from high-entropy human-made products.

New technologies may shift the costs and benefits in the above diagram, and even set the planet on a course to renewal (Broderick, 2001), but it is no longer safe to assume that this will be the case. Rifkin (1989) concludes that improved technology will not



remedy the problems associated with economic activity, especially those of diminished energy resources, pollution, and overpopulation. He notes that overpopulation contributes to an increased use of technology which, in turn, uses more and more energy which then worsens the problem of pollution. In addition, he argues that people always use the most accessible energy first, later being forced to develop more complex technology in order to use energy that is more difficult to access. Each successive phase of technology and energy consumption means more pollution. This, Rifkin argues, is an axiomatic result of converting energy from one form to another in the process of consumption – creating entropy in the form of pollution.

He remarks:

An entropy increase, then, means a decrease in “available” energy. Every time something occurs in the natural world, some amount of energy ends up being unavailable for future work. That unavailable energy is what pollution is all about. Many people think that pollution is a byproduct of production. In fact, he states, pollution is the sum total of all the available energy in the world that has been transformed into unavailable energy. Since according to the first law, energy can neither be created nor destroyed but only transformed, and since according to the second law it can only be transformed in one way – toward a dissipated state – pollution is just another name for entropy; that is, it represents a measure of the unavailable energy present in a system.

(Rifkin, 1980, p. 35)

Others make the point that renewable energy sources, such as solar, tidal, wind, geothermal, and biomass are essentially non-polluting – but they must be adopted and widely used to make a difference. And while technology may have the potential to mitigate the ills of humanity and the planet on which people live, history has shown that technology must be used appropriately and willingly, leaving the real solution squarely in humanity’s lap.

Daly suggests that people should simply curtail economic growth in favor of qualitative improvement. The approach of weak sustainability, the neoclassical view that

manmade-capital is a good substitute for natural capital, would be similar to addressing a fish shortage by building more fishing boats. Strong sustainability, or qualitative improvement, is better as it would increase the supply of fish and reduce their overconsumption. Qualitative improvement is a far better measure of human well-being and supports sustainable improvement, as Figure 34 suggests:

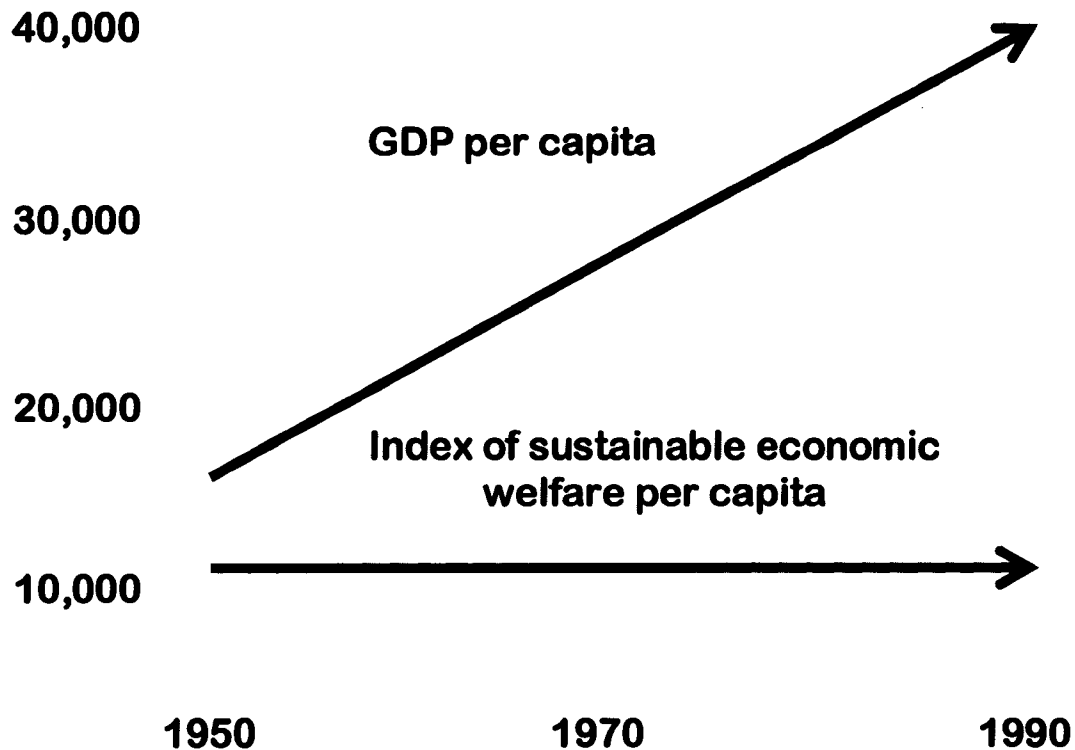


Figure 34. GDP per capita versus the index of sustainable economic welfare per capita over time, 1950 to 1990.

(Adapted from Daly, 2005, p. 105)

(Also see Ackerman, Kiron, Goodwin, Harris, & Gallagher, 1997; C. Cobb et al., 1995; C. W. Cobb, 1994; Daly, 1997; Daly & Cobb Jr., 1994; Farley & Daly, 2003; and J. M. Harris, Wise, Gallagher, & Goodwin, 2001)

In Figure 34, the vertical axis represents U.S. dollars adjusted to 2005 value and the horizontal axis represents the year. The red arrow shows growth in GDP over time. GDP does not measure income or well-being. It does not measure the depreciation of

man-made capital, human capital, or natural capital. GDP only measures overall economic activity. When hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, GDP in America increased because of the money spent to help victims and reconstruct the city (regardless of whether it was done badly). Cleaning up pollution and fixing the damage caused by natural disasters counts as increased GDP, even though one could argue that no net value is added.

The index of sustainable economic welfare (ISEW), on the other hand, measures human well-being and environmental health and is indicated by the green arrow. The above figure is a simplification, but since 1980 the ISEW has been in minor decline even though GDP has been in rapid ascension. Therefore, even though many economists are encouraged by a rapid growth in economic activity, the results in human and environmental well-being are discouraging if not frightening. According to Daly, whatever gains are being made are accumulating overall to a very few, especially in the United States, and the costs are being disproportionately absorbed by underdeveloped areas such as the subcontinent of Indian and Africa.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, socioeconomic issues appear to be inextricably intertwined with the welfare of humanity and its environment. Demonstrating a feed-forward relationship, undermining the environment subsequently undermines the conditions of production and threatens the process of capital accumulation (Foster, 1999, 2000, 2002; Kovel, 2002; J. O'Connor, 1997). Therefore, damaging or depleting the environment for economic gain ultimately becomes economically self-defeating.

This feed-forward behavior appears to be endemic to the spikes and hockey sticks discussed in this chapter. Spikes in economic activity, carbon emissions, poverty, global warming, desertification, population, disease, centralization of wealth and income, species extinction, melting polar ice, debt, war, resource depletion, deforestation, consumption, waste, pollution, anti-intellectualism, energy use, technology development, political instability, sprawl, cars on the road, distance traveled – often appear to increase the negative effects of the other and are collectively and quickly leading to a dramatic fork in the road, or bifurcation, for humanity (Ayres, 1999; Beinhocker, 2006; Bonner & Wiggin, 2006; Boseley, 2006; Broderick, 2001; P. Brown, 2006b; Buchdahl, 2004; J. Diamond, 2004; Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2004; Farmer, 2003; Flynn, 2007; Gore, 2006b; Jacobs, 2004; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Klare, 2002; Krugman, 2003b; Kunstler, 2006; Mason, 2003; McKillop & Newman, 2005; Panzner, 2007; K. Phillips, 2006; Ruddiman, 2005b; Schiff & Downes, 2007; Speth, 2005; T. A. Sullivan et al., 1989, 2000; Wiedemer, Wiedemer, Spitzer, & Janszen, 2006; E. O. Wilson, 2002, 2006).

Dauray (2005) notes:

What we have been doing for the past several hundred years is engulfing us now [in] overwhelming global crises. Each is a dangerous phenomenon, but all are closely interrelated and tightly integrated. We could have had any one of them without the others.... Any one of [them] can halt human progress, sink us into a new dark age and set Nature back a billion years.... [As a consequence] there are unhappy, overwhelmed and desperate people everywhere. There is little, if any, relief in sight. Our social order is quaking under this massive pressure and intense human stress!

p. 3, 31

In pure mathematics one can have an asymptote that reaches infinity without raising many eyebrows. However, when one is dealing with the results of human behavior within a finite system an asymptote generally means that either time must stop or the results, and likely the behavior, must change. Since time most probably will not

stop it is more plausible that the system, composed of behavior and outcome, will be required to change, as is suggested in Figure 35:

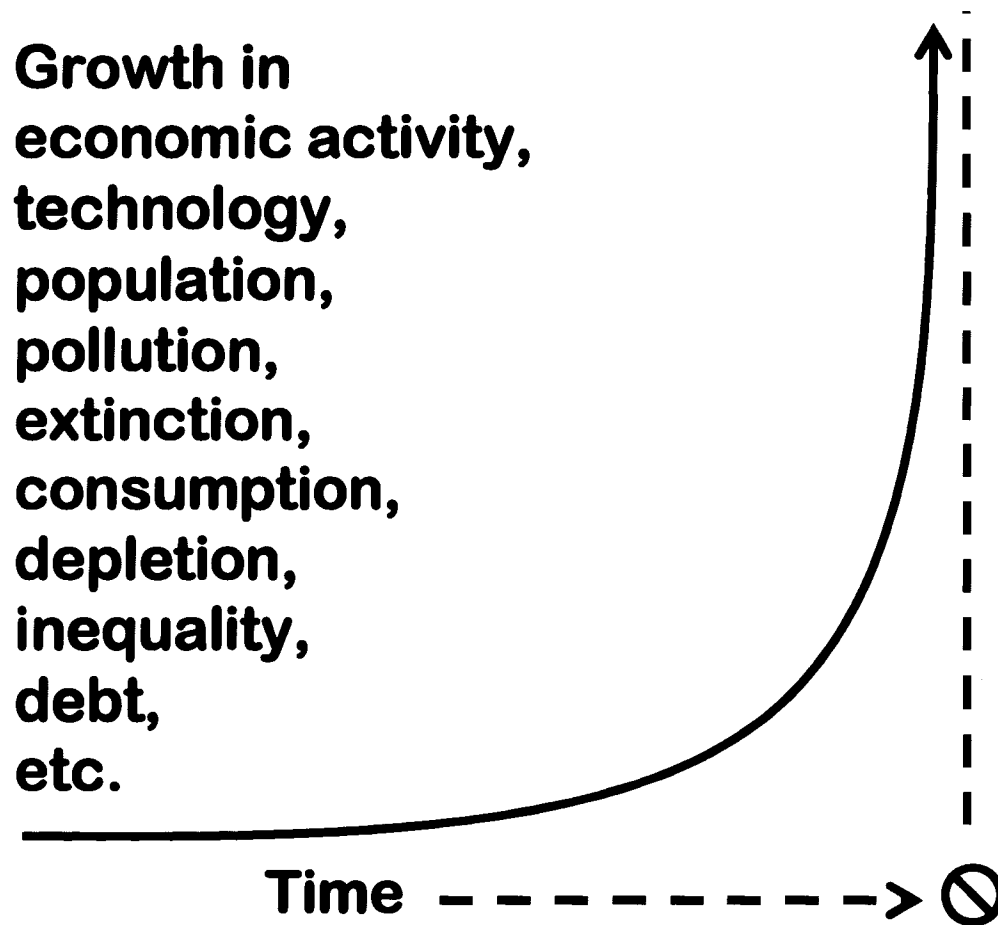


Figure 35. Growth in various social and economic factors over time.

Figure 35 is a simplification of the combination of spikes and hockey sticks mentioned previously. In this instance the spike is approaching an omega point or singularity (Broderick, 2001), meaning that the blue arrow will advance toward infinity and, along the way, reach a point beyond which prediction is impossible, although many live in denial of this predictable eventuality. However, the system is much more likely to

change in order to both move forward in time and continue to operate within a bounded set of resources. Simply put this means that things might get better, or they might get worse, but they will not stay the same. This is where bifurcation comes into play.

Following general models in chaos theory (Briggs & Peat, 1989; J. Gleick, 1987; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984) and catastrophe theory (Castrigiano & Hayes, 2004; T. Poston & Stewart, 1996) I have fashioned the illustration shown in Figure 36:

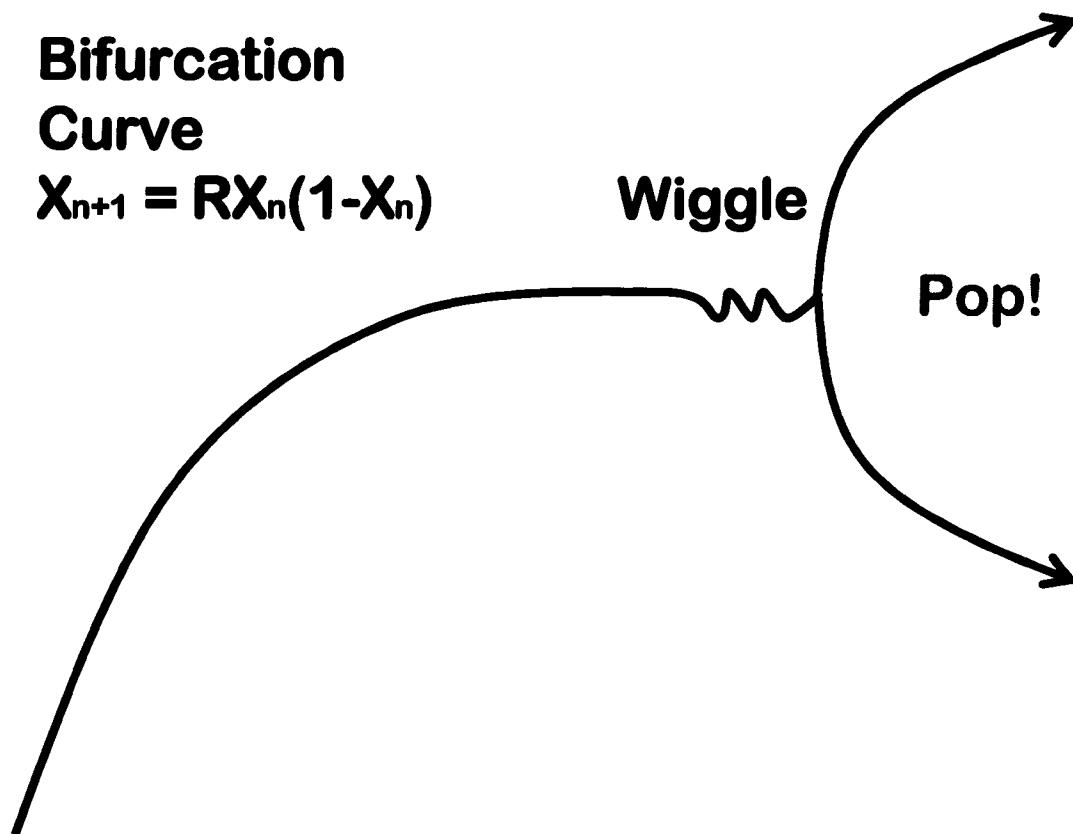


Figure 36. Simplified bifurcation curve, showing “wiggle” and “pop” phenomena.

Figure 36 is a simplification of a well-known phenomenon in chaos theory called bifurcation. In this case, the blue line represents the combination of spikes illustrated in the previous figure. The horizontal axis represents an increase in the tuning parameter. The vertical axis represents the ability of the system to function.

Natural systems, including humanity, are generally open systems in that their structure and function are to various degrees determined by the energy moving through them. When this energy, or tuning parameter, increases so does entropy. With each increase in the tuning parameter the system moves closer to an attractor which appears to the casual observer to be a point of equilibrium. However, when entropy reaches a certain point the system destabilizes and bifurcates, seeking new equilibria. The number of equilibria available to the system is predicated by the system's complexity (Laszlo, 1987, 2006), but these can be categorized into two simple levels of function. That is, the system can escape into either higher or lower forms of complexity and utility. This phenomenon applies to human and other natural systems and is true in the destruction and creation of societies (Omerod, 2000; Raikhlin, 2003).

As the tuning parameter increases the system will eventually become unstable. At the onset this perturbation appears slight. But the bifurcation, or pop, follows closely. A good example of this phenomenon is the variations in Northern Hemisphere temperature, based on samples taken from ice cores, in the years from 1800 to 2000, which preceded the spike in global warming (Gore, 2006b, pp. 64, 65). While the wiggle in the above illustration is greatly exaggerated, it is important to note because many observers focus only on the small changes preceding the much more profound bifurcation while ignoring the impending bifurcation itself. The media especially seems to expound upon small changes in weather, the stock market, military campaigns, minor political issues, the price of gas, and other relative trivialities while completely missing the larger picture and its implications.

But small perturbations within an apparently stable equilibrium can presage large instabilities. It is my assertion that the United States, if not the world, is headed towards a very important bifurcation, based on the cumulative effects of the previously mentioned spikes and hockey-sticks. And this bifurcation will either bring America to a time of sanity and greatly improved quality of life, or to a time of despair and profound loss. The nation is at a crossroads and must make a choice between better or worse. Standing still is not an option, because one cannot stop time, nor is maintaining the status quo. Figure 37 illustrates another way to view this choice.

The horizontal axis in Figure 37 is the utility of a certain state, increasing from left to right, and the vertical axis represents an increase in entropy from bottom to top. The blue arrow again represents the cumulative spikes, with the same wiggle and pop mentioned previously. This graph shows the general direction a bifurcation can take with respect to utility and entropy. That is, a bifurcation can certainly lead to a state of higher entropy and lower utility, or it can just as well lead to a state of higher utility but lower entropy. From this vantage the choice would appear simple.

Unfortunately, as noted previously, there are still some who deny that there is anything wrong. Moore and Simon (S. Moore & Simon, 2000; T. Moore, 2000) argue that the state of the planet is nothing to worry about; things are in fact only getting better. Americans, they claim, are living in more affluence than ever before, global warming is a myth, health and diet are better, education has improved, people are safer, there is more environmental protection, and freedom and democracy is on the ascension. They contend that there has been more material progress in America in the twentieth century than in the entire world in all other previous centuries combined.



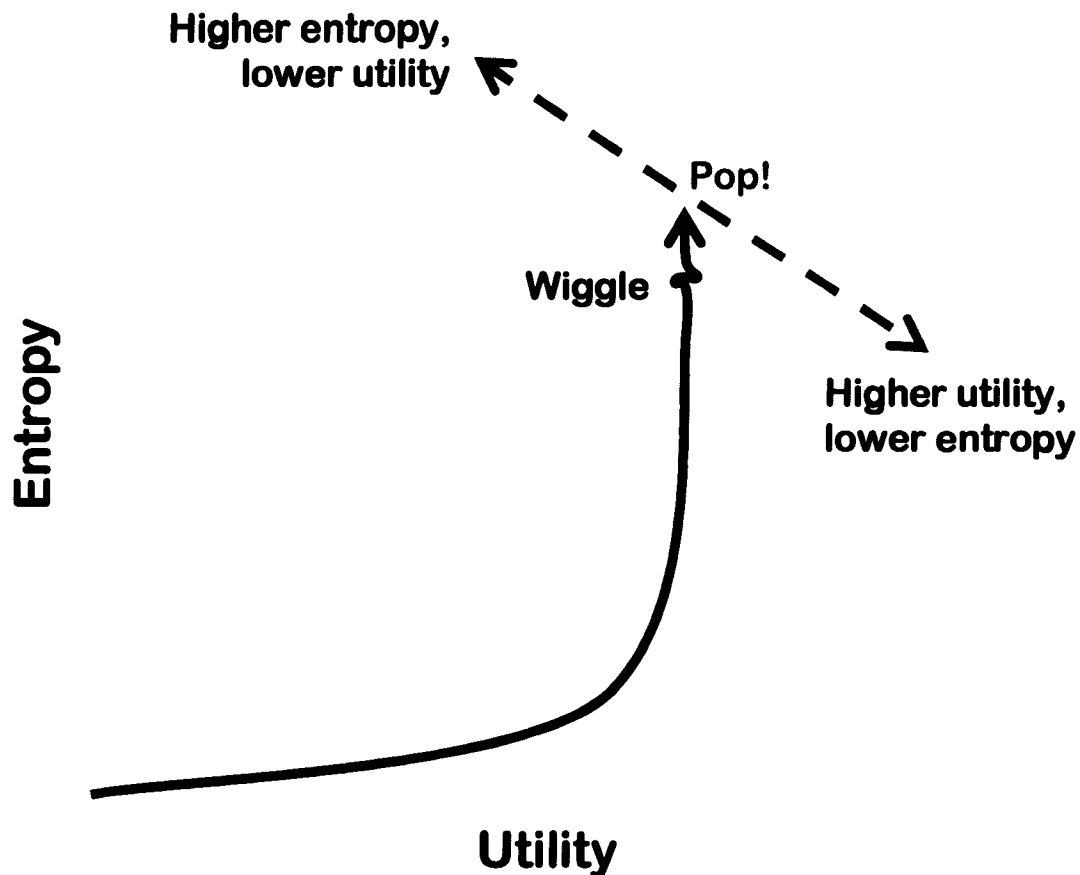


Figure 37. Potential entropy and utility outcomes at the point of bifurcation.

But according to many there is only a short time left to save the planet (Ayres, 1999; Grice, 2006; Meadows, Randers, & Meadows, 2004). What I posit is that in the very near future humanity will either experience things getting much better or much worse, but the state of the world as it is, and the trends that are perpetuating it, cannot continue.

Musser (2005) makes the same point:

Demographically and economically, our era is unique in human history. Depending on how we manage the next few decades, we could usher in environmental sustainability – or collapse.

p. 44

Kofi Annan (2002) agrees:

Imagine a future of relentless storms and floods: islands and heavily inhabited coastal regions inundated by rising sea levels; fertile soils rendered barren by drought and the desert's advance; mass migrations of environmental refugees; and armed conflicts over water and other precious natural resources.

Then, think again – for one might just as easily conjure a more hopeful picture: of green technologies; livable cities; energy-efficient homes, transport and industry; and rising standards of living for all the world's people, not just a fortunate minority.

The choice between these competing visions is ours to make. Current trends may not be very encouraging, and certainly we know enough about ecological problems to fear the worst. But there is time to draw back from the brink. Most important, another path exists – one that is better for people, less harmful to the environment and possible with the policies, knowledge and technologies at our disposal today.

p. A18

Laszlo (2006) also claims that the world is either on the brink of destruction or of giving birth to a new and marvelous civilization. He explains:

At the dawn of the twenty-first century we can no longer ignore that current trends are building toward critical thresholds, toward some of the famous... “planetary limits” that in the 1970s and 1980s were said to be the limits to growth. Whether they are limits to growth altogether is questionable, but they are clearly limits to the kind of growth that is occurring today. As we move toward these limits, we are approaching a point of chaos. At this point, some trends will deflect or disappear, and new ones will appear in their stead. This is not unusual: Chaos theory shows that the evolution of complex systems always involves alternating periods of stability and instability, continuity and discontinuity, order and chaos. We are living in the opening phases of a period of social and ecological instability – at a crucial decision-window. When we reach the point of chaos, the stable “point” and “periodic” attractors of our systems will be joined by “chaotic” or “strange” attractors. These will appear suddenly, as chaos theorists say, “out of the blue.” They will drive our systems to the crucial point where it will select the one or the other of the paths of evolution available to it.

(Laszlo, 2006, p. 9)

(Laszlo's chaos point is the "pop" where the system tips in one direction or the other, towards new equilibria and the strange attractors that bound the near-to-chaos nature of human behavior.)

Mason (2003) asserts that by the year 2030 the driving forces of poverty, depleted fuel supply, population growth, climate change, famine, and a shortage of water will all converge to plunge the world into catastrophe. He calls this the 2030 spike; a statistical spike that will spell disaster if these six drivers are not halted and reversed. If they are redirected, however, Mason argues that the world would be safer, healthier, and saner with unparalleled peace, prosperity, and well-being.

The September, 2005, issue of Scientific American is almost entirely dedicated to the question of bifurcation. Entitled *Crossroads for Planet Earth* the editors note that humanity is at a unique turning point and wonder if people will choose the right path. They are optimistic and provide methods for making things better. But they make it clear that the choice has yet to be made.

The problem is, most mutations fail.

Omerod (2006) declares:

Failure is all around us. Failure is pervasive. Failure is everywhere, across time, across place and across different aspects of life. Ninety-nine point nine nine percent of all biological species which have ever existed are now extinct.... More than 10 percent of all the companies in America disappear each year. Large and small, from corporate giants to the tiniest one-person business, they fail.... Government policies fail, firms fail, whole economies fail and remain enmeshed in poverty.... The existence of failure on this scale is simply not recognized in economics. Instead, in much of economic theory, getting the right strategy, the right policy, is straightforward. It is simply a matter of following the appropriate formula laid down in the textbook.... [This] has been much less successful, however, when applied to human social and economic systems. The fundamental reason is that this approach regards equilibrium – a static, changeless state of the world – as the natural order of things. The whole panoply of differential calculus, the branch of mathematics that is by far the most widely used in economics, is

focused on finding equilibrium solutions, solutions in which the system is at rest, static, in which continuity and lack of change are its hallmarks.

This is simply not the case either with society or with the economy.

pp. ix, 17, 18

Therefore, if we rely on old methods, on doing the same harder – or worse, simply waiting for a mutation to emerge rather than to take responsibility and make a functional choice – then the default mode of higher entropy and lower utility will most likely be the outcome. This leaves one to ask whether there is any benefit in pretending that humanity's current course can continue. Does the pain of change, or the comfort of changing nothing, overwhelm the potential for disaster if things remain the same?

Throughout this chapter I have presented graphs that take the form of an inverted “u” or, more simply, a bump. These figures illustrate that an increase of something – money, possessions, etc. – increases happiness, well-being, and quality of life. That is, until they don't. Generalizing from Schwartz (2004a), Kuntstler (2006), Schor (1999), Frank (1999), de Graaf and Naylor (2002), Dominguez and Robin (1992) and many others, when one moves from the peak, the optimal point, of these bumps one eventually finds oneself heading toward depression, pain, and anxiety – as is illustrated in Figure 38.

In Figure 38, the benefit of something increases from bottom to top on the vertical axis. The amount of something increases from left to right on the horizontal axis. Just as Goldilocks found when visiting the home of the three bears, there is a point between too little and too much where the benefit of something is just right.

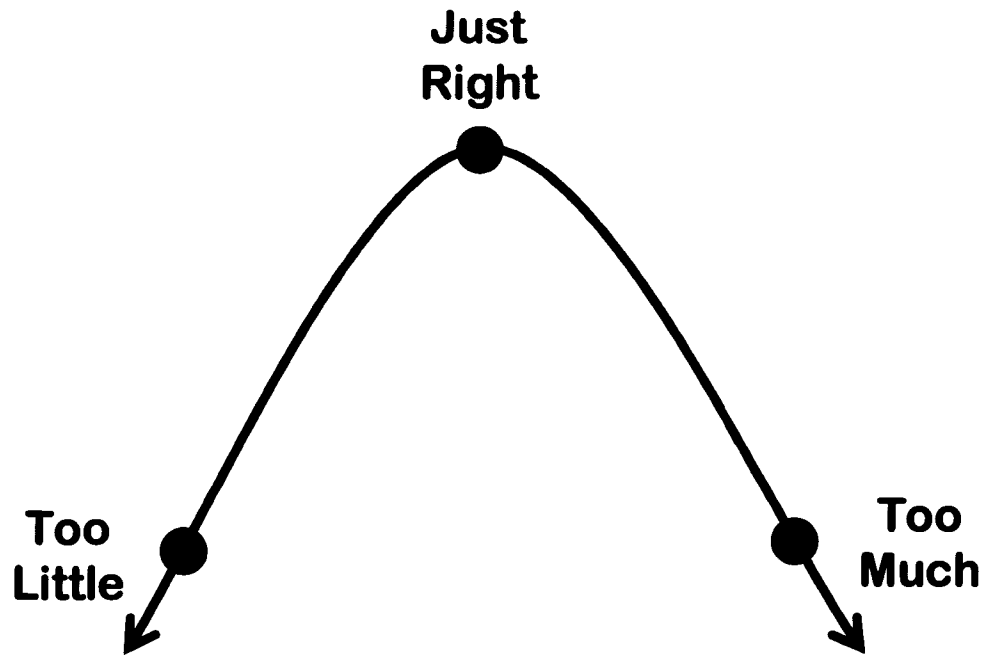


Figure 38. Benefit of tangible goods versus amount consumed or possessed.

For example, after a certain amount of wealth accumulation, managing one's money and possessions, or managing the people who manage one's money and possessions, can become all encompassing (Aldrich, 1988; B. Schwartz, 2004a; Sirgy, 2001), including the effort to make sure that one's children don't squander all of one's hard earned money (Aldrich, 1988). Therefore, trying to minimize local entropy can become entropic itself. Schwartz explains in Figure 39.

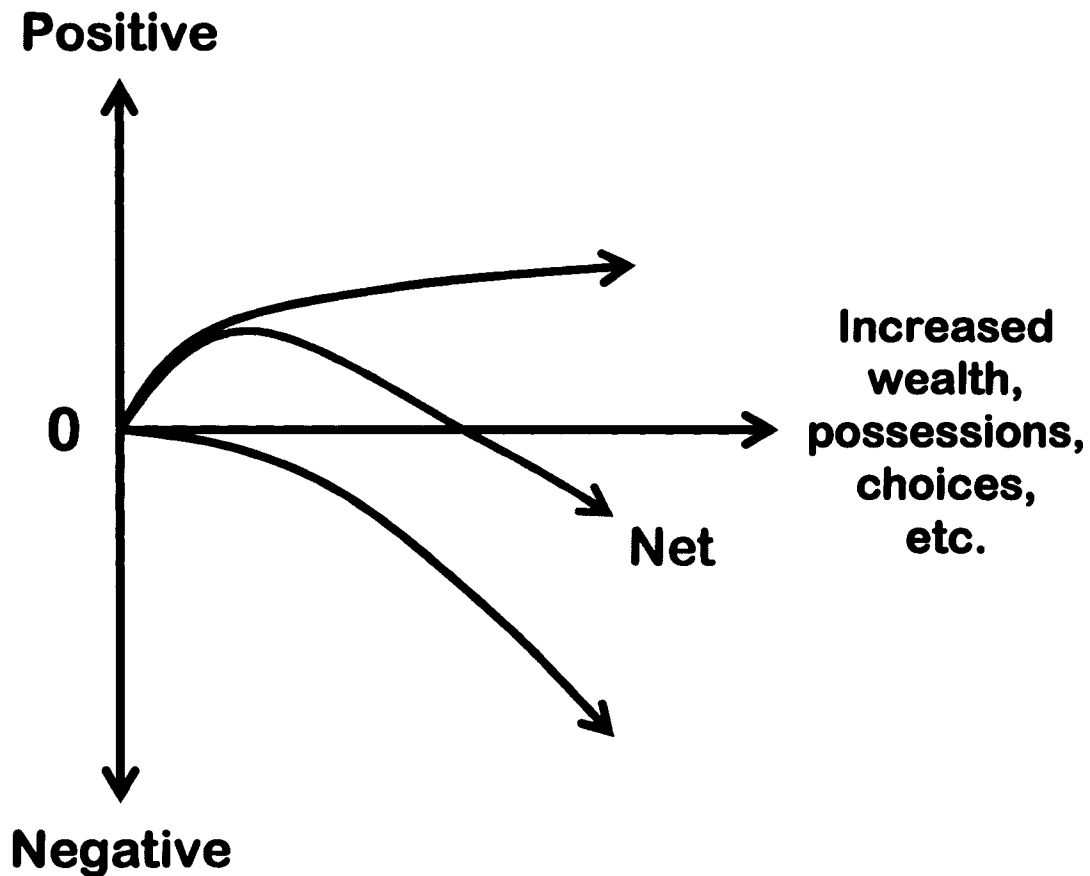


Figure 39. Diminishing value of material possessions and choices as amount increases.

(Adapted from B. Schwartz, 2004b)

In Figure 39, the vertical axis represents negative to positive effects in ascending order, with zero representing a position of neutrality. The horizontal axis represents an increase in wealth, possessions, and choices as the arrow moves from left to right. And while one could argue that there is always a positive aspect to having more of these things, beyond a certain point the negative aspects of possession outweigh the positive and yield a net result of diminishing returns. Therefore, movement on these bumps appears to be problematic if the optimum is not maintained at a level that is universally beneficial.

Besides, if the centralization of wealth continues on its current course there will likely be very, very few who have any possessions, or choice, or money to worry about.

Paraphrasing Engels; Hughes, Sharrock, and Martin (2004) note:

Intense and incessant competition among capitalists will lead to trade crises, cycles of booms and slumps with each increasingly severe crisis eliminating the weaker competitors. As time goes by capitalist production will become concentrated in fewer and fewer large firms. The social structure is also transformed: "The middle classes must increasingly disappear until the world is divided into millionaires [likely billionaires and trillionaires] and paupers...."

p. 43

Why, then, is the potential for bifurcation ignored?

Diamond (2004) emphasizes the idea that societies collapse because people ultimately ignore the exhaustion of their resources, human and natural. But why, he asks, could societies that are highly integrated and coordinated still harbor this fatal flaw? The answer, he contends, is that both group and individual decision makers fare badly under four general conditions. That is:

1. They fail to anticipate a problem;
2. They fail to perceive a problem when it manifests;
3. They fail to attempt a solution;
4. Or they attempt a solution that does not solve the problem.

(To this list I would add that people and societies fail to identify the real problem or the real cause.)

Diamond contends that these failures are especially likely when:

- They occur slowly and incrementally. This creeping normalcy can lull people into forgetting that things were once better.

- There is reasoning by false analogy, that is, proceeding as if old and new problems are similar when they are only superficially alike.
- Those responsible for a problem are insulated from the consequences.
- Powerful people benefit from the problem.
- Recognizing or solving a problem clashes with one's beliefs.
- Recognizing or solving a problem creates physical or emotional pain.
- People dislike those who reveal the problem.
- The focus is on short-term outcomes.
- People are susceptible to influence of the larger group.

Diamond comments that often:

The perpetrators know that they will often get away with their bad behavior, especially if there is no law against it or if the law isn't effectively enforced. They feel safe because [they] are typically concentrated (few in number) and highly motivated by the prospect of reaping big, certain, and immediate profits, while the losses are spread over large numbers of individuals. That gives the losers little motivation to go to the hassle of fighting back, because each loser loses only a little and would receive only small, uncertain, distant profits even from successfully undoing the minority's grab....

A frequent type of... bad behavior is "good for me, bad for you and everybody else" – to put it bluntly, "selfish...." Clashes of interest... are also prone to arise when the principal consumer has no long-term stake in preserving the resource but society as a whole does....

pp. 427 – 430

I have attempted to make it evident that many of the factors that make functional decisions difficult are alive and well in contemporary America. And although more discussion will follow in further chapters, I believe that it is important to note one central aspect of the decision-making process. This aspect is the space-time-and complexity domain in which people make decisions, as illustrated in Figures 40 and 41.



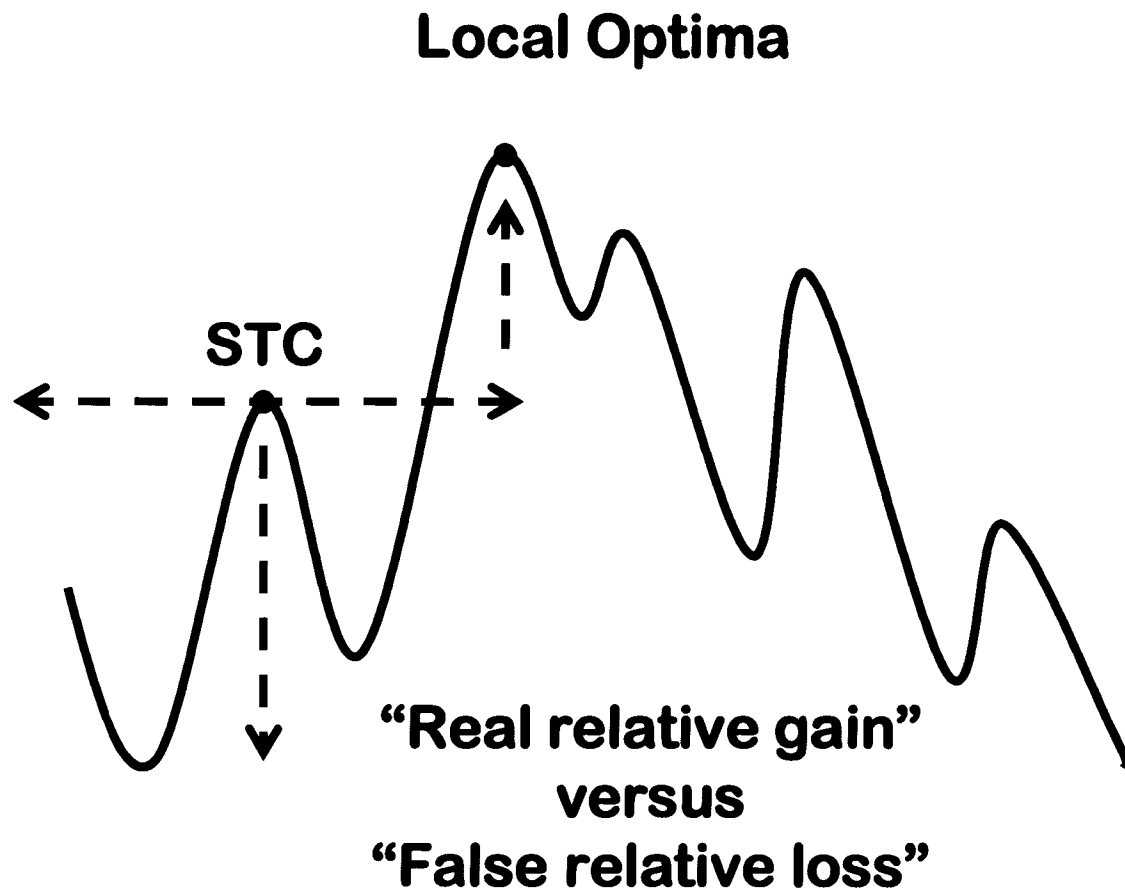


Figure 40. Challenge of local optima in decision making.

A model used programming the heuristics of artificial intelligence, neural nets, and genetic algorithms provides a good illustration for problem solving in human behavior. That is, when artificial intelligence is programmed to learn, parameters must be set on how far the algorithm will search for solutions. If the search is limitless and without constraint the program will continue forever in order to find the optimal solution. If, however, the search is too constrained the program will settle on a local optimum, unaware that better solutions are available.

When humans attempt to optimize they are also presented with a field of potential solutions (and potential disasters), much like a mountain climber who seeks the heights but fears the valleys. Once an optimum is reached, if one looks out only a short distance all one will see is a descent into the valley, causing one to settle on the peak one is on, the local optimum (Beinhocker, 2006). But if one looks further out chances are that a taller peak will appear. Now, the peak must be high enough to make the trek worthwhile, but it is important to know that it is there, and in a typical decision domain there are usually many higher and lower peaks.

In a crucial decision-making situation, finding the optimum, or an acceptable approximation thereof, requires searching in the dimensions of space, time, and complexity. This search need not necessarily be exhaustive, but it generally needs to be extensive when the issues are important. However, in many cases people operate from a space-time-complexity domain that worked for them in the past, but will not necessarily work for them in the future. This is problematic if this space-time-complexity domain becomes solidified and loses its ability to expand to the necessary dimension for an appropriate search (Laszlo, 1987, 2006; Lynch, 2003; Lynch & Kordis, 1991; Lynch & Kordis, 1988, 1990; Massey, 1979). In the case of the impending bifurcation humanity's search, in general, has been far too constrained, obfuscating both the potential disaster and the new and more functional optimum, as illustrated in Figure 41.

## Bifurcation Curve

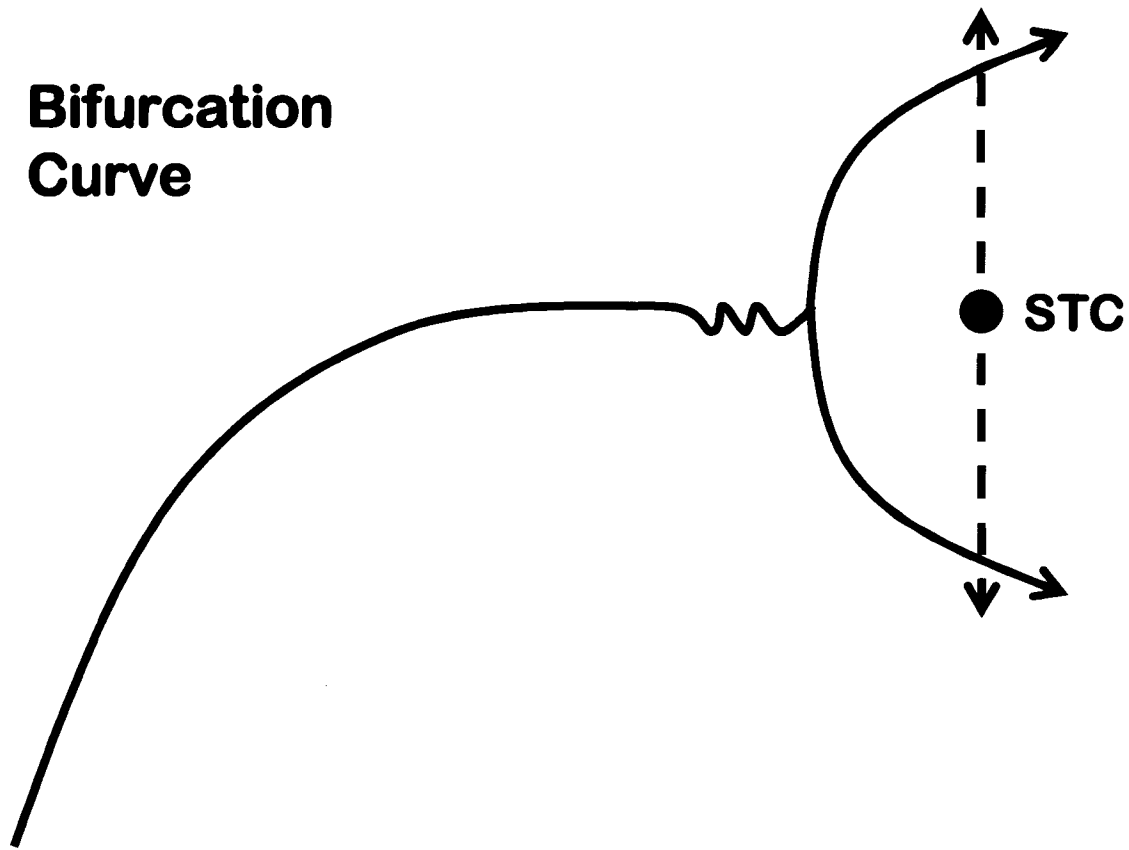


Figure 41. Relationship of the local optimum and the bifurcation curve.

Figure 41 is an iteration of the first bifurcation shown in Figure 36. If one is operating at the level of a limited space-time-complexity domain, regardless of whether or not it has functioned well in the past, one is at risk of missing the impending bifurcation, its range of potential consequences, and the choices one might make to direct the bifurcation towards higher utility and lower entropy. But, as noted earlier, humanity must take charge of and direct the impending bifurcation because most random mutations die. If this is to happen, though, many will have to radically change their world view and thought processes. To paraphrase Einstein, new problems cannot be solved by old thinking. Especially if it was old thinking that created the new problems. Others such as

Laszlo (2006) agree, claiming that the world is headed towards global breakdown and that it will take a breakthrough in thinking to prevent it.

But what will characterize this new mode of thinking?

Meadows, Meadows, and Randers (1972; 1993; 2004) contend that the world, largely due to the practices of the United States and other developed nations, has gone into global overshoot and have moved beyond the world's limits, that is, the rate at which people can change from nonrenewable resources to renewable ones, and the rate at which nature can recycle humanity's pollution. People are increasingly approaching global collapse through overconsuming such crucial resources as food and water while overwhelming nature with pollutants. The only recourse, these authors argue, is to unplug the exponential population growth and industrial production which will require a profound social and psychological readjustment, especially in the developed world.

Meadows (2004) advises that this new mindset should include: supporting technological advances that will increase the consumption of the world's poor, bringing them out of poverty while at the same time reducing humanity's ecological footprint; supporting personal change in order to reduce this footprint through minimizing the use of nonrenewable resources; preventing the erosion of renewable resources; adhering to maximum efficiency in the use of resources; reducing population; and planning from the perspective of much more distant time horizons. The minor adjustments that have been recommended so far, such as carbon sequestering and carbon trading (Reed, 2006), will likely be insufficient (Also see *Vital signs 2006 - 2007: The trends that are shaping our future*, 2006). Meadows suggests, however, that these remedial activities must take place

within the context of a new world view, one that people must imagine together based on the kind of world they would truly prefer (also see Laszlo, 2006).

Ehrlich and Ehrlich (2004) agree, suggesting that America is now emulating the overconsumption, resource depletion, and raging hubris that led to the downfall of the Assyrian Empire. Emphasizing the chasm between the super-affluent and the extremely poor, the cancerous influence and power of corporations, and the political, economic, social, and environmental catastrophes rapidly approaching they suggest that new thought patterns, radically different from those in ancient Nineveh, are essential for survival (also see Brzezinski, 1997; Brzezinski, 2004). But the process required to change America's current perspective may be daunting.

Catton (1982) observes:

Today mankind is locked into stealing ravenously from the future.... [a condition called] diachronic competition, a relationship whereby contemporary well-being is achieved at the expense of our descendants.... People of one generation have become indirect and unwitting antagonists of subsequent generations.... The overlooked differences between methods that permanently enlarge human carrying capacity and more recent methods that have only enabled us to temporarily *evade* the world's limits can be seen if we contrast the way people *used to* seek the good life versus today's substitute expedient.... Assumptions that were once viable but have become obsolete must be replaced with a new perspective, one that enables us to see more effectively and to understand more accurately.... Being unfamiliar, the new perspective will initially be distasteful and seem implausible.... But if we have the wisdom... we must face the fact that continued misunderstanding of unwelcome experiences cannot prevent them from happening and cannot insulate us from their consequences.

pp. 3 – 6

According to many, though, people in the most crucial nation, America, have hidden away, cocooning and insulating themselves, when they have the resources, from the size and complexity of the world's problems (Bennis, 2003; Popcorn, 1991; Putnam, 2000). Lasch (1991) indicates that the beginning of Americans' resignation, of alienation

from the world and self-indulgent individualism as an escape, began in the 1970s and 1980s. He observes at the turn of the century:

As the twentieth century approaches its end, the conviction grows that many other things are ending too. Storm warnings, portents, hints of catastrophe haunt our times. The “sense of an ending,” which has given shape to so much of twentieth-century literature, now pervades the popular imagination as well.... The threat of nuclear annihilation, the depletion of natural resources, well-founded predictions of ecological disaster have fulfilled poetic prophecy, giving concrete historical substance to the nightmare, or death wish, that avant-garde artists were the first to express. The question of whether the world will end in fire or in ice, with a bang or a whimper, no longer interests artists alone. Impending disaster has become an everyday concern, so commonplace and familiar that nobody any longer gives much thought to how disaster might be averted. People busy themselves instead with survival strategies, measures designed to prolong their own lives, or programs guaranteed to ensure good health and peace of mind.... After the political turmoil of the sixties, Americans have retreated to purely personal preoccupations. Having no hope of improving their lives in any of the ways that matter.... Americans seem to wish to forget... their entire collective past.... To live for the moment is the prevailing passion – to live for yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity. We are fast losing the sense of historical continuity, the sense of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and stretching into the future. It is the waning of the sense of historical time – in particular, the erosion of any strong concern for posterity – that distinguishes the spiritual crisis....

(Lasch, 1991, pp. 4, 5)

Although this early onset of American denial is likely true, others argue that those who do not have the capital to protect themselves from the fray support the status quo due to a misguided belief in or dependence upon the institutions that favored them in better days.

Observing how this phenomenon manifests in the workplace Wooding and Levenstein (1999) note:

In the changing American workplace much is made of leaner, meaner production. In many workplaces, management has achieved remarkable production gains and improved the bottom line. That this was possible in the 1980's had much to do with new technologies, increased automation, and capital flight to countries where labor is cheap and government regulation weak. However, it also reflects a changing set of beliefs about how management's (and the state's) responsibilities to workers are defined. Stressing the virtues for trickle-down economics and

emphasizing the need for capital to be free from governmental – that is to say, social – constraints (environmental and health and safety regulation in particular, taxation in general) created a new ethic of personal responsibility and reaffirmed the seeming virtues of the market. What little sense of obligation there had been of employer to employee (to provide relatively secure employment over the long term, to provide steadily increasing income and at least an elemental set of benefits) has broken down as the structural pressures for change are played out in the form of ideological assertions of the rights of capital over the rights of workers and citizens. Attacks on governmental regulation and organized labor, often spearheaded by business, have exacerbated job instability and insecurity. There is no longer a commitment by the government to full employment.

Clearly the changing character of the U.S. economy has altered the nature and experience of work for many Americans. It also has enormous social and political implications. The decrease in heavy manufacturing, the expansion of the service sector, and the concomitant changes in benefits and unionization have all contributed to changes in the overall welfare of working people. But the structural changes... have had a profound impact on the nature of employer-employee relations that goes well beyond the restructuring of work and the availability and extent of benefits such as health coverage and vacation time.... These changes have resulted in some new clearly identifiable problems that shape the overall welfare of Americans and have important health consequences in and outside of the workplace.... Technological and economic changes place an increasing burden on workers, and... there are now new chemical and ergonomic hazards facing workers at their workplaces. Further, working now takes up a greater proportion of time than in recent memory for those in full-time work, resulting in a significant reduction of leisure time and a negative impact on the quality of life for many working Americans....

These problems not only [relate] to the issue of the restructuring of work... but also to the decreasing ability of many workers to resist these changes. This decreased ability results from the decline in trade union power in the workplace and the dominance of an ideology that promotes the rights of corporation and limits the acceptability and legitimacy of state interventions to protect worker and environmental health.

pp. 51, 52

Yet, it would be unwise to assume that the general public has not been concerned, at least at the intuitive and emotional level, with the general damage being done and the potential catastrophe to come. The problem is that they feel out of the loop and out of control.

Using the risks inherent in the use of technology Beck (2004) comments:

The dominant risk paradigms have been able to surround themselves with the appearance (and self-delusion) of critical pluralistic debate and learning.... Yet the critical force of all this fervent intellectual activity is radically and systematically constrained by its cultural heritage and unreflective idiom (not to mention its forms of patronage and institutional orientations). Risks are defined as the probabilities of physical harm due to given technological or other processes. Hence technical experts are given pole position to define agendas and impose bounding premises *a priori* on risk discourses.

A small group of sociologists and anthropologists from beyond the cultural pale of this hegemony have made three observations in particular. First, such physical risks are always created and effected in social systems, for example by organizations and institutions which are supposed to manage and control the risky activity. Second, the magnitude of the physical risks is therefore a direct function of the quality of social relations and processes. Third, the primary risk, even for the most technically intensive activities (indeed perhaps most especially for them), is therefore that of social dependency upon institutions and actors who may well be – and arguably are increasingly – alien, obscure and inaccessible to most people affected by the risks in question....

It is common to suppose that when there is no open public conflict about the risks of some technology... this is evidence of positive public acceptance of the risks, or of the full social package of risk-technology-institutions. When public opposition emerges into political form, the questions are usually posed in terms of the factors which turned the public negative in its attitudes.

Yet more ethnographic fieldwork frequently shows that people were never particularly positive about the risks in question, or about their controlling institutions. They may not have expressed their criticism or dissent in public form, but that does not mean they were not chronically mistrustful of, skeptical of or alienated from those institutions supposed to be in control. They may simply have been resigned to dependency on that institutional or political nexus, with no perceived power to influence it or make it more accountable.

pp. 4 – 6

Recently, however, many institutions, scientists, and technologists have tried to raise concern regarding the dangers of global warming, burning fossil fuel, species extinction, pollution, and other critical factors relevant to what has already been reported in this dissertation, but have largely been prohibited, silenced, and even threatened by the current government (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2004; Hedges, 2007; Kennedy, 2006; Kennedy



Jr., 2004). This does not remove, however, the reality of these potential disasters nor does it erase the floating anxiety regarding these issues that people in America seem to feel.

Hallowell (2006) comments:

Our peculiar times seem to be leading up to some epochal phase change, comparable to what happens to physical bodies when they reach a certain temperature or speed. How fast can we go, how busy can we get before we fundamentally change? Wherever we're headed, we're headed there fast.

We've heard predictions, most of which we ignore because we don't know what else to do with them. Whether it's economic distress due to global competition and our own overspending, or physical distress due to global warming and our own misuse of the planet, or pandemic illness due to a resistant virus, or political distress due to global power shifts and our own misuse of power, we are aware of the dangers that might soon cataclysmically change our lives for the worse....

Life today teeters on a pinnacle surrounded by a sea of uncertainty. And so it did well before 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. Yet, buoyed by perhaps unreasonable optimism, we work harder than ever, trying to hold on to what we have and to make it better. You don't see many people giving up. Just the opposite. Most people are working as hard as they can. Through hard work coupled with cockeyed optimism and smart decisions, we rise to the peculiar challenges of life today.

But the challenges are peculiar and daunting, more so than most of us realize. For example, how much do you really know about global warming? I didn't know much, but because I wanted to get an expert's view on an important issue I didn't understand in order to show how busyness can keep a person (me) from keeping up with issues that really matter, I called Jim Anderson, professor of chemistry at Harvard and one of the world's experts on climate. He told me he was "not sanguine" (that's professorese for scared as hell) having looked at the latest data showing how much of the polar ice cap had already melted. As he went into the gory details, the part of my mind that can no longer hear about Big Problems I Can't Solve went numb. And global warming is just one of the many challenges we face. AIDS. Resistant bacteria and viruses. Deforestation. A national debt like we've never had before, plus an emerging China holding so many of our notes. The unexplained rise in asthma, autism, allergies, and Asperger's syndrome. Terrorism....

From physics to friendships, from cosmology to cameras and computers, from what we do and what our children do to how we keep track of what we do and how others keep track of us, from what your employer can promise you to the

lifestyle you can expect, everywhere you look, what was familiar has changed. No one knows what will be, what to hold on to, and what to reject.

While politicians and policy makers offer simplistic solutions to calm our nerves and quiet us down, the wise among us know that this world is so complex and unpredictable that simplistic solutions will leave people lost, disappointed, and ill equipped to thrive in tomorrow's world, like people who can memorize but who can't think.

pp. 15 – 17

Therefore, even if people in America are in denial, have little control, or do not have the mindset to fully address the problems they are facing, many seem to have an intuitive feeling that something has gone very badly. They may not be exactly sure what it is, or they may be reluctant to say or do something about it, and their passivity and silence may be giving people in power the notion that everyone agrees with what is going on, but they don't feel good about it. They may lash out at the wrong enemy, or place their trust in the wrong hands, but they apparently feel that something is amiss, that there is a shadow on the horizon, that things are just not right.

And one could rightly accuse me of projecting my own biases onto the American people and the problems they face.

Renata Adler points out that:

The writer has a grudge against society, which he documents with accounts of unsatisfying sex, unrealized ambition, unmitigated loneliness, and a sense of local and global distress. The square, overpopulation, the bourgeois, the bomb and the cocktail party are variously identified as sources of the grudge. There follows a little obscenity here, a dash of philosophy there, considerable whining overall, and a modern satirical novel is born.

Found at [http://en.thinkexist.com/reference/quotes\\_on\\_overpopulation/](http://en.thinkexist.com/reference/quotes_on_overpopulation/)

But in the final analysis the data seems to hold up:

- Spikes - There are multiple problems which appear to be leading America, if not the world, in an unsustainable direction.

- Hockey Sticks – See Spikes.
- Bumps – To continue on the current course seems to have little benefit and much cost. Those behaviors that brought about pleasure are now causing pain.
- Xs – The disutility of current economic and behavioral trends is rapidly exceeding their utility, leading to futility.
- Bifurcation – Things have reached a point at which things could greatly improve or they could quickly degenerate, but they are unlikely to remain the same.

And the implication seems to be that Americans are being led to a level of serfdom that has not been experienced since feudal times, or at least the Gilded Age. They appear to be in bondage to overwork and overconsumption, both symptoms of the larger bondage to America's economic system. And finally they appear enthralled, in the negative sense, by the larger economic, social, and environmental consequences of their servitude.

The more jaundiced observations seem to apply:

The most significant characteristic of modern civilization is the sacrifice of the future for the present, and all the power of science has been prostituted to this purpose.

William James as quoted in (Kunstler, 2006, p. 185)

A society which allows an abominable event to burgeon from its dung heap and grow on its surface is like a man who lets a fly crawl unheeded across his face or saliva dribble from his mouth - either epileptic or dead.

Jean Baudrillard found at <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jeanbaudri165297.html>

History is a race between education and catastrophe.

H. G. Wells found at <http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/catastrophe/>

Americans learn only from catastrophe and not from experience.

Theodore Roosevelt found at <http://www.quotedb.com/quotes/1242>

Mistakes, scandals, and failures no longer signal catastrophe. The crucial thing is that they be made credible, and that the public be made aware of the efforts being expended in that direction. The “marketing” immunity of governments is similar to that of the major brands of washing powder.

Jean Baudrillard found at <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jeanbaudri149991.html>

Apparently all that remains to be asked is how, in detail, did America get here, to what should America aspire, and what is being offered as a solution? These questions are the subject of the following chapters.

4

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DISSERTATION

The Superhighway to Serfdom:  
How False Social Norms Marketing is Hijacking the American Dream

Volume II  
Chapters Seven Through Eleven

Submitted by  
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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Fort Collins, Colorado  
Spring 2007

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## **Chapter Seven:**

### **A Brief Review of Time, Technology and Human Values**

Whenever life get you down, Mrs. Brown,  
And things seem hard or tough,  
And people are stupid, obnoxious or daft,  
And you feel that you've had quite enough!  
Just remember that you're standing on a planet that's evolving  
And revolving at 900 miles an hour,  
It's orbiting at 19 miles a second, so it's reckoned,  
A sun that is the source of all our power,  
The Sun and you and me, and all the stars that we can see,  
Are moving at a million miles a day,  
In the outer spiral arm, at 40,000 miles an hour,  
Of the galaxy we call the Milky Way,  
Our Galaxy itself contains 100 billion stars,  
It's 100,000 light years side to side,  
It bulges in the middle, 16,000 light years thick,  
But out by us it's just 3000 light-years wide.  
We're 30,000 light years from galactic central point,  
We go round every 200 million years,  
And our galaxy is only one of millions of billions,  
In this amazing and expanding universe,  
The universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding,  
In all of the directions it can whiz,  
As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know,  
Twelve million miles a minute,  
and that's the fastest speed there is,  
So remember, when you're feeling very small and insecure,  
How amazingly unlikely is your birth,  
And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere up in space,  
'Cause there's bugger all down here on Earth.

Galaxy Song by Monty Python found at  
[http://www.metrolyrics.com/lyrics/62656/Galaxy\\_Song](http://www.metrolyrics.com/lyrics/62656/Galaxy_Song)

Against stupidity the very gods themselves contend in vain.

Friedrich von Schiller, *The Maid of Orleans*. Act iii. Sc. 6



Human consciousness arose but a minute before midnight on the geological clock. Yet we mayflies try to bend an ancient world to our purposes, ignorant perhaps of the messages buried in its long history. Let us hope that we are still in the early morning of our April day.

Stephen Jay Gould as quoted in ("Sunbeams," 2006, p. 48)

Approximately 15 billion years ago, give or take five billion depending on whom you ask, the universe was created. There is also debate as to who or what created it, although some are trying to reconcile the differences (C. J. Collins, 2003; F. Collins & Falk, 2004; F. S. Collins, 2006; Falk & Collins, 2004; Matt, 1998; K. B. Miller, 2003; K. R. Miller, 1999; Ross, 2001; Roughgarden, 2006; Ruse, 2001; Schroeder, 1991; Whorton, 2005), and there are lingering questions as to what happened before the creation, what was going on nanoseconds afterward, and various opinions regarding all that confusing dark matter that seems to comprise the lion's share of the universe and the dark-vacuum energy that seems to be pushing the galaxies apart at a much faster rate than predicted by gravity (Krauss & Turner, 2004). However, there are a few things regarding the history of the universe that appear to be fairly well agreed upon within the scientific community.

In the television series *Cosmos*, Carl Sagan (2004), in order to squeeze cosmological time into a framework that people could better understand, used a one-year calendar to represent the history of the universe (similar timelines can be found in Bottjer, 2005; *Exploring the creation/evolution controversy*, 2004; Hawking, 1988; and *Hominid species timeline*, 2004). If one were to examine this calendar, one would find that the creation of the universe, called the big bang in scientific circles, would have occurred at midnight on New Year's Eve, the beginning of January 1<sup>st</sup> on the cosmological calendar. It would then take until March for the Milky Way to form, and the Sun and

planets of our solar system would not come into being until August. Single cell organisms would not appear on Earth until September and multi-cellular organisms would not be present until November. On December 17<sup>th</sup> invertebrates would emerge, on the 18<sup>th</sup> early land plants would come into being, on the 20<sup>th</sup> the first four limbed animals, on the 21<sup>st</sup> various insects, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> the first dinosaurs would appear. On the 25<sup>th</sup> the first mammalian ancestors would arrive, as would the first known birds on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 29<sup>th</sup> the dinosaurs would be wiped out and mammals would soon emerge as the more dominant life form. By December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:15 a.m. apes would appear and by 11:54 p.m. anatomically modern humans would emerge. At 11:59:45 p.m. writing would be invented, at 11:59:50 p.m. the Egyptian pyramids would be built, and at the last second in the cosmological calendar Christopher Columbus would begin his famous voyage to the Americas.

According to prevailing scientific belief, entropy, the second law of thermodynamics, became the dominant force in the universe immediately after the big bang. This entropic force dictates that the universe will eventually run down. It also creates the arrow of time because if things are constantly moving towards states of greater disorder they cannot reverse themselves and spontaneously escape to higher orders of organization. However, when life appeared it began immediately to demonstrate syntropy, a force that is the opposite of entropy, because life naturally moves toward greater and greater degrees of organization and complexity (Szent-Gyorgyi, 1977). These forces of entropy and syntropy plays an important background role in this dissertation and are reflected in other human dichotomies such as open vs. closed societies, life and death, love and fear, etc. According to some, providing for the evolution of living syntropy, with humanity at

its current apex, is the primary purpose of the universe and was at the heart of its creation (Barrow & Tipler, 1986; F. J. Dyson, 1985; Gardner, 2003; Tipler, 1994). The anthropic cosmological principle that is often used to espouse this purpose is hotly debated within scientific circles, especially when it implies a deity (Alger, 2001; Dawkins, 1987, 2006; Dennett, 2006; Hamer, 2004), but others find that even if one does not embrace the anthropic principle in its entirety, there is evidence to suggest the presence of psycho-bio-morphogenic fields (Sheldrake, 1995a, 1995b) that both mold evolution and predate any evolutionary progress.

Nonetheless, upon first glance one may conclude that not much syntropy occurred in the universe until the last part of this cosmological year. Especially in human parlance, little occurred until people arrived on earth and started doing things with their new technologies. If one were, then, to take the history of human technological development and squeeze it into a calendar month, one might observe the following:

The pace of modern innovation and technological change has gone from swift to super-exponential. If one were to pretend that the entirety of human civilization were only one Super Month in length where every second represents two years. In the speeded up world of the “Super Month,” we would see a rather remarkable image of the development of the species known as *Homo sapiens*. The phase we would know as that of the hunter/gatherer would consume virtually the entire month. This stage would last 29 days and 22.5 hours. This last hour and half, the time of movie, would represent the time of agriculture, towns and cities, and the birth of technology. The last 4 minutes of our artificial ‘super day’ would be the Renaissance. The last two minutes would be the industrial age. And what about the time of television, lasers, satellites, biotechnology, super computers, robotics, artificial intelligence and spandex? This “age of high technology” which consumes us so thoroughly in the late 20th century would occupy about 20 second of this ‘Super Month’ that represented the entirety of human existence. Within the next few super minutes of time – if we survive as a species – we could achieve remarkable things. We could colonize and terra-form planets, convert to clean and limitless energy, create von Neumann machines to search the universe for other intelligent life and much, much more. Time in our age of technology is increasing as a fourth order exponential...

(Pelton, 2000, p. 1)

Combining Sagan's cosmological calendar with Pelton's technology month one might easily find that the pace of change, driven primarily by new technology (Bell, 1973; Brockman, 2002; Broderick, 2001; Burrus, 1993; Cabot, 2001; Denning, 2001; Lynch & Kordis, 1988; Negroponte, 1995; Teich, 2002; Toffler, 1980; Zey, 1994), is advancing at impressive speed compared with cosmological or even human timescales (Barker, 1988; Brennan, 1990; Brockman, 1995; Davis & Meyer, 1999; Fogel, 2000; Kurzweil & Grossman, 2004; Naisbitt, 1988; O. B. Hardison, 1989; Toffler, 1984), but that the breakneck hyper-acceleration of change is an even more recent phenomenon (Gleik, 2000; Kaku, 1998) causing some to conclude that the trend must be reversed (Broderick, 2001; Honore, 2004; McKibben, 2003).

It has been predicted that humanity is fast approaching an omega point, or singularity (Broderick, 2001; Kurzweil, 2005; P. Russell, 1995, 2004; Sterling, 2004; Teilhard de Chardin, 1964, 2002), when predicting the future will be nearly impossible due to the rapid convergence of technology, humanity, and spirituality and the resulting pace of change. Therefore, if one were to map the advance of human technology and innovation towards this omega point it would look much like Figure 42.

In Figure 42, the horizontal axis is time by millennia and the vertical axis is technological innovation and change on a relative scale. For example, there was a great leap in technological innovation and change beginning in the 1700s, but the bulk of all scientific discovery, technological innovation, and change occurred in the past 50 years.

Therefore, from 9000 B.C. onward the growth of technology and its impact continued at a slow pace, appearing relatively flat on this illustration until one arrives at around 1000

B.C., at which time, much like the line of a hockey stick, technological development begins to accelerate.

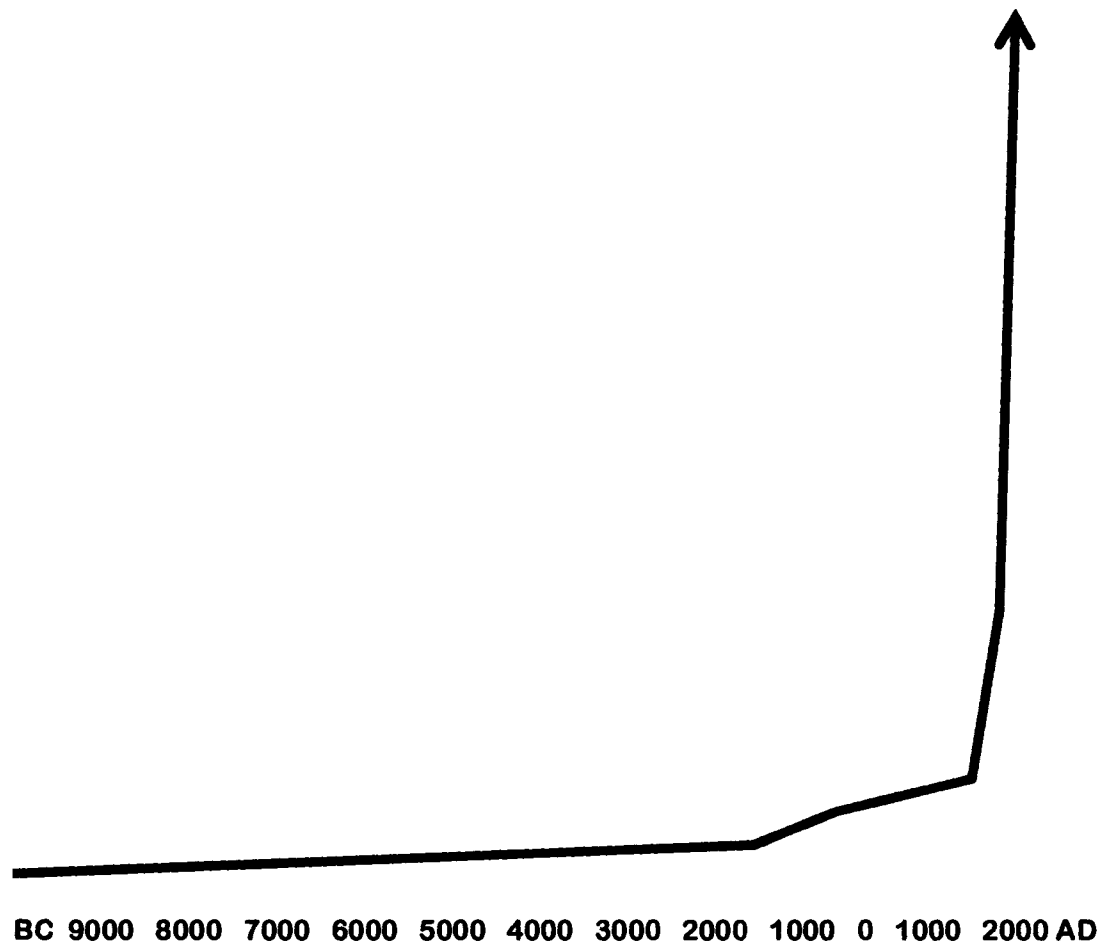


Figure 42. Advance of human technology and innovation over time.

(Adapted from Bronowski, 1973; Cippola, 1980; J. G. Clark, 1971; Derry & William, 1960; Fogel, 2000; McNeill, 1971; and Piggott, 1965)

By the 1700's A.D. development had jumped drastically, and approached a near asymptote by the year 2000 A.D., completing the hockey-stick pattern. (This pattern also reflects the growth of world population and mirrors many other crucial factors that were illustrated in chapter 6.) Key points on the chart include the following:

- The first agricultural revolution is signaled in the initial slow stage of growth.

- 2000 B.C. marks the beginning of metallurgy, mathematics, and writing.
- Year zero identifies the peak of the Roman civilization.
- The 1700s A.D. mark the industrial revolution and the second agricultural revolution.

Figure 43 helps to make technological progress, and its impact on how people make a living, even more clear.

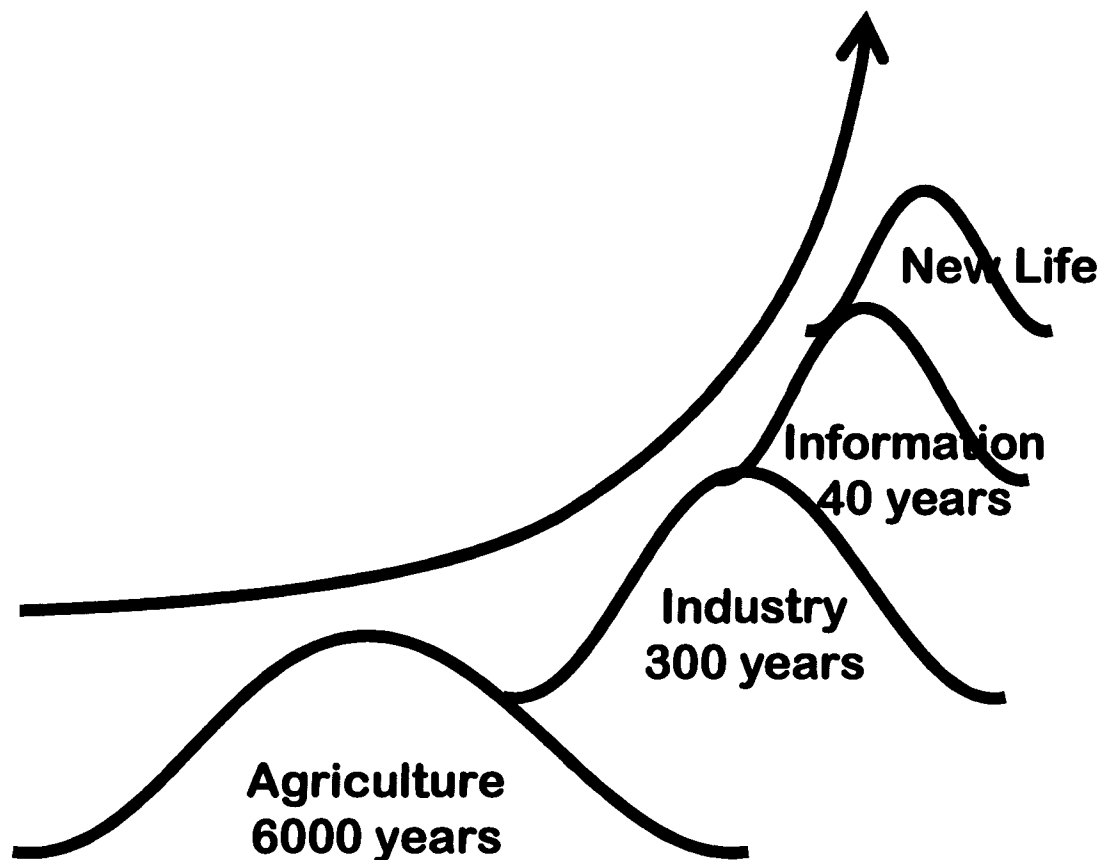


Figure 43. Context and chronology of the waves of technical innovation.

(Adapted from Bell, 1973; Jensen, 1999; Kordis & Ribeiro, 2005; Lynch & Kordis, 1988; and Toffler, 1980)

The long green curve on the top of the individual waves in Figure 43 demonstrates the acceleration of technology driven change in a more smoothed out fashion and

represents the growth in the innovation and utilization of technology between the nearly flat portion of the previous change graph and the nearly vertical path circa 2000 A.D. (This curve also reflects the acceleration of communication, information, and the resulting level of near-to-chaos dynamics and perturbation in the overall human culture.) The blue waves of change lying underneath the larger curve of change roughly represent the portion of people involved in each prevailing technology during its ascension, peak, and decline (Schumpeter, 1961). According to Toffler (1980), Ainsworth-Land (1986), Capra (1982), and Bell (1973), the first three great waves of technological change (and the eras of their greatest social, economic, and political impact) were the agricultural age, the industrial revolution, and the information age. People began to shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture between six and ten thousand years ago. By the early 1900s A.D. nearly 90 percent of people were involved in an agricultural pursuit. Presently, however, the number is between two and three percent. The industrial revolution began in approximately 1650 A.D. with the mechanical gardens in Europe. The percentage of people in the U.S. working in industry peaked in the 1950s, and the number has been declining since. The information age began circa 1965, with computers as the primary commodity, and peaked in the percentage of people working in this technology around 1985. The new life wave began in the early 1980's and is, as of this writing, involving more and more people in the production of its products and services. The new life wave (Lynch & Kordis, 1990) involves a convergence of six primary technologies including nanotechnology, that is, building materials, robots, and machines at the molecular level (American, 2002; Crandall, 1996; Drexler, 1990; Drexler, Peterson, & Pergamit, 1991; Gilder, 1989; M. A. Ratner & Ratner, 2002; Regis, 1995; Uldrich & Newberry, 2003;

Wilson, Kannangara, Smith, & Simmons, 2002), bioengineering, which includes biotechnology, genetic engineering, stem cell therapy, cloning, bionics, biogerontology, and cell therapy (Borem, Santos, & Bowen, 2003; Freitas, 1999; Fumento, 2003; Goodsell, 2004; Grossman, 2000; Houdebine, 2003; Kurzweil & Grossman, 2004; Lambrecht, 2002; Lyon & Gerner, 1996; Mulhall, 2002; Nicholl, 2002; Nuland, 2005; Shostak, 2002; Stock, 2002; West, 2003), machine cognition, represented by a convergence of artificial intelligence, genetic algorithms, expert systems, fuzzy logic, and neural nets (G. B. Dyson, 1998; Glenn, 1989; Kurzweil, 1990, 2000; Levy, 1992; Mitchell, 1998; Moravec, 1988, 1999; Mulhall, 2002; Paul & Cox, 1996; Penrose, 1989; Port, 2005; S. J. Russell & Norvig, 2002; Stock, 1993; Ward, 2000; Zuboff, 1988), macro-robotics, that is, robots at a visible scale or larger (Brooks, 2002; Kurzweil, 2005; Menzel & D'Aluisio, 2000; Mulhall, 2002; Perkowitz, 2004; Warwick, 2004), exotic energy sources such as superconductivity, zero point energy, fuel cells, fusion, and renewable resources (Hawken, Lovins, & Lovins, 1999; Hoffmann, 2002; Ketterson & Song, 1999; King, 2002; Mallove, 1991; Rifkin, 2002; Vaitheeswaran, 2003), and new materials science including smart materials, materials with unusual strength and lightness, or materials with other unique properties (Addington & Schodek, 2004; Baker & Aston, 2005; Ball, 1999; A. Briggs, 1992; Kerrod, 2003; B. D. Ratner, Hoffman, Schoen, & Lemons, 2004; Ruzette & Leibler, 2005; Stix, 2005; Wigginton & Harris, 2002). [The convergent nature of technological inquiry is producing new combinations of production and application that will very likely have a profound impact on human development and the nature of change itself (Alexander, 2003; Bailey, 2005; A. Clark, 2003; Dewdney, 1998; Fukuyama, 2002; Garreau, 2005; Hayles, 1999; Hughes, 2004; Institute, 2004; Kaku, 1998; Mulhall, 2002;



Naam, 2005; Pease, 2005; Roco & Bainbridge, 1999; Sherwin, 2004; Silver, 1998; Stock, 2002). Because of this, the listed references for one area are often equally applicable to many of the others.]

Considering the nature of the individual waves of change, a few important characteristics seem worthy of note:

- As the waves progress they become shorter and shorter in duration.
- They are currently beginning to stack one upon another.
- There is less and less time to prepare for each subsequent wave.
- Each wave remains productive by adopting the technology of the next and subsequent waves.

For example, the time for adaptation was quite long between hunting and gathering and agriculture. One could wait thousands of years to abandon the migratory following of the herds and the seasons and adopt the new processes for growing plants and living in one place that others had already perfected. There was plenty of time for changing on the backside of the wave and one was merely responsible for adopting the new technology, not inventing it. In the shift from agriculture to industry the transition time was greatly reduced from thousands of years to mere generations. However, changing after the fact by adopting the use of farm machinery was still available and potentially profitable. In the shift from industry to information, though, there was little if any lag. Therefore, the most successful people and organizations changed right with the times, adopting and adapting the new technology to meet their needs. In the transition between the information wave and the new-life wave, and indeed in every transition thereafter, attempts at navigating the future will need to be made ahead of time, based on intuition

and good investigation, in order to be successful. Therefore, as the waves grow shorter and the time for adaptation decreases, people will be required to shift from changing on the backside of the wave to changing on the front. And, as the waves continue to stack, people may find that they must simultaneously adapt ahead of time to multiple waves of change.

Mauldin notes:

The Third Wave was actually the result of an innovation cycle that we can call the *Information Age*. I believe we are only halfway through the *Information Age*, with more profound changes as to how we work and play just around the corner.

But this time something is different. Instead of one wave of innovation following another, I believe that we are going to see multiple waves at roughly the same time. The combined effects are going to produce a period of change unlike anything seen in the history of man.

(Mauldin, 2006)

In the past, each new wave would provide work for those leaving or being forced out of the previous wave. Unfortunately, the new life wave is not picking up the slack from American jobs lost in the information wave. This is due, in part, to the outsourcing of white-collar and gold-collar jobs to other countries and to governmental restrictions in the United States on certain technologies in wave four such as stem cell therapy (Corbett, 2004; Dobbs, 2004; Kelley, 1985).

In addition, the stacking of waves and the need to change ahead of time to be successful can be problematic for many individuals who are comfortable with changing slowly and after the fact, but are poorly suited to proactively embracing the uncertainties of the frequency and speed of change that is often required in today's environment (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Over the course of time on the cosmological calendar human development appears to have lagged far behind that of technology, especially in the appropriate use of the technology that humanity has developed (Meadows, Randers, &

Meadows, 2004; Rifkin & Howard, 1980; Speth, 2004; Tainter, 2000). Figure 44 is an approximation of this disparity:

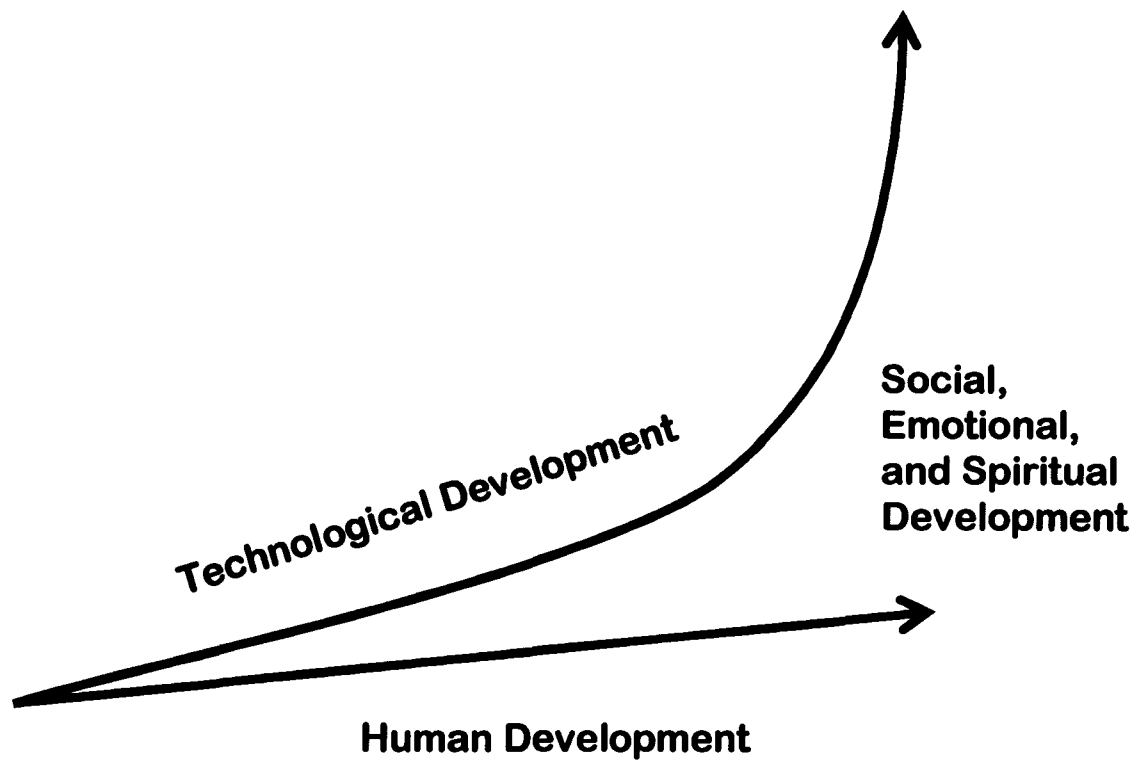


Figure 44. Disparity between technological development and human development over time.

Figure 44 shows the great divide between human development, technological development, and humanity's ability to understand and use wisely the technology that it has created. Apparently, in order to close the gap, human development must make quick and broad advances in its social, emotional, and spiritual-ethical development (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Bloom, 2000; J. Briggs & Peat, 2000; George, 2002; Hawken, 1993; Mitruff & Denton, 1999; Nasr, 1997; Pink, 2005; Sessions, 1995; Wilber, 2000), as the following quotes suggest:

If there is a technological advance without a social advance, there is, almost automatically, an increase in human misery.

Michael Harrington

The most important and urgent problems of the technology of today are no longer the satisfactions of primary needs or of archetypal wishes, but the reparation of the evils and damages by the technology of yesterday.

Dennis Gabor

Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it has great difficulty in generating joy.

Pope Paul VI

It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.

Albert Einstein

The genius of Man in our time has gone into jet-propulsion, atom-splitting, penicillin-curing, etc. There is none over for works of imagination; of spiritual insight or mystical enlightenment. I asked for bread and was given a tranquilizer.

Malcolm Muggeridge

The above six quotes found at  
(<http://www.basicquotations.com/index.php?cid=314>)

As an example, some have suggested that for decades the technological capacity has existed to meet the physical needs of the entire planet (Fuller, 1981). Yet humanity has chosen not to meet these needs, due in large part to its social, political, religious, and economic systems (Chomsky, 2005). To change this bewildering behavior will likely require a concerted focus on improving the emotional, social, and spiritual intelligence of humanity at large, that is, unless people were to take a more Luddite approach and dismantle their technologies instead.

Fogel notes:

The proposition that religion and politics in America have a cyclic component does not mean that (these) cycles have been the dominant characteristic of life over the past three centuries. Quite the contrary: the dominant characteristic has been a relatively steady and rapid growth in the economy based on an accelerating pace of technological change that has drastically transformed life within living memory. What has been cyclic is the tendency of these technological advances to outpace the development both of ethical guidelines for their utilization and of human institutions to control them. It is the lag between technological transformation and the human capacity to cope with change that has repeatedly provoked the crises that usher in profound reconsiderations of ethical values, that produced new agendas for ethical and social reform, and that give rise to political movements to implement these agendas.

...the more far-reaching the technological change, the more sweeping the attendant changes in economic and social institutions have been, and the more highly charged has been the battle over appropriate reform.

(Parentheses added) (Fogel, 2000) pp. 40, 41

Central to emotional, social, and spiritual intelligence, then, are the various systems of human values. The development of human value systems has tracked the progress of the aforementioned waves of change and, although individual differences certainly exist, the cultural average appears to influence and to be influenced by the contingencies and exigencies of the times (Harrison & Huntington, 2000; Inglehart, 2000; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Massey, 1979; Strauss & Howe, 1991). At the forefront of tracking these changes in human values was Clare Graves, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Union State College in New York. During his lifetime he charted the course of human values development and tested his hypotheses worldwide. Through this research he discovered that the most important differentiator among people, even more than racial, cultural, socioeconomic, educational, gender or age differences, was one's internalized value system. These value systems, according to Graves, are the filters through which all experiences pass and these filters define the meaning and interpretation of one's

experience. In other words, one's values create a worldview that determines how one experiences and interacts with the rest of existence (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Graves, 1965, 1970; Graves, Huntley, & LaBier, 1965; Lynch, 2003; Wilber, 1999). (All of Dr. Graves materials may be retrieved at <http://www.clarewgraves.com/home.html>.)

One of the very nice things about the Graves value systems is that they have tremendous convergent validity with other systems of human development (Hall, 1986; Lee, 1999; Martin, 2005; Wilber, 1983, 1999), including but not limited to the models of Fromm (1947), Heard (1963), Mumford (1978), Reisman (1961), Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1981; Munsey, 1980; Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersh, 1990), Erikson (Hampden-Turner, 1981), Piaget (Hampden-Turner, 1981; Reimer et al., 1990), Loevinger (Loevinger & Blasi, 1976), Maslow (1998), Jacques (Jaques, Gibson, & Isaac, 1978), and Schein (1970), but the Graves system goes beyond these other developmental models to identify more transcendent levels. There have been many lexicons used to identify the linear model outlined by Graves. For the sake of brevity and clarity I will use a simple numeric system (Lynch & Kordis, 1988, 1990):

System 1 – The first stage of development. This is a divergent, often pre-verbal system that is characterized by an extreme focus on self and on magical thinking.

One's time horizon is immediate and personal biological needs are of primary concern. This value system is generally exhibited by very young babies and by those who are either quite senile, severely brain damaged, or extremely autistic.

System 2 – The second stage of development. This is a convergent, self-sacrificial system that is characterized by a focus on one's small group, family, or tribe.

One's time horizon looks to the past and present, with a goal of bringing the past into the present. This is the realm of totems and taboos. Inside the group everything is good, outside of the group everything is bad. Authority is granted to the elders and there is a strong animistic bonding to nature. Resources are to be shared equally between members of the group. Nature will provide for all who understand and honor her.

System 3 – The third stage of development. This is a divergent system that is characterized by a strong focus on the self and on an assertion of physical dominance over others. One's time horizon is generally focused on the present. The self and one's immediate needs are seen as good, others and their needs are ignored or viewed as bad. This system rebels against authority and restrictions of any kind, especially physical restrictions. Resources are scarce and to be taken, even if others are deprived. Might makes right.

System 4 – The fourth stage of development. This is a convergent, self-sacrificial system that is characterized by a strong focus on demonstrating worthiness, loyalty, and an almost blind respect for authority. One's time horizon is an extension of meeting future goals such as defending the family, following the will of God, and proving oneself worthy and of value. However, the time horizon of this system rarely extends to a clear and distant vision that is self-generated or will be accomplished in this world. Rules and roles and doing things the right way, because that's the way things are done, are of great importance.

Value determines scarcity or abundance. One is provided for if, and only if, one proves to be worthy. Certainty is of primary importance and ambiguity is poorly tolerated (Jaques et al., 1978). Therefore, the truth is passed down from on high and is not to be questioned nor does it change. What is good has already been determined by authority, what is bad is anything that differs from or is outside of this doctrine.

System 5 – The fifth stage of development. This is a divergent, self-interested, non-sacrificial system characterized by a strong focus on status attained through achievement, affluence, and/or celebrity. One's time horizon is future oriented, but is generally directed towards goals that will provide status, power, and influence as quickly as possible. Resources are seen as scarce and, therefore, eliminate the opportunity to achieve win/win outcomes. For every winner there is a loser and people in this stage of values development do not intend, under any circumstances, to be the loser. Although physical violence personally perpetrated against another is rare, people at this level engage in constant one-upmanship and feel no remorse in demonstrating their superiority even at the expense of others. The ego drive at this level is extremely strong but the superego is subordinated to achieving goals. It's OK to bend the rules and to use other people if it will get the desired outcome. After all, a sucker is born every minute. The means justify the ends, and the means are scrupulously studied to see if they will product the ends. Authority is fine if one wields it or if one can get close to it. Truth is relative and can be manipulated to suit one's needs. One is successful because one deserves it.



People have to make their own luck by being smart and gutsy. Conversely, one is unsuccessful because one is stupid, lazy, or bad and therefore one deserves to be used. Visible success is good, visible failure is bad.

System 6 – The sixth level of development. This is a convergent system characterized by a focus on egalitarianism, participative/consensual decisions, stewardship of the environment, spirituality, inner meaning and development, metaphysics, life balance, inclusion, sharing of experiences, relationships, and material goods, caring for the downtrodden, equal rights, and community. One should sacrifice now so that everyone may eventually win because when one person loses, everyone loses. One's time horizon extends into an idyllic future where justice prevails, the earth is healed, and everybody belongs as an equal member in the family of humankind. The universe is seen as ultimately abundant if one can get into harmony with it. Visualization and positive thinking are held as important aspects of creating the world in which one would wish to live. A system that can be simultaneously self-sacrificial and narcissistic, consensual processes can degrade into interminable compromise and impotence. Paradoxically, although diversity is considered by this system to be good and necessary, other value systems are considered either dangerous or overly limited and certainly beneath the self-proclaimed enlightenment of this system. Inclusion in the group is of paramount importance but divergence or intellectual betrayal can lead to instant shunning. The greatest evil in this system is to hold one's self-interest above that of

other living beings and the environment, the greatest good is to achieve healing and abundance for all, as long as this system's beliefs prevail.

System 7 – The seventh level of development. This is a divergent but very flexible system that focuses on what works and on optimizing the benefits of other systems. Freedom, variety, novelty, and autonomy, especially in pursuing one's interests, are of prime importance but this system also works and plays well with others. Authority is viewed as central to the self, not as a consequence of blood, age, or status, and success is seen as context driven. Authority is earned through competence and if others have more competence authority is relinquished to them. Other value systems are neither encouraged nor discouraged. All are seen as valuable under certain circumstances. Win/win outcomes are preferred and creativity and tolerance of ambiguity are held in esteem. Any system or method is seen as useful as long as all participants benefit and are happy with it. However, any system or method can be easily dropped as soon as it proves to be dysfunctional or less functional than another. The good of the many in general outweighs good for the few, but the individual should always strive for optimal happiness and contribution. In this system one holds to a conceptual ideal that there is usually a more productive, useful, and satisfying option based on natural synergies when addressing important issues. These natural synergies reflect the abundance of the universe when resources are used creatively and thoughtfully.

System seven is not terminal. Existential issues and the pressures of life continue to challenge the competencies of the brain and its worldview. When one's system fails to produce the necessary results the brain must respond with greater capacity and flexibility. Therefore, value system development is open-ended and each new system emerges with an increased capacity for processing space, time, and complexity.

There is also a strong similarity between each system and its counterpart four levels up or four levels down. For example, there are many similarities between system two and system six, between system three and system seven, or between system four and system eight (not articulated here for the sake of brevity). Therefore, there is a sort of rotational effect of value systems, each re-emerging every fourth system but from the perspective of an enhanced space/time/complexity domain.

According to Graves, value systems emerge as a result of one's struggles with existential issues and the exigencies of life using the tools, knowledge, and skills at one's disposal. When the restrictions or limitations of one's system become too great, then a shift to another system is often in the making. That is not to say that one moves through every values system in isolation. Social influences can be and often are profound (Erikson, 1994; Sherif, 1966). Each value system is a type of strange attractor (Gleick, 1987; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984), creating a strong point of equilibrium that is difficult to perturb (Gold, 1999). Although value systems move more flexibly when people are young and developing at a rapid rate, when one reaches the cultural norm, the value system at which most of one's society operates, value development usually slows and often becomes ossified. Therefore, it generally requires a significant emotional event to move an individual from one value system to another once his or her value system has lost its

elasticity and become concrete (Massey, 1979). In some instances the demands of the general social, political, or economic environment exceed the competencies of an individual's, or group's, particular values orientation. When this occurs there is great potential for frustration and conflict as well as opportunity for growth and creativity (Kegan, 1995).

Unfortunately, one might well say, value systems do not always escape to a higher order of function. In some cases such as brain injury, nuclear holocaust, torture and imprisonment, an environment of perpetual stress or fear, or the emergence of a highly repressive culture the individual's or group's collective worldview may regress to a more primitive system. When people are forced to worry about survival or safety issues it is difficult to spend much mental energy considering self-actualization or transcendent matters (Maslow, 1998). Fortunately, one might also say, when one feels the call of a higher purpose to be fulfilled by oneself in the future, one can transcend one's current circumstances and maintain a more advanced value system (Frankl, 1962). This calling can, however, be manipulated by others with the intent of keeping one's behavior at a primitive level. One can be deceived into feeling a part of a greater whole moving towards an apocalyptic cleansing that will provide blessings and personal continuity into the distant future even if in order to do so one must commit atrocities and-or lose one's life in the process (Lifton, 2003).

Even though technology and human development have simultaneously progressed, human development appears to be trailing behind, and in some cases, to be reverting to worldviews that are incapable of dealing successfully with the current global situation. Modern technology, being inherently amoral, provides greater and greater

power for both harm and good. The disparity between human and technological development have enabled humanity to extend localized dysfunctions to a global scale.

Therefore, humanity may well need a more profound and more introspective focus on human development that would better parallel the historical focus on the development of technology. This escape to a higher and more humane form of processing could constitute a survival strategy. (Dalai Lama, 2005; Diener & Suh, 2000; Frey & Stutzer, 2002; *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural liberty in today's diverse world*, 2004; Jam-polsky, 1988; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003; Lifton, 2003; Martin, 2005; McMichael, 2003; Myers, 2001; Snyder & Blakely, 1999; UNDP, 2001).

### ***Conclusion***

Most of human and technical development has occurred very late in cosmological history. However, humankind is still confronted with the conflict between two forces that have their genesis early in the history of our universe, entropy and syntropy. Human value systems have emerged simultaneously with the advance of technology and the subsequent waves of rapid technological change. These value systems are generally syntropic and progressive but tend to lose momentum when the cultural norm is reached. Challenges to these systems, or the inherent limits of a particular system, generally cause people to advance beyond their current worldview and escape to a value system that operates from a greater space-time-complexity domain. While value systems generally advance with the demands of the overall environment, they can regress when people are traumatized, manipulated by people or events, or survive extreme circumstances that elicit profound external systemic change. The entropy generated by trauma and manipu-

lation, and the dysfunction that often results, is of great concern, as is the need to escape to higher orders of functioning in order to address the critical issues facing the planet. These larger issues are central to the development of human capital, which, as previously noted, is the culmination of things that happen to people outside of the workplace.

Currently in America the accelerated nature of change forces one to operate on the front side of the wave in order to remain successful. This eliminates the transitional time that was previously available between waves of change, and also eliminates most of the opportunity to leverage the old way of doing things while developing the new. Essentially, the functional portion of the wave has been trimmed to the portion at the beginning that resembles a J curve. That is, just before the old way of doing things has peaked in its ability to produce the desired result; one must adopt a new and better way. There is no time to ride the old system out and there is only a short period in which to develop a new way of doing things before dramatic improvements in performance must be manifest. This transition appears to be especially difficult for cultures that are closed, requiring a shock to the system followed by diminished results until the shift to an open system is achieved (Bremmer, 2006). Unfortunately, America appears to be moving away from an open and organic society focused on new and better solutions that benefit the common good toward a closed and mechanistic society that is concerned with selfish interests and win-lose scenarios (Callahan, 2004; Reich, 2002; Soros, 1998, 2004; Zunz, Schappa, & Hiwatari, 2002).

Wright (2000) observes,

Within any organism, it is ... well-played non-zero-sum games, and the flexible coherence they bring, that let life persist in the face of mounting universal entropy; that let life defy the spirit, though not the letter, of the second law of thermodynamics. That... information processing should be on the leading edge of

this war against entropy makes perfect sense. As Jacques Monod observed... to arrange matter into an orderly form and keep it there, in the face of the second law's tendency to mix things up, requires a "discriminative," even "cognitive" capacity. Ever since life's initial defiance of the spirit of the second law, information processing has risen to higher and higher levels, following the logic of organic coherence, which is to say, the logic of non-zero-sumness.

p. 323

Therefore, while it is arguable that technological advances have initiated the various waves of change, it is questionable whether technology will play a significant role in the solutions contemporary America seems to so desperately need unless America's human systems advance.

## **Chapter Eight: A Brief Review of Economic Thought**

Keynes (1964) observes:

The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas. Not, indeed, immediately, but after a certain interval; for in the field of economic and political philosophy there are not many who are influenced by new theories after they are twenty-five or thirty years of age, so that the ideas which civil servants and politicians and even agitators apply to current events are not likely to be the newest. But soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.

pp. 383 - 384

Brue (1994) also notes:

Capitalism, said Schumpeter, ever creates, educates, and subsidizes an intellectual group with a vested interest in social unrest. Intellectuals do not have direct responsibility for practical affairs; they are outsiders looking in, yet they wield the power of the spoken and written word. Their main chance of asserting themselves is their actual or potential nuisance value. Freedom of public discussion involves freedom to nibble at the foundations of capitalist society, and the intellectual group cannot help but nibble because it lives on criticism. College graduates who are incapable of professional work and object to manual occupations swell the ranks of the discontented, and they develop hostility toward the capitalist order in rationalizing their own inadequacies.

p. 496

And Keen (2001) follows with:

Modern-day economics students are insufficiently literate because economic education eschews the study of the history of economic thought. Even a passing acquaintance with this literature exposes the reader to critical perspectives on conventional economic theory ...

p. 5



This said, it seems necessary, in order to help explain the contemporary economic events and trends in America, to review the history of economic thought – even if one risks the discontent and rationalized inadequacies of academic inquiry. Therefore I offer the following based on an outline by Stanley L. Brue as provided in *The Evolution of Economic Thought* (Brue, 1994):

It is appropriate to begin this history in the year 1500 A.D., as it signifies a natural dividing line between two unique epochs in economic history. Prior to this time there was very little trade or use of money or credit, as goods were produced for local consumption rather than being sent to market. Therefore, there was very little thought regarding the economy, and very little need. However, after 1500 trade expanded rapidly, the use of money eventually superseded self-sufficiency, nation states and national economies began to dominate the marketplace, and systematic unified economic thought emerged (Blaug, 1985; Brue, 1994) making the financial system of this time more relevant to modern economics.

### ***Mercantilism (Circa 1500 – 1776)***

Mercantilism emerged as feudal systems slowly gave way to merchant capitalism. Trade flourished between countries and exploration greatly expanded the sphere of commerce. Increasingly merchants interceded between the producer and consumer, whether on an international, national, or local level. Although viewed by the aristocracy as contemptible, merchants worked diligently to raise their social status by bringing wealth to the state.

In principle, these merchants believed strongly in nationalism and in a strong central government. They viewed trade as a win/lose proposition, based on the static concept of fixed economic resources, and competed fiercely to ensure a surplus of exports over imports. Given the precedence merchants gave to their own self-interest, as compared to the interests of the domestic consumer, they sought government granted monopolies, removal of tolls and taxes, tariffs on imports, government subsidies, and limited entry into businesses that would create competition. They used gold and silver as a medium of exchange and counted the possession of these precious metals as the surest indicator of wealth. Because of this view, they ensured the payment of gold and silver in return for exports while limiting the availability of imports for local consumption, believing that the ensuing accumulation of gold and silver would enhance the country's wealth and power.

Merchants also favored colonization and the subservience of colonies to the parent nation. They restricted imports into, and manufacturing within, colonies, making them suppliers of low-cost materials and importers of manufactured goods.

In brief, merchants became central to business and helped to create a strong national government that was able to promote nationalism, protectionism, colonialism, and unhampered internal trade. Basic to this economic system was the importance of a large, hard-working population to provide a high labor supply (therefore keeping wages low) and also to enlist soldiers and sailors (to defend the system and protect it from outside competition or interference).

Exemplifying this thought, the Dutch philosopher Bernard de Mandeville (1924) wrote:

In a free Nation where Slaves are not allow'd of, the surest Wealth consiste in a Multitude of laborious Poor.... As they ought to be kept from starving, so they

should receive nothing worth saving.... It is the Interest of all rich Nations, that the greatest part of the Poor should almost never be idle, and yet continually spend what they get.... The Poor should be kept strictly to Work, and that is was Prudence to relieve their wants, but Folly to cure them.... To make the Society happy and People easy under the meanest Circumstances, it is requisite that the great Numbers of them should be Ignorant as well as Poor.

pp. 193-194, 248, 287-288

In his 1770 Essay on Trade and Commerce, William Temple wrote regarding child labor:

When these children are four years old, they shall be sent to the country work-house and there taught to read two hours a day and be kept fully employed the rest of their time in any of the manufactures of the house which best suites their age, strength and capacity. If it be objected that at these early years, they cannot be made useful, I reply that at four years of age there are sturdy employments in which children can earn their living; but besides, there is considerable use in their being, somehow or other, constantly employed at least twelve hours in a day, whether they earn their living or not; for by these means, we hope that the rising generation will be so habituated to constant employment that it would at length prove agreeable and entertaining to them.

(Furniss, 1920, pp. 114, 115)

The mercantilists contributed to economic thought through their emphasis on international trade, elevating the status of the merchant, and by focusing on precious metals as a medium of exchange. However, because they felt that a country could only become wealthy through the impoverishment of other nations they missed the opportunity to increase wealth through efficiency and cooperation.

### *The Physiocrats (1756 – 1776)*

Towards the end of mercantilism the physiocratic system of economic thought appeared in France, primarily as a reaction to mercantilism and the feudalism of older regimes that made equitable enforcement of rules impossible, and employed stringent government regulations, tolls, taxes, and tariffs that restricted the movement of goods and

impeded the improvement of production methods. A leading thinker of the time, Turgot (1898) noted:

You know as well as I do what is the great end of all governments on earth: obedience and money. The object is as the saying goes to pluck the hen without making it cry out ...

P. 97

Physiocratic thought introduced the rule of nature, or the idea that there is a natural order to the economy. They believed that laws of nature govern societies just as they govern the physical world. Therefore, scientific and philosophical inquiry would reveal these laws. Chief among these laws was the right of the individual to enjoy the fruits of one's own labor, as long as it was consistent with the rights of others. Physiocrats also believed in the freedom of people to do as they wish without the interference of government. They favored freedom of business at home and free trade abroad. They also felt that agriculture was the most useful profession as it was the only one to produce a surplus of product and value. And because only agriculture produced a surplus, only the landowners should be taxed. They strongly favored large capitalist farms employing wage labor and utilizing the most advanced techniques.

Likely the most salient contribution of physiocratic thought was the law of diminishing returns. This concept states that, eventually, the more one attempts to extract from a finite resource the less improvement in yield one gets.

### *Classical Economics (1776 – 1871)*

Classical economic thought arrived with the publication of *Wealth of Nations*, written by the movement's most notable contributor, Adam Smith (1776). This new form of economic thought was strongly influenced by both the scientific and industrial revolu-

tions. Highly influenced by Newtonian science, the classicists, much like the physiocrats, felt that the restrictions and institutions of feudalism and mercantilism had become obsolete and could be replaced nicely with a new set of natural laws. They believed that these natural laws would ultimately guide the economic system and, therefore, laissez-faire would eventually exemplify the highest form of social wisdom.

As the industrial revolution progressed there was a substantial growth in trade, manufacturing, inventions, and the division of labor, thus lending greater emphasis on the industrial aspect of economics. Mercantilism was disintegrating due to expansion and the resulting surge in business activity. Also emerging was a free, mobile, hard-working, and low-paid labor force. Peasants were turning to wage labor and craftsmen lost their competitive advantage as the factory system developed. A high birthrate coupled with a falling mortality rate increased the labor supply, augmented by working children and immigrant peasants. Because of the competitive labor supply, government no longer needed to enforce low wages and wage earners struggled unsuccessfully to establish a minimum wage.

Frequently called economic liberalism, classical doctrine is based on personal liberty, private property, individual initiative, private enterprise, and minimal government interference (Brue, 1994). The classicists believed that the forces of a competitive and free market would guide the economy, an economy that would become self-adjusting and would tend towards full employment. They believed that the influence of government should be confined to property rights, national defense, and public education. They also assumed that self-interest was at the heart of human behavior, but that by pursuing individual interest people would ultimately serve the best interests of society. This belief

helped to impart dignity and improve the status of merchants and industrialists, while assuring profit seekers that they were serving the greater good.

Unlike the mercantilists and physiocrats, the classicists viewed all economic activities and resources – land, capital, labor, agriculture commerce, production, and exchange – as contributing to a nation’s wealth. Believing that natural laws were universal and immutable, classicists focused their analysis on specific economic theories. Lasting contributions include the law of diminishing returns, the law of comparative advantage, the idea of consumer sovereignty, the importance of capital accumulation to economic growth, and using the market to reconcile individual interests with those of society.

A forerunner to classical thought, philosopher David Hume had a strong influence on classicists such as Adam Smith. Hume countered the mercantilist argument of a win/lose, zero-sum international economy with a tenet that would later be foundational to modern game theory. Specifically, he postulated that international trade could be synergistic, a win/win, positive-sum outcome. In speaking of mercantilist theory he noted:

In opposition to this narrow and malignant opinion I will venture to assert, that the increase of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbors; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism.

(Hume, 1970, p. 78)

Writing in 1740, Hume also recognizes that cooperation may be optimal where future interactions are likely:

We can better satisfy our appetites in an oblique and artificial manner, than by their headlong and impetuous notion. I learn to do a service to another, without bearing him any real kindness; because I foresee that he will return my service, in expectation of another of the same kind, and in order to maintain the same correspondence of good offices with me or with others. And accordingly, after I have served him, and he is in possession of the advantage arising from my action, he is induced to perform his part as foreseeing the consequences of his refusal.

(J. W. Friedman, 1990, p.110)

As founder and guiding light of the classicists, Adam Smith was most influenced by the intellectual movement we now call the Enlightenment. This movement proposed that there was a natural order that could be discovered, and that individuals have a natural reasoning ability with which to discover it. Under these conditions, people could discover not only the physical laws but social laws as well. This belief would lead to a very optimistic outlook for Smith as he felt that the discovery of these laws would themselves lead to unlimited prosperity. Smith also believed that discovering those things that serve the good of humanity would lead to actions that are ethical and place one within the will of God.

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith discusses the moral forces that restrain selfishness and create a workable society. He notes that sympathy for others promotes interest in the fortune of others because when people are sympathetic, they feel personally the other person's joy and pain. However, there are social and unsocial passions, those that make others feel respectively comfortable and uncomfortable. Because people prefer to sympathize more with joy than sorrow, they display their riches and hide their poverty. Much of the work and frenzy people participate in is undertaken to satisfy their vanity, not their need. The rich bask in the world's attention; the poor hide in shame and obscurity. Smith (1759) notes:

This disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and powerful, and to despise, or at least, to neglect, persons of poor and mean condition, though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments....

We frequently see the respectful attentions of the world more strongly directed toward the rich and the great, than toward the wise and the virtuous. We see frequently the vices and follies of the powerful much less despised than the poverty and weakness of the innocent. To deserve, to acquire, and to enjoy the respect and admiration of mankind, are the great objects of ambition and emulation. Two different roads are presented to us, equally leading to the attainment of this so much desired object; the one, by the study of wisdom and the practice of virtue; the other, by the acquisition of wealth and greatness....

To attain to this envied situation, the candidates for fortune too frequently abandon the paths of virtue; for unhappily, the road which leads to the one and that which leads to the other, lie sometimes in very opposite directions. But the ambitious man flatters himself that, in the splendid situation to which he advances, he will have so many means of commanding the respect and admiration of mankind, and will be enabled to act with such superior propriety and grace, that the luster of his future conduct will entirely cover, or efface, the foulness of the steps by which he arrived at that elevation.

pp. 119-122, 126-127

Smith then considers the problems of injustice and selfishness:

Beneficence, therefore, is less essential of society than justice. Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence; but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it....

To the selfish and original passions of human nature, the loss of gain of a very small interest of our own appears to be of vastly more importance, excites a much more passionate joy or sorrow, a much more ardent desire or aversion, than the greatest concern of another with whom we have no particular connection. His interest, as long as they are surveyed from his station, can never be put into the balance with our own, can never restrain us from doing whatever may tend to promote our own, how ruinous soever to him....

When we are always so much more deeply affected by whatever concerns ourselves than by whatever concerns other men; what is it which prompts the generous upon all occasions, and the mean upon many, to sacrifice their own interest to the greater interests of others? It is not the soft power of humanity, it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart, that is thus capable of counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love. It is a stronger power, a more forcible motive, which exerts itself upon such occa-



sions. It is reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct....

When the happiness of misery of others depends in any respect upon our conduct, we dare not, as self-love might suggest to us, prefer the interest of one to that of the many. The man within immediately calls to us, that we value ourselves too much and other people too little, and that, by so doing, we render ourselves the proper object of the contempt and indignation of our brethren....

(Smith, 1804, pp. 175, 274 - 280)

In *Moral Sentiments*, Smith proposes that sympathy, justice, and benevolence restrain selfishness. In *Wealth of Nations*, it is competition that channels economic self-interest towards the social good. He notes:

Every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic industry to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other causes, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it.

(Smith, 1877, p. 354)

This harmony of interests between individuals and society prompted Smith to view government intrusion into economic affairs as undesirable and unnecessary. He further believed that government was wasteful and corrupt and that individuals could judge their economic interests much better than the state. Smith further surmised that governmental tampering with international trade was equally injurious. He did approve of limited interventions by the government such as enforcement of contracts. However, of greatest interest to him was the provision of education:

The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become.... His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social, and marital virtues. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it.

(Smith, 1877, pp. 616, 617)

Smith also observed a link between productivity and wage, marking a striking departure from feudalism and mercantilism:

The liberal reward for labour, as it encourages the propagation, so it increases the industry of the common people. The wages of labour are the encouragement of industry, which like every other human quality, improves in proportion to the encouragement it receives. A Plentiful subsistence increases the bodily strength of the labourer, and the comfortable hope of bettering his position, and of ending his days perhaps in ease and plenty, animates him to exert that strength to the utmost. Where wages are high, accordingly, we shall always find the workmen more active, diligent, and expeditious, than where they are low.

(Smith, 1877, p. 78)

In summary, Smith's optimistic view of human rationality and natural law culminated in his theory of economic development, and is briefly described as follows:

Division of labor produces improved capital accumulation, which increases wages. Capital accumulation and increased wages combine with division of labor to improve productivity and national output thus increasing the wealth of the nation. Once the natural laws governing this process are fully optimized there will be unlimited potential for the generation of prosperity.

As optimistic as Adam Smith was, there were other prominent figures among the classicists who viewed the economy less brightly. Chief among them was Thomas Malthus. Although formally trained as an ordained minister, Malthus's 1798 *An Essay on the*

Principle of Population established his fame in economic thought. By this time, the darker side of industrialization was becoming apparent, including poverty, unemployment, growing population, food shortage, and increased urbanization. Because of these problems Malthus had less faith in progress and set out to disprove the optimistic belief in the perfectibility of people and society. Key to his accounting of poverty and misery among the lower classes was the issue of population. In an article written for the 1830 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Malthus wrote:

It may be safely asserted, therefore, that population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical progression of such a nature as to double itself every twenty-five years.... If, setting out from a tolerably well peopled country such as England, France, Italy, or Germany, we were to suppose that, by great attention to agriculture, its produce could be permanently increased every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to that which at present produces, it would be allowing a rate of increase decidedly beyond any probability of realization.... Yet this would be an arithmetical progression, and would fall short, beyond all comparison, of the natural increases of population in a geometrical progression.

(Glass, 1953, p. 119)

In response to this problem he identified two positive regulators of population growth: those that reduced the birth rate and those that increased the death rate. To accommodate a decrease in birth rate Malthus suggested moral abstinence but spoke strongly against the use of mechanical birth control. To accommodate an increase in death he suggested that famine, misery, plague, and war were unfortunate evils required to limit the population. He believed these evils were punishments for those who had not practiced his version of moral restraint. He states:

It is an evident truth that, whatever the increase in the means of subsistence, the increase in population must be limited by it, at least after the food has once been divided into the smallest shares that will support life. All the children born, beyond what would be required to keep up the population to this level, must necessarily perish, unless room be made for them by the deaths of grown persons.... To act consistently therefore, we should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavoring to impede, the operations of nature in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of famine, we

should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction, which we compel nature to use. Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits. In our towns we should make the streets narrower, crowd more people into the houses, and court the return of the plague. In the country, we should build our villages near stagnant pools, and particularly encourage settlements in all marshy and unwholesome situations. But above all, we should reprobate specific remedies for ravaging diseases; and those benevolent, but much mistaken men, who have thought they were doing a service to mankind by projecting schemes for the total extirpation of particular disorders. If by these and similar means the annual mortality were increased ... we might probably every one of us marry at the age of puberty, and yet few be absolutely starved....

(T. R. Malthus, 1798, pp. 465, 466)

Additionally, Malthus opposed government aid to the poor:

A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if the society do not want his labour; has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favor.... The order and harmony of the feast is disturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into scarcity.

(T. R. Malthus, 1798, p. 532)

And again:

We are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the right of the poor to support.

To this end, I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring that no child born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law, and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance....

With regard to illegitimate children, after proper notice had been given, they should not be allowed to have any claim to parish assistance, but be left entirely to the support of private charity. If the parents desert their child, they ought to be made answerable for the crime. The infant is, comparatively speaking, of little value to society, as others will immediately supply its place.

(T. R. Malthus, 1798, pp. 485 - 487)

Ironically, and standing in stark contradiction, Malthus also proposes the need for unproductive consumption, the overspending by landlords to avoid a glut of goods on the market:

There must therefore be a considerable class of persons who have both the will and power to consume more material wealth than they produce, or the mercantile classes could not continue profitably to produce so much more than they consume. In this class the landlords no doubt stand pre-eminent; but if they were not assisted by the great mass of individuals engaged in personal services, whom they maintain, their own consumption would of itself be insufficient to keep up and increase the value of the produce, and enable the increase of its quantity more than to counterbalance the fall of its price. Nor could the capitalist in that case continue with effect the same habits of savings.

Originally published in 1836 (T. Malthus, 1986, p. 400)

Malthus's theories were popular among the wealthy landlords, a group that was quickly losing its prestige and power. Through his assertions they were absolved from any responsibility for poverty and could heap scorn upon the poor as their situation was seen as one of their own making. However, his theories have not lived up to their promise, as the world's population has not achieved the exponential growth Malthus predicted and the production of food has far surpassed his original expectation. This does not, though, obviate the fact that many of the world's developing nations live much more closely to Malthusian principles than do first world countries.

On a brighter note, John Stuart Mill was also a powerful influence on classicist thought in the later years. A prolific writer, his first book, *System of Logic* (1843), established him as a leading logician. He believed in the perfectibility of humanity and in progress through the development of our moral and intellectual abilities. A staunch critic of the status quo, Mill became a recognized political scientist, social philosopher, and champion of the democratic way of life. With his wife, Harriet, he forwarded women's

rights, deploring the exclusion of women from certain fields considered unfeminine. He states:

Let every occupation be open to all, without favor or discouragement to any, and employments will fall into the hands of those men and women who are found by experience to be most capable of worth exercising them. There need be no fear that women will take out of the hands of men any occupation which men perform better than they. Each individual will prove his or her capacities, in the only way in which capacities can be proved – by trial; and the world will have the benefit of the best faculties of all its inhabitants. But to interfere beforehand by an arbitrary limit, and declare that whatever be the genius, talent, energy, or force of mind of an individual of a certain sex or class, those faculties shall not be exerted, or shall be exerted only in some few of the many modes in which others are permitted to use theirs, is not only an injustice to the individual, and a detriment to society, which loses what it can ill spare, but is also the most effectual mode of providing that, in the sex or class so fettered, the qualities which are not permitted to be exercised shall not exist.

(Mill, 1859, p. 423)

Mill also stressed a non-traditional approach to helping the less privileged. He noted that every increase of capital is capable of giving additional employment to labor without limit, thus eliminating the need for the rich to give employment to the poor. He exhorted capitalists to spend less on luxury consumption and more on investment, thus increasing wages and the demand for labor. Mill believed that if the population increased, the increased demand for necessities by wage earners would offset the decreased demand for luxuries by capitalists. But, if the population did not increase in proportion to the growth of capital, wages would rise and luxury consumption by workers would supplant luxury consumption by their employers. Therefore, the limit of wealth is never caused by a lack of consumption, but by a lack of production. Each addition to capital creates either additional employment or remuneration to labor. He also believed that through profit sharing and producer cooperatives that workers could enhance their wealth.

Although Smith was the founder of classical economics, David Ricardo was instrumental in its further development. An outstanding deductive thinker, Ricardo began with basic premises and used logic to deduce generalized economic laws. Concerned with relative values, as opposed to absolute value, Ricardo worked to discover the basis for exchange ratios between commodities, thus allowing him to identify the causes of changes in the economy over time. He argued that the utility of a product, coupled with its scarcity and the labor required to produce it, was the determinant of its larger value. However, the exchange value of a commodity is more dependent on the labor time, raw materials, and capital goods used in the process of production. He saw this as easier to measure and as a more stable indicator, over time, of the marketplace.

Ricardo noted the growing conflict of interest between capitalists and labor, but he saw an even more basic conflict between landlords and everyone else. He noted that as population increases, demand for food, and its subsequent price, rises, bringing poorer land into production and increasing the utilization of better land. As returns on the land diminish rent on the land increases, causing wage hikes and a drop in profits. If this process is left unchecked a stationary state occurs where profits eventually reach zero, workers are paid subsistence wage, and rents become very high. In this case only the landlords benefit (avert your eyes from California). Ricardo still concluded that wages should be unregulated and relief to the indigent should be avoided. However, he also surmised that a tax on rent, falling wholly on the landlords, was in order to stabilize the economy when population increased.

Malthus argued that capitalists satiate their desires and, therefore, save large portions of their money, requiring spending by landlords to ensure that demand remains

sufficient to purchase all output. He asserted that if this did not happen, the resulting glut of goods would force producers to reduce production and fire workers. Ricardo countered with the notion that the will to purchase or consume was dictated by the ability to do so. He argued that gluts could temporarily occur, but that full production and employment would be the norm. He believed that supply creates its own demand because increased production generates enough wage, profit, and rental income to purchase additional goods. He also believed that the increased savings of capitalists would generate investments that eventually benefit producers and the system as a whole.

### ***Socialism (Circa 1800 - )***

The rise of socialist thought began as a reaction to the tenets of classical capitalism and the darker side of the industrial revolution. The poverty of the masses seemed to increase as the wealthy continued to amass even greater fortunes, and vice, crime, hunger, and disease became a way of life for many in the industrialized areas. As George Crabbe wrote in *The Village* in 1783:

Where Plenty smiles, alas! She smiles for few.  
And those who taste not, yet behold her store.  
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore.  
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

John Stuart Mill agreed by questioning, a century after the beginning of the industrial revolution, whether or not all of the mechanical inventions had reduced anyone's toil, but rather had given an even greater number of people the opportunity to experience a life of drudgery and imprisonment while an increased number of manufacturers and others made their fortunes. (Note this later, and gloomier, aspect of Mill's observations.)



There were many types of socialism that appeared against this backdrop of industrial oppression to address the perceived failings of capitalism. These include:

- Utopian Socialism – These socialists regarded the competitive market as unjust and irrational. They developed concepts of perfect social order developed around universal togetherness, the end of class struggle, and cooperative communities. They then pleaded, with little success, for the world to accept them.
- State Socialism – These socialists suggested government ownership of all sectors of the economy. The goal was to achieve social objectives rather than profit. They considered the state to be a neutral power, influenced to favor the working class if the vote, education, and the ability to organize were extended to the workers.
- Christian Socialism – These socialists offered the solace of religion to workers to give hope and mitigate their pain. The Bible was seen as the manual for everyone, including the government and the employers. Repudiating class struggle and violence, they believed that God's order was love and fellowship. Private property owned by the rich would be remitted into a trust for everybody.
- Anarchism – These socialists did not advocate disorder, rather, they sought a societal order that would arise out of voluntary, self-governing groups. They believed that regardless of whether the prevailing government had begun with good intentions, it had ultimately aligned itself with the rich, the educated, and the privileged against the larger and poorer class. However, they also believed that human nature is essentially good if not corrupted by the state and interfered with by the government. They envisioned associations of production carrying on trade

between communities and associations of consumers coordinating the civil infrastructures such as lighting, heating, sanitation, and food. Mutual understanding and cooperation would be the hallmark of the anarchist model. Individual initiative would be encouraged while authoritarian centralization and forced conformity would be curtailed.

- Revisionism – These socialists rejected the class struggle, denying that the state was an instrument of the wealthy. Rather, they focused on education, electioneering, and using the ballot to gain control. They supported government regulation of monopolies, working conditions, utilities, and capital.
- Syndicalism – These socialists believed that deteriorates into bourgeois beliefs when engaged in political activity. Therefore, they were anti-parliamentarian because they believed that socialist representation in conventional government would lead nowhere. They envisioned one central workers union that would stir the revolutionary consciousness of workers in order to provoke revolution through strike and sabotage. Eventually they saw this union as overthrowing capitalism. Each industry would then organize into autonomous units and these units would combine into a larger administrative federation. Other forms of government and private property would be abolished.
- Guild Socialism – These socialists advocated gradualism and reform. They accepted the state as a necessary institution but advocated management of industries through industrial guilds rather than government. Government's role would be to develop economic policy that benefited the entire community. Producers and

consumers would form a partnership of equals, each having its national association, the guild and the government.

These forms of socialism have several common features:

- They rejected the notion of harmony of interests between classes, viewing society as composed of distinct classes with often competing interests.
- In general, they viewed government as a potential ally to the working class.
- They saw capitalism as characterized by stagnation or crisis.
- They also saw people as perfectible. Advocating collective action and public ownership, they believed that, with the right environment, the more noble of human virtues would emerge and defeat the self-interest promulgated by capitalism.

Of all the various embodiments of socialism, clearly Marxian socialism and communism were the most visible and popular, and Carl Marx was notably the most influential leader of socialist thought during this era. Although he shared their outrage, Marx dismissed as useless the moral objection to capitalism demonstrated by the other socialist thinkers and, instead, created scientific socialism as a method of analyzing social trends. Through this method he predicted that capitalism would eventually implode due to its internal contradictions, and he encouraged workers to unite to hasten its demise.

Marx was strongly influenced by Charles Darwin and viewed his theories as a scientific-natural basis for the historic struggle of the classes (Urena, 1977). Of even greater significance was the influence of philosopher Georg Hegel. Marx modified Hegel's ideas of theses, antithesis, and synthesis to formulate his own theory of materialism (in this case defined as the world of reality rather than the pursuit of material goods)

in which people come to know the real world through the use of their senses rather than through idealistic thought. Combining Hegel's dialectic with materialism, Marx developed a theory of history in which the static relations of production (rules, social relations, property relations) come into eventual conflict with the dynamic forces of production (technology, capital, skills), creating a conflict that revolutionizes the system so that new relations of production permit the higher development of the forces of production (Brue, 1994). He states:

The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, continued to serve as the leading thread in my studies, may be briefly summed up as follows: In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations with which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

(Marx, 1913, pp. 11, 12)

Marx saw social evolution moving through specific historical stages:

1. Primitive Communism – Characterized by the absence of classes and class struggle, people held land in common and cooperated to survive. There were no surpluses produced, making slavery and exploitation impossible.

2. The Slavery of Antiquity – Once production increased in efficiency a surplus could be produced and slavery became profitable. However, slaves were poorly motivated workers and would eventually depose their masters through rebellion.
3. Feudalism – Serfs were allowed to work a portion of the week on the land assigned to them for their own benefit, while working the rest of the week on the land owned by their lords. They were more motivated than slaves and feudalism increased production. However, the workers were still exploited and the system was finally superseded by capitalism.
4. Capitalism – The advent of capitalism is, at first, signaled by a great increase in production, but the system of private ownership of capital combined with the concentration and centralization of the techniques of production limit further progress. Labor becomes a commodity and exploitation becomes the only way of creating profit, therefore, unemployment rises and quality of life for the working class declines to the point of causing the workers to revolt. The state becomes an instrument of force used by the capitalists against the workers, but the working class prevails, overthrowing the system and establishing its own.
5. Socialism – Capital and land are publicly owned by the government or cooperatives regulated by the state. Production and investment are planned until the state finally withers away and pure communism prevails, thus closing the circle.

Even though Marx was the most visible advocate of, and influence on, socialism, one cannot write about Marx without mentioning the important, if not crucial, role Friedrich Engels played in the support of Marx and his family, and in the development of

Marxian socialism. Engel's writings on political economy date from two periods, his early writings in the 1840's, and then from 1869, when he retired from business, until his death in 1895. Some of his most important writing occurred before his fateful meeting with Marx in August of 1844, which cemented their lifelong friendship. (This friendship included, ironically, the financial support of Marx, his family, and illegitimate children, from 1849 until Marx's death. This enabled Marx to pursue his musings while maintaining a visibly bourgeois lifestyle, devoid of any need to provide for himself or his family, keeping up, what Marx believed, were the necessary appearances for someone of his stature.) These early writings were influential in creating the basis of Marxist socialism and in turning Marx's interest from philosophy to political economy (Hutchison, 1984).

In his 1844 essay, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" Engels placed a strong emphasis on periodic crisis, seeing the economy in a perpetual state of oscillation and disequilibrium. Denying the contemporary belief in the equilibrating effects of supply and demand he stated:

Economists come along with this wonderful law of supply and demand and prove that "one can never produce too much." Practice replies with trade crises which reappear as regularly as the comets.... What are we to think of a law that can assert itself only through periodic slumps? ....Every new crisis must be more serious and more universal than the last. Every fresh slump must ruin more small capitalists and increase the workers who live only by their labour.

(Henderson, 1967, pp. 165, 166)

This became a central theme of Marxist political economy, and if it grossly exaggerated instability, the Classical economists erred in the opposite direction.

The prediction of business concentration, a second major contribution attributed to Marx, was also preceded by Engels:

It is well known that large manufacturers and merchants enjoy great advantages over their smaller rivals and that big landowners enjoy great advantages over

smallholders who are cultivating only a single acre. The result is that under normal conditions, large capital and large landed property swallow small capital and small landed property. This leads to the concentration of property. When there are depressions in industry and agriculture this process of concentration is greatly accelerated... The middle classes must increasingly disappear until the world is divided into millionaires and paupers and into large landowners and poor farm labourers.

Henderson, p. 174

Another significant aspect of Marxist political economy, an emphasis on the implications of technological development, was again preceded by Engels:

Economists regard land, capital, and labour as the conditions of wealth and that is all. Science is no concern of the economists. What does it matter to the economists that they have received the gifts of science... And have not the advances in Science greatly increased production?

Henderson, p. 159

Noting the rapid acceleration of scientific discovery, Engels also made an important counter to Malthusian philosophy:

The amount of land is limited. That is agreed. The labour force which can be used on this land increases as the population grows. Let us even assume that the increase in the yield of crops brought about by the expansion of the labour force does not always rise in proportion to the increased labour force. Even so there is another factor to be considered. This is the advance of scientific knowledge. And this course is ignored by the economists. The progress of scientific knowledge is as unceasing and at least as rapid as the growth of population.... Population grows in proportion to the size of the last generation. Scientific knowledge advances in proportion to the knowledge bequeathed to it by the previous generation. And this is progress, under the most ordinary conditions, is also in geometrical progression. What is impossible to science?

Henderson, p. 173

Unfortunately, blinded by his devotion to Marx, Engels in the later years kept hidden some of his early assertions that, though vindicated by history, proved an antithesis to Marxist theory. He noted that there was a third factor in addition to land and labor that had been previously ignored, that of mental thought and innovation (a direct violation of Marxists theory of labor). Engels also contradicts Marx by stating:

Imagine someone making an utterly useless article with great exertion and at great expense. And suppose that no one wants this article. Do production costs represent the 'value' of such a commodity?

'Of course not,' says the economist, 'Who will want to buy it?'

Henderson, p. 156

Speaking of both the value of labor and the perceived value of the product, he continues:

The value of an article includes both the factors which contending economists have so rudely and so unsuccessfully attempted to separate.

Henderson, p. 157

From the standpoint of dogmatic Marxian orthodoxy, these were dangerous ideas.

Engles theories were much influenced by Moses Hess, and Engles was to discover for himself much of what Hess had described as the prevailing conditions in England, especially Manchester. In 1842 Hess observed:

England, where distress has reached frightful proportions, is heading for a catastrophe sooner than had been expected. And no one can foretell the consequences that this catastrophe will have not only for Great Britain but also for the Continent.... Industry has passed from the hands of the people to the machines of the capitalists. Commerce – formerly operated on a modest scale by many small merchants – is now concentrated more and more in the hands of capitalists and adventurers (i.e. swindlers). The land has fallen into the grasp of a few aristocratic families owing to the working of the laws of inheritance. In fact a few great families expand and control ever greater amounts of capital....

(Hess, 1842); as translated by Henderson (1976, pp. 21, 39)

Engles' experiences of the distress in England provided a strong impetus to collaborate with Marx in the development of a utopian vision – one of technological progress, the abolition of scarcity, and the elimination of the alienating effects brought on by labor division. Marx and Engels note:

Each man has a particular exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of liveli-



hood; while in a communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic.

(Hutchison, 1984, p. 11)

Both Marx and Engels continually felt that judgment day for capitalism was at hand. However, both were to die in disappointment as most of their dire predictions were never realized, at least in their lifetimes. In the end, Engels wrote that he and Marx had been wrong for decades:

But we, too, have been shown to have been wrong by history, which has revealed our point of view of that time to have been an illusion. It has done even more: it has not merely destroyed our error of that time; it has also completely transformed the conditions under which the proletariat has to fight. The mode of struggle of 1848 is today obsolete from every point of view.

(Hutchison, 1984, p. 18)

### ***German Historicism (1840 – 1917)***

Largely a product of academia, German historicism arose in the 1840's and ended circa 1917. In part because Mercantilism persisted in Germany long after it had disappeared in England, classical competition and freedom of enterprise were severely restricted and a large bureaucracy regulated the economy. The historical school defended and rationalized the German way of life and questioned the relevance of classical doctrines. Their four principles were:

1. Evolutionary approach – Analogous to Darwin's theory, the social organism goes through the stages of birth, development, and finally decay and death. Therefore, society is constantly changing and a doctrine may be relevant to only a certain country or a certain time.

2. The positive role of government – Society and the state are more important than the individual, and intervention of the state is necessary to protect the interest of the community.
3. Inductive/historical approach – Because they believed that economic and social phenomena are interdependent, German historicists criticized the abstract, deductive, static, and unhistorical qualities of classical and marginalist method. They felt that all of the forces of economic phenomenon and all the facets of economic behavior must be considered.
4. Conservative reform – The merit of economic activity must be examined to suit the demands of justice and morality. The state should be given responsibility for the safety, health, and well-being of the working class.

German historicism also recognized that unrestricted free enterprise does not necessarily yield the best result for society as a whole, believing that reform can be a good substitute for the worse upheavals caused by increasing class distinctions.

One of the most visible contributors to the German school of thought was Max Weber. Unlike Marx, Weber believed that capitalism was a result rather than a cause of the Reformation, seeing the rise of capitalism as strongly linked to Protestantism. He wrote:

The religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have called the spirit of capitalism. When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable, practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save. The restraints which

were imposed upon the consumption of wealth naturally served to increase it by making possible the productive investment of capital.

(Weber, 1930, p. 172)

In particular Weber believed that Calvinism, with its underlying belief in predestination and an elected few who are chosen for salvation, was very conducive to rationalizing individualistic profit seeking and the sanctification of accumulated wealth.

### ***Marginalism (1871 - )***

Destined to merge with neoclassicism, marginalism began in 1871 during a time of serious economic and social problems. Productivity was increasing, but there was widespread poverty. The standard of living was rising, but the distribution of wealth was extremely uneven. Business fluctuations affected peoples' lives in ways that were beyond their own initiative and ability to overcome. Rural poverty drove laborers to the city where long hours, industrial accidents, dangerous and unhealthy working conditions, the overbalanced power of the employer, monopolistic enterprise, and lack of old age security forced people to seek solutions beyond those provided by classical economics.

Strong sentiment towards socialism appeared, as did a trend towards bolstering trade unionism and pressuring government to regulate the economy, thus eliminating abuses and redistributing income. The marginalists, however, opposed these solutions, defending market allocation and distribution, deploring government intervention, denouncing socialism, and discouraging labor unions. They focused on the benefit of all humankind through a better understanding of how a market system efficiently allocates resources and promotes economic liberty. They developed powerful tools of analysis,

especially mathematical techniques and geometric diagrams. They were also among the first to analyze the forces that shape individual economic decisions.

Marginalists derived their name from their focus of attention on where the decisions are made, in other words, on the margin. They assumed that people act rationally in balancing pleasure and pain, measuring the utility of different good, and in balancing present against future needs. They studied individual decision making rather than the aggregate market, and employed an abstract approach, rather than the historical method, for their analysis. They also based their analysis on the world of small, independent entrepreneurs: numerous buyers; many sellers; homogeneous products; uniform prices; and no advertising, i.e. pure competition. They believed that demand determines price and demand depends on the subjective appraisal of marginal utility. They also believed in market equilibrium and an eventual balancing of economic forces, and, therefore, were strong proponents of minimal government intervention.

### *Neoclassical Economics*

The microeconomic thought of marginalism was later to be transformed into neoclassicism. The neoclassical economists emphasized decision-making and the determination of price at the margin. However, they emphasized both supply and demand in determining the market price of goods, services, and resources, they took a far greater interest in the role of money, and they extended marginal analysis to market structures beyond pure competition. They developed the law of diminishing marginal utility, which states that the marginal utility of a thing diminishes with every increase in its amount. They supported the idea of rational consumer choice and the idea of consumer's

surplus – the notion that the total utility of a good is the sum of the successive marginal utilities of each added unit – and the elasticity of demand, defined as the diminishing of a desire for a commodity with every increase in supply. They were also among the first to note the lifecycle of businesses.

### ***Monetary Economics (Circa 1900 - )***

Monetary economics emerged as an offshoot of neoclassical thought. While classical and Marxist theory regarded money as a veil that must be pulled aside to examine the real world, the monetarists felt that money and prices were subject to more basic economic factors. With the growth of banking, credit, economic fluctuations, and important monetary policies of central banks and governments, the relevance of money increased in economic theory. Interest rates, savings, flow and availability of currency, investment, deposits, and trade were all considered ripe areas for monetary analysis.

### ***Imperfect Competition (Circa 1926 - )***

As another offshoot of neoclassicism, there were those who embraced the idea of imperfect competition. They believed that the notion of pure competition had little value in a more modern agricultural economy and even less in modern industrial production and trade. In the modern world, sellers cannot dispose of any quantity of goods at the market price, and the market is compounded by advertising, brand names, and salesmanship. Therefore, buyers are no longer indifferent to which sellers they patronize, if they ever were, and competition is even more subject to bias in an international marketplace.

They argued that even though pure competition and natural monopoly are extreme examples, two aspects of normal economic operation frequently contaminate the purity of markets. First, a single producer can affect market price by varying the quantity of goods he puts on the market. Second, each producer may engage in normal production under circumstances of decreasing costs. Both conditions share more of the characteristics of a monopoly than pure competition. Sraffa (1926) notes:

Business men, who regard themselves as being subject to competitive conditions, would consider absurd the assertion that the limit to their production is to be found in the internal conditions of production... but in the difficulty of selling the larger quantity of goods without reducing the price, or without having to face increased marketing expenses. This necessity of reducing prices in order to sell a larger quantity of one's own product is only an aspect of the usual descending demand curve, with the difference that instead of concerning the whole of the commodity, whatever the marketing expenses necessary for the extension of this market are merely costly efforts (in the form of advertising, commercial traveler, facilities to customers, etc.) to increase the willingness of the market to buy from it – that is, to raise that demand curve artificially.

p. 543

Therefore, businesses seek to enjoy the special advantages of a protected segment of the market. In this way a business could enjoy certain elements of a monopoly even in a market that appears competitive. Sraffa continues:

We are led to ascribe the correct measure of importance to the chief obstacle which hinders the free play of competition... that is, the absence of indifference on the part of the buyers of goods as between the different producers. The causes of the preferences shown by any group of buyers for a particular firm are of the most diverse nature, and may range from long custom, personal acquaintance, confidence in the quality of the product, proximity, knowledge of particular requirements and the possibility of obtaining credit, to the reputation of a trademark, or sign, or name with high traditions, or to such special features of modeling or design in the product as – without constituting a distinct commodity intended for the satisfaction of particular needs – have for the principal purpose that of distinguishing it from the product of other firms. What these and the many other possible reasons for preference have in common is that they are expressed in a willingness (which may frequently be dictated by necessity) on the part of the group of buyers who constitute a firm's clientele to pay, if necessary, something extra in order to obtain the goods from a particular firm rather than from another.

When each of the firms producing a commodity is in such a position the general market for the commodity is subdivided into a series of distinct markets. Any firm which endeavours to extend beyond its own market by invading those of its competitors must incur heavy marketing expenses in order to surmount the barriers by which they are surrounded; but, on the other hand, within its own market and under the protection of its own barrier each enjoys a privileged position whereby it obtains advantages which – if not in extent, at least in their nature – are equal to those enjoyed by the ordinary monopolist.

Sraffa, pp. 544-545

In his theory of monopolistic competition, Edward Hastings Chamberlin (1946) proposed that in most cases market prices are determined by both monopolistic and competitive elements.

He further notes the waste factor of monopoly:

It is the peculiarity of monopolistic competition that it may develop over long periods with impunity, prices always covering costs, and may, in fact, become permanent and normal through a failure of price competition to function. The surplus capacity is never cast off, and the result is high prices and waste. The theory affords an explanation of such wastes in the economic system – wastes which are usually referred to as “wastes of competition.” In fact, they could never occur under pure competition, and it is for this reason that the theory of pure competition is and must be silent about them, introducing them, if at all, as “qualifications,” rather than as parts of the theory. They are wastes of monopoly – of the monopoly elements in monopolistic competition.

(Chamberlin, 1946, p. 109)

To the theory of monopolistic competition Joan Robinson (1933) added the concept of monopsony, the case of a single buyer in a market or a group of buyers acting as one. She concluded that under normal conditions, a monopsonist will buy fewer units of a product, and will pay a lower price, than would competitive buyers. Under the conditions of monopsony, workers can be exploited just as easily as under monopoly.

Robinson recommended that a trade board or trade union should impose a minimum wage in order to remedy this exploitation. She also notes that to eliminate monopolistic

exploitation of labor, markets would need to become purely competitive. However, this may still not be enough:

When the market becomes perfect the firms will expand, and in the new position of equilibrium, when profits are once more normal, the firms will be of optimum size, costs will be lower, and the price of the commodity will have fallen.

The removal of imperfection of the market must therefore lower the price of the commodity. It is likely also to alter the marginal physical productivity of the number of men formerly employed in the industry, since the workers are now organized in optimum firms instead of sub-optimum firms. In the old position they were receiving less than what was then the value of the marginal physical product, and in the new position they will receive the value of their marginal physical product, but it does not follow that they will be better off in the new position than in the old, since the value of the marginal physical product may have diminished; the marginal physical product may have diminished, and the price of the commodity must have fallen.

(Robinson, 1933, pp. 284, 285)

Robinson's model helped to initiate the Wagner Act, the Robinson-Patman Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, providing the right of self-organization free from interference and the right to bargain with employers, setting minimum wage, and limiting price discrimination that reduces competition.

### ***Mathematical Economics (1875 - )***

Mathematical models first emerged on the economic scene circa 1875. A method rather than a school of thought, they were used to more clearly and consistently express the definitions, postulates, and conclusion of many theories. However, by 1935 economics entered a mathematical epoch. Samuelson (1976, p. 25) observes, "It became easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a nonmathematical genius to enter into the pantheon of original theorists." Although some still did not favor the economic approach. As Heilbroner (1979, p. 198) noted, "The prestige accorded to mathematics in economics has given it rigor, but, alas, also mortis."



Used to derive and state economic theories and to quantitatively test their hypotheses, mathematical economics employs algebra, calculus, differential equations, topology, and statistical analysis under the general umbrella of econometrics. Because the increase in government intervention in the economy stimulated econometric research, and established government agencies as the greatest resource for gathering statistics, econometrics has provided useful economic information for both forecasting the future and policy analysis. (Forecasting anticipates likely events, trends, and their consequences, while policy analysis analyzes the effects of government programs and policies.) While policy analysis has been shown to be much more accurate than forecasting, the real advantage of forecasting is that it forces economists to consider the interdependencies in an economic system, thus helping decision makers anticipate the positive and negative effects of their actions. As technology became more sophisticated and available, econometrics has grown in the size and complexity of its models.

Of particular modern interest in econometrics is game theory. Originated by John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern (1953), game theory is categorized by three types of games, games of skill, games of chance, and games of strategy. For example, situations where the moves of all players are visible to all of the other players are analogous to chess. Situations where the moves of the players are hidden to the other players, or situations that are dependent on the decisions of other players are similar to poker. A game of chance is similar to playing dice, and a game of skill is similar to golf.

Economic theory has four main branches: game theory, decision theory, general equilibrium theory, and mechanism design theory. The last three are closely connected with game theory. Decision theory is very similar to games of skill, that is, it covers in-

stances of a single player against nature. General equilibrium theory is a specialized branch dealing with the interaction of large numbers of producers and consumers, while mechanism design theory differs from game theory by investigating the consequences of different types of rules, whereas game theory accepts a certain set of rules as given (Levine, 2003).

Game theory is generally applied in economic situations that are similar to games of strategy. Games of strategy are typically divided into two-person or multi-person categories, which are then broken down into cooperative, non-cooperative, mixed-strategy, and zero-sum games (Kelly, 2003).

While game theory generally rests on the idea that economic relationships resemble warfare, i.e. one person's gain is another person's loss, it has been shown that many situations which appear to be based on negative conflict, a win/lose scenario, can be profitably moved to a more synergistic win/win scenario through a cooperative approach which retains the option to retaliate if other players choose to defect (Axelrod, 1984; Lynch & Kordis, 1988). In addition, it has been noted that situations of continuous interaction will degenerate to a lose/lose scenario if players continue to play competitively. This may, in part, explain economic mobility in capitalistic environments, as winners at the top eventually become losers due to hyper-competitive behavior, only to be replaced by other competitive players who also will eventually lose. Thus, competition on the surface appears to create winners, but in the long run may create a continuous stream of losers (Kohn, 1986; Lynch & Kordis, 1988). In addition, modern innovations in game theory show that a cooperative outcome may occur (often characterized by a discreet

change between two points of relative equilibrium) purely through accident, ignorance, or imitation, as well as through conscious intent (Levine & Pesendorfer, 2002).

In *Decision Making Using Game Theory*, Kelley (2003) notes that game theory was conceived in the seventeenth century to solve the gambling problems of the idle French nobility. At this time game theory was largely preoccupied with two-person, zero-sum games. German mathematician Ernst Zermelo brought game theory to the modern era by proving that every competitive two-person game has a best strategy for both players, if, that is, both players have all of the information about each other's intentions and preferences.

This theory was quickly followed with the minimax theorem that postulates a strategy for each player in a competitive game that makes each player happy (no regret) with his or her strategy at the end of the game. Although attempted by many, the proof of the minimax theorem was to remain elusive until 1937 when John von Neumann proved the theorem for the general case, making it fundamental to game theory.

Oscar Morgenstern first met von Neumann for the first time in February of 1939 and they soon formed a synergistic partnership (Mirowski, 1991). By 1940 von Neumann was synthesizing his work on game theory while Morgenstern was developing the thesis that, since individuals make decisions in an environment where the outcomes of their decisions depend on the decisions of others, by definition social interaction is made with incomplete information (Kelly, 2003). In 1941 von Neumann and Morgenstern combined their efforts into a book that was to become the most famous in game theory, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*.

Unfortunately, it was not until 1957, with the publication of *Games and Decisions* (Luce & Raiffa, 1957), that Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa made game theory accessible to a wider audience. In their book they drew attention to the fact that players in a game are assumed to be fully aware of the rules and pay-offs, but that this is unrealistic in practice. This idea led John Harsanyi to construct a theory of games of incomplete information, in which nature was assumed to assign to players one of several states known only to themselves (Harsanyi & Selten, 1972; Myerson, 1984; Wilson, 1978). This construct, along with the concept of common knowledge developed by David Lewis in 1969, laid the foundation for many later applications to economics (Kelly, 2003).

In 1951 John Nash generalized the minimax theorem, proving that every competitive game has at least one equilibrium point in both pure and mixed strategies. Since this time Nash equilibriums have become the most widely used theoretic concepts in game theory.

The highly influential triad of von Neumann-Morgenstern, Luce-Raiffa, and Nash encouraged a community of game theorists to communicate, to collaborate, and to develop many important and new concepts including:

- Cooperative games in which promises and threats are enforceable (Harsanyi, 1966)
- Repeated games in which players may learn from previous interactions (Milnor & Shapely, 1957; Rosenthal, 1979; Rosenthal & Rubinstein, 1984; Shubik, 1959)
- Bargaining games where players are allowed to make offers, counteroffers, and side payments (Aumann, 1975; Aumann & Peleg, 1960; Champsaur, 1975; Hart, 1977; Mas-Colell, 1977; Peleg, 1963; Shapely & Shubik, 1969)

Although two-person, zero-sum games were important for military strategy, they fell from interest after the Vietnam War and game theory transitioned from military applications to the socio-political arena (Rapoport & Orwant, 1962). As opposed to two-person, zero-sum games, political science found many applications for the two-person, mixed-motive games (Axelrod, 1984; Schelling, 1960). The Shapley-Shubik (1954) and Banzhaf (1965) indices of power provided insight into the relationship between influence and weighted voting and were widely used in courts of law (Mann & Shapely, 1964). In 1969 Robin Farquharson created the concept of strategic choice to show how voters exercise power not according to true preferences, but tactically in order to bring about a preferred outcome (for example, a vote for one candidate to keep another out of office).

Subsequent to these discoveries, game theory expanded dramatically and research centers were established around the world. Game theory was successfully applied to many fields including biology (Maynard Smith, 1982; Selten, 1980), computer science, management theory, and economics (Kelly, 2003).

Kelley (2003) also notes three criticisms of game theory:

1. Rationality – Game theory assumes rationality on the part of the players and that players always act in their own self-interest (Von Neumann, 1928). This also assumes that players can determine the probable outcome of the actions and can rank these outcomes in order of preference. However, sometimes a player can achieve an optimal outcome by not playing selfishly, and in some circumstances players are motivated by a moral imperative (Beck, 1969, 1988; Guyer & Wood, 1998) rather than self-interest. In many circumstances information is incomplete, absent, externally influenced, or internally filtered, limited, and distorted by the

player. Therefore, players may play irrationally, unintentionally or intentionally, or may play from several perspectives of rationality – instrumental rationality (Von Neumann, 1928) in which self-interest is paramount, collective rationality in which the greater good is paramount, or bounded rationality (Simon, 1997) in which the player is limited cognitively and, therefore, must play by simple rules:

2. Indeterminacy – Games can have more than one equilibrium. Therefore, optimal strategy may remain uncertain and theory will fail to deliver a unique solution. Under these circumstances strategic selection is not necessarily rational.
3. Inconsistency – This third criticism of game theory concerns games in which players behaving irrationally do better than if they played rationally and selfishly (not noted here is the idea that selfishness may, in fact, not be rational). In this case, initial and unspoken cooperation and a sense of fair play can usurp the rationality of backward induction (or getting what you can while you can) (Binmore, 1987; Dixit & Skeath, 1999; Romp, 1997).

Even more recently the relatively new science of chaos (Gleick, 1987), fractals (B. Mandelbrot & Hudson, 2004; B. B. Mandelbrot, 1983), turbulence (Briggs & Peat, 1989), and other forms of nonlinear dynamics has begun, albeit slowly, to make its mark on economic thought (Anderla, Dunning, & Forge, 1997; Casti, 1994; Cohen & Stewart, 1994; Grandmont, 1987; Neugart, 2000; Puu, 1997; Zhang, 2005). [Note that most natural systems, including people and markets, are not purely chaotic systems but open systems that generally vacillate between equilibrium and near-to-chaos states (Nicolis &

Prigogine, 1989; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). However, chaos is easier to say than near-to-chaos and has been adopted as the formal description.]

Keen (2001) notes:

Most economists think that chaos theory has had little or no impact – which is generally true in economics, but not at all true in most other sciences. This is partially because, to understand chaos theory, you have to understand an area of mathematics known as “ordinary differential equations.” Yet this topic is taught in very few courses on mathematical economics – and where it is taught, it is not covered in sufficient depth. Students may learn some of the basic techniques for handling what are known as “*second-order linear* differential equations,” but chaos and complexity only begin to manifest themselves in “*third-order nonlinear* differential equations.”

p. 6

However, the gradual acceptance of non-linear dynamics is becoming necessary, if not apparent. Pesaran and Potter (1993) observe:

The empirical modeling of economic time series is dominated by methods that assume linearity of the underlying dynamic economic system, the so-called Frisch–Slutsky paradigm. The main *a priori* argument in favor of linearity and the reason for its original adoption is its simplicity: autoregressive models can be estimated using standard regression packages and there is now a wide range of computer software packages available to estimate models with linear moving average components; the dynamics contained in estimated models can be completely characterized by their impulse response functions and directly related to linear models of the macroeconomy. The dominance of the Frisch–Slutsky paradigm is not based on any strong *a priori* belief that the economic system is linear. Indeed, once curvature is introduced into utility functions and/or production functions, nonlinearity becomes a pervasive feature of theoretical dynamic models. Nor is it based on any convincing empirical evidence that actual economic time series are best characterized as linear stochastic processes. The LQ optimization approach (with Linear constraints and Quadratic objective functions) which underlies most econometric applications (either implicitly or explicitly) is undoubtedly attractive on analytical and computational grounds, but can be highly deficient in areas where economic behaviour is dominated by asymmetric costs or adjustments, irreversibilities, transaction costs or institutional and physical rigidities. The challenge facing applied econometrics in dealing with these issues is truly immense. Reliable statistical techniques are required for detecting dynamic nonlinearities. Stochastic optimization models that are capable of capturing the primary sources of dynamic nonlinearities and are suitable for empirical analysis need to be developed. The possible effects of temporal aggregation, and aggregation across commodities and agents need to be worked out in the context of nonlinear dynamic models. These are complicated issues, solutions to some of

which have eluded us even in the case of linear models, and promise to be far more complicated when we enter the realm of nonlinear dynamic models. It is therefore natural to expect that real progress in the area of nonlinear dynamic econometric models will be slow and hard to come by. Nevertheless, the past two decades have witnessed important advances in the mathematical and statistical analysis of dynamic systems, particularly in physics, epidemiology and meteorology. Many of these developments have already found their way into economics...

p. vii

At the turn of the century Henri Poincaré observed that simple, nonlinear, low-dimensional dynamical systems can exhibit apparently random and very complicated behavior. However, modeling this behavior was too difficult to attempt until the development of the electronic computer and, therefore, was largely ignored. However, since the 1980's improvements in computer technology have provided very powerful and easy access to visual representations of dynamical processes. One process of great interest is the recurrent business cycle, which is easy to observe but, so far, impossible to predict with any accuracy. Nonlinear dynamics may well provide a much better model for business cycles and the interrelated factors that cause them. Also, chaos theory appears to have a strong potential for determining the real stability of economic equilibriums, and will likely demonstrate that what we once thought of as stable, static states are, in fact, unstable and sensitive to small perturbations of the right kind (a rapid shift in public perception of the stock market may be a case in point). In which case, chaos theory will likely provide a much better understanding of the transitions between equilibriums (and stock market crashes). Nonlinear dynamics may also provide a better modeling of the real world, where perfect information and rational thought are not always available (Medio, 1992).

As of this writing, non-linear dynamics and other exotic applications of neural nets, genetic algorithms, and cellular automata are being used to forge new directions for



the study of consumer theory, foreign-exchange trading, debt deflation, volatility of interest rates and monetary velocity, the emergence of social and institutional structures, and other complex systems in economics (Barnett, Chiarella, Keen, Marks, & Schnabl, 2000). However, complexity may also be used to illustrate simple outcomes, such as the centralization of wealth. Speaking of the economist Brian Arthur and the concept of complexity Waldrop (1992) notes:

And that was precisely where Arthur's new economics came in. Conventional economics, the kind he'd been taught in school, was about as far from this vision of complexity as you could imagine. Theoretical economists endlessly talked about the stability of the marketplace, and the balance of supply and demand. They transcribed the concept into mathematical equations and proved theorems about it. They accepted the gospel according to Adam Smith as the foundation for a kind of state religion. But when it came to instability and change in the economy – well, they seemed to find the very idea disturbing, something they'd just as soon not talk about.

But Arthur had embraced instability. Look out the window, he'd told his colleagues. Like it or not, the marketplace isn't stable. The *world* isn't stable. It's full of evolution, upheaval, and surprise. Economics had to take that ferment into account. And now he believed he'd found the way to do that, using a principle known as "increasing returns" – or in the King James translation, "To them that hath shall be given"... Them that has gets.

p. 17

### ***American Institutionalism (1900 - )***

Founded by Thorstein Veblen, the uniquely American institutionalist mode of economic thought began around 1900 and continues to this day. Brue (1994) notes:

In the period between the Civil War and World War I the achievements of American capitalism were impressive. Rapid growth made the United States the biggest and most powerful industrial system in the world. The improvements in living conditions of many wage earners, however, fell far short of their aspirations and of the possibilities created by the general rise in national income. Hours of labor were long; housing often was inadequate; security in times of sickness, unemployment and old age was negligible; higher education was inaccessible for most workers' children; job security was virtually nonexistent; and health and safety regulations were inadequate. Frequently, employers organized company towns

and dominated the workers, even in their personal lives; large-scale immigration tended to undermine wage rates; taxation was regressive; usury was widespread; and recurring recessions were devastating to those who lost their jobs.

The age of monopoly may be said to have begun in the 1870's, and this movement accelerated around the turn of the century. Conservative voices predominated in the schools, in the press, in the pulpits, and in government. The state and federal governments, which proclaimed laissez-faire with respect to workers' interest, were quick to use the police and militia against labor in industrial disputes. They were also generous in establishing tariff protection for business and in granting large subsidies to railroads.

The American political and economic environment of the late nineteenth century led many economists to question the assumptions and conclusions of the neoclassical school. The doctrine that minimal government interference produced the maximum social well-being increasingly seemed untenable. There was much concern about monopoly, poverty, depression, and waste. The movement for social control and reform was gathering momentum, and it was in this milieu that institutional economics grew.

pp. 387, 388

At this time, undertaking socialist reform and using government to improve economic conditions were the recognized methods of creating change. Veblen (1904) favored a more radical reconstruction of society, but the economic recommendations of other American institutionalists, influenced by German historicism, became more reflective of socialist reform. Characterized by a middle-class desire for reform in an era of big business and banker capitalism, institutionalism challenged rigid orthodoxy in economic thinking. The tenets of American institutionalism include:

- A broad, holistic perspective in the study of the economy, looking for interactive patterns of collective action in the realms of politics, sociology, law, custom, ideology, tradition, and with other social processes and relationships.
- Emphasis on the role of institutions in economic life, including the institutions of custom, social habits, law, modes of thinking, and ways of living, and reformation

of the institutions of credit, monopoly, absentee ownership, labor-management relations, social security, and income distribution.

- Embracing a Darwinian, evolutionary approach while disavowing a static viewpoint. Institutions and societies are always changing and economic analysis should take this into account.
- Rejection of a pleasure-pain rationale for human economic behavior as over simplified, while incorporating the more complex psychologies of behaviorism and Freudian theory.
- Rejecting normal equilibrium in favor of circular causation or cumulative change. Embracing maladjustments in economic life as normal rather than as departures from the norm. Understanding that continual correction in economic life is required.
- Recognizing that people are cooperative, collective creatures who organize themselves into groups of common interest, while also recognizing that serious differences of interest emerge between groups and individuals. (This is in opposition to the harmony of interests proposed by the classicists.)
- Creation of liberal, democratic reform that promotes the equitable distribution of income and wealth, and includes a larger role for government in economic and social issues.

As an outspoken leader of American institutionalism, Veblen criticized what he called the leisure class. In his opinion this class is characterized by conservatism, conspicuous consumption, and an avoidance of useful work – seizing goods in a predatory

fashion without earning them. According to Veblen they accumulate wealth not for laudable reasons, but in order to consume in a fashion that displays their wealth (real or otherwise), thus indicating power, prestige, success, and honor. Therefore, wasteful consumption is the most reputable of all for the leisure class. He saw leisure-class women as egregious examples of this wastefulness, displaying constant evidence in their habits and dress that they kept by leisure-class men (Veblen, 1899). (He also believed that even the poor engaged in some wasteful consumption, as their worldview was greatly influenced by the leisure class.) As the leisure class must avoid useful work, he further notes acceptable occupations for this class, including the force and fraud that go with them:

These occupations are government, war, sports, and devout observances. Persons unduly given to difficult theoretical niceties may hold that these occupations are still incidentally and indirectly “productive,” but it is to be noted as decisive of the question at hand that the ordinary and ostensible motive of the leisure class in engaging in these occupations is assuredly not an increase of wealth by productive effort. At this time as at any other cultural stage, government and war are, at least in part, carried on for the pecuniary gain of those who engage in them; but it is gain obtained by the honorable method of seizure and conversion. These occupations are of the nature of predatory, not of productive, employment.

(Veblen, 1943, p. 40)

Noting that the leisure-class influence on business of the day was comparable to sports and warfare he states:

Strategy and cunning is an element invariably present in games, as also in warlike pursuits and the chase. In all of these employments strategy tends to develop into finesse and chicane. Chicane, falsehood, browbeating, hold a well-secured place in the method of procedure of any athletic contest and in games generally. The habitual employment of an umpire, and the minute technical regulations governing the limits and details of permissible fraud and strategic advantage, sufficiently attest to the fact that fraudulent practices and attempts to overreach one's opponent are not adventitious features of the game. In the nature of the case habituation to sports should conduce to a fuller development of the aptitude for fraud; and the prevalence in the community of that predatory temperament which inclines men to sports connotes a prevalence of sharp practice and callous disregard for the interest of others.

pp. 273, 274

He advocated government intervention through restriction of wasteful consumption, as large portions of consumption seem to be undertaken to impress one's neighbors, who will then retaliate by purchasing similar items to maintain their relative status, creating a feed-forward function of waste.

Veblen also stated that:

The situation of today shapes the institutions of tomorrow through a selective, coercive process, by acting upon men's habitual view of things, and so altering or fortifying a point of view or a mental attitude handed down from the past. The institutions – that is to say the habits of thought – under the guidance of which men live are in this way received from an earlier time.... Institutions are products of the past process, are adapted to past circumstances, and are therefore never in full accord with the requirements of the present.... At the same time, men's present habits of thought tend to persist indefinitely, except as circumstances enforce a change. These institutions which have so been handed down, these habits of thought, points of view, mental attitudes and aptitudes, or what not, are therefore themselves a conservative factor. This is the factor of social inertia, psychological inertia, conservatism.... The evolution of society is substantially a process of mental adaptation on the part of individuals under the stress of circumstances which will no longer tolerate habits of thought formed under and conforming to a different set of circumstances in the past.

pp. 190-192

Observing the conservatism of the leisure class, Veblen notes that they are sheltered from environmental forces and, therefore, adapt their views much more slowly. This slowness of adaptation retards social change and keeps the leisure class out of tune with the times. In a direct attack on neoclassical thought, Veblen asserts that hedonism (motivation by pleasure and pain) presupposes rational, intelligent, far-sighted people. He notes that the neoclassicists would have:

A gang of Aleutian Islanders slushing about in the wrack and surf with rakes and magical incantation for the capture of shell-fish ... to be engaged in a feat of hedonistic equilibration in rent, wages, and interest....

The hedonistic conception of man is that of a lightning calculator of pleasures and pains, who oscillates like a homogeneous globule of desire of happiness under the impulse of stimuli that shift him about the area, but leave him intact. He has neither antecedent nor consequent. He is an isolated, definitive human datum, in

stable equilibrium except for the buffest of the impinging forces that displace him in one direction or another. Self-imposed in elemental space, he spins symmetrically about his own spiritual axis until the parallelogram of forces bears down upon him, whereupon he follows the line of the resultant. When the force of the impact is spent, he comes to rest, a self-contained globule of desire as before. Spiritually, the hedonistic man is not a prime mover. He is not the seat of a process of living, except in the sense that he is subject to a series of permutations enforced upon him by circumstances external and alien to him.

(Veblen, 1919, pp. 73, 74, 193)

Veblen believed that we have an instinct for meaningful work and workmanship that is conducive to the general well-being of the species. He thought that people inherently want to work and to do it well, and that overwork and waste were inherently deplorable. However, he viewed this basic instinct as in conflict with the societal antipathy to useful labor. He also noted that, as industry enlarged its domain, its interests diverged more and more from that of the community. He states (Veblen, 1946):

The business man's place in the economy of nature is to "make money," not to produce goods. The production of goods is a mechanical process, incidental to the making of money; whereas the making of money is a pecuniary operation, carried on by bargain and sale, not by mechanical appliances and powers.... The highest achievement in business is the nearest approach to getting something for nothing.

pp. 91-94aa

Veblen believed that when making money takes precedence over making goods, workmanship is abandoned. He thought that progress is hampered by big businesses that manipulate prices, actively hinder output, profit from disturbances in the system that hinder output, make situations worse by forcing labor and capital into more competitive sectors of the economy, and concern themselves only with the vendibility of goods rather than with serving the needs of society.

Within the capitalist system Veblen noted many conflicts and paradoxes. Among them are:

- The instinct for workmanship versus the desire to maximize profit.
- Making goods versus making money.
- The community at large versus the absentee business owner.
- The buyers who want many goods at a lower price versus the monopolists who offer fewer goods at higher prices.
- The need for social change versus the conservatism of thought and action.
- Meeting people's basic needs of everyone versus conspicuous consumption.
- The need for stability versus the extension of credit.

Veblen regarded this last issue as one of great importance as, in his opinion, credit plays a special role in modern business. He noted that what is profitable for one businessperson becomes compulsory to his or her competitors. Those who can avail themselves of credit are in a better position to undersell the others. Therefore, credit has become widespread and typical, with the earning capacity of a business resting on the foundation of capital plus borrowed funds.

Veblen's views regarding credit led to his business-cycle theory. This theory states that borrowing money can increase profits as long as the rate of earnings exceeds the rate of interest. Credit allows a firm to bid up the price of material capital goods (property, shares of stock, etc.), and, as their dollar value increases, these goods serve as collateral for the extension of credit. However, this cumulative extension of credit rests on uncertain ground as eventually the rise in earnings does not keep up with the increase in value of the capital. When this happens, a period of liquidations begins, accompanied

by credit cancellations, high discount rates, falling prices, forced sales, shrinkage of capitalization, reduced output, reduced labor, and creditor takeover.

In parallel, labor benefits during times of prosperity not through higher pay but through fuller employment. As prices rise, the cost of living reduces the real value of wages, and as wages rise in response to increased prices, prosperity ends because profit margins shrink.

Veblen viewed these discrepancies between earning and capitalization as chronic. However, they can be overcome temporarily by speculative price increase, new discoveries of resources, or expansion of credit. They can also be overcome through promotion of monopolies and through wasteful and unproductive consumption. However, he did not believe that people could waste enough to keep up with business need:

Private initiative cannot carry the waste of goods and services to nearly the point required by the business situation. Private waste is no doubt large, but business principles, leading to saving and shrewd investment, are too ingrained in the habits of modern men to admit an effective retardation of the rate of saving. Something more to the point can be done, and indeed is being done, by the civilized governments in the way of effectual waste. Armaments, public edifices, courtly and diplomatic establishments, and the like, are almost altogether wasteful, so far as bears on the present question.... But however extraordinary this public waste of substance latterly has been, it is apparent altogether inadequate to offset the surplus productivity of the machine industry particularly when this productivity is seconded by the great facility which the modern business organization affords for the accumulation of savings in relatively few hands.

(Veblen, 1904, pp. 255 - 257)

(It is unfortunate that Veblen did not live to see the frenetic economy of the latter 1990s and early 2000s so that America could benefit from his further assessment.)

A strong and current proponent of the ideals of American institutionalism, John Kenneth Galbraith attacks neoclassicism as a widely accepted and familiar set of ideas that are no longer relevant. According to Galbraith (1958) modern capitalism is domi-



nated by large enterprises that use corporate planning and advertising to produce an abundance of contrived desires:

As a society becomes increasingly affluent, wants are increasingly created by the process by which they are satisfied.... Wants thus come to depend on output. In technical terms, it can no longer be assumed that welfare is greater at an all-round higher level of production than at a lower one. It may be the same. The higher level of production has, merely, a higher level of want creation necessitating a higher level of want satisfaction. There will be frequent occasion to refer to the way wants depend on the process by which they are satisfied. It will be convenient to call it the Dependency Effect.

p. 158

In the neoclassical model, the consumer decides independently which products or services to buy. However, Galbraith contends that now the huge firms that dominate the modern system decide what will be produced and then persuade consumers to buy these products. He contends that consumers no longer hold sovereignty, but rather are held in dependency on the whims of the producer. This circumstance creates many evils, including a social imbalance where, for example, what brand of toothpaste one uses becomes more important than public education. The creation of artificial wants, combined with social emulation, shifts resources away from public goods and towards private goods of lesser value.

In addition, readily identifiable persons no longer own organizations. They are owned by a myriad of stockholders who have little or no control over how these organizations are run. Instead, control of the organization is exercised by an elite group, whom Galbraith calls the technostructure, of scientists, engineers, managers, and marketers. He notes that, these technostuctures seek far more to grow than to maximize profit. This is in direct opposition to the neoclassical view. He notes that:

No point is better accepted by the neoclassical model than that the monopoly price is higher and the output smaller than is socially ideal. The public is the victim. Because of such exploitation, oligopoly is wicked.

(Galbraith, 1973, p. 119)

However, he counters with the idea that what neoclassicism describes as a problem does not truly exist. He notes that because growth benefits the technostructure more greatly than maximizing profit, gain for the stockholder is produced at the minimum level required for the maintenance of stockholder quiescence. Any additional money, which is often substantial, is spent on advertising, building market share, and acquiring other organizations.

He notes that economic forces, left to themselves, typically benefit only the powerful. But, he also notes that any conventional attempt to arrest these forces through public policy is likely futile, and chides antitrust action as an inadequate antidote to the evils of laissez-faire.

He notes:

The remedy that emerges from the neoclassical model is harmless. It presents no threat to the power or autonomy of the technostructure or to its affirmative interest in growth. And since the remedy is thought to be comprehensive – since competition is considered the remedy for all industrial ills – it directs all complaints into an essentially harmless channel. What might be dangerous agitation for effective regulatory action or for public ownership or socialism comes out safely as a demand that the antitrust laws be enforced.... Best of all from the standpoint of the technostructure would be immunity from all attack. But the next best thing – and a very good thing – is a system of ideas that diverts all attack into channels that are safely futile.

Galbraith, Economics, p. 121

Galbraith calls for more aggressive tactics including:

- Permanent public control over the prices set by the largest firms.
- Permanent public control over wage gains in the major collective bargaining agreements to ensure that they do not exceed the growth of national productivity.
- A public planning authority to join with major corporations and unions to plan and coordinate economic activity.

- A public planning authority to coordinate economic plans with other industrial nations.
- Government redistribution of income through public control of executive salaries, progressive taxation, increased minimum wage, and a negative income tax plan.

### *Welfare economics (Circa 1906 - )*

Nearly every aspect of economics contains a component of welfare. However, beginning circa 1906 greater focus was given to the specifics of welfare economics and continues to this day. The contributions resulting from this focus include:

- The definition of maximum welfare – Maximum welfare occurs where there are no longer any changes that will make someone better off while making no one worse off. This implies an optimal distribution of goods, an optimal allocation of technical resources, and an optimal quantity of output.
- The divergence between private and social marginal costs and benefits – Private cost is the expense of production, social cost is the expense or damage to society as a consequence of production.
- The recognition that people distribute their resources between the present, the near future, and the distant future irrationally – People sacrifice the remote future in favor of benefits in the near future, and the near future is sacrificed for the benefit of present consumption. Therefore, natural resources are consumed more quickly and wastefully because future satisfactions are underrated.
- An increased debate over the welfare benefits of laissez-faire and socialist economics.

- A focus on the imperfection of human systems and the difficulty of promoting and measuring welfare.
- The tendency of politicians to disguise the true cost of public goods through the creation of budget deficits.
- The notion that only individuals can know what gives them satisfaction and causes them dissatisfaction.

### ***Keynesian economics (Circa 1936 - )***

Thought by many to be the most influential economist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, John Maynard Keynes formulated his ideas as a response to what he saw as a declining rate of growth. (These concerns were given added impetus during the 1930s by the Great Depression.) He noted that secular stagnation was occurring because the population was declining, most of the world had already been colonized (apparently limiting geographic expansion), production outran consumption as incomes and savings grew, there were insufficient discoveries and innovations to stimulate new capital investments, and the economy was being dragged down by growing accumulated depreciation funds.

In response Keynes founded his principles of economics on:

- An emphasis on macroeconomics.
- The concepts of actual output, potential output, and effective demand. That is, aggregate expenditures (or effective demand) can be insufficient to buy all of the output produced. In this case unsold goods accumulate, and firms decrease output and reduce employment. Thus, actual output can be lower than potential output would be under full employment

- Recurring booms and busts in the economy and the erratic nature of planned investment.
- A downward inflexibility of wages, i.e., firms will lay off employees before decreasing wage.
- Active government intervention, including the easing of credit and the creation of federal budget deficits, to promote full employment, price stability, and economic growth.
- The multiplier effect – Giving jobs to people allows them to earn more and therefore stimulates spending that creates new jobs.

He also noted a fundamental principle regarding consumption (Keynes, 1936):

The fundamental psychological law, upon which we are entitled to depend with great confidence both a priori from our knowledge of human nature and from the detailed facts of experience, is that men are disposed, as a rule and on the average, to increase their consumption as their income increases, but not by as much as the increase in their income.

(Keynes, 1936, p. 96)

Keynes believed that the economy could be fine-tuned to create non-inflationary full employment. This was a very necessary focus given the debilitating unemployment and depression following the market crash. Keynesian policies allowed labor to negotiate improved wages and working conditions with less fear of unemployment, businesses benefited from government contracts and bankers found new and profitable investments in government bonds and benefited from the new liquidity, security, and stability afforded by government controls. (After the depression, many Keynesian ideas became orthodox, even dogma, within the broader economic theory.)

Critical of laissez-faire policy, Keynes noted:

Speculators may do no harm as bubbles on a steady stream of enterprise. But the position is serious when enterprise becomes the bubble on a whirlpool of speculation. When the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of the activities of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done. The measure of success attained by Wall Street, regarded as an institution of which the proper social purpose is to direct new investment into the most profitable channels in terms of future yield, cannot be claimed as one of the outstanding triumphs of laissez-faire capitalism – which is not surprising, if I am right in thinking that the best brains of Wall Street have been in fact directed towards a different object.

(1936, p. 159)

According to Keynes (1926), big business is a lottery in which some people take advantage of the ignorance and uncertainty of others, leading to inequalities of wealth, unemployment disappointment of reasonable business expectations, and impairment of efficiency and production:

I believe that the cure for these things is partly to be sought in the deliberate control of the currency and of credit by a central institution, and partly in the collection and dissemination on a great scale of data relating to the business situation.... These measures would involve Society in exercising directive intelligence through some appropriate organ of action over many of the inner intricacies of private business, yet it would leave private initiative unhindered....

Devotees of Capitalism are often unduly conservative, and reject reforms in its technique, which might really strengthen and preserve it, for fear that they may prove to be first steps away from Capitalism itself.... For my part, I think that Capitalism, wisely managed, can probably be made more efficient for attaining economic ends than any alternative system yet in sight, but that in itself it is in many ways extremely objectionable. Our problem is to work out a social organization which shall be efficient as possible without offending our notions of a satisfactory way of life.

pp. 47 - 58

More recently, American economists have made several important contributions to the Keynesian approach (Eichner, 1979; Mankiw & Romer, 1991). These include:

- A synthesis of Keynesian and neoclassical perspectives.
- A suggested coupling of the average annual wage increase to the annual national increase in productivity.

- A statistical method for comparing two states of economic equilibrium.
- A theory of efficient markets, where all new information is readily understood and quickly incorporated into market price. In this case, one cannot outguess the market because any existing market price is already based on all available information. Therefore, any subsequent change in price will be unrelated to existing information or past price changes.
- A method for determining the optimal quantity of a public good.

### *The Economics of Friedrich von Hayek*

Winner of the 1974 Nobel Prize and long-time outspoken counterpoint to Keynesian economics, Friedrich von Hayek was to undergo two profound transformations in his economic philosophy that were, ultimately, to transplant him from the Austrian School of his homeland to the Chicago School in America.

The first transformation occurred after World War I, when Hayek, jolted by a war where nationalism brought danger and collapse, returned home to Vienna to find a way to build a better world based on justice. He believed that socialism would fulfill the promise of renewal and a better world. Eventually, Hayek earned doctoral degrees in both economics and law. However, soon after beginning his schooling in economics he became convinced that a free market was better suited to fulfilling his dream of human betterment. In 1944 he wrote his landmark book, *The Road to Serfdom*, in which he presented a strong argument and appeal to end nationalism and government interference in the free market, citing Hitler's Germany as the backdrop against which no country could succeed. This book was to have great influence worldwide and was to become the bible

of economics for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In 1950 Hayek moved to the University of Chicago where he became professor of social and moral sciences and a member of the prestigious Committee on Social Thought. In 1960 wrote what many consider his most outstanding book, *The Constitution of Liberty*, in which he argued that free-market laissez-faire was not sufficient. He asserted that government had a role also, but a role in which it ensured a competitive economy through laws and rules and the development and maintenance of institutions to administer them (Yergin & Stanislaw, 2002).

Hayek's second transformation occurred in 1937. Previously, he had argued for static and equilibrium economic theories and supported the idea that scientific methods could be employed in economics to successfully explain current phenomenon and accurately predict the future. However, after 1937 Hayek made an about-face, strongly influencing the fundamentals of Austrian economic theory, and began to assert that while one could argue for a tendency towards equilibrium in economic behavior, economic equilibrium itself is likely fictitious, as are the assumptions upon which it is based. Later Hayek rejected the notion that social and economic laws have any significant application to the theory of complex phenomenon (thus preceding chaos theory). He contended that economists should use a scientific approach as best as possible, however, he also noted that economists would rarely if ever discover economic laws on a par epistemologically with those of physics (Hutchison, 1984).



### *Economic Development (Circa 1945 - )*

Just as no particular domain of economic thought has a monopoly on welfare concern, development and growth pertain to most economic domains as well. However, after World War II there was a significant increase in attention and scholarship in this area.

Whereas economic growth can be defined as the increase in the comprehensive output, economic development is the process of raising individual output and income. Common focal points for both economic growth and development are the maintenance of full employment, defense against instability, and defense against military attack.

A strong and distinguished proponent for economic growth and development, Joseph Alois Schumpeter constructed a theoretical system to explain both business cycles and economic development. He believed that the primary factor in economic change was the introduction of innovation, which included new goods, methods, markets, and organization. He also believed that invention was not innovation until it was successfully applied to the industrial process. He divided people in industry into two categories, entrepreneurs who pioneer the innovation, and the capitalists who run the business.

Schumpeter believed that the economy would become stagnant without innovation. Entrepreneurs transform the static equilibrium of economic life into the dynamic process of development. However, he also noted that innovation is not a linear process but occurs in clusters, and the resulting economic boom can easily create conditions favorable to its own demise. Investment may eventually be deterred by rising prices; producers of the old products may eventually lose business as they compete with the newer ones, and depression may replace prosperity if business repays its debts, thus intensifying the deflationary process. Therefore, business cycles represent the tendency

towards equilibrium, interrupted by innovation, and followed by adaptation and a struggle towards a new equilibrium. (Note that these observations provide much of the basis for modern economic equilibrium and chaos theories.)

Despite his optimism regarding innovation, Schumpeter believed that foundation of capitalism was crumbling. He wrote that if the capitalist system had followed the pattern of growth characterizing the 60 years preceding 1928, social reforms could be accomplished without disturbing the capitalist process. However, he felt that entrepreneurial function was becoming obsolete and the institutional framework of capitalist society was being destroyed along with any protective political strata. He notes:

To sum up this part of our argument: if capitalist evolution – “progress” – either ceases or becomes completely automatic, the economic basis of the industrial bourgeoisie will be reduced eventually to wages such as are paid for current administrative work excepting remnants of quasi-rents and monopoloid gains that may be expected to linger on for some time. Since capitalist enterprise, by its very achievements, tends to automatize progress, we conclude that it tends to make itself superfluous – to break to pieces under the pressure of its own success. The perfectly bureaucratized giant industrial unit not only ousts the small or medium-sized form and “expropriates” its owners, but in the end it also ousts the entrepreneur and expropriates the bourgeoisie as a class which in the process stands to lose not only its income but also what is infinitely more important, its function. The true pacemakers of socialism were not the intellectuals or agitators who preached it but the Vanderbilts, Carnegies and Rockefellers. This result may not in every respect be the taste of Marxian socialists, still less to the taste of socialists of a more popular (Marx would have said, vulgar) description. But so far as prognosis goes, it does not differ from theirs....

The capitalist process, by substituting a mere parcel of shares for the walls of and the machines in a factory, takes the life out of the idea of property. It loosens the grip that once was so strong – the grip in the sense of the legal right and the actual ability to do as one pleases with one’s own; the grip also in the sense that the holder of the title loses the will to fight, economically, physically, politically, for “his” factory and his control over it, to die if necessary on its steps. And this evaporation of what we may term the material substance of property – its visible and touchable reality – affects not only the attitude of holders but also that of the workmen and of the public in general. Dematerialized, defunctionalized and absentee ownership does not impress and call forth moral allegiance as the vital

form of property did. Eventually there will be nobody left who really cares to stand for it – nobody within and nobody without the precincts of the big concerns.

(1950, pp. 134, 142)

Schumpeter believed that a large number of small business owners are more politically powerful than a few executives and large stockholders. However, he noted that in a capitalist system big business destroys smaller firms, thus weakening the political power of the industrial bourgeoisie. He also feared that government would eventually take over the planning of investment and the ownership and management of selected industrial sectors, the labor and capital market, and foreign enterprise.

Also notable in the economic theories of growth and development are those of Ragnar Nurkse. He wrote regarding the circular nature of poverty:

The “vicious circle of poverty” ... implies, of course, a circular constellation of forces tending to act and react upon one another in such a way as to keep a poor country in a state of poverty. Particular instances of such circular constellations are not difficult to imagine. For example, a poor man may not have enough to eat; being under-nourished, his health may be weak; being physically weak, his working capacity may be low, which means that he is poor, which in turn means that he will not have enough to eat; and so on. A situation of this sort, applying to a country as a whole, can be summed up in the trite proposition: “a country is poor because it is poor.”

The most important circular relationships of this kind are those that afflict the problem of capital formation.... The demand for capital is governed by the incentives to invest; the supply of capital is governed by the ability and willingness to save. In underdeveloped countries, a circular relationship exists on both sides of the problem. On the supply side, we have the small capacity to save, resulting from the low level of real income. But the low real income is a reflection of low productivity, which in turn is due largely to the lack of capital. The lack of capital is a result of the small capacity to save, and so the circle is complete.

On the demand side, the inducement to invest may be low, because of the small buying power of the people, which is due to their small real income, which in turn is due to low productivity. The low level of productivity, however, is a result of the small amount of capital used in production, which in its turn is caused, to some extent, by the low inducement to invest....

(Nurkse, 1952, pp. 1 - 3)

Nurkse believed that progress was not automatic. He felt that forces within the system create an equilibrium that is difficult to escape. However, once the vicious circle of stagnation is broken, the circular relationships tend to make for cumulative advance. In under-developed countries, he believed that the defeat of stagnation must be deliberately organized through central direction or collective enterprise, generally requiring a combination of private and government action in savings and investment.

On the other hand, Theodore W. Schultz noted in the early 1960's that human capital, the enhancement of individual productivity and earnings through the accumulated investment in knowledge, skills, migration, and health, was missing from most economic considerations of growth and development. He states:

This knowledge and skill are in great part the product of investment and, combined with other human investment, predominantly account for the productive superiority of the technically advanced countries.

(Schultz, 1961, p. 3)

He further notes that national income has risen faster than capital as normally measured, thus requiring the additional consideration of human capital:

Consider the long-period behavior of the capital-income ratio. We were taught that a country which amassed more reproducible capital relative to its land and labor would employ such capital in greater "depth" because of its growing abundance and cheapness. But apparently this is not what happens. On the contrary, the estimates now available show that less of such capital tends to be employed relative to income as economic growth proceeds. Are we to infer that the ratio of capital to income has no relevance in explaining either poverty or opulence? Or that a rise of this ratio is not a prerequisite to economic growth?.... For my purpose all that needs to be said is that these estimates of capital-income ratios refer to only a part of all capital. They exclude in particular, and most unfortunately, any human capital. Yet human capital has surely been increasing at a rate substantially greater than reproducible (nonhuman) capital. We cannot, therefore, infer from these estimates that the stock of all capital has been decreasing relative to income....

The heart of the matter [is], namely, the essentially unexplained large increase in real earnings of workers. Can this be a windfall? Or a quasirent pending the ad-

justment of labor supply? Or a pure rent reflecting the fixed amount of labor? It seems far more reasonable that it represents rather a return to the investment that has been made in human beings.

pp. 5, 6

### *The Chicago School (Circa 1948 - )*

As faculty members at the University of Chicago, Milton Friedman and George Stigler established New Classicism, or the Chicago School of economic thought. According to Brue (1994), economic theory of the time supported greater government involvement in the economy:

Pigou's notion of externalities implied that government could improve the allocation of resources through selective taxes and subsidies. Robinson's theory of monopsony suggested that government should establish a minimum wage and promote labor unionism. The theories of imperfect competition and monopoly power led many to conclude that government's regulatory role in the economy ought to be expanded. Natural monopolies were to be regulated as public utilities, and unnatural monopolies broken up through antitrust actions. Because of a lack of competition, regulators need to police the conduct of firms in order to prevent outcomes inconsistent with the nation's efficiency and equity goals. The economic theory of market socialism convinced many that the state could just as efficiently allocate resources and produce goods and services as private enterprises. Widely accepted theories of economic development implied that government was the only available instrumentality for breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in underdeveloped countries. The Keynesian revolution had firmly taken root. Its basic premise that the government should use fiscal, monetary, and incomes policies to stabilize the economy became the new conventional wisdom. Rationales for government redistribution of income had emerged from both marginalist and Keynesian analysis.

p. 510

However, members of the Chicago school opposed this entire line of reasoning. Although it faced stiff opposition, the Chicago view eventually moved to the fore as the experiences of the 1970's cast doubt on the economic orthodoxy. This new surge of intellectual ideas was based on the following principles:

- People engage in optimizing behavior when they make decisions, i.e., they attempt to maximize their well being.
- In the long run, prices and wages are usually what they should be.
- The economy is self-regulating and self-adjusting and should not be subject to intervention by government because government is inherently inefficient.

Government regulation generally benefits only those who seek the regulation, or those who optimize it to their private advantage.

- The competitive market system, uninterrupted by government, produces the greatest economic freedom, which, in turn, gives the maximum return in collective and individual well-being.

The rapid inflation of the 1970s and 1980s turned attention away from unemployment, the Keynesian focus, to the problems of inflation. Because of this, economists returned to microeconomic analysis to expand their insights into the issues of the day. As part of this trend, the Chicago school helped to maintain and strengthen marginalism and monetarism while preserving the legacy of classical and neoclassical economics. They believed that a free market would produce economic efficiency, price stability, and a natural rate of full employment, and warned that Keynesian intervention would eventually produce negative effects outweighing the positive impact.

As a whole, the Chicago school has served the cause of conservatism in the United States. As Reder (1982) states:

The remarkable success of the Chicago School during the third quarter of this century was due in large part to the fact that it was able to take a leading role both in scientific research and in providing for political conservatism. That it could fill this dual role was due to... the bankruptcy of intellectual conservatism at the end

of World War II... the combined effect of the Great Depression in discrediting laissez-faire capitalism, and of Hitler in rendering suspect every type of nationalistic-conservative doctrine, was to leave the political right with very little intellectual support.

p. 35

The new classical economists argued for:

- Less government regulation and paperwork.
- The inconsequential or short-lived nature of monopolies.
- The necessity of mergers.
- The beneficial nature of advertising.
- The utility of taxes for revenues versus income redistribution.

In these ways they were advocates for the interests of corporations and high-income groups. However, their tenets also precluded:

- Government loans for businesses going bankrupt.
- Import quotas on foreign goods.
- Unnecessary licensures that increase remuneration for incumbents in certain professions.
- Subsidies and price supports.

As a founder of New Classicism (and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1976) Milton Friedman, contrary to common belief at the time, suggested that a household's consumption is determined by permanent income, that is, the average income people expect to receive over a period of years. He felt that consumption does not respond to every change in investment or government spending, but only to changes in income that people

see as long lasting. This implies that the previously alleged instability in the economy is overstated. Friedman also believed that people determine their expectations about future inflation on the basis of past and present inflation, changing their expectations only as new events transpire (i.e., adaptive expectations).

(Robert Lucas, also of the Chicago School, takes this analysis further by noting that people also form rational expectations regarding future inflation. They reflect on past errors, use and process all available information, and eliminate regular errors in their prediction. Households and businesses know that expansionary fiscal and monetary policies eventually increase inflation. Therefore, they immediately adjust their inflation expectations upward and move quickly to protect themselves when these policies are enacted. Workers pursue higher wages, sellers of goods increase their prices, and lenders raise interest rates. These reactions to higher expected inflation render expansionary fiscal and monetary policies impotent. Instead, expansionary fiscal and monetary policies will immediately increase inflation.)

Friedman (1968) additionally developed a modern quantity theory of money. This theory states that an increase of money supplied by the Federal Reserve System will give people an excess amount of cash over that which they desire. They will get rid of this extra cash by spending and writing checks. But the larger community will simply be exchanging this excess money, so the demand for goods and services will increase. If the economy is operating at natural levels of employment and output, prices will rise over the long run. As prices rise, demand for money increases to buy the higher priced goods. Eventually equilibrium is restored at a higher price level. Inflation, therefore, is produced by a rapid growth in the quantity of money.



In his book, *A Monetary History of the United States* (M. Friedman & Schwartz, 1993), Friedman reached the conclusion that monetary policy was primarily responsible for the Great Depression of the 1930's. In a later book he notes:

Keynes and most other economists of the time believed that the Great Contraction in the United States occurred despite aggressive expansionary policies by the monetary authorities – that they did their best but their best was not good enough. Recent studies have demonstrated that the facts are precisely the reverse: the U.S. monetary authorities followed highly deflationary policies. The quantity of money in the United States fell by one-third in the course of the contraction. And it fell not because there were no willing borrowers – not because the horse would not drink. It fell because the Federal Reserve System forced or permitted a sharp reduction in the monetary base, because it failed to exercise the responsibilities assigned to it in the Federal Reserve Act to provide liquidity to the banking system. The Great Contraction is tragic testimony to the power of monetary policy – not as Keynes and so many of his contemporaries believed, evidence of impotence.

(M. Friedman, 1969, p. 97)

Friedman believes that that Federal Reserve should abandon its use of discretionary monetary policy and annually increase money supply only in correspondence to the long-run growth of capacity. This monetary rule would limit the influence of the Fed and avoid the arbitrary power exerted by those not controlled by the electorate, and the pressures of partisan politics.

Other reforms suggested by Friedman (2002) include:

- An all-volunteer army.
- An international system of market-determined foreign exchange rates.
- A less strict interpretation of antitrust laws.
- The end to experimentation with incomes policies.
- A flat income tax.
- Legalization of recreational drugs.
- Privatization of many public services.

George J. Stigler was the second from the modern Chicago school to win the Nobel Prize. One of his more salient contributions was the theory of regulation. According to this theory, government regulation can be supplied and demanded because of the implied gains to the parties involved. Rather than providing an efficient allocation of resources, regulation will often serve the interests of those regulated at the expense of everyone else. Coalitions with a powerful enough self-interest can, and often will, capture the regulatory system and use it to their own advantage. On the other hand, political leaders and regulators are willing to supply regulation in return for the support of coalitions who benefit. This support includes endorsements, campaign contributions, and votes. If coalition support results in winning elections, both the elected and the appointed gain continued employment. Therefore, most regulation is tainted and does not serve the economy or the general public.

Gary S. Becker, also of the Chicago School, received his Nobel Prize in economics in 1992 for extending the economic approach into sociology, political science, law, social biology, and anthropology (Becker, 1976). Among his contributions is a strong emphasis on human capital. This focus broke new ground by introducing economic thought into such areas as discrimination (Becker, 1971), investment (Becker, 1964), allocation of time, marriage (Becker, 1981), fertility, divorce, and altruism.

### ***Behavioral Economics (Contemporary)***

In the early history of economics mathematical formulas and graphs were absent and the field was substantiated by direct observation of humans in the economic and political arenas. It was known then as political economics and the name implied a direct coupling with social observation. The import of behavioral economics (Belsky & Gilovich, 1999; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Thaler, 1992) [including its newly minted siblings, economic sociology (Dobbin, 2004; Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001; Nee & Swedberg, 2005) and neuroeconomics (Glimcher, 2004)] to this dissertation, and its relatively recent reemergence on the scene of economic thought, merit enough attention that a special chapter dedicated to this area of inquiry is included in another part of this dissertation. However, suffice it to say that one of the most salient aspects of behavioral economics is the visibility this discipline gives to the irrationality of everyday economic decisions and how they are based on insufficient information, contrary to conventional assumptions.

### ***Other Areas of Contemporary Economic Thought***

Many of the newer models of economics reject the notion that economic behavior can be easily predicted and argue that the assumptions made by neoclassical economics, as noted above, are fatally flawed. Among these new paradigms are post-autistic economics (E. Fullbrook, 2003; Edward Fullbrook, 2004; Halevi, 2000; Keen, 2001; *Real world economics: A post-autistic economics reader*, In Press) and economic models using complexity theory and nonlinear, near-to-chaos dynamics (Barnett et al., 2000; Barnett, Geweke, & Shell, 1989; Beinhocker, 2006; Hirooka, 2006; B. Mandelbrot & Hudson,

2004; Omerod, 2000; Puu, 1993). Some also incorporate true-cost economics and environmental economics (Daly & Farley, 2003; Daly & Townsend, 1993; Field & Field, 2001; Hanley, Shogren, & White, 2001; Keen, 2001; Omerod, 1997), which focus on the impact of production and consumption on the larger ecosystem and the greater social structure. The utility of these systems of economic thought will be more thoroughly considered in other chapters.

### *Conclusion*

Economic policy in the United States has been influenced by many of the prominent economic institutions of thought, but none so much as those of Classical and Neoclassical economics, the Chicago School, and John Maynard Keynes. Although John Kenneth Galbraith weighed in mightily against Neoclassical thought, the resistance to his ideas has gained dominance since Ronald Reagan assumed office. And even though fluctuations in policy have occurred, the United States appears to have clung tenaciously to neoclassical ideals and to have ignored, for the most part, the useful and more accurate information gleaned from more contemporary schools of thought, as illustrated in Figure 45:

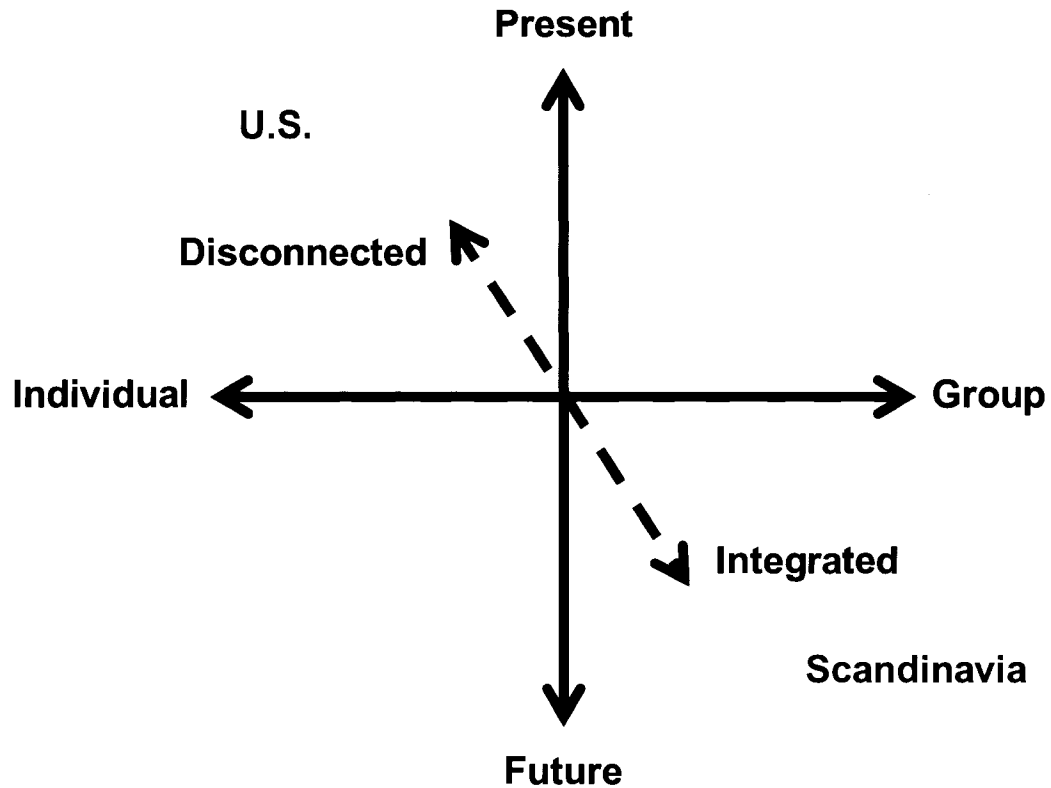


Figure 45. Three-dimension model plotting time horizon, level of community, and level of integration within an economy or culture.

Figure 45 is a three-dimensional graph with a graduated emphasis on the individual or the group described by the horizontal axis, a graduated emphasis on the present or the future described by the vertical axis, and a graduated emphasis on disconnection or integration described by the “z” axis.

Currently the countries of Scandinavia score the most highly among other countries on almost all, if not all, the parameters used to measure quality of life, including economic well-being. On the whole Scandinavian countries demonstrate great concern for the well-being of the commons and of common people, make decisions based on the more far-reaching future consequences, and view economics as integrated with and recip-

roccally influencing society, technology, politics, and the environment. In addition their societies emphasize meaningful work, the things besides money that bring true happiness, win-win solutions, distribution of wealth, basic care for all individuals, a small military, sustainable utilization of resources and consumption, education, healthy lifestyles, human capital, labor vs. the corporation, equality, higher value systems (6 and 7), and mutual regard.

On the other hand, in the last forty years the United States has moved in the opposite direction. It is now more focused on the individual and the benefits that can be achieved in the present – the future and the collective be damned – while economic policy is viewed as detached and disconnected from social, political, or environmental factors such as war, poverty, global warming, healthcare, or education. The real cost of production in America is externalized but that fact is often hidden from the consumer. Overwork has too often replaced meaningful work, win-lose scenarios degrading into lose-lose outcomes are common, war and rumors of war seem to dominate political decisions, wealth is highly centralized (as are power and influence), poverty is too high and getting worse, there seems to be little real equality, the American middle class (which was originally created to consume excess production) is faltering, freedom and civil rights are under attack, parasitic consumption and debt are growing like a cancer, people's livelihood is being downgraded and outsourced (as is the innovation touted as America's salvation), most people lack control over the important aspects of their lives, human capital is considered cheap if not worthless, and the worst of value system 5 (the wolves, the few) seem to be shepherding value system 4 (the sheep, the many), with the predictable loss of life and fleece.

Arguably, because of America's current love affair with neoclassical-style economics it has swallowed the notion that everyone has an equal chance to succeed and the market serves everyone equally and perfectly.

Therefore:

- Poor people are bad, immoral, disgusting, criminal, lazy, stupid, and undeserving.
- Rich people are good, moral, smart, hard-working, tenacious, and worthy of emulation.
- America operates in a true free-market system that is devoid of unfair trade, restricted competition, corporate influence over policy, or corporate welfare.
- Consumers are rational and perfectly informed.
- Economic theory is based on empirical evidence.

Combined with the current upsurge in religious fundamentalism, political neoconservatism, and elite deviance, America's economic practices and policies appear to be returning the nation to an imperial and feudal, if not fascist, state – which will be the topic of the next two chapters.

## **Chapter Nine: A Brief Review of Religious Influence**

I believe that no man or group of men is good enough to be trusted with uncontrolled power over others. And the higher the pretensions of such power, the more dangerous I think it both to the rulers and to the subjects. Hence Theocracy is the worst of all governments. If we must have a tyrant a robber baron is far better than an inquisitor. The baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity at some point be sated; and since he dimly knows he is going wrong he may possibly repent. But the inquisitor who mistakes his own cruelty and lust of power and fear for the voice of Heaven will torment us infinitely because he torments us with the approval of his own conscience and his better impulses appear to him as temptations. And since Theocracy is the worst, the nearer any government approaches to Theocracy the worse it will be. A metaphysic, held by the rulers with the force of a religion, is a bad sign. It forbids them, like the inquisitor, to admit any grain of truth or good in their opponents, it abrogates the ordinary rules of morality, and it gives a seemingly high, super-personal sanction to all the very ordinary human passions by which, like other men, the rulers will frequently be actuated.

(Lewis, 2002) p. 81

As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

Article 11 of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States  
and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary (Barlow, 1776)

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit....

Soon after I had published the pamphlet *Common Sense*, in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until



the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call revelation, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration: and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

(Paine, 1974, Part First, Section 1)

Foundational to this dissertation is the idea that economic and political thought tend to have reciprocal, and often self-reinforcing, influence. In the United States religion makes complete a power trinity of State, Money, and Church to the same effect. Currently in America the sway of evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity on the political and economic sphere continues to garner much attention and to foster heated debate regarding the appropriateness of this influence (Buss & Herman, 2003; S. L. Carter, 2001; Church, 1996; Clarkson, 1997; Diamond, 1989, 2000; Green, Rozell, & Wilcox, 2003; Kaplan, 2004; Kintz, 1997; Kohut, Green, Keeter, & Toth, 2000; Martin, 1997; Prothero, 2003; R. Reed, 1996; M. B. Rogers, 1990; J. Wallis, 2005c; Wilcox, 2000; Wills, 1991).

A Nobel Laureate in economics describes the present state in America as follows:

Americans are more deeply divided and angry with each other today than at any time since the 1850's. Now, as then, distrust of leaders and institutions is widespread, and charges of conspiracy by one group against the liberty, livelihood, or principles of another pour out in torrents of speeches and news stories. Some of

the issues are different, but the hatreds and fears are equally intense. Now, as then, there are racial and ethnic clashes in the cities, terrorist confrontations, a fracturing of parties, and charges of corruption everywhere: in government, in churches, in businesses, and in bedrooms. At the heart of the turmoil, now, as then, are three factors: a new technological revolution, a cultural crisis precipitated by technologically induced change in the structure of the economy, and two powerful social and political movements confronting each other across an ideological and ethical chasm, threatening to undermine the great egalitarian reforms of the twentieth century.

Fogel (2000, p. 15)

Many acknowledge that there is a great and threatening cultural divide both within America and between the United States and other societies and nations (Barber, 1996; Burma & Margalit, 2004; Greenberg, 2004; L. Harris, 2004; Himmelfarb, 2001; Hirsh, 2003; J. D. Hunter, 1991; Huntington, 1996; Layman, 2001). And though, within America, the current strain on this fissure is sounding the tectonic clarion of an impending quake (Feldman, 2005), the great divide has been in place for quite some time (Shogan, 2002). But is there an explanation for this threatening schism to be found in religion and its history?

A noted historian observes:

One of the most startling developments of the late twentieth century has been the emergence within every major religious tradition of a militant piety popularly known as “fundamentalism.” Its manifestations are sometimes shocking. Fundamentalists have gunned down worshippers in a mosque, have killed doctors and nurses who work in abortion clinics, have shot their presidents, and have even toppled a powerful government. It is only a small minority of fundamentalists who commit such acts of terror, but even the most peaceful and law-abiding are perplexing, because they seem so adamantly opposed to many of the most positive values of modern society. Fundamentalists have no time for democracy, pluralism, religious toleration, peacekeeping, free speech, or the separation of church and state. Christian fundamentalists reject the discoveries of biology and physics about the origins of life and insist that the Book of Genesis is scientifically sound in every detail. At a time when many are throwing off the shackles of the past, Jewish fundamentalists observe their revealed Law more stringently than ever before, and Muslim women, repudiating the freedoms of Western women, shroud themselves in veils and chadors. Muslim and Jewish fundamentalists both interpret the Arab-Israeli conflict, which began as defiantly secularist, in an exclusively religious way. Fundamentalism, moreover, is not confined to the great

monotheisms. There are Buddhist, Hindu, and even Confucian fundamentalisms, which also cast aside many of the painfully acquired insights of liberal culture, which fight and kill in the name of religion and strive to bring the sacred into the realm of politics and national struggle.

This religious resurgence has taken many observers by surprise. In the middle years of the twentieth century, it was generally taken for granted that secularism was an irreversible trend.... But in the late 1970s, fundamentalists began to rebel against this secularist hegemony and started to wrest religion out of its marginal position and back to center stage. In this, at least, they have enjoyed remarkable success. Religion has once again become a force that no government can safely ignore.

(Armstrong, 2000, pp. ix - x)  
(Also see Berger, 1999)

Therefore, this analysis will focus primarily on religious fundamentalism and the more conservative forms of evangelicalism, as the growth of these closely related factions have likely had, from a religious standpoint, the most profound impact on both America's politics and its economy.

While there are those who certainly disagree (Smith, 1998, 2000), fundamentalism can be used to describe the extremely conservative arm of evangelicalism (Antoun, 2001; Marsden, 1991; Noll, 2004) and will often be used interchangeably, although among different religions and sects the word fundamentalism can represent a host of different things. But some argue that all fundamentalisms follow a certain pattern (Martin E. Marty & Appleby, 1994); an embattled form of spirituality that emerges in response to a perceived crisis or danger. Viewed as a cosmic war between good and evil, fundamentalists do not see their battle as a political struggle, but as a battle against a secularism that is inimical to religion. Attempting to retrieve doctrines and practices of the past as a way to avoid annihilation and bolster their identity, fundamentalists will often withdraw from society to create a unique counterculture, refining their ideology so that they may eventually return to fight the secular world and make it sacred.

Although there have been people in every age who fought the modernity of their time, the fundamentalism of today is uniquely a twentieth-century movement, both reacting to the secular and scientific culture of the West, an unprecedented and unique type of civilization, and evolving a symbiotic relationship with the modern. Because Western civilization has changed the world, the fundamentalists cannot escape it. Their religious traditions were designed for a type of society that is so different as to be overly anachronistic. Therefore, the modern world is forcing fundamentalists to reassess these traditions.

This type of reassessment, however, has occurred many times in human history and usually accompanied a surge in technological change. One period of pivotal transition for the spiritual development of humanity was the Axial Age that occurred from 700 to 200 BCE. Beginning in Sumer, now Iraq, and Egypt it was the product of thousands of years of social, cultural, and economic evolution. People moved beyond subsistence farming and developed the capacity to produce a surplus for trade and income. Based on this ability civilization and the arts were nourished and city-states and even empires were built. Power shifted from the shaman, priest, or king to the marketplace, marginalizing the old paganism as a system for explaining the world. Old cults appeared limited and parochial as people developed broader space-time-complexity domains from which to interact with their environments. Monotheism increased in prominence as opposed to the animistic polytheism of the ancestors. More leisure time became available afforded people a pursuit of a spirituality that did not rely on external forces and provided a richer interior life. The social injustice of the old serfdom became a subject of debate as individuals came to be seen as individually sacred and compassion was viewed as crucial to

the spiritual life. Rationalism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Monotheism, Confucianism and Taoism were all born of the Axial Age from the notion of a single, universal transcendence that stressed compassion and nurtured an internal spirituality (Armstrong, 1993, 2000, 2007).

However, according to Armstrong (2000), people in the pre-modern world simultaneously embraced two very different ways of thinking about the world, mythos and logos. Both were essential and complimentary ways of acquiring knowledge and arriving at the truth. Regarded as primary, myth was concerned with those things that are timeless and constant. It looked to the origins and foundations of existence, to the deepest level of humanity. It was concerned with meaning rather than practicality. This mythos provided a sense of purpose and context to people's lives. It clarified the universal and the eternal. Rooted in the unconscious mind, mythos was an ancient form of psychology. Obscure regions of the collective subconscious were revealed in the stories, demons, and heroes of mythos. Rational investigation could not reveal or give meaning to these unique aspects of human existence, nor could it provide intuitive insight. Even though myth cannot demonstrate rational proof, it can become reality when embodied in rituals, ceremonies, and cult. As a result myth and cult eventually came to be viewed as inseparable.

People in the pre-modern world were more interested in the meaning of an event than in the actual facts. Incidents in history were seen as an external manifestation of constant and timeless realities. Nothing was new and history always repeated itself. The mystical descent into the psyche and the retelling of historical narratives were meant to reveal this truth. To scrutinize whether or not historical events transpired exactly as told

in these narratives was to mistake the purpose of the story and to confuse logos with mythos (Willer, 1971).

Equally important, however, logos provided the pragmatic, rational, and scientific path for success in the real, everyday world. It was, by definition, mundane. To be effective, logos had to correspond to external realities and relate exactly to facts. It was what people use to get things done. Rather than look to the foundations and beginnings of things, logos elaborated on old insights, moves ahead to something new, empirically gains greater environmental control, and creates novelty and variety.

Both mythos and logos were viewed as indispensable in the pre-modern world. Impoverished without the other, each was also held as distinct and confusing the mythical with the rational was considered dangerous. Logos and mythos had separate jobs. Myth did not need to be reasonable or to empirically prove its perspective. It was not to be taken as the basis of a pragmatic policy. What worked in the inner world was not necessarily applicable to the affairs of the outside world. On the other hand, logos proved unable to assuage human sorrow or pain. There is no rational argument for tragedy. Science cannot provide the meaning of life.

But by the eighteenth century science and technology had accomplished so much that the people of Europe and America began to believe that logos was the only path to truth. Mythos was viewed as false and superstitious (Ceaser, 1997). Interestingly, in the early stages of this transformation many of the scientists, explorers, and thinkers believed that they were discovering new ways of religious expression. But, an irreversible process was at work that would change the way people thought about and experienced their world. A pragmatic scientific spirit would slowly undermine the conservative-mythical

world view, causing people to embrace new ideas about the individual, the state, society, religion, and God (Vickers, 2002; Westfall, 1986).

Unfortunately, along with the benefits of modernization there would also be violence, despoliation, and religious strife. Ruthless methods including enslavement, exploitation, persecution, inquisition, and massacre were used under the banner of modernizing society – reflected by many developing countries that today are experiencing similar upheavals and blood-letting as they go through the painful process of coming up to speed with the modern world (Kakar, 1996; J. T. Roberts & Hite, 2000; Shiva, 2000; Toft, 2003).

In response many religious people held rationalism as an unavoidable social force attempted to turn the mythos of their faith into logos, leading again to a problematic confusion of the two. The scientific and rational concepts of truth and nature spawned economic, political, intellectual, and social revolutions depriving old forms of faith the ability to provide the necessary consolation and enlightenment. Consequently, many of the new reformers and prophets tried to build upon the faith of the past in a way that would usher them successfully into the new world (Armstrong, 2000; Fogel, 2000).

Among those who attempted this transformation were the fundamentalists (Handy, 1984). Modernization has typically proven to be a painful process, making the world strange and unrecognizable and producing feelings of loss and unfamiliarity. In response to their feelings of estrangement fundamentalists developed the belief that they were engaged in great battle of life and death, fearing that their most sacred values were at risk and that their creed was facing annihilation. Whether this perception was valid is of no real importance. The perception, now as before, is powerful enough to polarize so-

ciety. With one foot in the new world and one foot in the old, these reformers are both revolutionary and reactionary, attempting reform by returning to the past.

Others before them had done the same. Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Luther, and John Calvin all tried to go back in order to go forward (Marius, 2000; A. E. McGrath, 2000; Mitchell, 1993). This is due in part because a disruptive transition away from mythos can induce great anxiety and leave people with a sense of disorientation. As the meaning provided by mythos disintegrates there can be both a numbing loss of identity and a paralyzing sense of despair that seeks some kind of grounding in the past. However, the helplessness and fear of annihilation that spurs many to revival and fundamentalism can also erupt into extreme hostility. Stressing the absolute sovereignty of God (A. E. McGrath, 1999), reformers sometimes resort to extreme measures, including violence, in order to, make their religion speak to the new conditions of a world that was unobtrusively but irrevocably committed to radical transformation (Armstrong, 2000; Clarkson, 1997; Diamond, 1989; Juergensmeyer, 2003; C. Kimball, 2003; Sprigg, 2004; Stern, 2003). Currently a similar phenomenon is occurring among the more extreme evangelicals and fundamentalists in the United States (D. Kimball, 2003; Webber, 2000).

Although fundamentalism erupted in the 1700s, and many times since, its roots took hold in the previous century. By the seventeenth century scientists had begun to shed the constraints of conservative society and Bacon's definition of the truth as empirical became extremely influential. People who wanted to be religious but who also subscribed to the rational way of life were forced to find new ways of experiencing and contemplating God and spirituality. The death of mythos in philosophy was characterized by philosophers such as Rene Descartes who was only able to speak in rational



language. Embracing a lonely vision, Descartes saw the universe as a machine, the physical world as inert and dead. Therefore, the world could give us no information regarding God. The only living thing within the universe appeared to be the human mind, and people could not even be sure that anything but their own thoughts existed. Refusing to accept received ideas, Descartes was forced to contemplate the fundamental existential concepts. His first maxim, “Cogito, ergo sum,” (R. Watson, 2002) also led to the limitations of the mind, the notion that one must rely on one’s thoughts to prove one’s existence. However, if one could experience one’s limitations, he opined, one must also have had a prior concept of perfection. And a perfection that did not exist was a contradiction, therefore, God, the ultimate perfection, must exist (Veitch, 1994).

Regardless of the potential incongruence of this rationale, it does demonstrate the impotence of pure reason to provide a deeper and more meaningful understanding of spiritual and existential issues. At a time when rationality and science were making great progress, life was becoming increasingly meaningless. As Thomas Hobbes noted, there most likely is a God, but for all practical purposes, God may as well be nonexistent. God had revealed himself at the beginning of time, and would do so again at the end, but, for the moment, the world was empty of the divine. Until his return, people would just have to wait in the dark (Mitchell, 1993). Another philosopher of the time laments:

When I see the blind and wretched state of men, when I survey the whole universe in its deadness and man left to himself with no light, as though lost in this corner of the universe without knowing who put him there, what he has to do, what will become of him when he dies, incapable of knowing anything, I am moved to terror, like a man transported in his sleep to some terrifying desert island, who wakes up quite lost with no means of escape. Then I marvel that so wretched a state does not drive people to despair.

Blaise Pascal (1995p. 209)

Although the use of logos was improving the modern world in countless ways, it was not sufficient to deal with the existential questions that had previously been the preserve of mythos. Consequently, the modern experience included despair and alienation. But not everybody was affected so. John Locke (2006), one of the first to initiate the Enlightenment, was confident in human logic. His was a deist religion that depended entirely on reason, and he was certain that God was made evident in the natural world. If people were only freed of religious tyranny, they would discover the truth for themselves. Therefore, he believed that the state must tolerate all beliefs, concerning itself only with government and practical administration, separate from any religious creed. This vision inspired the ideal of a modern, tolerant, secular state of the Enlightenment. Locke believed that in this Age of Reason, people would, for the first time in history, be free to find the truth. Religious revelation would be unnecessary because truth could be arrived at completely unaided (Toland, 1991). Mythos was almost entirely being interpreted as logos, although this would eventually yield disappointing results.

Adding to the disappointment Immanuel Kant argued that it was impossible to prove that external reality bore any similarity to what the human mind discerned in nature. (In this vein Newton's laws would likely describe psychology rather than physics.) Kant believed that the order imposed on input from the senses was simply a creation of the mind. Therefore, there was no such thing as absolute truth (Kant, 1965). Descartes made the mind a lonely denizen of a dead universe, but Kant shut humanity up in its own head and destroyed the connection to the outside world (Tarnas, 1991). "Reason was enlightening and emancipating, but it could also estrange men and women from the world they were learning to control so effectively," (Armstrong, 2000, P. 74).

Since there was no absolute truth, Kant believed that God could be neither proven nor disproved. The deity was beyond the senses and inaccessible to the mind. Reason was speechless when faced with the ultimate. It was inappropriate for faith to rely on reason. Paradoxically he reasoned that God must exist or there would be no justification for acting morally, and morality, in his opinion, was embedded within the mind of human beings.

Even more noteworthy was the eruption of religious irrationality during a time when reason was considered the single path to truth. Witch hunts became common and thousands of women and men were burned at the stake for practicing the occult (Burns, 2003; Thurston, 2007). Europe had been divided by the Reformation into hostile camps with Catholics and Protestants persecuting and massacring each other in civil war. In the face of this hysterical mania scientific rationalism was impotent. A prime example of this was the French Revolution of 1789. While promoting the Enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, it also committed widespread state terrorism. Almost two centuries of violence would pass before a more just and tolerant social order was born in the American War of Independence (1775 – 1783).

While some were influenced by this violence to reject God or to explode into religious splinter groups with very angry and unconventional views, others were moved to a more compassionate and democratic posture. George Fox founded the Society of Friends to help people create an experimental religion where beliefs were verified by personal experience and understanding without direction from another (Lovejoy, 1985). Within this democratic ideal all people were considered equal and were encouraged to espouse their views. Similarly, the Methodists, founded by John Wesley, declared that religion

was a light in the heart rather than a doctrine in the head. They followed a regimen of Bible-reading, prayer, fasting and philanthropy that would help them emancipate faith from reason and turn to the light shining in their hearts (Pelikan, 1991).

Therefore, there was a schism forming among the Protestants. Some were working to rationalize and demystify their faith, others were rejecting reason altogether. Except for the Puritans, the early colonists had become almost entirely secularized by the seventeenth century. However, by the early eighteenth century Protestantism revived and became more formalized. Presbyterians, Baptists, and Quakers abandoned their rejection of ecclesiastical authority and created assemblies to supervise the clergy and stamp out heresy. This coercive but modernizing form of centralization allowed all three religions to flourish and add to their ranks. However, there was also a vehement grassroots reaction to this grab for greater control. In some Protestant movements the marginalization of reason led to manic irrationality. The Puritans experienced tumultuous and even traumatic conversions. Some Quakers would express their religious ecstasy by howling and trembling.

Edwards (1956) surmised that this awakening of emotional religious experience, the First Great Awakening, was still the work of God and would eventually establish the kingdom of God on earth – and, not incidentally, it would also help to pave the way for the American Revolution. But because of this type of ecstatic experience, many in America would be unable to link their recollection of a blissful state of freedom with the Enlightenment ideals of the revolution. To them, liberty meant the absence of pain and sorrow and the joy of conversion. Encouraged by Edwards and Whitefield to view their own ecstatic conversion as superior to that of the unborn-again elite, who regarded enthu-

siastic conversion with haughty disdain, many came to develop a strong mistrust of institutional authority. However, they also came to believe that they were part of a growing movement that would change the course of history (Bloch, 1988).

The new awakening split the Calvinists down the middle into the Old Lights and the New Lights. Old Lights typically came from the wealthy while the New Lights embraced the lower classes. Old Lights considered Christianity to be a rational and enlightened faith. They were appalled by the anti-intellectualism and the emotional hysteria of the New Light revivals. As a result of this split over two hundred congregations left existing denominations to found their own churches (Butler, 1992). Both the Old Lights and the New came to feel that great, even apocalyptic events were at hand. The New Lights saw America fighting a cosmic battle with the forces of good and evil. The Seven Years War between Protestant Britain and Catholic France fostered a religion of hatred as France and the Catholic Church were viewed as satanic (manifestations of the Antichrist) and unrighteous in comparison to the American moral ethic. Apocalyptic fantasies were cultivated as there seemed to be no liberty, no redemption, no peace, and no deliverance until a bloody purge abolished popery forever.

Due to the effects and expenses of the Seven Years War the British imposed new taxes upon the colonies in America, provoking the revolutionary crisis that led to the War of Independence in 1775 (Hartmann, 2002). During this struggle people in the colonies began a radical separation from the past, and a religion of hatred assisted in this development. People felt remorse and nostalgia when considering a break with their roots. A growing sense that the old world had become corrupt and evil helped those who had a fast grip on the British homeland to let go.

In contrast, the leaders of the Revolution were rationalist men of the Enlightenment and viewed the separation from England as a secular event. As deists, they stood apart from orthodox Christianity and did not see themselves engaged in a war against the forces of evil. The Declaration of Independence was an Enlightenment document and stood on the foundation of the self-evident rights that Locke had previously articulated. It was a modern appeal to the ideas of equality, autonomy, and independence through the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. It was, however, not a radical document. It did not include the redistribution of wealth or the establishment of a utopian society. It was a practical extension of logos for a workable and sustainable nation.

The majority of Americans, however, were Calvinists. They could not identify with an ethos of rationalism and frequently equated deism with satanic ideology (Butler, 1992). Therefore, among those who fought for the independence of America the struggle was associated as much with the myths and dreams of Christianity as with the secular ideals promoted by the Founders. In many cases it became quite difficult to separate political discourse from religious. In this way Americans joined forces against imperialism through the blending of secular and religious ideologies.

Although many Americans wished to cling to the old ways, the Revolution expressed a determination to break away from the past and was in close ideological parallel with the scientific revolution. The Declaration of Independence was a modernizing document. However, religion proved necessary to move people through the right of passage to modernity. Revolutionary speech became Christianized by the mainline churches. The concept of virtue in government was joined with an acknowledgement of the virtue of the divine governor. Liberty was saturated with religious implication, free-

dom with the grace of the Gospel. The Kingdom of God and the emergence of a Chosen People were thus associated with the new nation, one that was to belong to Christ (Bloch, 1988).

Although religion was instrumental in the establishment of the first modern secular republic, God made only a perfunctory appearance in the constitutions of the new states. The Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists resented the position of privilege held by the Church of England and supported Thomas Jefferson in his efforts to build a wall of separation between politics and religion. God was not mentioned in the federal Constitution and the First Amendment formally separated religion and the state. Faith was relegated to the personal and private domain. The modern state required tolerance to hold together, and, therefore, had to be secular. If it were to choose a state religion, the union of the colonies would not hold. However, by the mid-nineteenth century America had become a nation of passionate Christians. Spurred by new growth, the churches began to counter the ideology of the Enlightenment. The new republic was viewed as God's achievement, the revolutionary war a battle of heaven against hell (Wilson, 1990). Religious leaders noted that because democracy had put the people in charge, they must become even godlier to avoid the dangers inherent in popular rule.

Note: To this day Americans venerate the Founders while also seeing America as God's nation. However, secular humanism has been demonized and is bitterly opposed as a religion counter to Christianity (Armstrong, 2000).

The Founders and the mainline clergy had cooperated in the creation of a modern, secular republic. However, many were also elitists and aristocrats. They believed that they must lead the nation from an enlightened perspective that they alone held. Historical

transformation was to be the province of great individual personalities. Change from below was not even considered. John Adams held suspect any notion of popular rule that might lead to mob rule and the impoverishment of the rich. Jefferson, however, argued that established authority was fallible and protested against Adam's form of government. He felt that the elite could not speak for the many and that the voice of the people must be heard. Jefferson also argued that the law, medicine, and religion were all a matter of common sense that anyone could grasp. Nobody should be coerced into giving credence to doctors, lawyers, or the clergy (Hatch, 1989). This sentiment was enthusiastically supported on the frontiers where the people resented the ruling elite who taxed them harshly but did not share their hardships.

Among the frontiersmen a new brand of preacher was gaining popularity. These traveling pastors spurred the Second Great Awakening, one that was more politically radical than the first and one that worked to shape society and religion in a new way. These new revivalists were not educated as had Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield been. They reviled academia and intellectualism, insisting that all people had the right to interpret the Bible for themselves. Their services were boisterous and earthy, taught in a vernacular that was easy for the common man or woman to understand. Moving away from the style of the Age of Reason, the new revivalists held torchlight processions and huge tent services. New gospel songs created ecstatic and emotional outbursts, visions and dreams, signs and wonders were the order of the day. Rationalism and Enlightenment ideology were completely foreign and antithetical. However, this movement was modern. The past was not held to be a repository of wisdom. People were not to be bound by traditions. As the children of God people were to use their common sense to determine



the truth (Hatch, 1989). The aristocracy, the learned clergy, and the established authorities were to be scorned. Jesus and the Apostles had no college degrees. Religion and politics were part of a single vision with the egalitarian nature of the New Testament holding sway.

On the other hand, the establishment looked upon these new revivalists with disdain. They saw the new preachers as mindless demagogues and as barbarously primitive and anachronistic. The mainline clergy and aristocrats responded in a way not unlike how liberals and secularists regard today's fundamentalists. But even though they were reviled by the established elite, these revivalists were able to bring the modern ideas of equality, democracy, freedom of speech, and independence to the common person in a way that the educated could not. The less privileged majority were provided with a mythological context that gave meaning and a sense of community. Unlike preachers of the First Great Awakening, these revivalists were not content with individual conversion, but were intent on social change. And this radical rebellion against scientific rationalism was most successful. As Armstrong notes:

There is a strain in the American spirit that is closer to the populism and anti-intellectualism of the nineteenth-century prophets than to the cool ethos of the Age of Reason. The noisy, spectacular revivals of the Second Great Awakening made a permanent impression on the distinctive political style of the United States, whose mass rallies, unabashed sentiment, and showy charisma are so bewildering to many Europeans. Like many fundamentalist movements today, these prophets of the Second Great Awakening gave people who felt disenfranchised and exploited in the new states a means of making their views and voices heard by the more privileged elite. Their movements gave the people what Martin Luther King called "a sense of somebodiness," in much the same way as the fundamentalist groups do today. Like the fundamentalist movements, these new sects all looked back to a primitive order, and determined to rebuild the original faith; all relied in an entirely new way upon Scripture which they interpreted literally and often reductively. All also tended to be dictatorial. It was a paradox in early-nineteenth-century America, as in late-twentieth-century fundamentalist

movements, that a desire for independence, autonomy, and equality should lead large numbers of people to obey religious demagogues implicitly...

The Second Great Awakening shows the sort of solutions that many people find attractive when their society is going through the wrenching upheaval of modernization. Like modern fundamentalists, the prophets of the Second Great Awakening mounted a rebellion against the learned rationalism of the ruling classes and insisted on a more religious identity. At the same time, they made the modern ethos accessible to people who had not had the opportunity to study the writings of Descartes, Newton, or John Locke. The prophetic rebellion of these American prophets was both successful and enduring in the United States, and this means that we should not expect modern fundamentalist movements in societies that are currently modernizing to be ephemeral and a passing "madness."

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 90)

However jarring to the establishment, these evangelical movements were also positive and modernizing. They actively promoted egalitarianism and emphasized the worth of each individual person. This helped to make slavery intolerable in the North. People embraced inalienable rights within a Christian context. Evangelical Christians also led prison and education reforms and promoted feminism, all progressive in nature. (On the other hand the South, which had remained separate from the Second Great Awakening, maintained its premodern and elitist social structure, including the use of slaves.) Therefore, by the mid-nineteenth century were no longer disenfranchised and were engaged in returning American society to a Protestant ethos. Despite the secular Constitution, America had become more Christian than before. Evangelical Christians would eventually form the backbone of the Whig party, later to be supplanted by the Republicans, which was motivated to make America a righteous empire based on Godly rather than secular virtues.

In Europe, however, atheism was taking the high ground. Under the influence of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (2003) the conservative spirit had been eclipsed by the driving optimism of the modern age. Religion was outmoded and God became the an-

tithesis of humanity. Ludwig Feuerbach (1849) argued that religion was separating man from himself, Karl Marx (1848) proposed that religion was symptomatic of a sick society, an opiate to make the social system bearable, and Charles Darwin (1859) insisted that all life had developed slowly through evolutionary adaptation to the environment. Clerics argued that the Bible should be subjected to critical rigor and scholars applied literary analysis, archaeology, and comparative linguistics to achieve this end (J. R. Moore, 1986). In Europe this Higher Criticism demonstrated the triumph of logos over myth. Many of the tales of the Bible were shown to be myths in the light of this new analysis, leading to what some would see as a major assault upon religion. But the narratives of scripture and doctrine were not something that could be investigated scientifically. They were mythos, not logos. However, Western people had lost their sense of the mythical and were trying to read scripture in an entirely literal way.

In the United States the discrepancy between Darwin's hypothesis and Genesis challenged some Christians to find a common ground between natural selection and divine creation. Out of this effort Creation Science was born as an attempt to make Genesis scientifically respectable. However, this again missed the point because the creation story was a spiritual reflection on the significance of life, something which left the science of logos standing mute. By treating religious truth as logos, philosophers, scientists and critics made it incredible. This led Friedrich Nietzsche (1844) to pronounce God dead. By making God something that could be divined by intellect alone, modern believers had killed him. The modern experience of religious truth as tenuous and arbitrary had rendered apprehension of the sacred impossible. Meaninglessness, annihilation, and terror would become part of the modern experience. Exuberant modernity

was opening up to nameless dread. Those who remained religious would experience spiritual embattlement and would become increasingly defensive. There was recurrent alarm that the traditional faith was in increasing danger and the dread of this potential spiritual annihilation spawned a fundamentalist backlash that is reflected in the late twentieth century.

By the end of the eighteenth century modern science had brought longer and healthier lives and democracy had brought more equality. However, the Enlightenment notion of a new and better world of universal brotherhood proved unsustainable. The Franco-Prussian War (1870 – 1871), and the advent of modern weaponry, had shown that modern science had a malignant dimension. With it came a growing sense of anticlimax (Steiner, 1974). The industrial revolution brought injustice and exploitation, and poets such as William Blake wrote of dark, satanic mills (Erdman, 1982). After the Franco-Prussian War Europe engaged in a frantic arms race which eventually led to the First World War. When the Great War broke out in 1914 Europeans entered it with wild enthusiasm, cultivating a fantasy of perverse self-destruction despite the achievements of modernity.

In the United States conservative Protestants held a similar vision, but one which took a religious form. Those in the North had seen the Civil War (1861 – 1865) as an apocalypse in which the nation would be purged. Pulpits rang with the message of Armageddon, a battle between liberty and slavery, between good and evil, light and darkness. A new dispensation would arise from the ashes of the conflict (Strozier, 1994). But by the end of the war cities were destroyed, families torn apart, and a white southern backlash was on the rise. The expected utopia was replaced by a swift transition to an

industrial society. The new humanity arrived as an anticlimax. There was a swell of immigration and urban populations. Workers lived in poverty as fortunes were made from oil, iron, and steel. Work consisted of long hours and dangerous conditions. Women and children were exploited as laborers. A gulf widened between the city and country while the South remained largely agrarian. America was swiftly losing its core (Fuller, 1995). Rather than dreaming of a monstrous future war that would use even more advanced technology, many developed a deep interest in a final war between God and Satan that would bring their disappointing society to a deserved end. In the absence of the promised brave new world, a new apocalyptic vision took hold in America called premillennialism. As opposed to the postmillennialist Christian interpretation embraced by the liberals, which assumed that God's Kingdom would be established on earth by believers' own efforts, premillennialists asserted that Christ would return to earth before establishing his thousand-year reign (Waymeyer, 2004). Rushing toward destruction, the modern world, rather than becoming more virtuous as the Enlightenment thinkers predicted, was reaching a level of depravity that would demand God's intervention. After Christ's final victory the faithful would emerge triumphant and revel in his kingdom (Boyer, 1992; Marsden, 1992).

According to the premillennialists the bible was to be taken literally, and the book of Revelation was making precise predictions that would soon come to pass. Again, mythos was viewed through the eyes of logos and the appearance of the Antichrist and the following Tribulation as predicted by biblical prophecy were believed to be at hand. Subsequently, there would be a war between the Antichrist and Christ on the plain of Armageddon outside of Jerusalem, signaling the beginning of the Seventh Dispensation.

After the defeat of Satan, Jesus would establish a reign of one thousand years upon the earth before the Last Judgment. In this view progress was seen as inseparable from the conflict and final destruction. Christ was to execute the annihilation of modern society, and the premillennialists had a morbid, nihilistic, longing for the day, despite the millennial dream of bliss and divine redemption. Of course, the faithful would avoid all of the messy business of the Tribulation by leaving earth and ascending to heaven. This snatching up of the faithful, called the Rapture, would allow Christians to escape the suffering of the Last Days (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – 8).

In noting a similar contemporary belief among premillennialists Armstrong states:

They are convinced that suddenly airplanes, cars, and trains will crash, as born-again pilots and drivers are caught up into the air while their vehicles careen out of control. The stock market will plummet, and governments will fall. Those left behind will realize that they are doomed and that the true believers have been right all along. Not only will these unhappy people have to endure the Tribulation, they will know that they are destined for eternal damnation.

Premillennialism was a fantasy of revenge: the elect imagined themselves gazing down upon the sufferings of those who had jeered at their beliefs, ignored, ridiculed, and marginalized their faith, and now, too late, realized their error. A popular picture found in homes of many Protestant fundamentalists today shows a man cutting the grass outside his house, gazing in astonishment as his born-again wife is raptured out of an upstairs window. Like many concrete depictions of mythical events, the scene looks a little absurd, but the reality it purports to present is cruel, divisive, and tragic.

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 139)

Other contemporary premillennialist interpretations are less cruel, allowing for the salvation of unbelievers during the tribulation (Lindsey, 1970, 1973). But the notion of revenge on those who still choose to reject Christianity is still quite evident in the best-selling *Left Behind* series by (J. B. Jenkins & LaHaye, 2003). (Also see P. Jenkins, 2003)

In Chapter 7 I note that values develop in a fairly predictable way, and that the level 4 value system has a very strong need for predictability and certainty. Premillennialists would very likely fit this category in that they appear to demonstrate a lust for

certainty (Goldberg, 2006; Hedges, 2007; Phillips, 2006). According to Armstrong this passion for certitude is manifest in a reaction to a modern world that embraces open questions and denies absolute truth. By the late nineteenth century this certainly appeared to be the case. Booms and busts made and consumed huge fortunes, apparently controlled by obscure and mysterious market forces. Human life was seen by some sociologists as being controlled by an economic dynamic that was transparent to the uninitiated. Psychologists attributed behavior to an unseen unconscious mind. Evolutionists preached that existence was dominated by a hidden biological struggle. The Higher Critics claimed that the Bible was not what it appeared to be, and was often written by people nobody recognized. People of faith wanted security, but what they got was mental vertigo.

A clear and easily understood faith was what these people wanted, but religion was being held to a strict rationality if it was to be respected. Therefore, some Protestants attempted to make their faith adhere to the discipline of logic and science. Unfortunately modern science was often too loosely grounded for those in search of real certainty. Freud and Darwin used hypotheses that were yet to be proven, and seemed unscientific to the traditional Protestants who adhered to an approach that required less guesswork. They held to the approach proposed earlier by Bacon, who asserted that God had organized the universe on rational principles. All science needed to do, therefore, was to carefully observe those things that were obvious. They were also drawn to the ideas of Kant who proclaimed truth to be objective and available to common sense (Marsden, 1992). The passion for certainty was an attempt to fill the God-shaped hole in the mind of the rational being. A Protestant thought leader of the time, Arthur Pierson stated:

I like Biblical theology that ... does not begin with an hypothesis and then wraps the facts and the philosophy to fit the crook of our dogma, but a Baconian system,

which first gathers the teachings of the word of God, and then seeks to deduce some general law upon which the facts can be arranged.

(Marsden, 1992, p. 55)

However, Biblical mythos never pretended to be translatable into rational language without losing its essence. Its meanings were more poetic than prosaic. Its truths were not amenable to scientific justification (Sloek, 1996). It became a caricature of rational discourse and would eventually disgrace religious logos.

Princeton became a New Light bastion for scientific Protestantism. In 1873 the chair of theology, Charles Hodge, published a two-volume work that insisted that theology was not to look for meaning beyond the words, but rather to simply arrange the teachings of scripture into a system of general truths. Hodge insisted that every word of the Bible was inspired by God and was to be taken seriously, unaffected by allegory or symbol. Any story or statement in the Bible was errorless and true. His son, who later took the chair, noted that if the Bible said it was inspired, it was inspired (Hodge, 1881). Everything the Bible said was to be viewed as absolute. This view, of course, was not objective or rational and was closed to any alternative. Princeton aligned itself with reason and modernity, but its assertions were not in alignment with the facts. In a later article Benjamin Warfield notes:

Christianity makes its appeal by right reason. It is solely by reasoning that it will put all its enemies under its feet.

(Meeber & Nutley, 1902, pp. 99, 100)

However, in all premodern religion reason had been exercises only in a mythical context, relying on intuition, liturgy, and mysticism as opposed to “right reason.” A desperation seemed to pervade Princeton theology. If Christian truth were so easy to see,



why did people reject it? The more this disparity grew the more Princeton became divided between bad science and inadequate religion.

Other Protestants began taking a more liberal line. Henry Ward Beecher (Applegate, 2006) asserted that dogma was of secondary importance. He pointed out that it was uncharitable to penalize others because of their differing opinions, such as Darwinism and Higher Criticism. God was present in nature and natural processes. Therefore evolution could be viewed as Gods' ongoing concern for his creation. But, irrespective of other doctrinal variances, the practice of Christian love was paramount. Liberal Protestants worked to create the justice of God's Kingdom in this world through philanthropy and social work. The prosperous middle class who enjoyed the fruits of modernity were more amenable to this optimistic theology. By the 1880's the New Theology guided many of the Protestant schools in the north. They believed that people would finally realize that there was no distinction between the supernatural and the worldly, discover their deep connection to God, and live in peace with each other.

Instead, American Protestants were becoming even more at odds. Rather than promoting greater harmony, their differences threatened to tear them apart. More than any other, the issue of conflict was Higher Criticism. Liberals believed that new theories, even though they might be inimical to old beliefs, would lead to a deeper understanding. However, for the conservative traditionalists this Higher Criticism, which claimed that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, that the Virgin Birth was merely a figure of speech, and that the Ten Plagues of Egypt were likely natural disasters that had been later interpreted as miracles (Szasz, 1982), symbolized everything that was wrong with modern industrialized society. A deep fear was emerging that the new biblical theories would

uproot the basic structure of Christianity. As the American Methodist clergyman Alexander McAlister argued (*New York Times*, April 5, 1824), “If we have no infallible standard we may as well have no standard at all.”

Many felt that if biblical truth were unseated then all decent values would disappear. They saw the Higher Criticism as the direct cause of widespread drunkenness, divorce, graft, corruption, crime, infidelity, murder, and, not least of all, agnosticism.

By 1900 the ideas of Higher Criticism seemed to have gained the upper hand. Liberals held important positions in most denominations and the conservatives appeared to be quietly stunned. On the outside it appeared that the uproar had dimmed. However, within the denominations there were two very distinct factions representing the old and new ways of interpreting the Bible. The façade of peace was deceptive, and some had already begun to mobilize for a future ideological clash. The Moody Bible Institute was founded in Chicago by Dwight Moody in order to combat Higher Criticism. Moody hoped that his institute would become a conservative bastion much like Princeton, but his message was less dogmatic. He emphasized that the sinful world could be redeemed by Christ and was willing to work with any Christians whose goal was the salvation of souls. Like the liberals, he was concerned with social reform and missionary care of the poor. However, he was a premillennialist who believed that Godless ideologies would lead to the final destruction. Unlike the liberals, Moody believed that the world was running downhill to perdition (Boyer, 1992; Marsden, 1992).

Moody’s Bible Institute did become an important fundamentalist institution that provided a safe and sacred enclave in a godless modern society. Eager to prepare an army for future theological battles, other Protestants followed Moody’s lead. In 1902

William Bell Riley founded the Northwestern Bible School and Lyman Stewart established the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Mainline conservatives were banding together to create a unique identity as an independent force. The Prophecy and Bible Conferences were first held at the closing of the nineteenth century. Here the faithful could gather to read the Bible in a literal, common-sense manner and discuss their premillennial convictions without the painful distraction of Higher Criticism – a natural response to the confusing, frightening, and depressing aspect of modern experience.

The Great War of 1914 that followed was so destructive that few could be optimistic about the progress of civilization. The nations of Europe had devastated each other with hideous military technology that seemed to parody the industrialization that had brought power and wealth to the continent. Trench warfare had proven pointless and futile, defying the logic and rationalism of the age. People had looked into the void, and it was beginning to peer back.

The economy of the West was faltering and in 1910 had begun the path that would lead to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The poet W. B. Yeats (1865 – 1939) saw the Second Coming not as the victory of peace and Godliness, but as the beginning of a savage and pitiless era.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert  
Shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

(Finneran, 1996, p. 187)

However, the modern spirit also bloomed with astonishing achievements and unparalleled creativity in science and the arts. These creative thinkers worked to create a new world, free from the past. People developed a new mentality that changed their view of the world. Unlike a conservative return to the past, there was a desire in both the arts and sciences to go back to first principles in order to start again. Artists dissembled their subjects. Scientists searched for the atom, sociologists and anthropologists were drawn to primeval societies. Freud strove to uncover the fundamental layers of the unconscious. All of this came about with the goal of bringing forth something new. However, for those who were attempting to build a new religious vision based on the fundamentals it became clear that modern people could not be religious in the old way. If they wanted a return to religion, they would need to radically alter their rites, beliefs, and practices. Just as people in the first Axial Age had found that paganism no longer met their needs, those of this second Axial Age faced a similar challenge. Fundamentalism was merely one attempt at finding a more worthy path.

The Progressive Age of the first twenty years of the twentieth century was characterized by attempts to deal with the problems arising from industrialization and urbanization. The denominations were still polarized, but liberals and conservatives both were involved in social programs to address these ills. Protestants of all denominations cooperated in foreign missions, campaigns for improved education, and in support of Prohibition (Handy, 1990). Based on the calling of Christ to visit prisoners, clothe the naked, and feed the hungry the Protestants developed the Social Gospel movement to bring God back to the cities and factories. They set up institutional churches which provided services and recreation for the poor and the immigrant. Charles Stelzle, a liberal

Protestant, founded the New York Labor Temple in 1911 in order to study urban problems and fight child labor (Szasz, 1982). Conservatives were just as involved, but differed in their ideology. Even though their social crusades attacked low wages, child labor, and poor working conditions they were seen as a battle against Satan or materialism. Later, conservatives would criticize the Social Gospel, arguing that it was pointless to try to save a doomed world. However, in the early years before they moved to the political right, even the staunchest conservatives were willing to work with social reformers.

In 1909 Charles Eliot (1909), professor emeritus of Harvard University, struck dismay in the conservative heart by suggesting that, as an attempt to return to a basic Christian foundation, religion should have only one core value. This new value would have only one commandment: the love of God expressed in the service of others. The theology of sin, the scriptures, and the churches would no longer be necessary, being replaced by the overwhelming presence of God. All views would be considered equally valid, and caring for other human beings would include education, democracy, social reform, and preventative medicine. In seeking to avoid dogma and doctrine Eliot was attempting to plumb the core values common among all religions, those of love of God and neighbor, social justice and care for the weak, in essence, compassion.

Conservatives, however, fell back from this idea with horror. In their view faith without infallible doctrine was not Christianity. They felt morally compelled to confront this dangerous liberal notion. In 1910 the Presbyterians of Princeton issued a list of essential dogmas:

1. The inerrancy of scripture
2. The virgin birth of Christ

3. Christ's atonement for our sins on the cross
4. Christ's bodily resurrection
5. The objective reality of Christ's miracles (later to be replaced by the doctrine of premillennialism)

(Marsden, 1980, pp. 117 - 122)

Between 1910 and 1915 Milton Stewart, founder of the Bible College of Los Angeles, financed a series of pamphlets entitled *The Fundamentals*, widely distributed and free of charge, in which leading conservative theologians refuted the tenets of the Higher Criticism. This project would later acquire great symbolic significance as the first seed of fundamentalism. But at the time, these pamphlets generated little interest.

However, during the Great War the seeds of terror also entered conservative Protestantism, moving it inexorably towards fundamentalism. They saw the conflict as apocalyptic, confirming their premillennial convictions. As a result they became more politically conscious. A dispute with the liberals that, at first, was purely doctrinal became a fight for America's future. Conservatives saw themselves as the front line against satanic forces bent on destroying the world. Inspired by a deep dread, conservative thought was characterized by a xenophobic rejection of foreign influence, including that of Catholics, communists, and the Higher Critics. Conservatives also became ambivalent towards democracy, which they feared would lead to mob rule, a communist republic, and a world ruled by Satan (Fuller, 1996; Marsden, 1980). From this point forward the fundamentalists would view institutions such as the League of Nations as absolute evils, in league with the Antichrist, who would likely be seen by the world as a peacemaker (Boyer, 1992). In their view the Bible said that the world would end in war, not peace.

The fundamentalists' revulsion also demonstrated a visceral fear of the centralization of modernity, especially anything resembling a world government.

People often feel that they are fighting for their lives when involved in this type of conspiracy paranoia, and will often retreat into tribalism. Given the impending universalism of modern society the conservatives prepared for a fight. Moody's loving savior was replaced by the Christ of Revelation, a bloody god seeking revenge. Unsurprisingly, this put the liberal Protestants on the offensive. They had their own problems, given the challenge the war posed to their vision of a world moving toward God's Kingdom. They found the violence of premillennialism horrifying and un-Christian, and the conservatives' critique of democracy un-American. Despite their gospel of love, the counterattack on the conservatives was vicious. They accused the premillennialist of being traitors and of taking money from Germany, compared them to Bolsheviks who wanted to remake the world in a day, and called them "the most astounding mental aberration in the field of religious thinking," (Szasz, 1982). Put simply, the liberals hit below the belt and the conservatives struck back hard.

James M. Gray, president of the Moody Bible Institute, claimed that liberals, due to their pacifism, had jeopardized the war effort. In premillennial magazines it was the liberals who were accused of being in league with Germany. Higher Criticism was touted as having created the war in the first place, as it had caused the ruin of decent German values. Other articles blamed rationalism and evolutionary thinking for the German atrocities while Howard W. Kellogg of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles argued that the theory of evolution was responsible for "a monster plotting world domination, the wreck of civilization, and the destruction of Christianity itself," (Marsden, 1992).



Due to this acrimonious dispute, there was little chance of reconciliation. Conservatives viewed the Higher Criticism as an absolute evil and the truth of the scripture became a matter of life and death. Attacks on the Bible were believed to only result in anarchy and the collapse of civilization. In 1917, William Bell Riley, A. C. Dixon, and Reuben Torrey formed an association to promote scientific evidence of premillennialism and the literal interpretation of scripture. In 1919 Riley formally established the World's Christian Fundamentals Association and began a tour of the United States to promote the fundamentalist view. Riley was met with such enthusiastic support that he felt that a new Reformation had been launched (Szasz, 1982). Eventually positioned as a battle, fundamentalist leaders constantly used military imagery to describe their cause. The faithful were called to rise up in defense of their beliefs, to become a united offensive power, to regain the territory which had been lost to the Antichrist, in a battle from which there was no discharge (Marsden, 1992).

One objective in this battle was to purge the denominations of liberals. The fiercest battles to expel the liberals were fought among the Baptists and Presbyterians. Within these congregations liberals were vilified as pagans who denied the truth of Christianity. The campaigns escalated to the point that the denominations became fractured, with a massive movement of believers to the fundamentalist camp. The Disciples of Christ, Seventh-Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, and the Salvation Army all rallied to support the fundamentalists. By 1923, it appeared that the fundamentalists would win. However, a new movement caught the nation's attention and eventually brought the fundamentalist campaign into disrepute.

In 1920 a crusade against the teaching of evolution was launched by William Jennings Bryan (1860 – 1925), a Democratic politician. He believed that Darwinism, not Higher Criticism, was responsible for the horrors of the First World War (Ammerman, 1991). Many were willing to listen, although his criticism was naïve, superficial, and incorrect. The war had ended the honeymoon with science and there was a growing fear of its military potential. Science seemed removed from common sense and people were eager to find a rationale for rejecting evolution. Bryan provided this rationale and put evolution at the forefront of the fundamentalist agenda. However, the campaign to move Higher Criticism to a lower priority might have failed if not for a significant development in the South.

Previously there had been no need for fundamentalists in the South, which had remained much more conservative than the North. However, southerners were worried about the teaching of evolution in schools and bills were introduced in Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas to ban the practice. Anti-evolution laws in Tennessee were especially severe, and to strike a blow for the First Amendment, John Scopes confessed that he had broken the law as a substitute teacher in Dayton. He was brought to trial in July, 1925. Clarence Darrow (1875 – 1938) headed the team of lawyers from the new American Civil Liberties Union assigned to defend Scopes, Bryan accepted the position of defending the law. Once started, the trial became a contest between God and science, rather than one regarding civil liberties. While Bryan argued well, Darrow argued brilliantly. Bryan complained that, in the absence of definite proof, people had the right to reject an unsupported hypothesis, such as Darwinism. Darrow asserted that science must have the freedom to express itself and to advance. Each was arguing for

values that they considered sacred and inviolable, but when Darrow put Bryan on the stand, the cross-examination brought to light the unclear and simplistic nature of Bryan's perspective. He was forced to concede that the earth was older than six thousand years and that the days of creation as noted in Genesis were far longer than twenty-four hours. Bryan admitted that he had not read any critical account of the origins of biblical text and that he had no interest in any other faith than his own (Marsden, 1992). When the trial concluded Darrow emerged heroically while Bryan was discredited as a bumbling fool. A few days after the trial, Bryan died. Scopes was convicted but the ACLU paid his fine. Darrow and modern science were clearly the victors in a press that exposed Bryan and his supporters as hopelessly anachronistic. Fundamentalists had been relegated to the past. They were now seen as the enemies of science and intellectual liberty. They could no longer be a legitimate part of modern society. H. L. Menken further vilified fundamentalists as the scourge of the nation and as gaping primates. He noted that they:

...are thick in the mean streets behind the gas-works. They are everywhere learning is too heavy a burden for mortal minds to carry, even the vague, pathetic learning on tap in the little red schoolhouses.

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 177)

As Maynard Shipley (1927) warned at the time, if the fundamentalists were allowed to seize power and impose their strictures on the people by law, Americans would be dragged back into the Dark Ages.

The fundamentalists were clearly cowed. Liberals gained control of the denominations and William Bell Riley's reform movement faded by the end of the decade. However, fundamentalism had not gone away. Embittered, they nursed their grievances against modern culture. Fifty years earlier the New Lights were the majority, now they had become marginalized and treated with contempt. But their faith was founded in a

deep fear that could not be dispelled by rational argument. After Dayton, the fundamentalists became even more extreme (R. L. Moore, 1986). Before the trial few fundamentalists believed in the notion that Genesis was accurate in every detail. However, after Dayton the fundamentalists closed their minds even more, embracing biblical literalism in every way. They also drifted to the far political right. While previously fundamentalists were willing to work with the liberal left to support social reform, the Social Gospel was now tainted by the enemy. As an entity, fundamentalism exists symbiotically with an aggressive liberalism or secularism, and, when attacked, becomes more excessive, extreme, and bitter.

While the fundamentalists were developing their faith, the Pentecostals were simultaneously creating a grassroots postmodern vision that rejected the rational modernity of the Enlightenment. As opposed to the fundamentalist return to a doctrinal base of Christianity, Pentecostals found dogma uninteresting. They sought the raw religiosity that exists underneath the creedal formulations of faith (Synan, 1997). While fundamentalists placed faith in the written Word of God, Pentecostals held to the notion that language was inept at expressing the greater reality that lies beyond reason. Theirs was not the contorted logos of the fundamentalists. Their discourse went beyond words. Pentecostals received the Holy Spirit and spoke in “tongues,” strange languages, in the same way that the apostles had at Pentecost (Acts 2: 1 – 6). This was inspired by the Biblical prophet Joel who claimed that the gifts of healing, ecstasy, prophecy, and tongues that had been enjoyed by the primitive Christian church would be given again to the faithful immediately before the Last Days (Joel 3: 1 – 5). Sons and daughters of former slaves and disadvantaged whites began to fill Pentecostal services. Since its establish-

ment in 1906 it took only a few years for Pentecostals to create hundreds of churches across America and to establish a presence in fifty countries (Cox, 2001). This Pentecostal upsurge was yet another of the Great Awakenings that occasionally emerge when people perceive that great change is coming. Their founders believed that the Last Days were at hand and that Jesus would soon return to establish his Kingdom. However, the First World War blunted this hope and it seemed that it would take a while longer for Jesus to return. At this point the Pentecostals reinterpreted their gift of tongues as a new way of speaking to God that went beyond the scope of speech. Their inclusiveness, charity, and compassionate love stood in marked contrast to fundamentalism. Pentecostalism was an attempt to recover much of what the Western world had rejected, and a rejection of the modern foundation reason. Founded at a time when people were beginning to doubt science, Pentecostals became enamored with intuition and the imagination (Synan, 1997). While fundamentalists were agonizing over how to make their beliefs rational and scientific, Pentecostals were returning to the core of spirituality, delving into the source of mythology. They had spontaneously begun to share the mystic's impatience with human speech because ultimate reality is ineffable and inexpressible. While the Pentecostals were spontaneously embracing traditions that have prevented the divine from the imprisonment of human systems of thought, the fundamentalists were moving in the opposite direction. Although the fundamentalists nursed a strong hatred of the Pentecostals, both were reacting to the fact that Western discourse had reached an unprecedented complexity (Cox, 2001). Closer to the liberal Protestants at their inception, many Pentecostals would eventually be drawn into the more extreme fundamentalist camp and lose their sense of charity.

Meanwhile, in the modern secular world there was little to evoke a sense of sacredness and for many the notion of God had become almost meaningless. However, the world was a better place in many ways. A secularist spirituality, one that would provide transcendence and meaning, was being born in literature, art, sexuality, drugs, and even in sport. By the middle of the twentieth century most believed that religion would never again play a major role in world events. It had been moved into the private sphere for good. Western Christianity had often been seen as cruel and coercive, the secular world wished to be more tolerant. But World War I and World War II had proven that it was wrong to assume that a rational education would eliminate barbarism. The Nazi Holocaust showed that a concentration camp could exist near a great university. It was an example of scientific-rational planning in which everything is subordinated to a single, finite, clearly defined objective. While the Holocaust was a reminder of the dangers imparted when God is absent from human consciousness, the horror of the atomic bomb had also imparted the germ of nihilism to modern culture. There was a not-so-covert nihilistic urge among those who had more power than ever before to pursue mass destruction. For some time people of faith had dreamed of an apocalypse brought by God. Now it appeared that man could do it quite effectively without God's help. Faced with such ominous capacity, reason became silent. The limitations of rationalistic ethos were self-evident. In the conservative period God had imposed a constraint upon what humanity could do. His Law told people that the world was not theirs to do with as they wished. But modernity had abhorred any notion of divine limitation on autonomy and freedom. Now the Gulag had shown what can happen when people cast off such restraint, making the polity or the nation of supreme value. New ways of implanting the ideas of respect

and the sacredness of life were needed, but they could not compromise modern integrity with old notions of the supernatural (Armstrong, 2000).

After the Scopes trial, Protestant fundamentalists retreated to their own churches and colleges. Liberals assumed the fundamentalist crisis was over, but instead of fading away, fundamentalists were putting down roots at the local level. They founded new organizations and raised a new generation of evangelists. By 1930 there were fifty or more fundamentalist Bible colleges in the United States thirty additionally founded during the Depression. Fundamentalists also created their own broadcasting and publishing empires. With the advent of television in the 1950s, Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and Rex Humbard began ministries as televangelists, linking the fundamentalists together across the nation (Ammerman, 1991; Ellwood, 2000; Marsden, 1992). The new colleges, radio, and television stations gave those who had been marginalized by society a home in a hostile world. In this new counterculture were now safe enclaves, holiness created by means of separation, apart from the profane world. Founded in 1927, Bob Jones University (BJU) was the epitome of the new fundamentalist institution. Its founder, no intellectual, wanted to create a safe school that would help the younger generation preserve its faith and prepare to fight the atheism he believed saturated the secular universities (Schultze, 1994). A world unto itself, it was strongly governed culture of dress, social interaction, and dating. Everyone was required to take at least one Bible course per semester, to live a Christian life, and to attend church. Disobedience was not tolerated and was considered an unpardonable sin (Dalhouse, 1996; M. Wright, 1984). This discipline was seen as necessary because those within the confines of this University were at war against all atheistic, agnostic, and humanistic or secular attacks against the Holy Scripture, the com-

promises of the New Evangelicals, and the practices of the Charismatics. The separation from this world was foundation of their witness and testimony. The staff and students had to retreat from the unscriptural practices of the world. Although BJU had small influence on the academic community, it had great influence on Christians in America. Among other things, BJU has become known as the largest supplier of fundamentalist teachers in the nation.

Feeling that their faith was imperiled, Bible colleges and fundamentalist universities became militant separatist citadels. They regarded themselves as outsiders who were displaced from the center of American life (R. L. Moore, 1986). Rooted in their deep fear, fundamentalists were creating a religion of rage. But by the Second World War, only the premillennialists called themselves fundamentalists. (Other Conservative Christians preferred to call themselves evangelicals.) With the deflation of postmillennial optimism, the fundamentalists viewed the new United Nations with the same contempt as the League of Nations. They feared that the UN would pave the way for world dictatorship, the Antichrist, and the Tribulation. World peace was a mere fantasy. The Bible offered no utopian dream before the final conflict. Wars and even more terrible anguish were in store (Lockyer, 1942). Diametrically opposed to the liberal dream, this vision created a split among Americans, making two nations within a nation that could not share the same world view. For the fundamentalists, there was no hope of escaping the final holocaust. Yet this scenario gave them a sense of confidence and superiority. They alone had the truth and would be raptured up into heaven before things got too rough. Only the unbelievers and apostates would suffer. Also, because of their premillennial views, fundamentalists became very interested in the condition of Israel. Jerry Falwell



saw the creation of the State of Israel as the most important day in history since the ascension of Jesus – because Christ could not return, nor the Last Days begin, unless the Jews were living in the Holy Land (Boyer, 1992).

By the 1960s, revolution was in the air and young people took to the streets in both Europe and America to demonstrate their rebellion against the modern ethos. They refused to fight in the nation's wars. They rebelled against materialism, imperialism, and chauvinism while fighting for a more just and equal society. In creating their counterculture, youth of the 1960s had done what the fundamentalists had done. They gave birth to an alternative society that rejected the values of the mainstream. There was a longing for mythos and a move away from scientific rationalism. Mysticism, transcendence, and personal transformation were the order of the day. The quest for spirituality was self-indulgent, narcissistic, and wild, having no grounding in the more disciplined ways of gaining intuitive knowledge.

Religious radical youth, the Jesus freaks, were mounting their own offensive against the secularization and rationalization of modern society (Miles, 2003; Perry, 2005). But it was, for the most part, a reaction to the suppression of mythos by logos.

At the very same time fundamentalists were also mobilizing. Many were angry and determined to fight those who had oppressed and marginalized them. But they would be challenged to fight with modern weapons and a modern ideology. This new ideology would provide a means to mobilize people for battle, to engage them in social and political struggle (Talmon, 1960). The new ideology must be expressed in simple terms, using brief slogans that were meant to explain everything. Central to this ideological order is the need to find someone to blame. Once this person or group is identified all one need

do is to point them out as the source of the world's ruin, then designate another person or group that will put things right. The ideology must also be easily grasped and understood by the least of the population (Armstrong, 2000). In addition, the ideology must avoid giving any credence to information which conflicts with the ideology (Janis, 1982). People who believe things that contradict the ideology are to be viewed as on the outside, and among those who simply cannot understand.

Edmund Burke was among the first to discover that challenging a prevailing ideology, which, at one time, may have been revolutionary, demands creating a new and counterrevolutionary ideology. Many of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims had used this technique by the 1960s and 1970s not only as a response to rational modernity but also as a reaction to the youthful rebellion at the time (Judis & Teixeira, 2002).

Armstrong notes:

In order to counter what they regarded as the rational fantasies of the modern establishment, they would have to challenge ideas which had once been radical and revolutionary but had now become so authoritative and pervasive that they seemed self-evident. They were all in a weak position and all convinced, sometimes with reason, that the secularists and liberals wanted to annihilate them. In order to create a religious ideology, they would have to reshape the myths and symbols of their tradition in such a way that they became a persuasive blueprint for action that would compel the people to rise up and save their faith from extinction. Some of these religious ideologues were deeply imbued with the spirituality of the conservative age. They were mystics and had a deep appreciation of myth and ritual, which made them acutely aware of the reality of the unseen. But there was a difficulty. In the premodern period, myth had never been intended to have a practical application. It was not meant to provide a concrete plan of action; on occasions when people had used myth as a springboard for political activity, the results had been disastrous. Now, as they planned their counterattack on the secular world, these religious radicals would have to turn their myths into ideology.

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 235)

The chaos of the counterculture-underground-freak-flower-child-hippie era with its feminism, permissive sex, and promotion of equal rights for homosexuals and blacks,

seemed to loosen the foundations of society (Miles, 2003). Many Christians felt that the Rapture and the End Times must be nigh. Since the Revolution American Protestants had been divided into two embattled camps; the fundamentalists living in a separate world that rejected secularism and liberal Christianity. They had yet to form a political movement to redeem society, but the potential was there. In 1979 the fundamentalists staged their comeback. One of every three polled claimed to have experienced a “born-again” conversion, one out of two believed that the Bible was inerrant, and over 80 percent believed that Jesus was divine. By this time there were about 1300 Christian evangelical television and radio stations, with an audience near 130 million. Pat Robertson bragged during the 1980 election that, “We have enough votes to run this country,” (Lienesch, 1995, p. I-2).

This new growth and confidence was supported by three factors. First was the development of the South. Fundamentalism had previously been a product of northern cities. But during the 1960s the South began to modernize, experiencing the same kind of rapid urbanization and industrialization that the North had a century earlier. Liberals from the North brought modern ideas to the South. Old values and beliefs had to be defended. The conservative faith became ripe for a fundamentalist movement (Martin E. Marty & Appleby, 1994). Moving from the farm to the city, many southerners felt uprooted and alienated. People started sending children to colleges where they would encounter the liberalism of the sixties, with a concurrent loss of faith (Hatch, 1989; Reeves, 1996). People began to turn to fundamentalism and the new church of the air-waves as televangelists such as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker busied themselves building powerful empires of conservative religion.

Second was the rapid expansion of state power after World War II. Mistrustful of centralized government since the Revolution, many Americans used religion to voice their unhappiness with the secular establishment. The Supreme Court decision to ban worship and Bible readings in public schools outraged the fundamentalists. In the 1970s the Court passed a series of judgments stating that any law would be struck down if it intended to promote the cause of religion, if its consequence, regardless of intention, was the advancement of religion, and if it entangled government in religious affairs (Bruce, 1990). The fundamentalists saw these rulings as a Godless crusade to wipe them out. They were also offended that the Court extended the principle of free exercise of faith to religions that were not Christian, seeing it as an attempt to make all religions equal, thus invalidating their own. Similar to the Scopes trial, this expansion created another clash between two value systems. Both sides believed they were completely right and a deep rift ran through America. As the state expanded its notion of the public arena, conservative Christians began to feel colonized by the modern secularist worlds of Washington, Manhattan, and Harvard. The state seemed to have invaded the inner sanctum of the family. According to fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible a woman's place was in the home, but a Constitutional amendment gave equal rights of employment to women. Even though, in their eyes, the Bible said that fathers had a duty to use corporal punishment (Proverbs 23:13), the law limited the chastisement of children. To their astonishment, abortion was legalized and homosexuals were given civil rights and freedom of expression. These reforms that seemed so naturally moral to the liberals seemed just as sinful to the fundamentalists. In a nation that was campaigning for the legalization

of marijuana, it became clear to the faithful that the influence of Satan had fallen heavily upon America (Ammerman, 1991; Bruce, 1990).

Among the fundamentalists there was an urgent fear that if Christians did not fight back their religion might be destroyed. During the 1970s parents escalated their attempts to get the children of Christian families into Christian schools. Between 1965 and 1983 enrollment in evangelical schools increased six-fold, and nearly 100,000 fundamentalist children were home schooled (Ammerman, 1991). By the 1990's the American Association of Christian Schools had 1360 member schools, while the Association of Christian Schools International had 1930 (S. Rose, 1997). In these schools there was a desire for an education where politics, history, morality, patriotism, and economics could be taught from a Christian viewpoint. Subjects would not be taught unless they conformed to Biblical and family values. Hothouses for growing committed and sometimes militant Christians, these schools were set up to fight the growth of secularization in America and ultimately to bring the country back to its religious roots.

As stated earlier, for an ideology to mobilize effectively it needs a clearly defined enemy. For the Protestant fundamentalists, the enemy was secular humanism. Because they were fervently patriotic, fundamentalists could not target American secularism. Therefore, they had to struggle with an enemy that came from within. Secular humanism became both a broad term and a grab bag for any belief or value that the fundamentalists didn't like (Bollier, 1982). As defined by the Pro-Family Forum, secular humanism:

- Denies the deity of God, the inspiration of the Bible and the divinity of Jesus Christ.

- Denies the existence of the soul, life after death, salvation and heaven, damnation and hell.
- Denies the Biblical account of Creation.
- Believes that there are no absolutes, no right, no wrong – that moral values are self-determined and situational. Do your own thing, “as long as it does not harm anyone else.”
- Believes in the removal of distinctive roles of male and female.
- Believes in sexual freedom between consenting individuals, regardless of age, including premarital sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, and incest.
- Believes in the right to abortion, euthanasia, and suicide.
- Believes in the equal distribution of America’s wealth to reduce poverty and bring about equality.
- Believes in control of environment, control of energy, and its limitations.
- Believes in the removal of American patriotism, and the free-enterprise system, disarmament, and the creation of a one-world socialistic government.

*(Is humanism molesting your child?, 1983)*

This list, while somewhat accurate in describing the liberal mindset of the sixties, is still a gross oversimplification, a caricature of liberalism. Not all who desire the redistribution of wealth are atheists. Jesus himself was in favor of the rich giving their wealth to the poor (Luke 18: 18 – 25). Not everyone who condones homosexuality is in favor of incest. Few liberals would agree that there is absolutely no right and no wrong. And the European Union or the United Nations are hardly attempts to create a one-world socialist

government amenable to the godhead of the Antichrist. However, the list seems useful in distinguishing how a good liberal value, i.e. a desire to care for the environment and the poor, could be interpreted as evil by fundamentalists. Unfortunately, fundamentalists believed that the list was more than an accurate definition of liberalism and secular humanism. As a result, modern society became so polarized that it was increasingly difficult for the two camps to understand each other.

Fundamentalists, therefore, saw secular humanism as a competing religion that would not only rival, but engulf them. They would argue that the secular humanism practiced by government should be outlawed from public life, just as their own religion had been. To fundamentalists, the notion of secular humanism was not a mere ploy to further their agenda. They saw it as a conspiracy of evil forces that filled them with dread. Seen as anti-God, anti-moral, anti-self restraint, and anti-American (T. LaHaye, 1980), they believed that secular humanism was fostered by the government, the public schools, and the television networks in order to destroy the America family and to eradicate Christianity. Fundamentalists were seeing America, which, in their eyes, had been founded as a Bible-based republic, turn into a secular state. John Whitehead, president of the conservative Rutherford Institute, viewed this move to a secular state as a catastrophe caused by a misreading of the First Amendment. Whitehead believed that the wall of separation between church and state, as advocated by Thomas Jefferson, was instituted to protect the church from the state, not the other way around. He argued that the state's goal was to perpetuate itself against God's sovereignty; therefore the state was committing idolatry (Whitehead, 1982).

According to fundamentalists, the conspiracy had not only conquered the United States, but the entire world as well. The fundamentalist writer Pat Brooks claimed that there was a huge conspiratorial network of secular humanists that was quickly creating a new world order that would reduce the world to slavery (Brooks, 1981). Brooks saw the conspiracy at work in the Soviet Union, in Zionism, on Wall Street, in the World Bank and the Federal Reserve – masterminded by the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, Kissinger, Brzezinski, the Shah of Iran, and Omar Torrijos of Panama. The horror of secular humanism became an irrational and paranoid fantasy. Modern society in America, in the mind of the Protestant fundamentalists, was as demonic as that portrayed by any fundamentalist Islamic.

For Franky Shaeffer (1982) the West was entering:

...an electronic dark age, in which the new pagan hordes, with all the power of technology at their command, are on the verge of obliterating the last strongholds of civilized humanity. A vision of darkness lies before us. As we leave the shores of Christian western man behind, only a dark and turbulent sea of despair stretches endlessly ahead ... unless we *fight*.

p. 122

Protestant fundamentalists were evolving a vision of America that was radically different from that of the liberal mainstream. They were convinced that the United States was God's country. However, they did not share the same values as many other Americans. Rather than looking ahead, they turned to a nostalgic past filled with images of their Puritan Pilgrim fathers. Fundamentalists believed that the Puritans did not come to the new world to establish liberal ideals. They did not come to create a democracy, and they didn't have any time for liberty. They were, however, interested in compelling others to walk in the right way through right government in church and state (Walton, 1979, 1987).



Nor was the Revolution considered democratic. According to Pat Robertson, the founders of the American Republic were inspired by Calvinist ideals. The revolutionaries had wanted nothing to do with mass rule. They wanted, Robertson asserted, a republic in which the will of the majority would be controlled by Biblical law (Robertson, 1986). They were not looking for a direct democracy in which the majority could do as it pleases. And the Constitution certainly did not ever have sanction to create laws that were apart from the higher law of God (Rushdoony, 1978).

Fundamentalist history was the creation of a counter-culture that wanted to return America to the right path. However, by the end of the 1970s they had to accept that by retreating and isolating themselves they had contributed to America's falling away from its Godly beginnings (Lienesch, 1995). Now they must commit to political activism. Previously premillennialism had kept fundamentalists apart from political action. After all, if the world was doomed what was the point in trying to reform it? And thought leaders up until the 1970s did not see much of a role for America in the events of the end times. However, by the end of the decade popular authors such as Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHay changed their minds. They believed that if the faithful in America were to awaken, the nation could play a powerful role right through the millennium. Lindsey notes:

That means that we must actively take on the responsibility of being a citizen and a member of God's family. We need to get active, electing officials who will not only reflect the Bible's morality in government, but will shape domestic and foreign policies to protect our country and our way of life.

(Lindsey, 1980, p. 157)

The third reason for the mobilization of fundamentalism in the early 1980s was that they had achieved greater confidence and had greatly increased their profile. They

had an enemy to fight, a vision for America that was much different than that of the liberals, and the power to succeed. The affluence that had helped to make a permissive society had also made the fundamentalists more prosperous. The new prominence of the South made them feel worthy of challenging the mainstream. Liberal churchgoers had diminished in number while the fundamentalists had experienced impressive growth. Televangelism was creating a palpable presence, making the voice of the fundamentalists loud, public, and clear. The huge sum of contributions given to these televangelists seemed to be Gods answer to economics. Pat Robertson asserted that in the Kingdom of God “there is no economic recession, no shortage,” (Robertson, 1982, pp. 108, 109).

Preeminent among the televangelists was Jerry Falwell. Having begun his ministry in 1956 with only a handful of members, by 1988 his Thomas Road Baptist Church had 18,000 members and sixty associate pastors. Its total income was over sixty million dollars per year and his services were broadcast on 600 radio stations and 392 television channels (Bruce, 1990). In typical fundamentalist style, Falwell wanted to build a separate and self-sufficient society. At Lynchburg he created Liberty Baptist College, and by 1976 it had 1500 students. He also established a nursing home, a home for recovering alcoholics, and an adoption agency that operated as an alternative to abortion.

This purpose of this separate enclave was to create an alternative society whose goal was to undermine secular humanism. But separation from society would not allow Liberty College to become a world-class university, so Falwell took a middle road. Liberty, unlike Bob Jones University, would apply for and receive accreditation. It would train students for the major professions and walks of life. However, its ultimate goal would be to build a spiritual army of young people who are pro-life, pro-moral, and pro-

America (Schultze, 1994). Faculty would be required to subscribe to the articles of faith. Students were compelled to complete Christian service assignments and attend services at Thomas Road three times a week. Drinking and smoking were forbidden and students must wear Sunday-best clothing at all times. This compromise allowed Liberty to appeal to non-fundamentalists who appreciated its academic standards and moral sobriety. Liberty became an alternative to the liberal colleges of the sixties and seventies, and to the mediocre standard of other Bible colleges.

Falwell planned his offensive in a very modern way by reaching out to what he perceived as a dying world with a conglomerate of college, church, radio stations, and television. He used no wild antics in his ministry and criticized the extravagances of Roberts, Swaggart, and the Bakkers. He stood for restraint, capitalism, and the work ethic and believed he could win souls through innovation. The Thomas Road Baptist Church combined the ministries of several agencies in order to attract the masses and minister to each individual. Thomas Road seemed to expand through the Godly viability of capitalism, so when the secular power brokers were looking for someone to lead a right-wing revival, Jerry was perfect for the job. He understood the modern capitalism and could engage it with the best of them.

Yet, those fundamentalists who responded to Falwell were also filled with fear. There was no use arguing that there was no secular humanists conspiracy bent on their annihilation. Modern society had achieved a great deal morally as well as materially. Democracy, freedom, and toleration were liberating more and more each day. Yet the fundamentalists could not see this. To them, modernity was nothing less than an assault on their most sacred values, and they were poised to fight back.

Secularists were surprised by the fundamentalist assault brought on by the militant explosion of faith in the late 1970s, but the drama was softened by the enjoyment of prosperity and success the Protestant fundamentalists were experiencing along with the rest of America. These fundamentalists did feel, however, alienated from modern secular culture although they were very comfortable in America. A firmly established democracy allowed them to express their views freely without fear of reprisal. They also used democratic institutions to further their cause. Nonetheless, they began to feel that it was necessary to become more politically involved. A substantial evangelical constituency could be mobilized on conservative issues such as abortion, family values, and religious education.

The icon for this political revival was Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Created in 1979, the impetus came not from fundamentalists but from professional right-wing organizers. Howard, Phillips, Richard Vignerie, and Paul Weyrich, who had already created a number of political action committees, were becoming disenchanted with their political party. Staunchly conservative on issues such as reduced government and defense, they wanted to create a new conservative majority in opposition to the social and moral liberalism that had not only permeated America since the sixties, but had also recently affected their champion, Ronald Reagan. They were quick to realize the strengths and numbers of the evangelicals and fundamentalists, and saw Jerry Falwell as the perfect candidate to lead their campaign. He had a gigantic and ready-made constituency, and was linked with other prominent leaders such as Tim LaHaye and Greg Dixon through the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

Once established, the Moral Majority did not confine itself to fundamentalism. The leaders were intent on cooperation with others who shared their views on ethical and political issues to create a forum for all American conservatives. Since Protestant evangelicals constituted less than 20 percent of the population of the United States, like minded Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Mormons, Jews, and even secularists were needed to make the necessary impact (Bruce, 1990). Pragmatically driven, fundamentalists put aside their separatism and embraced the plurality of the modern world.

However, support for the Moral Majority was predominantly Protestant, with the greatest sympathy centered in the South. Conservative Catholics could endorse anti-abortion legislation, tax relief for independent schools, and the removal of rights for homosexuals. But they found it hard to forget the fundamentalists' tradition hatred of Roman Catholicism. Jews, black Baptists, and Pentecostals were repelled by the racism demonstrated by prominent patrons of the movement such as Senator Jesse Helms (Bruce, 1990).

In addition, the tenets of the Moral Majority were not new. It pronounced America to be currently degenerate, noting that after World War II an East Coast secular elite had dominated political and cultural life. Falwell called these liberals the immoral minority. Conservatives were told not to allow themselves to be marginalized any longer. They were the new majority and they must fight to keep the traditional values alive (T. LaHaye, 1980). Pat Robertson told one audience that:

We have together with the Protestant and Catholics enough votes to run this country. And when the people say, "We've had enough," we are going to take over.

(Vignerie, 1981, p. 126)

In the late 1970s and early 1980's some of the fundamentalists were beginning to modify the pessimism of premillennialism. Christians had an obligation to convert as many as possible, even though the world at large was doomed. America might even be reprieved before the Rapture, that is, if Christians committed to the right action. On the *Old Time Gospel Hour* Jerry Falwell expressed his opinion on this issue:

I think so. I believe as we trust in God and pray, as we Christians lead the battle to outlaw abortion, which is murder on demand, as we take our stand against pornography, against the drug traffic, as we take our stand against the breakdown of the traditional family in America, the promotion of homosexual marriages, as we stand up for strong national defense so that this country can survive and our children will know the America we've known.... I think there is hope that God may one more time bless America.

(S. Harding, 2004, p. 70)

After fifty years of sequestered quiet, fundamentalists were on the offensive. Soon to be known as the New Christian Right, these newly militant Christians had given birth to a rejectionist crusade that was against far more than it was for. Anti-abortion, anti-gay, anti-drugs, and certainly anti-détente with the Satanic Empire of the Soviet Union, the New Christian Right believed that any teaching of peace before the return of Christ was heresy (Boyer, 1992). The emphasis on sexuality was also significant. As concerned with the position of women as the Islamists, the New Christian Right had a far more frightening vision. Women's liberation filled fundamentalists with abject terror. Phyllis Schlafly, a Roman Catholic leader of the Moral Majority, railed against feminism as a disease that caused all of the world's ills. Eve had disobeyed God in seeking her own liberation. Feminism was an extension of this original disobedience and had brought pain, sickness, fear, anger, hatred, violence, danger, and all types of ugliness (Phyllis Schlafly, 1981). The Equal Rights Amendment was seen as a government plot to create Soviet-style nurseries, higher taxes, and the federalization of all remaining aspects of life.

Beverly LaHaye called feminism a philosophy of death. She argued that, based on Marx-ists and humanist teachings, feminist ideology would bring about self-destruction and the death of all civilization. Christian women were urged to move their husbands back to center stage and to engage in the ethos of feminine self-sacrifice. Through this they would save society and bring civilization into the twenty-first century (B. LaHaye, 1984). Gripped by conspiracy fear, the fundamentalists were able to link something as large and important as the survival of society with the traditional position of women.

Masculinity among Protestant fundamentalists and Christian conservatives seemed to be facing diminution by secular humanism (Hedges, 2007). These denominations seemed very concerned about male impotence and lack of confidence in the boudoir. In their 1976 bestseller *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love* Tim and Beverly LaHaye portray men as impotent, sexually troubled, and worried about satisfying their wives. Many also were concerned about their performance as compared to other men (T. LaHaye & LaHaye, 1976). This had been brought about, they reasoned, by the new self-assertion of women. Even fundamentalists women were being infected with the feminist virus, causing their men to become feminized and castrated (T. LaHaye, 1985). As one may guess, this fear lay at the bottom of some fundamentalists' hatred of homosexuality, which they also viewed as epidemic and a cause of America's decline. Fundamentalists also equated homosexuality with pederasty and were convinced that it resulted from homes that had failed due to secular humanism (Falwell, 1980). Fundamentalist writers agreed that America needed real men. But some seemed to have covert worries about the emasculating aspects of Christianity itself, which had become a religion of forgiveness, mercy, and tenderness. However, Edwin Louis Cole argued that Christ

was no sissy. He was a fearless leader who cast out demons, defeated Satan, and commanded nature. He could be ruthless and Christians must also be aggressive (Cole, 2001). The desire for a virile, militant Christianity helps to explain the Moral Majority's hostility to gun control, upholding firearms as a part of the mission to revive upright, potent, and combative manhood.

The activism of the New Christian Right partially sprang from the fundamentalist feeling of being undermined and somehow castrated (Hedges, 2007; Phillips, 2006). Their flock, once held aloof from the mainstream, was to become politically active and to take part in public life. The Moral Majority began to work in the same way as other political movements. They made sure that their members registered for the vote, understood how to vote correctly, and were able to arrive at the polls on time. Fundamentalists held rallies to promote activism, to educate the faithful in lobbying and preparing newsletters, and to teach their members how to influence the media. Members were also exhorted to hold office wherever they could.

Gradually liberals and secularists woke to the growing born-again presence in public life. Over the next decade, militant Christians began to colonize mainstream institutions and Pat Robertson even made a bid for the presidency in 1986. They began to target candidates who voted the wrong way on gun laws, funding for abortion clinics, or the Equal Rights Amendment. Those who held the wrong views on school prayer, defense, or gay rights were labeled as anti-American, anti-family, and anti-God. Gradually the fundamentalists began to learn how to play the political game. Their most notable achievement was blocking the Equal Rights Amendment. Phyllis Schlafly and the Christian Right activists halted the momentum necessary for a two-thirds majority required to



adopt the amendment, reversing the endorsements of Nebraska, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and South Dakota. In Arkansas and Louisiana bills were also passed to ensure that the literal teachings of Genesis were given equal time with Darwinian evolution in schools (T. LaHaye, 1982).

The long-term objective was to build an ultraconservative majority in both chambers of Congress. Once achieved, the reforms they wanted would easily follow suit. Twenty years after the Moral Majority initiated this political activism, it is not clear as to how effective it had been. More committed Christians vote than before, especially in the South. Unfortunately for their cause, their efforts sometimes backfired. For example, in the 1986 Maryland mid-term, when Linda Chavez called her liberal opponent a communist and a child-murdering lesbian, it likely contributed to her defeat. Also, the efforts of conservatives in 1988 – 99 to impeach President Bill Clinton for his sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky proved counterproductive, with a possible liberal backlash. However, by late in the twentieth century, religion had become a force to be reckoned with in America, which had traveled a long distance since the promotion of secular humanism during the Enlightenment. Since the Revolution the Protestants had used religion as a method of protesting the policies and conduct of the liberal establishment. The campaigning of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and others in the Christian Right were simply a late manifestation of this technique. As a result, the sacred now plays a far greater role in the political life of the United States than in other countries where the display of overt religiosity would be politically damaging (Armstrong, 2000).

Aside from national politics, some of the greatest victories of the Christian Right occurred in the 1970s and 1980s at the local level. In 1974 West Virginia Christians

withdrew their children from schools that were criticized for teaching a secular humanist slant. In January of 1982, the local Christians of St. David's, Arizona, banned books by William Golding, John Steinbeck, Joseph Conrad, and Mark Twain from their schools.

In 1981 Mel and Norma Gables began a campaign to get God back into the Texas schools. They criticized the liberal slant which, they noted, could be seen in:

...open ended questions that require students to draw their own conclusion; statements about religions other than Christianity; statements that they construe to reflect negatively on the free enterprise system; statements that they construe to reflect positive aspects of socialist or communist countries (e.g., that the Soviet Union is the largest producer in the world of certain grains); any aspect of sex education other than the promotion of abstinence; statements which emphasize contributions made by blacks, Native American Indians, Mexican-Americans, of feminists; statements which are sympathetic to American slaves or are unsympathetic to their masters; and statements in support of the theory of evolution, unless equal space is given to explain the theory of creation.

(Weissmann, 1982, p. 13)

The courts overruled the Gablers, but publishers were still so alarmed that they made the changes themselves.

The campaign had revealed the fears that had long plagued fundamentalists, the fear of colonization, of experts, of uncertainty and foreign influence, of science and sex. It had also shown the White, Anglo-Saxon nature of the New Christian Right. America was to be Protestant and white. Even though they lost more cases than they won, the Christian Right had learned how to conduct itself in the political arena and their victories were sweet. However, the progress was also too slow. Fundamentalists worried that time was running out, that the Rapture was nigh. Some also believed that their leaders were selling out. For example, in 1982 Fallwell campaigned for the limited availability of abortion rather than its elimination. During his presidential bid, Pat Robertson politely but guardedly about the mainstream denominations, even though fundamentalist orthodoxy demands that the apostate churches be attacked.

Robertson and Falwell both learned that compromise is a necessary feature in modern politics. Absolutism cannot survive in a democratic context, which requires bargaining. A religious vision that sees certain principles as nonnegotiable has difficulty with this reality. But, to achieve any success, Falwell and Robertson had to make concession to those whom they regarded as satanic. Upon entering the modern world the fundamentalists felt a cognitive dissonance, a dynamic tension created by brushing shoulders with those whom they had come to battle. Later, however, some of the compromises to which fundamentalists felt driven signaled a defeat for religion itself.

The revival of fundamentalism proved that religion was not yet a spent force. Faith had been brought out into the daylight and showed that it could garner a huge constituency even in modern society. The victories of the fundamentalists filled secularists with dismay. The new fundamentalism was not the polite, decorous, private Enlightenment faith of the founders. It denied the sacred values of modernity, and showed that societies were polarized. By the end of the twentieth century the fundamentalist offensive had made the rift between the secularists and the religious even deeper. Both held a separate vision and spoke a separate language. From a rational standpoint the rise of fundamentalism was disastrous. To usher in a theocratic state seemed fantastically embarrassing in its rejection of accepted Western wisdom, but fundamentalism was a rebellion, after all, against rationalism.

Each, the religious and secularist, gazes at the other with horror. Neither can see the other clearly. Both recall the excesses, cruelties, and intolerance of the “other side” and, wounded to the core, they cannot make peace.

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 354)

Polls in the United States showed the population to be neatly divided into two nearly equal, mutually antagonistic camps (Wuthnow, 1990). Though other polls showed

that only 9 percent of Americans called themselves fundamentalists, they shared the core beliefs of Protestant fundamentalism (Wuthnow & Lawson, 2004):

- 44 percent believed that salvation comes only through Jesus.
- 30 percent describe themselves as born-again believers.
- 28 percent believe that every word of the Bible is true and to be taken literally.
- 27 percent believed that the Bible did not contain any scientific or historical errors.

However, in 1987 fundamentalism experienced a severe setback. Scandals among the popular televangelists threatened to discredit fundamentalism with their banality, sexual escapades, and greed. Because the Protestant fundamentalists were concerned with doctrine, they had tried to turn Christian myth into scientific fact, creating a hybrid that was neither good religion nor good science. This had produced great stress for the faithful as religious truth often runs counter to the rational approach and cannot be proven scientifically. Also, because they overlooked the intuitive and the mystical, they had lost a great deal of contact with the deeper and more unconscious impulses of the personality. As a result, American revivalism had sometimes taken on an archaic and neurotic tone. By the late 1980s, a number of fundamentalists were ready to revolt against the pursuit of a rational faith. Anxious about gender boundaries and sexual potency, it was not surprising that sexual license was at the forefront of this rebellion.

The public adulation of televangelists came with its own pitfalls. The narcissism of the personality cult is at odds with the spiritual transcendence of ego. Also, the huge sums of money commanded by these personalities proved in diametric opposition to Jesus' call to abandon material wealth. While Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, for example,

had admonished their viewers to personally sacrifice and to give more money to the needy, they themselves spent \$375,000.00 on an ocean-front condominium and \$22,000.00 on floor-to-ceiling mirrors (Bruce, 1990). Stars of the PTL (Praise the Lord and People That Love) network, and owners of a huge Disney-style Christian theme park, Heritage USA, they were a far cry from the sobriety and self-restraint characterized by Falwell's Lynchburg. Susan Harding suggests that they were consciously staging a revolt against the commonsense religiosity of Jerry Falwell by pushing fundamentalism into a postmodern phase (S. Harding, 1993).

Since the late nineteenth century American fundamentalists had answered the challenge of modernity by attempting to make their faith rational. Emphasizing the virtues of reason and plain sense, fundamentalists embraced a literalism that rejected fantasy, intuition, and creativity. They attempted to organize the world into seamless compartments of right and wrong, true believers and everyone else. It was an ethic of separation, of certainty and hierarchy, and a rejection of the Godless mainstream, the doubts and uncertainties of the modern world. But by attempting to make their religion scientific and rational they had pushed their faith into an unnatural position. As the fundamentalists had clung to the Baconian ideal and rebelled against the scientific rationalism of Darwin, so the Bakkers were rebelling against the rationalism of old-style fundamentalists. Their ministry was one of performance, spectacle, and fantasy. Harding notes that the Bakkers were also evolving a theology of infinite forgiveness, promising divine pardon for any sin beforehand.

In the past rebellion has sometimes erupted during times of transition. The faithful can feel overly constrained by old rules, beliefs, and lifestyles that no longer fit the

changing times. They may even find relief in breaking old taboos, or even go so far as to develop a theology of holy sin (Armstrong, 2000). When the scandal broke in March of 1987 that Jim Bakker had drugged and seduced a church secretary and then paid her \$250,000.00 to keep quiet, it appeared that something of this theology had been going on in the Bakker's own Praise the Lord (PTL) network. Immediately following the revelation of this scandal it was revealed that Tammy Faye had become infatuated with a country-and-western singer and had subsequently broken up his family. However, when the truth came out, the Bakkers went public. They took their contrition to huge television audiences, proclaiming God's love and forgiveness.

Jerry Falwell had attempted to maintain the restraint of conservative, premodern religion. The Bakkers', on the other hand, demonstrated what happens when these restraints are entirely rejected. Their post-modern Christianity expressed the conviction that anything goes, a belief that was most often ascribed to secular humanism. With celebrity and huge sums of money, the Bakkers believed that they had no limitations, that the old categories of right and wrong could be dissolved. Then new horrors appeared.

In a hasty exit of PTL, Jim Bakker asked Falwell to act as temporary caretaker of the network. Bakker then turned his vitriol on Jimmy Swaggart, who had brought the Bakkers' scandal to the public. Enraged by Swaggart's actions, Bakker vindictively accused Swaggart of trying to take over PTL. Swaggart had also made diversions into the land of rebellion by frequenting a prostitute in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His misconduct was revealed by Marvin Gorman, a minister that Swaggart had attacked on his show. The prostitute soon went public with her story and clarified that Swaggart was more interested in ritual humiliation than in sex (L. Wright, 1993).

A Pentecostalist, Swaggart had, in his early days, been the polar opposite of fundamentalism. He attempted to bypass reason and to give the ineffability of divine truth a voice. Unfortunately, he courted the unconscious world of abdication of reason and combined it with a malicious religion of hatred. Obsessed by his own buried anxieties, he became famous for foulmouthed attacks on homosexuals. He also eviscerated other ministers and rival televangelists. By casting off reason and charity, he had become self-destructive and nihilistic. The highlight of his ministry appeared to be his nearly orgasmic preaching:

He would sink deeper and deeper into his subconscious, he would journey past reason and conscious meaning into the slashing emotions and buried fears and unnamed desires that bubble below. His voice would rise and tremble, his grammar would fall away, but still he stumbled toward that cowering raw nerve of longing. He knew where it was. One watched him with both dread and desire, because this is the nerve that is attached to faith. Longing to be loved and saved – it is when he finally touches this nerve that the tears flow and the audience stands with its hands upraised, laughing, wailing, praising the Lord, speaking in the unknown languages and quivering with the pain and pleasure of this thrilling public exposure.

(L. Wright, 1993, pp. 72, 73)

Swaggart's success demonstrated the longing people had for ecstasy in an overly rationalized world. It also showed how the quest can lose its balance. His unmitigated frenzy appeared to have more to do with his sexuality than with spirituality. Yet the failure of fundamentalism is better demonstrated by the hatred and rage of the televangelists as they strove to batter each other during the scandals. Swaggart had turned on Bakker like a bulldog when he heard of his sexual misdeeds, Bakker turned on Falwell, and Falwell had retaliated by calling a press conference where he produced sworn affidavits by men claiming to have had homosexual relations with Bakker. He also produced a note from Tammy Faye that listed what she wanted from the PTL to compensate her for going quietly. It included \$300,000.00 a year for Jim and \$100,000.00 for herself. She also

wanted royalties on all PTL records and books, their \$400,000.00 mansion, two cars, plus fees for her lawyers and accountants.

The year before the scandals, Falwell had renamed the Moral Majority the Liberty Foundation and declared that many of its members would run for different levels of office in the 1988 election. After the PTL debacle he resigned his presidency of the Liberty Foundation and announced the end of his political career (Bruce, 1990). The dream of a coalition of religious conservatives taking America by storm was over. When Pat Robertson failed in his bid for the presidency, the fundamentalist offensive appeared, to all intents and purposes, dead. Secularists, once again, assumed that the threat was over.

But fundamentalism was merely asleep in a cocoon, soon to emerge in a new and more extreme body. On November 28, 1987, a born-again upstate New Yorker led a crowd of three hundred to an abortion clinic in Cherry Hills, New Jersey. They held a service on the doorstep for nearly eleven hours, praying, singing, and preventing women from entering the clinic. By the end of the day all were arrested, but their leader, Randall Terry, announced triumphantly that no babies had been killed (Ginsburg, 1993). This was the initiation of Operation Rescue, a group whose tack on dismantling the mainstream culture was to demonstrate it to be inherently murderous. Increasingly militant, the movement began what they viewed as the siege of Atlanta, in which more than thirteen hundred demonstrators blockaded the city's abortion clinics. Since that time Operation Rescue has staged Days of Rescue all over Canada and the United States. They also provide training for their recruits on the evils of liberal government and feminism. Unlike the televangelists, Terry was prepared to work openly outside the law. He described the actions of Operation Rescue as biblical disobedience. Purely fundamental-



ist, his vision was to create a nation where the Judeo-Christian ethic provided the foundation for politics, the judicial system, and public morality. Terry and his followers believe that abortion represents one of the most brutal manifestations of modernity, and that if it is not eradicated, America will not continue. However, Terry is confident that his holy army can succeed, and if abortion falls, then so will child pornography, euthanasia, and the other evils of secular modernism – that the fundamentalists will take back the culture (Ginsburg, 1993). He and his followers believe that theirs is a war to prevent imminent catastrophe and to rescue America.

Even more extreme is the Reconstructionist movement founded by Gary North and Rousas John Rushdoony. Also engaged in a war against secular humanism, the Reconstructionists have abandoned the premillennialist interpretation of the last days and have concerned themselves primarily with the sovereignty of God. Very similar to Muslim fundamentalism, they wish to create a civilization that will crush Satan and usher in the Kingdom of God on earth. The key concept of Reconstructionism is Dominion Theology. They believe that God gave Adam and Noah responsibility for taming the world. This mandate has been passed on to Christians who must take responsibility for imposing God's rule on earth before the Second coming of Christ. However, Christians will not need to take action as God will bring the modern secular state to ruin in a terrible catastrophe. The Christians who are left will simply reap the rewards. Meanwhile Reconstructionists are preparing themselves to take control after the destruction comes (Bruce, 1990; Hedges, 2007; Hendricks, 2005).

Their vision is a complete distortion of Christianity in its abandonment of the ethos of compassion. When the Kingdom comes, there will be no more separation of church and state, the modern heresy of democracy will be abolished, and society reorganized on strictly biblical lines. This means that every single law of

the Bible must be put literally into practice. Slavery will be reintroduced; there will be no more birth control (since believers must “increase and multiply”); adulterers, homosexuals, blasphemers, astrologers, and witches will be put to death. Children who are persistently disobedient must also be stoned, as the Bible enjoins. A strictly capitalist economy must be enforced; socialists and those who incline to the left are sinful. God is not on the side of the poor... Taxes should not be used in welfare programs... The same goes for the Third World, which has brought its economic problems on its own head because of its addiction to moral perversity, paganism, and demonology. Foreign aid is forbidden by the Bible. While waiting for victory... Christians must prepare to rebuild society according to God’s blueprint and must support government policies which approximate to these strict biblical norms.

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 361)

(Also see the collection of articles at <http://www.ensignmessage.com/archives.html>.)

The Dominion that North and Rushdoony (2004) envision is totalitarian, elitist, and aristocratic. No other view or policy will be permitted; there will be no democratic tolerance for rival ideas or individual freedom. According to North there is a tight relationship between wickedness and poverty, therefore he believes that subsidizing these sluggards is the same as subsidizing evil (North, 1986). This notion is a return to the justification used by almost all elites and aristocracies in the past for enslaving the poor while assuming that they, the privileged, are simply enjoying God’s favor because they are smarter, more moral, harder working, braver, and better in almost every way. Simply put, rich = good; poor = bad.

Although the chances are still remote that this type of totalitarian movement could accomplish a theocratic take over; an economic or environmental disaster could allow an authoritarian state church to replace liberal polity. After all, even though it was foreign to many of the teachings of Christ, Christianity was able to adapt quite well to capitalism. Reconstructionism is also quite compatible with a fascist ideology that, in a crisis, might be used to maintain public order (Rifkin & Howard, 1979). Among others, some conser-

vative Pentecostals have already shown interest in Dominion theology. Apparently a pivotal transitional figure, Pat Robertson also believes that the Second Coming may be far off, an idea that separates him from premillennial fundamentalism (Cox, 2001). Similar to the Reconstructionists, Robertson believes that in the interim, Christians should achieve positions of power in order to build a society and government based on biblical norms (Lienesch, 1995). He has changed the name of his university to Regent University, explaining that a regent is someone who governs in the absence of a sovereign. His college is preparing its seven hundred students to take charge when God's Kingdom arrives (Cox, 2001).

Based on the growing support for a more theocratic approach, it is clear that fundamentalism is here to stay and it is taking an increasingly hard line. Historically, religion in America has often shaped opposition to government. When Bill Clinton was elected to the presidency, Jerry Falwell announced that Satan had entered the White House. Clinton, he asserted, would destroy the nation and the military by letting the gays take over. Abortions in federally funded clinics, the endorsement of homosexual rights, and new research on fetal tissue were all signs to the right that America had officially declared war on God (S. Harding, 2004). And now that war is escalating.

Even more extreme Christians are rallying to fight the secular government (Ezekiel, 1996; Levitas, 2002; C. H. Roberts, 2003; Stock, 1997). A fascist group called the Christian Identity has left fundamentalism in the dust. They hate the idea of the rapture and view premillennialists as wimps. The Christian Identity wants to fight the forces of evil during the Tribulation. They do not wish to be caught up into the clouds. They despise the fundamentalists' support for Zionism and are rabidly anti-Semitic. The Iden-

tity believes that Jews stole the title of Chosen People from the Aryan race, and now they have usurped the Holy Land that rightfully belonged under British authority. They believe that Armageddon will be fought in America rather than the Middle East, and that there will be a new holocaust in which the United States and the white race will be extinguished. Preparing themselves for this imminent catastrophe, they foresee the destruction of the federal government which they believe is dominated by Satan and the Jews. They believe that this government, which they call ZOG (the Zionist Occupation Government), is dedicated to destroying the Aryan nation. Therefore they are sequestering themselves into remote military groups in the northwestern United States. In these camps they collect firearms, learn survival techniques, and prepare for the final war. Some have made raids on the government, killing state officials. Others have bombed or set fire to abortion clinics (Barkun, 1997). This type of ideology inspired Timothy McVeigh to bomb the federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995.

Like fundamentalism, the Christian Identity has reacted to the secular world in contempt and fear. Ironically, it has retreated from the world in order to take it over. This is a worrisome trend among the most extreme types of Christian reactionaries who see conspiracy everywhere and nurture a theology of resentment and rage. Members of the Christian Identity, as well as many other groups like them, have outdone the fundamentalists in their hatred of the American government, their fascist ideology, and the extremity of their withdrawal. Rather than concern themselves with doctrine and biblical inerrancy, they wish to create a separate Aryan state in America – a result of an ideology of terror and alienation that has no parallel in the history of America. Similar to Reconstructionists, the Identity demonstrates how religion can be further used to voice

discontent and a reactionary sense of vulnerability. In this sense the war is still very much on and in many ways becoming even more extreme and militant.

As Armstrong concludes at the end of her book *The Battle for God*:

Religion did not disappear after all, and in some circles it has become more militant than ever. In all three of the monotheistic faiths, fundamentalists have reacted angrily to attempts to privatize or to suppress religion, and have, as they believe, rescued it from oblivion. It has been a hard struggle and in the course of it, the faith has often been distorted; this represents a defeat for religion. But fundamentalism is now part of the modern world. It represents a widespread disappointment, alienation, anxiety, and rage that no government can safely ignore. So far efforts to deal with fundamentalism have not been very successful; what lessons can we learn from the past that will help us to deal more creatively in the future with the fears that fundamentalism enshrines?

(Armstrong, 2000, p. 364)

At this point it would be useful to provide a brief summary of what has already been discussed in this chapter and to give equal time to the more positive aspects of fundamentalism and evangelicalism. Although there is currently a strong trend in the Religious Right towards supporting a politically conservative and elitist agenda based on the gospel of prosperity and intense nationalism, or an even more radical agenda of fascist compliance with Levitical Law (Brown, 2002; Diamond, 1989, 1995a, 1995b, 2000; Ewing & Grady, 2007; Garrison, 2006; Goldberg, 2006; Green et al., 2003; Hedges, 2007; Martin, 1996; Phillips, 2006), the Religious Left is also mobilizing evangelical liberals and intellectuals to counter this effort (J. Carter, 2006; S. Carter, 2000; Lerner, 2006; McLaren, 2006; Meyers, 2006; J. Wallis, 2005c). Over time the course of evangelicism, and sometimes fundamentalism, has occasionally brought the faithful to enact egalitarian and liberating reform rather than fostering a restrictive agenda (Pole, 1993; Sen, 1996).

According to Fogel (2000), American evangelical churches, and the lay movements they influenced, were also driving forces behind earlier social reforms in America including:

- Redistribution of income from rich to poor
- Women's suffrage
- The right of unions to strike
- Prohibition
- Universal primary education
- The abolition of slavery
- Ending aristocratic privilege

These churches were and are different from their European counterparts in that European churches are typically state churches and are fundamentally hierarchical in nature. Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Orthodox Churches of Europe have, in general, supported the governments in power (Lipset, 1996; G. S. Wood, 1992). Whereas American evangelical churches promoted popular democracy through their emphasis on the congregation as the center of church government and personal struggle for salvation versus the dependence on ecclesiastical authority (Ahlstrom, 1972; Hall, 1994).

Using the previous work of McLoughlin (1978), Fogel (2000) integrated political realignment theory (Burnham, 1967, 1991; Clubb, Flanigan, & Zingale, 1980; Key, 1955; Kleppner, 1970; McCormick, 1986; Riker, 1982), quantitative analysis of voting behavior (Alexander, 1967; Bogue, 1983; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Gienapp, 1987; Kousser, 1974), the history of technological change and its effects (Kuznets, 1979;

D. C. North, 1990; N. Rosenberg & Birdzell Jr., 1986; Schumpeter, 1961; Wrigley, 1987), and the insights of biodemography (Davis et al., 1972; Easterlin, 1996; Fogel, 1986; Fogel, Galantine, & Manning, 1992; Higgs, 1979) to create overlapping religious and political cycles that are broken into three overlapping phases.

Fogel notes that American politics has been punctuated by political realignments in which critical elections by a dominant coalition institutes an extended era of legislative reform. He further states that there is a strong link between the egalitarian reforms promoted by evangelical churches and those that have followed political realignments. (Examples include the extreme political reforms under the presidencies of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson.) Fogel continues by noting that both political and theological upheavals (periodic crises that cause churches to reevaluate their ethical values and social policies, thus strongly influencing political realignments) are often byproducts of technological change and economic transformation. Technologically driven change often create problems for which society is ethically, politically, and socially unprepared. Therefore, the faster the technological change, the greater the lag in human adjustments to those changes.

Fogel posits that evangelical churches are poised to respond more rapidly to change because of their independence from hierarchy and from restraints imposed by political parties, creating a close identification between populism and evangelical religion. He creates a new analytic framework for religious-political movements by defining four overlapping cycles in religion and politics called Great Awakenings – key transitions that have shaped the egalitarian reforms in America. These enthusiastic religious upsurges tend to run in cycles of about one hundred years. Each cycle occurs in three phases: a

phase of religious revival and intensified religious beliefs that brings in new or reinvigorated ethics and theological principles; a phase of powerful political movements and programs precipitated by the new ethics and principles; and finally a phase of challenge to the new ethics and politics resulting in a decline of the political coalition built upon the revival.

Fogel suggests that from the very beginning America has been a deeply religious society. However, by the mid-eighteenth century there was a renewed surge of religious fervor spurred by revivalists such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards (Dallimore, 1998; Marsden, 2003). Emotional public meetings, emphasizing religious conversion as their central objective, were characteristic of this revival and became common in this First Great Awakening. This new theology undermined the Calvinist doctrine of predestination as well as the influence of church officials, accusing orthodox leaders of corruption and the unbridled pursuit of luxury and power while calling on converts to trust their personal experience of rebirth rather than the authority of the church.

Whereas the years 1730 through 1760 signaled phase one of the First Great Awakening, religious revival and the rise of the ethic of benevolence, 1760 through 1790 marked the phase of rising political effect, characterized in the First Great Awakening by attacks on British political and moral corruption. This helped to establish the ideological foundation for the Revolution through questioning the legitimacy of existing authority and promoting discontent. As Freemasons cloaked in the rationalism of the Enlightenment, most of the leaders of the Revolution held the established church in suspicion and generally viewed political issues through the lens of natural rights rather than divine revelation (Albanese, 1976).



Thus religion suffered as a result of the Revolution, with some denominations falling into disrepute for not backing the separation from England. Others were weakened by the spread of rationalism and from the relocation of members to the frontier. The year 1790 heralded the beginning of the third phase of the First Great Awakening, which ended in 1820. During this time military and political issues caused the revolutionary coalition to break along partisan and ideological lines, leaving the church at its lowest point in the history of America (Fogel, 2000).

As phases of Great Awakenings often overlap each other, the period from 1800 through 1840 bracketed both the end of the First Great Awakening and the revival phase of the Second Great Awakening. During this time camp meetings were common and the doctrine of predestination was further weakened. A new theology born of Methodist influence pronounced that every person was capable of achieving grace through a struggle against sin (Ahlstrom, 1972). Guided by the principle of disinterested benevolence, practitioners of this new theology believed that people who achieved grace would be healthy and prosperous, the reward of virtue, while condemned individuals would lead lives of economic strife and catastrophe. (Only slightly hidden in this view was the belief that illness and poverty were a result of sin and immorality.) It was the belief of the leaders of the Second Great Awakening that America's mission was to rebuild God's kingdom on earth. The nearing millennium provided a sense of imminence and social zeal to achieve perfection. America was to be made fit for the Second Coming of Christ. The temperance, abolition (which eventually became the Republican party), and nativist movements were all aimed at the purification of America (Fogel, 1989).

The years 1840 – 1870 marked the political phase of the Second Great Awakening. The temperance movement succeeded, reaching its zenith in the period of 1846 thru 1855 when thirteen states prohibited the sale of alcohol. Limits on child labor and the establishment of compulsory education were accompanied by attacks on corrupt city governments and the emergence of women's suffrage. William Lloyd Garrison (Faber, 1970) as well as other militant abolitionists first focused their campaign on the church, admonishing the faithful to condemn slavery as a terrible sin that would prohibit national salvation. But soon the struggle was shifted to the political arena. Eventually Republicans dropped the call to Christian duty and urged the Northern electorate to free the slaves in order to prevent slaveholders from reducing the wages of Northern workers, to protect Northern lands, and to prevent the Democratic Party from seizing control of the government (Fogel, 1989).

The fate of slavery, however, was decided by the Civil War. But even though the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments abolished slavery and extended citizenship and voting rights to former slaves, the civil equality of ex-slaves was difficult to establish. The years 1870 – 1920 saw the decline and eventual replacement of the abolitionist leaders and the Northern evangelical movement became preoccupied with other issues, including Darwinism and the urban crisis, thus signaling the third and final phase of the Second Great Awakening.

The religious revival phase of the Third Great Awakening, which began around 1890 and continued through 1930, overlapped the decline of the Second Great Awakening. At this time the urban crisis – the rapid growth of cities and the urban centralization of crime, corruption, prostitution, graft, and drunkenness – precipitated a split among the

evangelical churches that wished to reform the cities. The winning faction rejected the notion that poverty was the wage of sin, thus emphasizing the nature of social sin over personal sin. A second ethical split was fostered by Darwinism, which held nature to be purposeless and amoral and challenged the biblical story of creation. (This also ran counter to the millennial goal of building God's kingdom in America.) And finally a third split was promoted by increasing labor conflict. The agrarian world had been populated with landowners who strenuously fought infringement of property rights. They found no difficulty in making strikes illegal and in using troops to suppress them. However, in the urban world property owners were few and most of the laborers were open to more anarchistic and syndicalist ideas. Suppressing labor disputes became much more difficult in this environment.

The split over these issues produced conservative-fundamentalist and modernist-liberal camps. Conservatives stood fast on issues of creed and emphasized the importance of morality and personal conversion. The liberals, who became the winning camp, emphasized the scientific approach to the Bible and felt that the theory of evolution was consistent with biblical thought. Science was considered to be the process of explaining God's laws of nature. The millennialist dream of the Second Coming of Christ was replaced by a secular optimism that emphasized perfecting American society. The Social Gospel movement, a radical liberal wing, argued that America needed to change its ethical construct and its understanding of God's relationship with man. Poverty was not to be seen as a result of personal sin, a personal failure, but a social one, a result of the sins of society. According to this view the state was obliged to end urban corruption by redistributing wealth and favoring labor to improve the conditions of the poor.

During the revival phase of the Third Great Awakening conservatives controlled the hierarchies of the church, and other related organizations, and held more tightly to the reforms of the Second Great Awakening. It was not until the New Deal that the legislative agenda raised the priority of the political reforms of the Third Great Awakening.

Theological conservatives fervently sought to limit the influence of liberals and Social Gospelers. However, Social Gospel theories were widely accepted by colleges and universities and taught to their students. These institutions were often founded as centers of religious study and were, therefore, focal points for new religious and social ideas. By World War I universities were producing historians, journalists, social scientists, dramatists, and novelists who were far more secular than sacred in their leanings. Entrenched in the new mass media they attacked conservative religionists. So successful were these attacks that fundamentalists were driven from their previous offices of authority. This laid the foundation for the labor reforms of the 1930s through the 1950s, the civil rights reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, and for the feminist programs of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Fourth Great Awakening, and the political realignment of the 1990s, began with a phase of religious intensification in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At this time church membership began to grow across all denominations:

However, from the mid-1960s on, only the enthusiastic religions grew rapidly, cutting deeply into the normal membership in the principal mainline churches, and also drawing many unchurched persons into the fold. Over the past three decades, membership in the principal mainline Protestant churches of America has declined by 25 percent, while membership in enthusiastic churches (such as Pentecostal, Adventist, and neo-fundamentalist) has nearly doubled. In the case of certain enthusiastic denominations, such as the Mormons, membership has quadrupled.

By the end of the 1980s, enthusiastic religion had about 60 million adherents, representing about one-third of the electorate. Although often identified with the rapidly growing neoevangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and Protestant charismatic denominations, the movement is far wider. It includes about 20 million persons in the churches of the mainline Protestant denominations, 6 million Catholics who reported a born-again experience, and nearly 5 million Mormons. Some mainline churches have responded to the demand for a more passionate religion by embracing Pentecostalism – even the Roman Catholic Church has launched its own charismatic movement.

(Fogel, 2000) p. 25

(This growth data can also be found in Ostling, 1989)

Note: The revolt against modernism expressed in the Fourth Great Awakening is also reflected in other contemporary religious movements including those of Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism (Armstrong, 2000; M. E. Marty & Appleby, 1991 - 95). However, it is the Christian influence that has been the most dominant in the United States, and it has been the evangelical churches that have been central to the elaboration of the egalitarian creed.

Halfway through the religious phase single-issue movements began to emerge such as the right-to-life movement in the late 1970s, the tax revolts of the late 1970s, and the media reform movement of the early 1980s. In 1979 the Moral Majority emerged as a vehicle through which enthusiastic religions could unite to restructure politics on a national level. The issues included abortion, school prayer, and pornography. Although the Moral Majority had success in shifting voters to the Republican side, it was too rigid theologically and too focused on the issue of abortion. Scandalized by the public humiliation of televangelists in the mid-1980s, the Moral Majority imploded and was replaced by a much broader movement called the Christian Coalition.

More focused on politics than the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition is more theologically flexible and willing to compromise on key issues in order to extend the

connections among enthusiastic believers within the mainline churches. It has also integrated smaller government and tax reduction into its social ideology, linking these to the notion of individual responsibility, as a means of reaching out to social conservatives. Confirmed by the outcomes of the 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2004 elections, the interpretation of contemporary political, ethical, and economic developments now requires an understanding of simultaneous movements within fundamentalism and evangelicalism. As noted by Fogel (2000), "For the foreseeable future, the Republican Party is likely to continue as the principal vehicle for the political reforms sought by leaders of the Fourth Great Awakening." But the third phase of this awakening has yet to be articulated.

Leaving summation and returning to contemporary analysis, it is important to note that the new Religious Right was galvanized by the charisma of Ronald Reagan even though it had been evident in rural politics as early as the 1970s. But the movement asserted little influence until the congressional elections of 1994. Polls taken during the midterm congressional elections of the 1980s showed one-third of adults identifying themselves as evangelical. These individuals split their votes fairly evenly between Democratic and Republican candidates and issues. However, by 1994 their allegiance had firmly shifted to the Republican side. In 1994 only 26 percent continued to vote Democratic, while 74 percent voted Republican. By this time the share of ballots cast by believers in more fundamentalist Christianity had also increased, therefore boosting their influence at the polls (Fogel, 2000).

Election statistics from the last two decades indicate that America has effected a political change that was largely produced by trends in national religiousness. It is yet to be revealed whether the reforms of the Fourth Great Awakening will indeed follow a

compassionate path, or, as some fear, undo the egalitarian reforms that have already been made.

According to Sweet (2003) Americans are now living in a pivotal age that is similar in its defining character to both the Great Depression, a time of moral searching for the church, and the Sixties, a time when a deep longing for spirituality was built upon the bankruptcy of traditional worship and subjective experience was substituted for objective authority (also see Ellwood, 1994; Watkins, 1999) . For churches trying to survive in America's emerging spiritual culture the choice appears to lie somewhere between navigating the new world in its entirety and maintaining a course that is two millennia old (D. Kimball, 2003; Redman, 2002; Sweet, 2003). Sweet sees contemporary society as one that is measurably less religious but decidedly more spiritual. But this impulse to create a personal spirituality has pervaded American history since colonial times. Divination, astrology, witchcraft, angelology, Swedenborgianism, Emersonian transcendentalism, mesmerism, New Thought, and New Age movements have all marked their place in American history and frequently return when the times are right (Fuller, 2001). Wuthnow (1998) suggests that in post-modern times the secular influence of social and professional mobility pose a hardship for Americans who wish to sustain a spiritual life because they don't feel rooted in one place. Because of this they embark on spiritual searches that are more superficial and dabbling than deep and committed. Roof (1994) suggests that, especially among the baby boomers, there seems to be a distrust of institutions, a value for experience over dogma, the need to seek personal fulfillment over that of the community, and fickleness regarding their religious allegiances.

In contrast, however, Wuthnow (1998) also observes an increasing number of religious people turning to a practice-oriented, rather than a seeking-oriented, spirituality where there is a deliberate attempt to relate to the sacred through disciplines such as study, service, and prayer. Many baby boomers are now turning away from individualistic, self-fulfilling strategies. They were shaped by seeking, but have now remapped the spiritual landscape for America by not only creating a quest culture, but by shifting their attention from the institution to the individual, emphasizing a lived religion, that is, religion in practice (Roof, 1999). However, this more contemporary desire for a spirituality of practice is often fulfilled at the expense of becoming more evangelical, fundamental, and/or politicized (Armstrong, 2000).

The nod to both secular and fundamental spirituality continues in contemporary literature, lending credence to the notion that the faithful, as a whole, feel pulled in multiple directions (Roof, 1994), even as many of the evangelicals and fundamentalists distance themselves and become more entrenched within their own flocks (Armstrong, 2000). Morgan (2001) documents one church's awkward attempt at civic engagement and reform when conservative groups offered alliance, support, and money for the church as a faith-based organization available for civic service. Questions of the separation of Church and State, boundaries of influence; and clandestine power mongering among those on Capitol Hill and in offices of ecclesiastical politics lend an uncomfortable reality to the tough choices churches face when they are well-meaning but ill prepared. And this is a conundrum that many churches will continue to face. Even as the slick religious brochures that eventually adorn the doorknobs of residential areas list the social and psychological advantages of church membership, they less and less frequently address



spiritual striving, suffering, or faith in God, let alone outline the consequences of Faustian alliances with conservative political groups (Witten, 1993). Carter (2000) argues that there is nothing inherently wrong with the robust participation of the faithful in debates over public matters. Unfortunately, he also notes that religions will generally lose their best, most spiritual selves when involved in the partisan, electoral side of politics and it is often difficult to draw the line between the two. Thomas and Dobson (1999) conclude that when it happens, the corruption of the church through politics ultimately hurts the sincere Christians and the people they are trying to help. They call for a change in strategy that promotes the Christian agenda through devout faith and consistent living rather than the brute force of politics.

In an attempt to create a middle ground for conservative and liberal Christians, Borg (2003) reintroduced an old paradigm for those who have left the faith because they can no longer support its doctrines or for those who are trying to remain while simultaneously questioning these doctrines (also see Spong, 1992). Much like Eliot (1909) and Beecher (Applegate, 2006), Borg emphasizes a transformational emerging paradigm that is exemplified through loving God and loving what God loves. It rejects a rigid adherence to the specific belief sets that have created discord over the centuries and replaces them with ideas that are likely to be acceptable to both liberals and conservatives (although they may be rather restricted in content because of what has to be removed). As noted, this concept is not new. In 1794 Thomas Jefferson sought to reveal the essence of true Christianity by extracting Jesus' message of love and service from the rest of the scriptures (Jefferson, 2001), which is quite similar to Borg's emphasis.

However, the more vocal and influential faith-based movements appear to be those with a more political, ecclesiastical, or fundamentalist bent (S. F. Harding, 2000). And even for the least of these there still appears to be some need to return to a society that is more centered on religion. According to Lapin (1999) there is a tug of war going on for the future of America. At one end of the rope are those who believe that religion is part of America's foundation, at the other end are those who believe that the nation is, and should be, secular. Lapin argues that the United States was founded on the Judeo-Christian tradition and that returning to these roots is essential to the restoration of national tranquility, vitality of spirit, and moral greatness. Neuhaus (1992) voices a similar idea, noting that a liberal democracy requires a religious foundation if it is to succeed as a social force that can unify mutually antagonistic factions (a la Dr. Martin Luther King).

As noted, whether they call themselves the Christian Coalition, the Religious Right, Promise Keepers, the Moral Majority, or Bible-carrying Christians these more right-leaning Christian groups have demonstrated a determination to both show up at the ballot box and to use their impressive supply of power, influence, and money to get what they want. Credited with a major role in the elections of 1996, their success foreshadowed their status as Christian Soldiers who can and will put Republicans sympathetic to their cause into key positions of political power (Wilcox, 2000). Martin (1996) notes the rise of political power of these groups as one of the most important political and cultural events in modern history. To many, the Christian Right movement is poised to destroy the nation's tenuous separation of church and state (Boston, 1994). But to those in the movement, their purpose is to valiantly struggle in the preservation of religious liberty and to prove that the Christian right is the best hope for delivering America's soul. In re-

cent years the religious right has exerted more than pure political influence by actively campaigning in areas of race relations, school curricula, preserving the family, abortion, and reproductive rights. By doing so their activism has radically altered the way America views and confronts these problems (Martin, 1996) and the way that people think, or avoid thinking, about social power (Watt, 2002).

The Christian right has also moved into mainstream media to promote its agenda. Called the Funding Father of the conservative movement and acting chairman of American Target Advertising, Inc., Richard Viguerie transformed politics in the 1960s and 1970s with his pioneering use of computerized direct mail to build the coalition that eventually elected Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. With Viguerie's assistance the conservative right, who felt shut out by liberal mass media in the 1950s and 1960s, regained their power by using new and alternative avenues, eventually creating their own mass media assets (Viguerie, 1981; Viguerie & Franke, 2004). Television, radio, and video (and more recently the Internet) have come to the fore as tools for communicating the ideology of the religious right. The growing influence of religious conservatives on American politics and culture has surprised many, but the efficacy with which the media is being used by those with a religious-right agenda bears testament to a strong commitment to regain the upper hand (Kintz & Lesage, 1998).

One of the more important institutions in this effort, and yet to be mentioned, is James Dobson's enormously popular radio program, *Focus on the Family*. A bestselling author and child psychologist, Dobson doses out parental advice peppered with his ultra-conservative opinions regarding the welfare state, homosexuals, and racial preferences (Apostolidis, 2000). Alexander-Moegerle (1997) takes this analysis a step further by not-

ing that Dobson is a tremendous political threat to the pluralism and diversity of political views in America. Dobson, an autocratic leader hungry for power and recognition, claims to be sinless and morally perfect, making him morally superior even to his employees. To Alexander-Moegerle's dismay, Dobson's apparent homophobia, sexism, and racism do not prevent him from being able to lobby Capitol Hill with 500,000 to 1 million phone calls within an hour or so of making a request of his listeners – with most of the proceeds from donations for Dobson's prescribed cures, such as the elimination of the Department of Education and the NEA, smaller government, larger defense, and the barring of women and homosexuals from military service, seeming to serve only to line his personal and corporate pockets.

Apparently even more outspoken in their conservative religious battle are folks such as the Bishop Earl Jackson who claims that the Religious Right is at war to take back America from secular humanism and to engage in spiritual combat against the liberal media and homosexuals (Boston, 2000). In rebuttal, Kintz notes that the appeals made by the radical religious right regarding the role of government, gender roles, and gay rights are based on a dangerous and outmoded view of natural law. She states that much of the firepower of the Christian right comes from women who reconstruct the role of motherhood as a sacred calling that is divinely ordained and enforce the notion of strict sexual roles while, ironically, relying on a large supply of women activists who preach the subordination of women while lecturing around the country and hosting power lunches (Kintz, 1997). The men, on the other hand, seem to be mired in self-doubt regarding their manhood and involved a desperate attempt to reassert their role as spiritual

and household leaders while, again, relying on the assistance of their wives (Armstrong, 2000; Ducat, 2004).

With any level of investigation of contemporary media it would seem that there is a growing and intertwining hostility between Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, democracy and theocracy, and fundamentalism and secularism (Armstrong, 2000; Blaker, 2003; Thomas & Dobson, 1999; Wuthnow, 1989).

With no small risk of overgeneralization, these polarities might be presented as follows:

- Republican vs. Democrat
- Conservative vs. Liberal
- Old Testament vs. New Testament
- Fundamentalist vs. Modernist
- Religious vs. Spiritual
- Theocracy vs. Democracy
- Church vs. State
- Pro-Small Government vs. Pro-Social Programs
- Pro-Military Buildup vs. Anti-Military Buildup
- Pro-Life vs. Pro-Choice
- Anti-Gay vs. Equal Rights for Gays
- Exclusion vs. Inclusion
- Monocultural vs. Multicultural
- Strict Gender Roles vs. Feminist Latitude
- Puritan Ideals vs. Deism and Enlightenment Ideals

- Pure Capitalism, Free Markets, and Globalization vs. Democratic Socialism
- Big Business vs. Labor and Consumer
- Welfare for the Rich vs. Welfare for the Poor

While this list is not exhaustive and corner cases may be readily evident, in general the categories on the left cluster together as do the categories on the right. That is, it is far more likely to find a conservative Republican fundamentalist supporting a theocracy than a conservative Republican secularist supporting multiculturalism. By the same token it is more likely to find a liberal Democrat supporting the separation of church and state than a liberal Democrat supporting a theocratic monoculture.

Taking an historical view Lambert (2003) notes that two sets of spiritual fathers defined the place of religion in early America: the Planting Fathers and the Founding Fathers. The Planting Fathers brought the Old World ideas and dreams of building a “City upon a Hill,” (one of Ronald Reagan’s favorite metaphors) and the Founding Fathers determined the constitutional arrangement of religion in the new republic. While the Planting Fathers emphasized one true and pure faith with a strong influence on government, the Founding Fathers supported religious freedom and a separation of church and state (Lambert, 2003). These two views created the basis for much of today’s polarity and controversy (Gibbs, 1991). And as the arena becomes more politicized, the controversy becomes more heated.

This political temperature started to climb when America first began to accept religious pluralism. Hutchison (2003) notes that in the late twentieth century many Americans belatedly agreed to embrace the religious diversity that originally emerged in

the nineteenth-century influx of Catholic and Jewish immigrants, including the rise of Transcendentalism and Mormonism, both American-born faiths. This transformation has turned a legally tolerant nation into one that guarantees the rights of full participation in a wide range of religions (including Buddhism and New Age spiritualism). While some note the new pluralism as a great achievement, however, others worry about the moral balkanization of a society that lacks shared religious premises (Eck, 2001; Hutchison, 2003).

Among those who are unhappy about these prospects are those who feel that Christianity is being persecuted by the new multiculturalism, the separation of church and state, and modern secularism (J. Hunter, 1983; J. Watson, 1997). Limbaugh (2003) notes that while Christians may not get fed to the lions any more, they endure more subtle forms of martyrdom. He claims a litany of injuries including:

- School children are forbidden to pray before football games
- Nativity scenes are banned from municipal property
- Various media ridicule Christian politicians
- Hollywood caricatures Christians as Bible-thumping, axe-wielding maniacs
- Darwinism, relativism, and sexual studies hold sway at universities
- Christians are subjected to sensitivity training with a homosexual agenda
- Democratic opposition to pro-life judicial nominees
- Laws requiring Catholic employers to cover contraceptives in their health insurance

One time Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork (1997) continues the fight by mounting an extended attack against everything liberal. Lambasting mainstream Protes-

tant and Catholic churches, pop culture, the Supreme Court, multiculturalism, racial and sexual politics, the criminal justice system, and welfare practices he notes that these are only a few in a large list of liberal ideas and institutions that have led to America's decline. Also taking square aim at the American left Horowitz (1998) blames the left for many of America's ills, including multiculturalism, feminism, and economic socialism. He notes that leftist doctrines are rooted in nineteenth-century prejudice and have been refuted by a historical record of oppression and bloodshed. He then blames the gay-rights activists for creating a political environment that inhibits public health from treating AIDS effectively. Feder (1996) supports this attack by noting that those who support gays in the military, are pro-choice, and who oppose school prayer, are the same kind of people who would reject any objective moral authority that might limit one's right to kill unborn children as a matter of sheer personal convenience. Arguing that the left wants to undermine God, country, family, and the military, Savage (2003) further notes that America's enemy lies within and equates liberalism of any sort with treason or insanity. Eviscerating illegal immigration, health care, the decline of education, entertainment from Hollywood, general moral decline, and likening Federal courts and judges in America to al-Qaida he makes a strident claim that everything is the fault of the liberals – a la Ann Coulter (2002; 2003; 2004). In solidarity, Charen (2004) agrees, espousing that everything that has gone wrong in America is the fault of liberal policies and the counterculture movement of the 1960s, while everything that is good and getting better is the consequence of the visionary leadership of a few politicians on the right.

Guinness (2002) writes that multiculturalism and post-modernity may be the worst tragedy in American history, certain to end America's position of leadership in the



world if left unchecked. In place of these two evils, he suggests embracing the traditional worldview provided by Judaism and Christianity. He claims that currently truth is considered relative, no longer objective or absolute, and is often subject to human convention. However, real responsibility, as well as freedom and a good life, comes with seeking and speaking the truth. This truth, in his opinion, is better provided by the moral certainty of traditional religion. In harmony with this idea, Himmelfarb (1994) pleads for a return to the Victorian virtues of hard work, self-reliance, and deferred gratification as a way of combating present social ills. Noting that values are no substitute for the virtues of thrift, respectability, and charity she argues for a return to the more elegant nineteenth-century English morals and mores.

Bringing attention to what he sees as a vast left-wing conspiracy, York (2005) points out that the left is outraged at President Bush and the war in Iraq and is using that anger to build the biggest, richest, and best organized political movement in American history. According to York this new movement has transformed American politics with its behind-the-scenes manipulation, making it a well-oiled political machine that is unlikely to go away even though it has lost the last two presidential elections. Unfortunately, after the foibles of the Carter and Clinton administrations, the Democrats can no longer be entrusted with national defense and foreign policy (Hewitt, 2004; Patterson, 2004), because the left has continued to become more stupid and unreliable by the minute. Indicting the left as intellectual morons, Flynn (2004) accuses them of letting ideology do their thinking, an ideology that is resplendent with lies, bad logic, and fanatical notions. He notes that even the smartest people on the left fall for stupid ideas:

- Well-educated antiwar activists equate President Bush with Hitler and argue that the U.S. government orchestrated the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.
- Al Gore believes that cars pose a mortal threat to the security of every nation.
- Animal rights advocates at Princeton object to eating meat but not to having sex with animals.

Flynn's diatribe continues by noting that people can become so blinded to reality by the causes they serve that they espouse bizarre, sometimes ridiculous, and often dangerous ideas – bad ideas that often plague the media, academia, and the political elite. Unfortunately everyone suffers when these lies and bad ideas become institutionalized as the truth. Flynn notes that:

- Rabid anti-Americans simply ape the delusional claims of a small group of self-appointed gurus.
- The environmental movement, including Paul Ehrlich, has spawned doomsday predictions that are not only wrong, but have promoted fanaticism, stupidity, and dishonesty.
- The hero of the animal rights activists, Peter Singer, promotes infanticide and euthanasia.
- Alfred Kinsey, a fraud and pervert, launched the sexual revolution.
- Abortion rights activists hide the fact that their matron saint, Margaret Sanger, advocates eugenics and concentration camps.
- Universities have become incubators of leftist ideologies.
- Historians and journalists have revised history to turn a racial separatist, W. E. B. DuBois, into a civil rights icon.

Bloom (1988) agrees with the general notion of left-induced stupidity, stating that the left has eliminated critical thinking and closed the American mind. He notes that the social and political crises of America today are intellectual in nature:

- The preponderance of moral relativism and fear of value judgments
- The inculcation of college students with dangerous and embarrassing words such as “culture”
- The current distrust of classical texts
- The current trend towards teaching Sartre and Marx on campus

Going beyond simply decrying the stupidity and fuzzy logic of the left, Horowitz (2004) claims that the left and its leaders have supported far more terrorism and sold far more lies than any other faction, especially in its recent unholy alliance with radical Islam. Kupelian (2005) follows this notion of extreme lying with the proposition that Americans have been lead to tolerate, embrace, or even champion many things and ideas that would have horrified their parents’ generation, including extreme body piercing, abortion on demand, homosexual clergymen, and easy divorce.

According to Kupelian, this does not mean that people are now more confused and depraved, but rather that they have been taken in by stunningly brilliant and compelling marketing campaigns, especially of the leftist kind. This marketing of evil has taken what was once abhorred and packaged, perfumed, gift-wrapped it to be sold under the visage of something desirable. Playing on America’s deeply felt values of generosity, tolerance, and fairness, the marketers of evil persuade people to accept as enlightened and noble those things which they previously regarded as corrupt and self-destructive. The moral confusion of the 1960s has permeated America and made people ripe for the kind

of deception that can threaten the future of the country. Americans have been led to believe that abortion rights and gay rights movements were grassroots uprisings of neglected and persecuted minorities seeking freedom. Kupelian believes, however, that Americans were sold on abortion by a public relations effort that used fantastic lies and fabrications. He also claims that the gay rights movement, which made former deviants and reprobates into victims and cultural heroes, was perpetrated by Harvard-trained marketers using a deceptive and in-depth plan. Rounding out the overall plan to sell evil, Kupelian reveals the infiltration of undercover culture spies among young people to better lead children into even more debauched forms of pseudo-authentic self-expression. Kupelian sees the motivating force for chasing this youth market as the voracious competition of American corporations seeking to dominate a \$50 billion market (also see Syke, 1992).

Note: This, ironically, is exactly in line with liberal complaints regarding the immoral influence of corporate marketing on youth consumerism (Schor, 2004).

However, even though national polls indicate that approximately 50 million adults in America now consider themselves to be born-again Christians, most Americans as well as the rest of the world see their culture as secular. And despite their numbers, these born-again Christians are often portrayed as outsiders who endanger public life (S. F. Harding, 2000). Those in the liberal religious and political left are just as motivated and able to cast aspersions on the conservative right in any of its manifestations as the right has been to discredit the left. And because Christ has continued as a powerful icon in our culture (Fox, 2004), being raised to celebrity status in many instances, it is not unusual for religious and political opponents to argue about whose side Jesus is on. Bawer (1997)

claims that fundamentalists are barely Christian at all and that the fundamentalist movement readily displays a blatant disregard for the most important Gospel messages: selfless love and service to everyone. Reed (2002) agrees, observing that the true opposite of fundamentalism is feminism, and that fundamentalism is primarily about social power and control, not about returning to religious fundamentals. She sees fundamentalism as a political reaction to the discontent and disruptions caused by modernization and globalization. Misztal and Shupe (1992) also note that this is a common political process whereby religious groups arise or reemerge to confront a trend towards globalization and determine how to cope with the pressures to conform. They also suggest that a trend towards globalization often sets in motion a reaction of nationalistic and religious dialectic that it was thought to have eliminated. Therefore, if one were to use the two previous definitions, one could conclude that fundamentalism is a convenient philosophy in which to isolate oneself from modernity, even if the religious ideals involved in fundamentalism are not completely, or even remotely, internalized. As is often the case with those who would manipulate the evangelical and fundamentalist mindset, one does not need to believe in something in order to use it to one's own ends. Aligning with this idea Marsden (1991) positions fundamentalism as an outgrowth of the millenarian movement of the late nineteenth century, noting that it is not a monolithic and immutable faith, but was shaped and continues to be shaped by the surrounding culture. He goes on to define fundamentalism as a patchwork coalition of other movements that have subsequently molded into a militant, anti-modernist Protestantism. The religious ideological element is certainly there, but so is the political.

One response by the left regarding the evangelical-fundamentalist inability to reconcile internal spiritual contradictions is the accusation that they are stupid. Noll (1994) posits that the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind. He asks why the largest single group of religious Americans, a group that is enjoying increased wealth, status, and political influence, has contributed so little to rigorous intellectual scholarship.

Noll notes that evangelicals have rested in the simple truths of the gospel while abandoning the universities, the arts, and other high culture – failing to sustain any kind of serious intellectual life. In fact, others strongly suggest that there is a significant rejection of intellectualism on the part of the religious right and that this rejection has very deep roots.

In the 1960s Hofstadter noted:

The American mind was shaped in the mold of early modern Protestantism. Religion was the first arena for American intellectual life, and thus the first arena for an anti-intellectual impulse. Anything that seriously diminished the role of rationality and learning in early American religion would later diminish its role in secular culture. The feeling that ideas should above all be made to work, the disdain for doctrine and for refinements in ideas, the subordination of men of ideas to men of emotional power or manipulative skill are hardly innovation of the twentieth century; they are inheritances from American Protestantism.

Since some tension between the mind and the heart, between emotion and intellect, is everywhere a persistent feature of Christian experience, it would be a mistake to suggest that there is anything distinctively American in religious anti-intellectualism. Long before America was discovered, the Christian community was perennially divided between those who believed that intellect must have a vital place in religion and those who believed that intellect should be subordinated to emotion, or in effect abandoned at the dictates of emotion. I do not mean to say that in the New World a new or more virulent variety of anti-intellectualist reaction was discovered, but rather that under American conditions the balance between traditional establishments and revivalist or enthusiastic movements drastically shifted in favor of the latter.

(Hofstadter, 1962, p. 55)

Guinness (1994) states simply and bluntly that current affairs are no better, and that evangelical churches are dumbed-down from a long history of contempt for thinking. In a loosely related rebuttal McGrath (1996) argues that evangelicalism is intellectually cogent and coherent from an internal perspective and fairs well, in his mind, with the weaknesses and inconsistencies of postmodernism, post-liberalism, and religious pluralism. However, there is no explanation for the absence of evangelical intellectuals in academia or secular circles except for the notion that the mind should be subordinated to emotion, spirit, and revelation.

Another complaint of the liberal religious left is that while there may be scriptural foundations for fundamentalism, these foundations are often found in the Old rather than the New Testament. Popular literature continues the debate, sometimes even humorously, between Old Testament and New Testament advocates, as well as arguing over which lays claim to the most American icons, with titles such as, *God and other famous liberals: Recapturing Bible, flag, and family from the far right* (Church, 1996) and *Moses was a right-wing conservative* (Plough, 2001). It could be said as a quick rule of thumb that the difference between a liberal and a conservative is that a liberal loves sex and abhors violence, while the conservative loves violence and abhors sex. Regardless of its truth, or humor, this armchair analysis helps to illustrate one of the core differences between liberal and conservative religion. Liberals seem to loathe the violence of the Old Testament and embrace the love, grace, charity and tolerance of the New, while conservatives appear to hate the notion of a wimpy, sensitive, new-age Christ, and embrace the old fashioned hellfire and brimstone judgments and flaming swords from heaven swooping to vanquish evil that are characteristic of the Old Testament. And while it would be

unfair to say that conservatives believe only in salvation by works and liberals only in salvation by grace, there appears to be a strong tendency on the part of the religious conservatives to worry more about following the rules set aside in the Old Testament.

Nelson-Pallmeyer (2001; 2003) concurs, arguing that the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth has mostly disappeared, replaced by a pathologically violent God, muddled thinking, and unjust living. Many believers read a Bible filled with contradictory and distorted images of God, including stories attesting to God's violence, abuse, and murder. These images are inconsistent with the nonviolent New-Testament God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth and should, in his opinion, be jettisoned. He notes that there is an unacknowledged elephant in the room of the world's great monotheisms, the Quran and Old Testament-Hebrew Bible passages point to God as a determined and powerful land thief and a relentless and bloodthirsty warrior. And while the New Testament is often perceived as a softer, gentler statement about God's goodness, this milder ethos is shored up by a system in which Jesus' sacrificial death appeases a violent God who punishes sin.

Because the Middle East is the birthplace of these three most visible manifestations of monotheism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, as well as their common father, Abraham (Biema, 2002), each has also been influenced by a more primitive and ancient myth of violence.

Arguing the genesis of violent tendencies in the American culture, and those of the conservative religious right in particular, Walter Wink, professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City, asserts:

The belief that violence is a reasonable and often necessary route to achieving our aims goes unquestioned in most societies. Violence is thought to be the nature of things. It's what works. It seems inevitable – the last and, often, the first resort in conflicts. This Myth of Redemptive Violence is the real myth of the modern



world. It, and not Judaism or Christianity or Islam, is the dominant religion in our society today....

[It is] the oldest, continually enacted myths in the world: the Babylonian creation story (the Enuma Elish) from around 1250 BCE.

In the beginning, Apsu, the father god, and Tiamat, the mother god, give birth to the gods. But the frolicking of the younger gods makes so much noise that the elder gods resolve to kill them so they can sleep. The younger gods uncover the plot before the elder gods put it into action, and kill Apsu. His wife Tiamat, the Dragon of Chaos, pledges revenge. Terrified by Tiamat, the rebel gods turn for salvation to their youngest member, Marduk. He negotiates a steep price: if he succeeds, he must be given chief and undisputed power in the assembly of the gods. Having extorted this promise, he catches Tiamat in a net, drives an evil wind down her throat, shoots an arrow that bursts her distended belly and pierces her heart. He then splits her skull with a club and scatters her blood in out-of-the-way places. He stretches out her corpse full-length, and from it creates the cosmos.

In this myth, creation is an act of violence. Marduk murders and dismembers Tiamat, and from her cadaver creates the world. As the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur observes in *The Symbolism of Evil*, order is established by means of disorder. Chaos (symbolized by Tiamat) is prior to order (represented by Marduk, high god of Babylon). Evil precedes good. The gods themselves are violent. Violence is simply a primordial fact.

The simplicity of this story commended it widely, and its basic mythic structure spread as far as Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Germany, Ireland, India and China. Typically, a male war god residing in the sky fights a decisive battle with a female divine being, usually depicted as a monster of dragon, residing in the sea or abyss (the female element). Having vanquished the original enemy by war and murder, the victor fashions a cosmos from the monster's corpse. Cosmic order requires that violent suppression of the feminine, and is mirrored in the social order by the subjection of women to men and people to ruler.

After the world has been created, the story continues, the gods imprisoned by Marduk for siding with Tiamat complain of the poor meal service. Marduk and his father, Ea, therefore execute one of the captive gods, from whose blood Ea creates human beings to be servants to the gods.

The implications are clear: our very origin is violence. Killing is in our genes. Humanity is not the originator of evil, but merely finds evil already present and perpetuates it. Human beings are thus naturally incapable of peaceful coexistence. Order must continually be imposed upon us from on high: men over women, masters over slaves, priests over laity, aristocrats over peasants, rulers

over people. Unquestioning obedience is the highest virtue, and order the highest religious value.

(Wink, 2005)

Peterson (2002) agrees, explaining that even in modern times there are those who, in the name of their God, defend both chattel and wage slavery. These defenders justify their position by calling on man's natural subjugation to God, which precedes its counterpart in social and economic subjugation to a ruling class. This would fortify Wink's position that religion and religious myth can perpetuate slavery under the guise of a natural hierarchy of subjugation.

Wink goes on to say:

The belief that violence "saves" is so successful because it doesn't seem to be mythic in the least.... What people overlook, then, is the religious character of violence. It demands from its devotees an absolute obedience-unto-death....

As Marduk's representative on earth, the king's task is to subdue all those enemies who threaten the tranquility that he has established on behalf of the god. The whole cosmos is a state, and the god rules through the king. Politics arises within the divine sphere itself. Salvation is politics: the masses identify with the god of order against the god of chaos, and offer themselves up for the Holy War that imposes order and rule on the peoples round about.

In short, the Myth of Redemptive Violence is the story of the victory of order over chaos by means of violence. It is the ideology of conquest, the original religion of the status quo. The gods favor those who conquer. Conversely, whoever conquers must have the favor of the gods. The common people exist to perpetuate the advantage that the gods have conferred upon the king, the aristocracy, and the priesthood. Religion exists to legitimate power and privilege. Life is combat. Any form of order is preferable to chaos, according to this myth. Ours is neither a perfect nor perfectible world; it is theatre of perpetual conflict in which the prize goes to the strong. Peace through war, security through strength: these are the core convictions that arise from this ancient historical religion, and they form the solid bedrock on which the Domination System is founded in every society.

The Babylonian myth is far from finished. It is as universally present and earnestly believed today as at any time in its long and bloody history. It is the dominant myth in contemporary America. It enshrines the ritual practice of violence at the very heart of public life, and even those who seek to oppose its oppressive violence do so violently.... We encounter it in the media, in sports, in

nationalism, in militarism, in foreign policy, in televangelism, in the religious right, and in self-styled militia groups....

The myth of redemptive violence is the simplest, laziest, most exciting, uncomplicated, irrational, and primitive depiction of evil the world has even known.... a function of values endlessly reinforced by the Domination System. By making violence pleasurable, fascinating, and entertaining, the Powers are able to delude people into compliance with a system that is cheating them of their very lives.... Once children have been indoctrinated into the expectations of a dominator society, they may never outgrow the need to locate all evil outside themselves. Even as adults they tend to scapegoat others for all that is wrong in the world. They continue to depend on group identification and the upholding of social norms for a sense of well-being.... [But] redemptive violence gives way to violence as an end in itself. It is no longer a religion that uses violence in the pursuit of order and salvation, but one in which violence has become an aphrodisiac, sheer titillation, an addictive high, a substitute for relationships. Violence is no longer the means to a higher good, namely order; violence becomes the end.

(Wink, 1999)

(Also see Bergen, 2002; Berman, 2003)

Stern (2003) explains that contemporary religious militancy is a form of psychological warfare, designed to strengthen the faithful and strike dread in the unbeliever. Militant leaders in all denominations recruit among the disenfranchised and, often under cult conditions, recondition them by stoking their zealotry to the point of suicide and murder. Neiwert (1999) claims that many of these recruits are often racist, paranoid, blue-collar people who have been economically and socially challenged by the changing times, and are desperately responding to feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement from the American Dream. These religious terrorists not only includes militant Palestinians, Israelis, and others in the Middle East, but also Americans who, among other things, bomb abortion clinics, physically assault gays, and shoot abortion doctors in the name of Christ. Because this violence begins as psychological warfare, Stern suggests that the most effective counterstrategy would be psychological counter-warfare and a reaffirmation of more functional and non-violent values. However, no system so far

has seemed to stem the tide of religious violence both around the world and within the United States (Stern, 2003).

Focusing on a prominent segment of these religious militants, Baumgartner (2001) has charted millennialism from early Christianity to the more contemporary and tragic Jonestown and Waco debacles. He believes that certain groups of people have always longed for the Day of Doom, and these millennial cults and sects throughout American history have almost always been heavily influenced by Christianity. Noting how millennialism often comes to the fore during times of change, revolution, and crisis, Baumgartner asserts that Jonestown, Waco, and Heaven's Gate resonate in the contemporary mind in the same way that Masada or Mount Tabor did in the minds of others long ago. The members of these radical movements believed that the end of the world was near and that they were compelled to act through suicide or violence to ensure its arrival. This belief in the imminent termination of all things, followed by the advent of a new age, has been the primary motivator for hundreds of sects and cults, many of which burned out in an orgy of violence, leaving an indelible stain on America's history (Baumgartner, 2001). Juergensmeyer (2003) broadens this view to identify cultures of violence along the spectrum of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, noting that such violent communities often justify violence through their perception that they and their way of life are under attack. In some cases even the most nonviolent of religious ethics, such as Buddhism, will be violated if a group adopts a millenarian prophecy regarding the imminent end of the world.

Although the majority of people in the religious right are less likely to choose the path of spectacular self-destruction, they are also more likely to incorporate violence into

both their doctrine and their punishment of spiritual lawbreakers. The tendency towards fanaticism, Old Testament legalism, and violent solutions make the more radical religious conservatives vulnerable to apocalyptic visions and to more fascist forms of political conservatism. However, before pursuing this theme any further, it is important to address a precursor to this apocalyptic fascism embodied in one of the most, if not the most, contentious contemporary disputes – the debate over the separation of church and state.

Over two hundred years have passed since the Constitution was written, yet Americans still dispute over whether religion is a private or public institution, or a combination of the two (Dionne Jr. & Dilulio Jr., 2000). Jacoby (2004) asserts that it is America's secularist freethinkers who laid the foundation upon which our nation was built. She contends that it is a great unresolved paradox that religion occupies such an important place in a nation founded on the separation of church and state. For over two centuries of activism, from the fierce debate over omitting God from the Constitution, to abolition, women's suffrage, feminism, labor and civil rights, and the propagation of Darwin's theory of evolution the freethinkers have had a significant role. They have stood at the forefront, along with liberal and tolerant religious believers, of the battle for reforms opposed by reactionary forces, and upheld the combination of secular government and religious liberty that is the glory of the American system. This secularist heritage gave Americans the first government in the world that was not founded on the authority of religion, but rather on the bedrock of human reason. Now that the separation of church and state is under attack as never before, Jacoby fears that secularist freethinkers may ultimately be forced to the margin.

In a sympathetic argument, Boston (1994) challenges the zealots of the Religious Right and debunks their claims about church-state separation. He emphasizes that the Religious Right have launched a systematic propaganda war against this separation, claiming that it was never intended by our founding fathers and that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. However, he outlines the development of the church-state relationship throughout history and shows how the principle of separation protects religion, declaring that America's founders were ardent advocates of this separation. Joining the rebuttal against those who would claim that America was founded as a Christian nation, Kramnick & Moore (1997), and Ehrenrich (1992) contend that the Constitution was built upon an intentionally secular base. They note that even the religious faithful among those who ratified the Constitution wished to distance religion from government, and that the godless nature of the Constitutional structure was undermined only much later with the introduction of God to the U.S. currency and the institutionalization of God in the Pledge of Allegiance. ("Under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance in the early 1950s.)

Lambert (2003) observes that the American colonies were founded with explicitly religious aspirations, but later came together to become the first modern state with a commitment to the separation of church and state. He locates this critical shift in the mid-eighteenth century when, in the wake of evangelical revival, immigration by new dissenters, and population expansion, there emerged a marketplace of religion characterized by sectarian competition, pluralism, and widened choice. During the American Revolution dissenters found sympathetic lawmakers who favored separating church and state, and the free marketplace of religion gained legal status as the Founders began the

daunting task of uniting the thirteen colonies. Avoiding discord in an increasingly pluralistic and contentious society, the Founders left the religious arena free of government interference, except for the guarantee of free exercise of religion for all. The faithful were also free to seek political office and influence, which ensured that while the place of religion might be a contested one, it would not be a state-regulated one.

There are those who take a softer and more rational approach than the radical religious right. Among those, Wills (1991) explains that religion is an inextricable part of America's political life. He notes that Abraham Lincoln viewed the Civil War as an act of expiatory suffering and that Thomas Jefferson wrote about his enthusiasm for Jesus' ethical doctrines. Citing the 1988 presidential campaign, Wills illuminates the antipodal extremes between the wooing of Jerry Falwell by George Bush Sr., espousing a presidency of patriotism, religion, law and order, and the religious opposition of two ordained ministers, Pat Roberson and Jesse Jackson, who advocated a new moral revival. (Even short-time candidate Gary Hart was a product of Yale Divinity School.) The only candidate basing his campaign on non-religious issues was Michael Dukakis, who came across as secular and narrow.

Recently Pope Benedict XVI stated that he is skeptical that politics can be done without reference to the Gospel. He notes that appeals to neutral language and ideas that do not refer to religion forget some of the difficult sayings of Jesus that don't seem rational enough for public discourse. Sayings such as "Love your enemies," and "Turn the other cheek," or "Put away the sword," are usually dismissed as impractical at best and sectarian at worst. Pope Benedict insists that the Church speak to power and make claims and demands on public law. But he also proclaims a need for balancing church

and state by observing that where the Church itself becomes the state, freedom is lost, and if the Church is abolished, then freedom is again extinguished because the state will claim for itself the jurisdiction of morality (*New Pope a strong critic of war*, 2005). In a similar vein Whitten (1999) writes that while he does not want a Christian America, a theocracy, he also would deplore an America stripped of its religious values.

However, Blaker (2003) fears that as the separation of church and state in America come increasingly under attack by the fundamentalists and others in the religious right that it may further erode, making it necessary for everyone to clearly understand the possible consequences and perils of a religious government before it is too late. She calls attention to a creeping darkness that seems to be enveloping America and the rest of the world. She notes that the politics, educational policies, and social values perpetrated by fundamentalists, especially Christian, are currently having a negative effect on women, children, African Americans, gays, lesbians, and other minority groups. This effect would only be exacerbated by a theocracy that attempted to force a theology of inerrancy on politics and government. Boston (2000) also wishes to sound an alarm over those who would tear apart the Jeffersonian wall of separation between church and state. He warns of the agendas of major players in the religious right such as Pat Robertson, D. James Kennedy, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, and Gary Bauer who feel that their religious and moral views should be the law of the land. Not only are unbelievers targets of their wrath, but other Christian groups are also labeled as apostates. Boston notes that these leaders of the right have no compunction about misleading their followers by distorting facts and history. The colonial American experience, the philosophies of Jefferson and



Madison, and the principles involved in Supreme Court decisions are frequently and radically twisted to influence the faithful in the prescribed direction.

Note: In a related rebuttal, this time of the liberal view, Barton (1997) has dedicated an entire book to demonstrating how the Supreme Court has reinterpreted the Constitution to deliberately dilute its Biblical foundations.

Weber warns that any full-on theocracy rests on shaky ground:

When they do gain power theocracies tend to be short lived for a number of reasons, some internal to the regime and others external to it. Internally, clerics trained in religious dogma and jurisprudence are rarely skilled in economic matters and have difficulty maintaining a complex modern economy. When corruption occurs among government officials, ensuing scandals undermine religion as well as politics if those officials are also clerics. Resentment grows among the non-clerical populace when religious laws seem arbitrary or excessively strict and are enforced through civil power. Religious taxes imposed on top of other taxes, especially in times of economic hardship, cause added resentment. Finally, clerics who presume to speak in the name of the Divinity have difficulty engaging in normal compromises so essential for political effectiveness. Such compromises may even seem to them to be immoral or sinful. Finally, in states controlled by one party, which theocracies tend to be, police are often tempted to resort to brutality and other harsh measures that undermine the legitimacy of the regime.

(Weber, 1998, p. 734)

Recently the issues surrounding the separation of church and state have found a focal point in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the resulting war on terror declared by George W. Bush. Ali (2003) suggests that the visible violence of 9/11 was a response to the invisible violence inflicted on Arab states by America. According to Ali the United States since the beginning has been a nation bent on fundamentalist foreign policy, one that is, for the most part, impelled by economic self-interest. Because of this the current conflict has little to do with terrorism or individual terrorist leaders. Rather, it is yet another struggle between the dispossessed and their imperial masters, propelled this time by a clash between Islamic and American fundamentalisms. Although the struggle is politi-

cal and economic, the symbols of religion are once again playing a major part in the propaganda of both sides. The frequent use of phrases such as, “The revenge of Allah,” “God is on our side,” and “God bless America!” in political speech are but a veneer of a much deeper use of religion to promote secular goals.

Reed (2002) takes a different tack with the notion that the real global struggle (especially the war on terror) is not one of East versus West, or tradition versus modernity, but secular enlightened society versus fundamentalist theocracy. Buruma and Margalit (2004) further contend that while the clash of cultures between the United States and countries in the Middle East appears to be one of Middle-Eastern fundamentalism versus American modernist secularism, the real clash is between fundamentalism and modernist secularism within both the United States and the Middle East. The war, in other words, is really happening at home.

Before the terrorist attacks of 2001 there was concern among many regarding the influence of a religious right with theocratic leanings on government (Rapp, 1991). But in order to illuminate the recent effects of fundamentalist extremism and theocracy in the United States, Blaker (2003) notes that after the attacks of 9/11 there emerged a revolutionary agenda of the American religious right that chillingly exemplified the extent to which right-wing Christian politicians, pundits, and social engineers will go to attract like-minded absolutists who are consumed with controlling the hearts and minds of all Americans. Reactionary, single-minded, and utterly unwilling to accept opposing viewpoints, these extremists in the Christian right espouse a theocratic agenda that is, in her mind, clearly un-American and anti-democratic. As theocracy is the ultimate expression of the demise of church and state separation, Petersen (2002) argues that the threat be-

comes all the more sinister because it is cloaked in virtue by its advocates. And one of the more extreme examples of this sinister virtue, according to Clarkson (1997), is the theocratic state sought by Christian zealots in organizations as diverse as the Promise Keepers and the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, zealots who have developed a well-organized effort aimed at overthrowing Democracy. Clarkson notes that this disturbing worldview has its roots in John Cotton's Massachusetts Bay Colony, a time when biblical law was the law of the land, and a place where having an abortion would have been punishable by death and homosexuals would have been thrown into jail (Fiske, 2003). Clarkson observes that these values began to emerge once more when, nearly five years before the Oklahoma City bombing, elements of the Christian Right were encouraging the formation of citizen militias, and when the Christian Coalition made plans to take over the Republican Party – which largely succeeded in several states and was documented during the televised 1996 Texas Republican Convention.

Note: To hear an abbreviated audio file of Steven Hotze giving a speech that mobilized Christian activists in Houston, Texas to take over Republican precincts go to <http://www.mainstreambaptists.org/images/Hotze3.mp3>. In the full version of this audio file he instructs people on the procedures for taking control of a precinct meeting and on how to run the meeting if one is elected to be the chairperson. Hotze's efforts eventually placed him in a position of political prominence in Houston. Since that time he has exercised his own form of dominion over Harris County, Texas, successfully defeating more moderate Republican candidates and in electing ultra-conservative candidates to public offices, especially in the judiciary (Prescott, 2002).

Drawing broad criticism from the left but viewed as a crowning achievement by the right, the election of George W. Bush to the presidency marked a very high point in the efforts of the religious right to not only take over the Republican party, but to dominate all three branches of the American government. According to Kaplan (2004) George W. Bush's warm and cozy relationship with right-leaning Christian activists represents a grave threat to America. She notes that Bush's evangelical Christian faith has dictated his decisions on both domestic and international issues, including the invasion of Iraq, abortion, court appointments, promotion of abstinence, and his weak stand on the AIDS epidemic. She also points out that for over four years the Bush administration has held twice-weekly Bible classes in the White House and daily prayer meetings at the Department of Justice. The combination of a born-again president, a burgeoning family-values movement, and the canny political strategies of Bush's political advisers has delivered unprecedented influence to the Christian fundamentalists. Kaplan shows that no condom fact sheet or obscure drug advisory panel is too small to escape the roving eyes of Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, or the myriad of other political advocacy groups of the religious right. Family planning and sex education have become the targets for relentless audits while church groups receive hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for programs promoting sexual abstinence and marriage training, especially for the poor. Bush's evangelical crusade will, if allowed, undermine women's rights and gay rights, bolster the corporate agenda, and even shape foreign policy and the war on terror. Kaplan laments that to sell his faith-based initiative to Christian conservatives Bush has provided federal funds to groups that refuse to hire Jews, gays, unmarried mothers, or anyone else who fails their moral code. Under

pressure from Christian fundamentalists the National Park Service now displays and sells books that claim the Grand Canyon was formed by Noah's flood. And Bush has collaborated with states he considers sponsors of terror, such as Iran and Libya, to forward an abortion agenda at the United Nations, all the while insuring that doctors sent to help in Iraq were firmly anti-abortion.

There are others who view Bush's social, environmental, and economic programs to be closely aligned with the radical Christian right sect of Dominion Theology. This alignment involves, among other things, taking advantage of voter apathy to promote a minority agenda, using tax cuts to starve the federal government, shifting education and welfare to churches, ending government regulation, and increasing material wealth through the plunder of natural resources (*Economics from the religious right*, 2005; Hendricks, 2005; McDowell & Beliles, 1989).

However, to his supporters on the right President Bush is a man of great faith and principle (Ewing & Grady, 2007). According to Aikman (2004), Kengor (2004), and Mansfield (2003) Bush is a conservative Christian who has brought back the power of prayer and the search for God's will to the Oval Office, where it rightly belongs. They see his faith as the bedrock of his strength and courage, and inspired by his trust in the power of God. Noting that his decision to go to war with Iraq was the ultimate test of his faith, Bush's spiritual life will have a lasting effect on the presidency, the nation, and the world. In a film dedicated to Bush's evangelical Christianity, Justin Webb comments:

Nobody spends more time on his knees than George W. Bush... The Bush administration hums to the sound of prayer. Prayer meetings take place day and night. It's not uncommon to see White House functionaries hurrying down corridors carrying Bibles.

("George W. Bush: Faith in the White House," 2004)

Here Bush is portrayed as bolder, more public, and more genuine in living out his faith on the job than any president since Abraham Lincoln. According to this film, George W. Bush, as leader of the free world, bears an enormous responsibility, the weight of which drives him to his knees in prayer and supplication.

Freiling (2004) suggests that the media's perception of Bush's faith is simply wrong. It is true that George W. Bush believes in the God of the Bible and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But Freiling notes that Bush goes to great lengths to establish the limits of his faith based principles in their influence on his public office. Bush's religious beliefs are the impetus for his compassionate conservative policies and his faith based initiatives, but the President does not use the Bible and prayer to condemn or discriminate, but rather to find comfort and help. He believes that all people are created equal by God, and that the Bible commands people to love their neighbor. He also believes that evil exists, that freedom is a God-given right, and that Americans have the duty to protect the freedom of all people. This battle for freedom under the banner of fighting evil has been a hallmark of Bush's presidency.

In contrast to the seemingly self-contradictory remarks by Freiling, Martos (2004) comments:

Sincerity is not enough. A person can be sincere and also misguided. A person can be trying to do the right thing and yet be mistaken. A clear conscience is no guarantee of correctness.

The history of Christianity is filled with people who thought they were right at the time. The early centuries are replete with individuals and groups whose sincere beliefs about God and Jesus were eventually judged to be heretical. In the Middle Ages, Christian nobles and knights were convinced that God wanted them to rescue the Holy Land even if they had to kill thousands of Moslems to do it. During the decades following the Reformation, Protestants and Catholics waged war on

one another in the name of true religion. For over two hundred years, Christians in the American South believed that slavery was justified by the Bible.

(Martos, 2004, pp. 1, 2)

Martos is concerned that the American way, as promoted by Bush, may not be God's way. He notes that if compassionate conservatism is to become more than a slogan, conservatives need to show compassion towards those who are less well off. Conservatism extols the virtues of the free market, but compassion is a virtue that concerns itself with those who are not the beneficiaries of the free market. Conservatives would reduce the size of government, but compassionate people would strive to reduce the suffering of people.

He continues:

Such policies would be based on the understanding that peace [and prosperity] is not simply the absence of war but a condition of cooperation and harmony among nations and between peoples.... Perhaps most importantly, such policies would exhibit truth and honesty in their formulation, in their presentation to the people, and in their implementation....

The president's policies and actions are questioned and attacked by individuals and groups that are also religious. Protestants who believe in the social gospel and Catholics who believe in social justice decry the Bush administration's proposed changes in welfare, health care, and other social programs. Christians who believe that public policy should create a more equitable society object to tax cuts that widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Quakers, Mennonites, and other churches committed to Christian peacemaking deplore the president's rush to war not once but twice.

Increasingly, too, the president and his administration have come under attack for deceiving the public: for lying about Iraq's possession of and ability to deploy weapons of mass destruction, for not being truthful about the benefits of tax cuts, for deceptive labeling of legislation, for claiming that the administration's nominees for federal judgeships are not ideologically conservative.... they give the appearance of high-level disregard for the commandment prohibiting false witness.

More important, however, are the discrepancies that exist between the policies of the Bush administration and the ethical principles revealed in the Bible. Perhaps the president's study of the Bible has not led him to see the contradictions be-

tween the responsibilities of stewardship and his administration's environmental policies, between the Law of Moses and its violations of human rights, between the teaching of the prophets and its disregard for social justice, between the commands of Jesus and its pursuit of war....

At this point, therefore, it is legitimate to inquire about the president's principles – not his private principles but the principles according to which he acts in public life. If George W. Bush espouses the policies of his administration – and he is certainly the most consistent defender of those policies – then he also embraces the principles on which they are based. Those principles, as we have seen over and over again, are the principles of political and social conservatism. They are not the social principles of the Bible. They are not the ethical principles of the Law and the prophets. They are not the moral principles that Jesus taught his disciples to follow.

(Martos, 2004, pp. 232, 233)

Singer (2004) agrees that more than any president in recent memory, George W.

Bush invokes the language of right versus wrong and good versus evil, but appears ethically confused and self-contradictory when addressing religiously charged issues such as tax cuts, stem-cell research, and American preeminence in Iraq. To Singer the question is, “Does President Bush live up to the values he so often touts in his presidential prose?” Singer ponders whether the abuses at Abu Ghraib and the war in Iraq are consistent with religious compassion, or whether an advocate of smaller government should become embroiled in a right-to-die case, or whether someone so vocal regarding the value of individual merit should reward birthright by eliminating the estate tax. Even the appropriateness of Bush's faith-based initiatives, seemingly based on a growing consensus favoring public support for community-serving religious institutions, was not only fought on the religious battlefield but also in partisan legislative politics that were not free from secular interests (A. E. Black, Koopman, & Ryden, 2004).

Bishop Sims (2004) issues a faith-based challenge that critiques the extremist religious and political assumptions the underlie Bush's foreign and domestic policies. Sims poses two radically different concepts of power found in the Hebrew-Christian Scrip-



tures; the one represented by Bush is a very old one of male-dominant, militarist imperialism, co-opted recently by a fierce fundamentalism that forecasts an imminent and violent end of history; the other an enduring power of compassion, non-violence, and justice exemplified by Jesus and the Hebrew prophets. In Sims' view Bush is ignoring the foundations of New Testament Christianity. Many writers share Sims' view.

In *The Perils of a Righteous President* Klein concludes that:

After his grudging public apology for the behavior of U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison, George W. Bush attended a ceremony commemorating the National Day of Prayer. His remarks there were, as we have come to expect from this President, a stirring mix of humility and certainty. "God is not on the side of any nation, yet we know He is on the side of justice," Bush said. "Our finest moments [as a nation] have come when we have faithfully served the cause of justice for our own citizens, and for the people of other lands."

The words are wonderful, but such sentiments are easily corrupted. Faith without doubt leads to moral arrogance, the eternal pratfall of the religiously convinced. We are humble before the Lord, Bush insists. We cannot possibly know His will. And yet, we "know" He's on the side of justice – and we define what justice is. Indeed, we can toss around words like justice and evil with impunity, send off mighty armies to "serve the cause of justice" in other lands and be so sure of our righteousness that the merest act of penitence – an apology for an atrocity – becomes a presidential crisis. "This does not represent the America that I know," Bush said of the torturers, as if U.S. soldiers were exempt from the temptations of absolute power that have plagued occupying armies from the beginning of time.

As the nation suffered the disgrace of Abu Ghraib last week, I traveled through Turkey and Jordan – our staunchest Islamic allies in the region – and talked with moderate politicians, businesspeople and military officials. Most found Bush's moral talk either duplicitous or fatuous. "Liberate Iraq? Rubbish," said a prominent Jordanian businessman. "You occupy Iraq for the strategic and economic benefits. You are building the largest embassy in the world in Baghdad. Halliburton and Bechtel are running everything, at enormous profits. And then I watch Bush on Al-Arabiya and all I see is his sense of moral superiority. He brings democracy and freedom to the barbarians. But who are the barbarians? Even before the Abu Ghraib pictures, we saw male soldiers searching Iraqi women and humiliating Iraqi men by forcing their heads to the ground."

The President's moral convictions are, no doubt, matters of true faith.... But Bush's moral certainty almost seemed delusional last week in the vertiginous realities of Iraq. A distressing, uninflected righteousness has defined this

Administration from the start.... It was neoconservatives who provided the philosophical rationale for the President's gut response to the evildoers of Sept. 11: a grand crusade – yes, a crusade – to establish democracy in Iraq and then, via a benign tumbling of local dominoes, throughout the Middle East. Those who opposed the crusade opposed democracy. Those who opposed the President coddled terrorists....

But democracy doesn't easily lend itself to evangelism; it requires more than faith. It requires a solid, educated middle class and a sophisticated understanding of law, transparency and minority rights. It certainly can't be imposed by outsiders, not in a fractious region where outsiders are considered infidels. This is not rocket science. It is conventional wisdom among democracy and human-rights activists – and yet the Administration allowed itself to be blinded by righteousness. Why? Because moral pomposity is almost always a camouflage for baser fears and desires. Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives share a primal belief in the use of military power to intimidate enemies [retributive justice]. If the U.S. didn't strike back “big time,” it would be perceived as weak. Crushing the peripheral Taliban and staying focused on rooting out al-Qaeda cells wasn't “big” enough....

Abu Ghraib made a mockery of American idealism. It made all the baser motives... more believable. And it represents all the moral complexities this President has chosen to ignore – all the perverse consequences of an occupation.

(Klein, 2004)  
(Also see Kinsley, 2003)

Regardless of the true genesis of Bush's evangelical faith, or of his true intentions, the religious right believes it helped to re-elect him and now has the right to collect some payback. Tumulty and Cooper (2005) point out that religious conservatives mobilized as never before in the 2004 presidential election, counting on President Bush to support their agenda if reelected. So what do they think he owes them? Bob Jones III, president of Bob Jones University, warned Bush that God had granted America an undeserved reprieve from the agenda of paganism, and the he (Bush) should refuse to equivocate. Jones emphasized that Bush owed the liberals nothing and should put his agenda on the front burner to let it boil. The proposed agenda: abortion, homosexuality (especially gay marriage), and liberal judges. For example, if enough conservative

judges were to be ensconced, even the hugely political football of *Roe v. Wade* might be up for reversal.

There have been many victories for the right since Bush has held office, even though they have not reached their ultimate conclusion. Legislation making it illegal for anyone other than a parent to transport a minor across state lines in order to obtain an abortion, tightening up on parental notification, and requiring doctors to notify pregnant women that abortion might cause the fetus pain is likely to be passed. And laws that ban second- and third-trimester partial-birth abortions, ban federal funds for most kinds of stem cell research, make murdering a pregnant woman a double crime, and allow doctors and nurses to refuse to perform abortions in hospitals receiving federal funds have already been passed (Tumulty & Cooper, 2005). The 2004 election also added several votes to the anti-abortion side in the House and four in the Senate.

Nothing, though, matters more to the religious right than the appointment of conservative federal judges. According to Christian conservatives, the current judiciary is threatening religious liberty and the family (Levin, 2005; Phyllis Schlafly, 2004). So far, conservatives have praised Bush's judicial nominations although the influence of Evangelicals in American politics threatens to create a firestorm over this religious intrusion into politics. But, for many evangelicals there is no controversy, but rather a long-range plan to leverage political advantage. Many of the evangelical activists are frustrated that their successes have not been translated into larger gains. Did they not play a key role in Bush's election, as well as the Republican control of both houses of Congress? This frustration has increased the pressure on Senate Republicans to outlaw Democratic filibusters of judicial nominees. The battle led by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (Kirkpatrick &

Hulse, 2005; *Transcript: Justice Sunday on FNS*, 2005), ostensibly over the 10 judges the Senate Democrats have rejected, was really about having enough power to put a religious conservative on the Supreme Court if a vacancy should appear (Kirkpatrick, 2005; D. Rose, 2005).

Over the long haul, evangelicals are looking to expand rights for prayer in schools and religious symbols in public places. They also advocate laws that allow churches to endorse political candidates, acquire more federal funding for faith-based programs, and discriminate against non-evangelicals in their hiring practices. In all of this they expect Bush to deliver on their agenda (Magnusson & Dunham, 2005).

Eisenberg (2005) argues that Rick Scarborough is yet another example of the kind of dedicated activist the Republicans have to thank for their current political dominance and for the increased pressure on the GOP to produce a change in the judiciary. A Texas Baptist minister, his organization, Vision America, has recruited nearly 4,000 pastors in the South and Midwest to use their pulpits to help elect conservative judges and politicians and to mobilize the evangelical-Christian vote. Noting that Christians have a moral imperative to be involved in politics, Scarborough has turned his gaze to the one branch of the government that Republicans don't fully control: the judiciary. He believes that the courts are the last bastion of liberalism even though Republican appointees account for the majority of judges on 10 of the 13 federal courts and seven of the nine Supreme Court Justices were also appointed by Republicans. Cohorts D. James Kennedy and Rod Parsley agree with Scarborough that activist judges have imposed their personal ideology by creating new rights on gay marriage, pornography, and gay marriage that were not expressly accommodated in the Constitution. In their opinion, the same judges have

restricted freedom of religion and persecuted Christians by ordering the removal of a Ten Commandments monument from the Alabama state court grounds. Scarborough and many other ministers in his organization are giving the lion's share of their effort to divert the Democrats attempt to block several of Bush's judicial nominees. Even though the Republicans blocked many more of President Clinton's nominees, and even though President Bush has successfully appointed more judicial seats than any president in nearly a hundred years, Scarborough still notes that it takes two-thirds of Congress, the President's signature, and three-fourths of the states to change the Constitution – but just one judge. Although this may be an overstatement, conservative Christians believe that their interest is best served by a sympathetic judiciary that is filled by as many conservatives as possible.

Refusing to accept anything but total victory, much of the support for conservative judicial nominees has also come from the Arlington Group, a loose coalition of right-leaning Christian leaders that includes James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Richard Land of the Southern Baptists, as well as Rick Scarborough. However, judicial nominations is only a part of the Christian right's reform agenda. House conservatives have discussed shutting down certain courts and judges by eliminating their funding. F. James Sensenbrenner, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, recently suggested the establishment of an inspector general for the federal judiciary whose job would be to monitor how money is being spent. In addition he has lent his support for a House measure that would divide the San Francisco-based Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, derided by conservatives for its ruling that the wording "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional, into three separate circuits. Other hot issues such as school

prayer, capital punishment, and gay marriage have spurred others in the House to introduce bills to remove the federal courts' jurisdiction in these areas, putting the power into the hands of state and local judges who must be elected, and therefore are much more easily manipulated (Eisenberg, 2005).

A cover for BusinessWeek magazine on May 23, 2005 read, "Evangelical America: Big Business, Explosive Politics," portending that the mega-church is becoming the new model for evangelical worship and that its influence on both political and corporate America have become profound. Symonds (2005) points out that more than 30,000 people attend Lakewood Church in Houston, to hear Pastor Joel Osteen and a full cast of others create a rousing and slickly-produced charismatic service. In addition to those who attend the live service, there are 7 million who watch the five Sunday services on national cable and network channels. To keep attendees coming back, Osteen's mega-church offers free financial counseling, low-cost bulk food, and a counseling group for men with sexual addiction. Lakewood Church brought in \$55 million in contributions in 2004 and is laying out \$90 million to transform the Compaq Center in downtown Houston into a church that will provide a 16,000 person seating capacity, including a high-tech stage for TV and Sunday School for 5,000 kids.

Osteen is one of a new generation of evangelical entrepreneurs who are transforming Protestantism into one of the fastest-growing and influential religious groups in America, focusing on a huge potential market of those who have drifted away from other Protestant congregations or simply have never attended church. To reach these people, mega-churches are churning out Sunday Schools and day-care centers that could double for Disney World and church cafes that rival Starbucks. Some complexes include banks,

pharmacies, schools and even housing units. Attendance in mainline Protestant churches has dwindled, but evangelical Protestant churches are expanding with the number of mega-churches, those with a weekly attendance of 2,000 or more, increasing at over 800 per year. These churches have helped to launch \$3.3 billion in religious book sales in 2004 and 925 Christian radio stations since 1998 (Symonds, 2005). Finke (1993) points out that while mainline Protestant churches have dropped from 12 percent of market share in 1980 to 9 percent in 2000, evangelical Protestant churches have risen from 13 percent of market share in 1980 to 15 percent in 2000, making them the largest religious force in America.

In the new evangelical Protestant mega-church, old fashioned services and hymns are scrapped for multimedia worship in a Hollywood environment stripped of religious icons and decked out in theater seating. In addition there are a large variety of services, worship and otherwise, tailored to meet the customized needs of a diverse congregation, including divorce counseling and support for the parents of autistic kids. A prime example of this kind of mega-church is the Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Boasting a \$48 million budget and \$143 million in net assets, this church attracts more than 21,000 to its weekly services with the support of 427 staff people and 10,000 volunteers in 100 ministries. Some churches are so successful that they are opening up branches. In 2005, for example, the Southern Baptist Convention plans to create 1,800 new churches using niche-marketing. According to a spokesman, there will be cowboy churches for those working on ranches, country music churches, and even motorcycle churches for bikers. Biblezines now package the New Testament in glossy format to appeal to differing market segments, such as teenage girls and hip-hop fans.

Alternative rock, punk, and screamo music using Christian lyrics is packaged to match unique tastes. Pyro marketing is being used to sell books such as Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* by targeting first those who would love the book and spread the word (Symonds, 2005).

The recent success of evangelical Christianity has profoundly reshaped many aspects of society and politics in America. In the past, the larger portion of the business and political elite were mainstream Protestant. Today, however, President George W. Bush and more than a dozen members of Congress, including House Speaker Dennis Hastert, are evangelicals. The Republican right has been swelled with the ranks of politically conservative evangelicals who no longer support the separation of church and state that was popular among evangelical leaders in the 1960s and 1970s. However, there are growing tensions between evangelical and mainline Protestants over the appropriateness of becoming involved in politics and using brazen marketing methods. Fueling the fire are controversial leaders such as Creflo A. Dollar who endorse material wealth and preach that God wants the faithful to be prosperous. Dollar himself owns two Rolls Royces and travels in his personal Gulfstream 3 jet. But some evangelical leaders are also concerned that flagrant materialism can raise the ghost of religious hucksterism. For an evangelical leader to be seen as a CEO rather than a pastor can carry very negative connotations and elicit reactions against mega-churches similar to those that have been levied against Wal-Mart.

However, some mega-churches are cashing in on their newly found expertise by selling it to other ambitious churches anxious to gain the same kinds of revenue. Willow Creek Community Church formed a consulting arm called Willow Creek Association,



which earned \$17 million in 2004 by selling marketing and management advice to churches from 90 different denominations. The entrepreneurial mega-churches and their leaders have become so adept at selling that it can become difficult to distinguish their aims from the secular styles they mimic. Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas held a Christmas festival featuring a 500-person choir. It attracted 70,000 people with the cheapest tickets selling for \$20. In addition, some 16,000 folks participate in its sports program, which uses eight playing fields and six gyms on its \$100 million, 140-acre campus. This appeal to the younger churchgoer helps to bring in parents and their cash. The Life Church in Edmond, Oklahoma includes a Toon Town of 3D buildings, a 16-foot high slide, and animatronic characters. This type of marketing effort not only brings in the troops, but creates brand loyalty to boot. Willow Creek ranks in the top 5 percent of 250 major brands including Nike and John Deere. Life Church now has five campuses in Oklahoma and is expanding to Arizona. Creflo A. Dollar has pushed into five countries.

This massive growth, coupled with strong encouragement for tithing, has created a huge inflow of cash. A typical traditional church has fewer than 200 members and generates an annual budget of around \$100,000. But the average mega-church makes \$4.8 million. The larger mega-churches are expanding beyond the bounds of the church itself. Windsor Village United Methodist Church owns a former Kmart which employs 270 people and houses a Christian school and a bank, with near-future plans to also contain a senior center, housing, retailing, and a public school. Coupled with the massive inflow of cash is a growing portion of the population interested in spirituality. This growing interest is partially fuelled by the aging of the population, as one grows older one typically becomes more interested in spiritual matters, and the attacks of 9/11. But for whatever

reason, the evangelical mega-church stands ready and poised to capitalize on the trend (Gallup Jr. & Jones, 2000; Symonds, 2005).

In addition to the already familiar names in evangelical leadership there are newer stars (some coupled with the aforementioned mega-churches) rising in the evangelical Christian effort to cast Washington in their own image (Van Biema, 2005). But in addition to Washington, big corporations are also within the sights of the religious right. Greene and France (2005) point out that one of the most recent targets has been Microsoft. Idealistic techies within the organization thought that Microsoft was more than an ordinary company driven by profit; that it was an organization driven by progressive values and human rights. But when the software giant withdrew its support for gay-rights legislation the people on the inside knew that management had knuckled under to pressure from the religious right. Employees then voted on an internal blog and overwhelmingly supported the anti-discrimination bill, forcing Chairman William H. Gates III and CEO Steven Balmer to backtrack, announcing that the company would again support the legislation. Microsoft is a liberal organization. Others are not. ServiceMaster Co. and TruGreen Chemlawn proclaim that employees must honor God in all that they do.

The culture wars within organizations now reflect those on the outside, mostly because corporations these days rarely have the option of neutrality on social issues. Even though business has historically had to weigh in on economic issues such as environmental regulation, tort reform, and trade, the need to engage has been far less regarding gay marriage, the death penalty, and abortion. However, when the American Family Association launched a letter-writing campaign and a boycott against Kraft Foods

Inc. for supporting the Gay Olympics, it learned that divisive issues can and will penetrate the corporate veil and CEOs can get caught in the crossfire. In addition to the AFA, other Christian right organizations such as Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, the American Decency Association, Life Decisions International, and Children of God for Life monitor corporate behavior for violations of evangelical moral code and stand ready to retaliate. In addition to Microsoft and Kraft, Procter & Gamble were boycotted against by Christian groups who were outraged at P&G's support for a gay rights proposal, Safeway, Lowe's, Tyson Foods, and Kellogg have been targets of e-mail campaigns to remove their advertising support of the television show *Desperate Housewives*, and General Electric has been attacked for its proposed plan to pursue stem cell research (Greene & France, 2005).

U.S. foreign policy and the Federal Communications Commission are also under close watch by the religious right. Indecency in broadcasting has become a very hot issue as have human rights issues in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, countries that represent 60 percent of Christianity. Making very strange bedfellows, the Christian right and liberal secular human-rights groups have formed alliances to force Washington to address AIDS funding, international sex trafficking, and Third World debt, and intervene in the Christian-Muslim civil war in the Sudan.

Note: In light of the mobilization of the Christian right, House Democrats organized a 20-member faith committee whose charter will be to shape the Democratic message so that it is more appealing to religious voters. The liberal think tank Center for American Progress will hold events around the country to demonstrate how the Christian faith aligns with Democratic policy. This effort likely has a great deal more to do with

marketing than with changing traditional positions on controversial issues. However, advisers to the Democrats note that the party needs to shed its reputation as being a party of secular fundamentalists, and return to the liberal Christian roots of Martin Luther King Jr. and Jimmy Carter (Bacon Jr., 2005).

Even though one would be hard pressed to criticize activities such as eliminating poverty, disease, and ignorance while promoting human rights and prosperity, there is also a darker side to the influence of the Christian right in the political and corporate arena. Conversely, there is also much room for concern over the influence that America's corporate and political machines might have over the religious right.

Clarkson (1997) agrees, expressing grave concern over the theocratic intentions of political conservatives (such as Bush). He chastises liberals for failing to fully recognize the full threat to liberty that the hostility of the right brings, noting that the neoconservative agenda goes far beyond the boilerplate conflict of the culture wars and legalized abortion. The real agenda, so ominous that most Americans would reject the possibility, is global American empire (Bacevich, 2002; Brzezinski, 2004; Chomsky, 2003; Dorrien, 2004; Ferguson, 2004; Halper & Clarke, 2004; Harvey, 2003; Hudson, 2003; C. Johnson, 2004; Khalidi, 2004; Miller, 2004; Newhouse, 2003; Norton, 2004; Pilger, 2002; Soros, 2004; Tarbell & Burbach, 2004; Vidal, 2004; Williams, 1972).

Although others prominent in American history have personally desired, or even believed it was the right and destiny of the United States to achieve global hegemony, rarely did they have the combination of mental and physical resources to pose a legitimate or lasting threat (Lafeber, 1998; E. Rosenberg, 1982; Stephanson, 2000). During most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century imperial conservatism in America was not particularly a product

of the intelligentsia. Primarily a proponent of business, the Republican Party which usually provided a home for these conservatives, was, for the most part, anti-intellectual and considerably xenophobic. But when the radical neoconservatives appeared in the 1960s, they became the first seriously intelligent movement on the American right since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dorrien, 1993). Touted as having a controlling interest in the current administration of George W. Bush (Buchanan, 2004; Chomsky, 2003; Conant, 2004; Eisendrath & Goodman, 2004; Gold, 2004; Halper & Clarke, 2004; Hayes, 2004; Huffington, 2004; Mason, 2004; Miller, 2004; Prestowitz, 2004; Steinberg, Papert, & Boyd, 2003), their goal appears to be a return of the old specter of remaking of international order under the effect of U.S. hegemony – destroying America's enemies and crippling international institutions that make a claim to international jurisdiction, such as the United Nations. Their arrogance and intolerance betray a thinly veiled conviction that they alone possess a realism and truth that all others lack.

As the notable founder of this philosophy, Leo Strauss provided more than a seed crystal for the neoconservative worldview (Papert, 2003). Leaving Germany in 1938 and teaching for many years at the University of Chicago, Leo Strauss became the primary intellectual influence on the neoconservatives, with many studying and receiving their doctorates under his tutelage. During his later years in Chicago something of a cult developed around him and helped to disseminate his belief that:

- Greek classical philosophy, especially of the real Plato that was subsequently lost by Neo-Platonic and Christian thinkers, is truer to nature than anything that has replaced it

- Platonic truth is too difficult for people to bear and the classical appeal to virtue is unattainable.
- Expediency works; there is no God to punish the wrongdoer. There is a natural hierarchy in humanity and those at the top must curtail free inquiry and exploit the mediocrity and vice of ordinary people to maintain order.
- Machiavelli was right. Although Strauss admitted that Machiavelli was wicked, this did not prevent him from admiring his intrepidity, eloquence, and grandeur of vision (Strauss, 1958).
- The essential truths about humanity and human history should be held by the elite, who should then withhold the truth from those who lack the fortitude to deal with it, and give them instead a series of consoling lies about the nature of political reality. The elite, however, recognizes the real truth and this gives them an insight and implicit power that others do not possess.
- Philosophy as a field of inquiry by those other than the elite is dangerous as it questions the conventions on which civil order and morality depend.
- Secular society is the worst possible thing because it leads to individualism, liberalism, and relativism, precisely those traits that may promote dissent that in turn could dangerously weaken society's ability to cope with external threats.
- Moral clarity is essential.
- The notion of relativism is a moral disorder that could keep America from identifying its real enemies.
- America demonstrates the most advanced case of liberalism among all nations and as a consequence is the most vulnerable to nihilism.

- Religion is absolutely essential in order to impose moral law on the masses. But religion is for the masses alone – the elite need not be bound by it as religion is a pious fraud.
- The elite must be visibly pro-religion even though they themselves are not believers.
- Political order is stable only if it is united with and by an external threat. If no threat exists, it must be manufactured.
- Foreign policy should exceed national security because it is a means to fulfill the nation's destiny.
- The goals of the ruling class are achieved through perpetual war, not perpetual peace. War keeps the masses distracted, while peace fosters introspection.

(Lobe, 2003; R. Locke, 2002)

This bleak and anti-utopian philosophy goes against almost everything in which Americans believe and contradicts the conventional wisdom of modern democracy. Some have argued that Strauss was not friendly with the idea of hegemony and that he believed that no group of human beings could rule all of humanity justly. Therefore, his appeal to neoconservatives is based more on the notion that his elitism provides a principled rationalization for policy and political expediency, and the necessary lies told to those who would be demoralized by the truth (Mason, 2004).

Be that as it may, in keeping with Strauss' philosophy the neoconservatives and the Bush administration have been visible supporters of right-leaning religious groups – claiming allegiance to many of the values that motivate these groups without actually having to actively support them, and, in some cases, actively working against their eco-

conomic interests (Frank, 2004). Although Marty and Moore (2000) argue that a thoughtful blending of church and state could potentially work for the common good, it seems more likely that this administration has a hidden agenda. Marty and Moore also point out the underlying dangers of integrating religion into the fray of politics could include the potential for fundamentalist extremism and religious violence.

One of the more egregious examples of right-wing religious conservatism, with more than a latent potential for extremism and violence, is a growing movement called Dominion Theology.

In essence, those who adhere to Dominion Theology, called Dominionists, assert that the entire world is destined, sooner or later, to surrender to the will of God in every aspect of life. A key doctrine of this theology is the claim that Israel has been cut off from God and that the Christian church is now heir to all of the promises made by God to Israel. As a spiritual army of God, the church will defeat the forces of darkness through spiritual warfare and bring the whole world under the dominion of God. Everything and everyone, including society, culture, economics, politics, ethics, and religion, will submit to the will of God. The earth will then become the full expression of the kingdom of God (Barron, 1992; Chilton, 1984b; Sandlin, 1998).

Dominion Theology is often viewed as having at least two subordinate movements that believe Christians should take dominion over the world before Christ returns. These two movements state that there is a biblical mandate to occupy or control all secular institutions until Christ returns. One of these movements is Christian Reconstructionism. Begun by R. J. Rushdoony and Gary North, this movement is heavily influencing the evangelical church. Leading with a strong postmillennialist view, the



Reconstructionists are aggressively pursuing a Christian takeover of the world before Christ returns. They believe that the kingdom of God is being extended by preaching the gospel and Christianizing the world, and advocate the imposition of an Old Testament style theocracy. Under this theocratic rule a wide range of sins would be punishable by death including murder, rape, adultery, incest, homosexuality, witchcraft, incorrigible delinquency in youth, and blasphemy (G. North, 1990; Rushdoony, 1973). This advocacy of an absolute theocracy and a return to the Pentateuch as the arbiter of all law and social interaction is both growing and gaining influence (Clarkson, 1994; House & Ice, 1988; Robinson, 2004) and appears to be ripe for an intimate subservience to the neoconservatives (Revscat, 2004; Tapper, 1999).

The principle founder of the movement, Rousas John Rushdoony was strongly influenced in his youth by Westminster Theological Seminary professor Cornelius Van Til (Diamond, 1995a), who emphasized the inerrancy of the Bible and the irreconcilability between the unbeliever and the believer (Bahnsen, 1998; Edgar, 2003; Van Til, 1967). Later Rushdoony argued that the establishment of a secular society divorced from religion is not only ill advised but unattainable because in every culture law originates in religion, in any culture the source of law is God, any change of law is either an explicit or an implicit change of religion, it is impossible to disestablish religion in any society – one religion is simply supplanted by another, and there can be no tolerance in a law-based system for another religion because every law-based system must maintain its existence through hostility to every other law-based system and alien religion (Rushdoony, 1973), (also see Cohen, 1972).

In addition to his assertion that all law is religious in origin and the source of God, Rushdoony argues that a true Christian cannot be without the law. He notes that lawless Christianity is both anti-Christian and a contradiction in terms. The purpose of grace, in his opinion, is not to set aside the law but to fulfill the law, enabling man to keep the law (see [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu)). In many ways this negates the claim to salvation by faith noted later in the explanation of Theonomy, and is a contradiction to Pauline apology. In Romans, Paul notes that law is a means to grace. "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Romans 3:20). Through this line of thinking Paul appears to state that the purpose of the law is not in its keeping, but that it drives people to seek grace. However, the larger point is that, according to Christian Reconstructionism, everything has become connected, not just to God, but to a particular religion with Old Testament legal tenets that are to govern everything and everyone.

The other group of Dominionists is represented by the Kingdom Now movement. Led by Earl Paulk and Thomas Reid, Kingdom Now urges the church to become united under the rule of charismatic prophets and apostles and to establish the church as the authority of Christ by taking control of secular institutions. Dager (1986) further defines this movement:

Within the "Kingdom Theology" camp are several movements whose teachings are remarkably similar over all, yet divergent on some points. These movements - though to a greater or lesser degree disavowing association with each other - are sufficiently homogenous in their eschatological and theological viewpoints to place them all under a common banner: what I refer to as "Kingdom Theology." These movements are built upon the same foundation: the neo-Pentecostalism of the mid-twentieth century. They draw from one another the support needed to develop their strategy for gaining preeminence among Christians. All zealously propagate their "new revelations" which allegedly are to prepare the Church for

“the next move of God,” bringing us closer to the Kingdom Age (the rule of God on earth).

The basic premise of Kingdom Theology is that man lost dominion over the earth when Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden. God “lost control” of the earth to Satan at that time, and has since been looking for a “covenant people” who will be His “extension,” or “expression,” in the earth and take dominion back from Satan. This is to be accomplished through certain “overcomers” who, by yielding themselves to the authority of God’s apostles and prophets for the Kingdom Age, will take control of the kingdoms of this world. These kingdoms are defined as all social institutions, such as the “kingdom” of education, the “kingdom” of science, the “kingdom” of the arts, and so on.

Most especially there is the “kingdom” of politics or government. This naturally implies the concentration of military and police power in the hands of those in control during the Kingdom Age. They are referred to as the “many-membered man child,” whom Kingdom Theology adherents believe will be the fulfillment of Revelation 12:1-5: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars....And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.”

Those who hold to Kingdom Theology assume that the Church (some believe only a small group within the Church, called “overcomers”), under submission to the latter day apostles and prophets, is that man child, and that it has the responsibility to put down all rebellion and establish righteousness. This necessitates the utilization of supernatural power and the full implementation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This theory is based upon the idea that all authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to Jesus. Since believers are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit that indwelt Jesus, we have all authority in heaven and on the earth; we have the power to believe for and speak into existence things that are not, and thus we can bring about the Kingdom Age. The many-membered man child must take control of the earth before Jesus can return.

(Dager, 1986)

According to Dager, the “overcomers” must ensure the restoration of the Tabernacle of David, or a blemish-free church, after which they will crush all of the enemies of Christ under their feet. Those who commit evil must be converted or they will be punished or destroyed. These evildoers have been variously described as drug pushers, murderers, child molesters, thieves, prostitutes, and other considered to be the scum of

the earth. But the term “evildoer” applies to anyone who refuses to submit to God's authority, including the latter day apostles and their prophets.

The Tribulation written about in the book of Revelation is seen as a time when the faithful disinfect the world of evil. They deny the Rapture, a removal of Christians from the earth to be with Christ before God pours out his wrath on creation, because Christ will return to receive the Kingdom from their hands after it has been cleansed. Consequently, there will be no physical restoration of Israel, as noted in Biblical prophecy, because they themselves are the spiritual Israel and all prophecies regarding Israel are made to apply to the new church.

Those adhering to Kingdom Theology also note that the traditional church has failed because it misunderstood what Jesus meant when he told his disciples that they would be witnesses throughout the earth. Rather, being a witness means to demonstrate the Kingdom on earth: to take dominion, bringing all things into obedience to Christ. In order to demonstrate the Kingdom, the Church must not only be united under the apostles and prophets, but must be prosperous and control all the material wealth on earth.

(For more information on these movements see:

<http://www.dtl.org/shield/latter-rain-1.htm>,

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/heresy.html>,

<http://www.agetwoage.org/Kingdom1.htm>,

<http://www.agetwoage.org/LatterRain.htm>,

<http://www.banner.org.uk/res/gatekeepers.html>,

<http://www.banner.org.uk/res/theglory9.html>,

<http://www.banner.org.uk/res/theglory8.html>,

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/apostolicmemorandum.html>,  
<http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/NewReform61.html>,  
<http://www.agetwoage.org/ApostolicJustFacts1.htm>,  
<http://www.agetwoage.org/JustFacts3.htm>, and  
[http://moriel.org/discernment/new\\_annoointing.htm](http://moriel.org/discernment/new_annoointing.htm).

Although there are differences among the Christian Reconstructionists and the Kingdom Now proponents, they both intend to set the agenda and course for the United States and believe that taking government away from the godless is a mandate from Christ.

This type of dominion over secular society gained broad acceptance within the evangelical Christian community with the 1981 publication of philosopher Francis Schaeffer's book, "A Christian Manifesto" (1982). In this book Schaeffer argues that the United States started as a nation rooted in biblical principles. Then, as American culture became more pluralistic, secular humanism came to gradually dominate society. Because humanists put human achievement rather than God at the center of their day to day concerns, they have prodded American culture into an ungodly state that includes legalized abortions and the secularization of public schools. Shaeffer calls for Christians to use civil disobedience to restore the morality of the scriptures (also see Grimstead & Beisner, 1986).

This is reflected in the Dominionist mission to go beyond the transformation of individuals to seek a spiritual change in society. According to their philosophy, they must change the laws of the land, elect Christians to office, and bring the world under

Mosaic Law. The influence of this theology and mission is becoming more apparent even among those who may not be aware of it, including James Dobson, The Christian Coalition, Pat Robertson, Promise Keepers, and Operation Rescue (Diamond, 1995a; Torres, 2005).

Another example of right-wing religious conservatism, embellished with a latent potential for extremism and violence, is the belief in Theonomy.

Theonomy literally means God's law and is represented in modern religious culture as the belief that the moral laws of the Old Testament are still binding. This belief states that the only Old Testament laws which are non-binding are those that were fulfilled by the New Testament, such as dietary, ceremonial, and sacrificial laws. Christian salvation is not provided by adherence to the law, but by grace. However, those who believe that they no longer need to follow Biblical law, a belief called antinomianism, are heretics. Grace is the means of justification and sanctification, but obedience to the law provides the measure of sanctification. This obedience on a broad scale provides the foundation for a system of theocracy, or God's government. Thus God's law, Theonomy, is essential to fulfilling God's government, theocracy (Bahnsen, 1991).

Theonomists hold themselves as different from the traditional Christian right because they, supposedly, do not emphasize political solutions. According to their views God's law should be the standard for civil legislation and not the law of man. But civil government is only one form of government and it is not the most important one. Heresies such as abortion, pornography, homosexuality, and socialism are to be punished by God's law, and since the majority of society will eventually be saved, or at least conform to God's law, the goal is not to capture the political realm but to pave the way for a true

theocracy that will hasten the return of Christ. Advocates argue that theocracy is not a rule of the church over the state, but rather an absolute rule of biblical law over both church and state. The basic tenets of Theonomist theocracy include:

- Postmillennialism – Christ will return when the earth has been made ready. The goal is to work with individuals and families to conform to God’s law and to reform the church.
- Both church and state must conform to God’s law. The only standard for civil law is biblical law and civil government must punish evildoers according to biblical law. This theocracy, the rule of God in society through His law, is different from ecclesiocracy, the rule of the state by the church. The state will not intervene in private lives, educate children, or intrude into families. Elections will be determined by popular vote, but the majority of the electorate will be Christian or follow a Christian philosophy, all of whom will uphold the moral law of god. (Theonomists call this a theocratic republic or a theonomic representative democracy.)
- Christians will elect the rulers. An atheist or antinomian may run for office, but would stand no chance of being elected.
- Civil rulers will not be allowed to interfere in any way with the affairs of the church. A centralized government will be prohibited from intervention in the activities of individual Christians, families, churches, and local community governments. Families, churches, and local communities will govern their own interests.

- No one religious denomination will dominate political activities in America. However, denominations must adhere to Reformed Social Theory, Biblical Law, Eschatology of Victory, Christian Dominion in Society, and Presuppositional Apologetics. (This requires denominations of influence to, at the very least, be Protestant.)
- Not all Old Testament law would hold sway. The New Testament rescinded certain aspects of Mosaic Law and there are moral laws given in the New Testament as well.
- Imprisonment as punishment for civil or moral crime is unacceptable. Only biblically prescribed punishments are acceptable. Therefore, there are only two biblically prescribed punishments enforceable by the state: execution and restitution. And only the state can execute criminals for capital crimes. However, the state is not the final arbiter in moral law. Violation of moral law will be resolved within families or churches.

(Bahnsen, 1991; J. Rogers, 2005)

It may appear at first blush that the Theonomists are reluctant to involve themselves in matters of state and use their self-professed shunning of civil involvement as an excuse for distancing themselves from others in the Christian right, including the fundamentalists. However, upon closer examination it might easily become apparent that Theonomy is an even more radically right departure from mainstream religion. And while it shares its literalism and belief in the ultimate rule of God with the fundamentalists, it exceeds most fundamentalists by eschewing civic rule through a tortuous and serpentine maze of rationalizations. This almost desperate need to eliminate the power of



secular government makes Theonomy, along with Dominion Theology and Reconstructionism, vulnerable to a neoconservative government that is superficially sympathetic to theocracy, believes in its own brand of elite rule, is steeped in deception, and is very skilled in the manipulation of true-believers (Hoffer, 1951; House & Ice, 1988; Morrison, 2001).

This vulnerability to political maneuvering is not new. Tuveson (1980) points out that America has a history of seeing itself as a redeemer nation, with its puritan and post-millennial religious roots planted firmly in the early colonies. In this worldview, America would be chief among nations, fulfilling end times prophecy and providing for the earthly reign of Christ.

Morrison notes:

In many ways, it is only to be expected that a great number of the Lord's people will feel attracted to a theology which advocates the exercising of Christian dominion over the civil powers and the restructuring of society along Christian lines. They rightly feel disturbed by the world they observe around them, and they would seek to influence the civil authorities to adopt laws which are compatible with Biblical morality and the demands of purity which are expected within the body of Christ. Yet, it is here that the greatest tension occurs. Many believers — in order to cope with this dilemma — take a nostalgic, rose-coloured look at former times of blessing and revival; or they eagerly anticipate a similar golden age of global grace ahead. However, such millennial longings are more a response of believers unable to handle adequately the tension of being a suffering church in a predominantly godless world, rather than a serious exegesis of Holy Writ.

(Morrison, 2001)

But more recent endeavors by those who would combine conservative politics with conservative religion demonstrate a recent and disturbing escalation.

Wallis (2005c), comments in an e-mail:

Several weeks ago, Episcopal priest and former Republican Senator John Danforth (2005) began an op-ed in the *New York Times* by writing: “By a series of recent initiatives, Republicans have transformed our party into the political arm of conservative Christians.” And, I would add, some Religious Right leaders are try-

ing to transform the church into the religious arm of conservative Republicans. Either way, these partisan attempts to hijack faith and politics are wrong.

Yet each week brings a new outrage. This week's news was of a Baptist church in North Carolina, where nine members, including three deacons, say they had their membership revoked because they were Democrats who supported John Kerry (*Church split in dispute over Bush*, 2005; J. Wallis, 2005b). According to the *Charlotte News-Observer*, the nine walked out of a church meeting when Pastor Chan Chandler asked them to sign documents agreeing with his political views. When they left, members remaining voted to terminate their membership....

It's the latest outrage in a continuing pattern. Last year, news stories included Republicans seeking church membership lists and mailing postcards implying Democrats wanted to ban the Bible. Just a few weeks ago, Religious Right speakers held what they billed as "Justice Sunday - Stopping the Filibuster Against People of Faith" in support of President Bush's judicial nominees. Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying Democrats "have targeted people for reasons of their faith or moral position,"....

Then, on ABC's *This Week*, George Stephanopoulos asked Pat Robertson about his statement that "the out-of-control judiciary, and this was in your last book *Courting Disaster*, is the most serious threat America has faced in nearly 400 years of history, more serious than al Qaeda..." Robertson replied: "George, I really believe that. I think they are destroying the fabric that holds our nation together...the gradual erosion of the consensus that's held our country together is probably more serious than a few bearded terrorists who fly into buildings."

This latest news from North Carolina is the logical, inevitable result of the road the Religious Right and some Republicans have taken.  
References inserted into text.

(J. Wallis, 2005a)

Note: Robertson criticizes the judiciary for being far too liberal on issues such as

- homosexuality, removal of the Ten Commandments from courthouses, and abortion, among others, and suggests that the courts return to God's law (Robertson, 2004a, 2004b).

Even if it has been slow in coming, awareness of this radical movement is finally beginning to dawn in the secular and religious media. One humorous example is an e-mail that has been widely and frequently disseminated (Note that from a legalistic viewpoint, Orthodox Judaism is little different from Reconstructionism):

Dr. Laura Schlessinger is a radio personality who dispenses advice to people who call in to her radio show. Recently, she said that, as an observant Orthodox Jew, homosexuality is an abomination according to Leviticus 18:22 and cannot be condoned under any circumstance. The following is an open letter to Dr. Laura penned by an east coast resident, which was posted on the Internet. It's funny, as well as informative.

Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the other specific laws and how to follow them:

When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness - Lev.15:19- 24. The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination - Lev. 11:10, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?

I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? - Lev.24:10-16. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help.

Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.

Your devoted fan

(Szczepaniak, 2005)

Although, in my opinion, the sentiments stated above are both erudite and funny, the seriousness with which the most right leaning Christians are considering a return to Mosaic Law is nothing to take lightly. Reconstructionist Christianity, in its many forms, represents one of the most extreme examples of fundamentalism. Reconstructionists are attempting to train a generation of children in private Christian schools so that when these children graduate, they can be given the responsibility of creating a new Bible-based political, religious, and social order (Ewing & Grady, 2007). One of this order's first tasks will be to eliminate religious freedom and choice, as the world must be converted to Christianity. Then, all religious groups other than fundamentalist Christianity will be suppressed. Nonconforming Evangelical, mainstream, and liberal Christian institutions will be prohibited from holding services, organizing, proselytizing, or otherwise operating as a religious body. Once this is accomplished, the laws and punishments of the Hebrew Scriptures will prevail. Any person advocating or practicing other religious beliefs outside of their home will be tried for idolatry, a sin punishable by death.

Blasphemy, violating the Sabbath, adultery, and homosexuality would be criminalized and also carry the penalty of death. Genocide would be advocated for followers of minority religious and non-conformers (Robinson, 2004).

To emphasize, what is now likely to appear as, the totalitarian and near-fascist nature of a Reconstructionist theocracy, a summary of its fundamental beliefs is as follows:

- Regeneration of individuals through an intimate relationship with Christ.
- Guidance of individual lives by following a specific set of biblical laws.
- Active promotion of a world-wide Kingdom of God.
- Rejection of antinomianism, the belief that salvation is totally achieved through faith and not through good works and moral living.
- Belief in presuppositionalism, an acceptance on faith that the Bible is true.
- Belief in the complete inerrancy of the Bible.
- Acceptance of postmillennialism, the belief that Jesus will not return to earth until the majority of the world has converted to Christianity.
- The 613 Mosaic laws are divided into two classes: moral and ceremonial. All people are to follow the moral laws which were not modified or cancelled by further revelation.
- Moral laws given to the ancient Israelites reflect God's unchangeable character. These laws are meant for all nations, cultures, societies, and religions.
- The Hebrew scriptures hold primacy over the Christian scriptures, i.e. Old Testament over New Testament.
- Civil laws must obey the Bible's moral rules. Anything found to be immoral by this code must be criminalized.

- The only valid legislation, spiritual belief, and economic or social theory are those based on the Bible.
- In every aspect of life there are two options: God-centered or man-centered. Theonomy or autonomy. The latter must be banned everywhere. Individuals, families, churches, societies, and governments must be reconstructed to eliminate sin. Every Christian must contribute to this reconstruction.
- Same-sex, interracial, and interfaith marriages are forbidden.
- The Gods of other religions are Satan and their teachings are false. All religion should be replaced with Christianity.
- Expansion of the death penalty for adultery, blasphemy, heresy, homosexuality, idolatry, prostitution, sorcery, and witchcraft through stoning or burning alive.
- Congregations that do not accept Mosaic Law have another god before them and are guilty of idolatry (requiring two-thirds of the world to be put to death).
- The status of women will be reduced to that of a slave. Women will be considered property of their fathers until they are married, at which time they become the property of their husbands.
- Slavery will be re-institutionalized and regulated according to Mosaic Law. Slave owners may beat their slaves as long as the slaves subsequently live for at least three days before dying.
- Polygyny and keeping concubines will be permitted.
- Every 50 years control of all land shall revert to its original owners and all debts will be cancelled.
- Income taxes will be severely limited or will cease to exist.

- Prisons will be eliminated. Restitution or execution for crimes will become law.
- Abortions will be banished. Those found guilty will be executed.

(Bahnsen, 1991; Chilton, 1984a; Clarkson, 1994; J. Ligon Duncan, 1995; Martin, 1996; North, 1986; Rushdoony, 1973)

In addition to increased awareness regarding the Reconstructionist movement and other closely related movements, some modern congregations are beginning to express alarm regarding the biblical violation of their teachings (*A last days fictitious revival led by false "Christ's"*, 2005; Prasch, 2002). Much of their concern is based on scripture relating to the end times of Revelation in which the faithful are warned about false prophets, false apostles, and false anointing:

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtly, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

2 Corinthians 11:3 – 4

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11: 13 – 15

And thou hast tried them who say they are apostles and are not: and hast found them liars.”

Revelation 2:2

Therefore, the debate over the separation of church and state is most apparently manifest in the Old Testament conservative rhetoric of extremist religious groups, who, by their zeal for the elimination of secular government, have become vulnerable to manipulation by the current neoconservative administration. And, while violence is

condoned at different levels among the different movements, it is, none the less, on the verge of erupting on a large scale. This will especially be true if these far right religious movements achieve their goals.

However, as noted earlier, the extremism and violence in which some religious activists engage is already in rapid ascent. The Ku Klux Klan, the Aryan Nations, and many racist and ultra-conservative religious organizations follow a doctrine called Christian Identity – which is not a denomination, but rather a loosely organized movement which embraces a wide range of beliefs. Founded on the idea that Anglo-Saxons are the true descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, this movement is composed of people who believe that they are God's chosen people. This makes Christian Identity a bloodline religion with a belief system tied to race. Because of this it tends towards violence, racism, and anti-Semitism, with direct links to domestic terrorism. Many members predict a forthcoming war based on race and religion (Quarles, 2004) even though there are some researchers who predict that the extremists in the religious right will never have enough momentum to achieve their goals (Bruce, 1990, 2003; Crothers, 2003).

Levitas (2002) points out that as the World Trade Center towers collapsed, many domestic right-wing hate groups were celebrating and praising God. Anxious for a great war to begin, they wished for the World Trade Center to burn to the ground.<sup>7</sup> However, the war they wished for would be fought against the Jews and others not like themselves, not simply against Muslims. This war has its roots deeply embedded in history, from the white supremacist groups that emerged after the Civil War, to the segregationist violence of the civil rights era in the 1950s and 1960s, to the right-wing tax protest of the 1970s, to the farm crisis of the 1980s and the militia movement of the 1990s, including the Okla-



homa City bombing and the shootouts at Ruby Ridge (Wanter, 2002) and Waco (Reavis, 1998). Disturbingly, Levitas notes that these groups have a broad-based, if not extremely strong, sympathy among those whose numbers exceed their active membership. He observes that this sympathy has caused state and local governments to show reluctance in prosecuting these groups. However, he also notes that ignoring the problem puts the nation's citizens in peril. Bromley and Melton (2002) assert that, contrary to conventional wisdom, violent episodes involving cults are historically rare, even if the potential is now on the rise, and generally occur only when a new religious movement and society become polarized. However, this polarization has returned to America and the potential for religious violence to disrupt civil life is very real and complex to manage. Any kind of intervention involves the controversial issues of politics, state intervention, freedom of religion, and the security of the public and can lead to the kind of disasters mentioned by Levitas, especially if the situation is hampered by confusion surrounding the events and mixed loyalty from onlookers.

But as dangerous as the Reconstructionist doctrine and Christian Identity's apocalyptic reactionary militarism might be (Barkun, 1996), there is also danger in others who hold an extreme premillennialist view and intend to force the apocalypse of the end times by their own efforts (Baumgartner, 2001). In her book, "Forcing God's hand: Why millions pray for a quick Rapture... and destruction of Planet Earth," Grace Halsell (1986; 2003) investigates a new religious doctrine that is the fastest growing movement in Christianity today. The leaders of this movement proclaim that God wants and demands that the world be destroyed in this generation. Halsell notes that even though this movement may appear quite different from cults such as those of Jim Jones or Heaven's Gate

(Landes, 2000), who committed suicide because they believed that the end was near, it accepts the same theology. That is, nothing can be done about the environment and it is useless to work for peace. The only thing to do is build more weapons for Armageddon. However, those who support the advent of Armageddon do not expect to suffer, rather, they expect to be caught up in a Rapture that will remove them to Heaven before things get ugly. The leaders of this movement assure their followers, said to include one out of ten in America, that they will be seated in comfort as they look down on the agony and death of the unfaithful. (To view a real-time calculation of the probability of imminent rapture see <http://www.raptureready.com/rap2.html>.)

Less than 200 years ago Cyrus Scofield (Trumbull, 1920) popularized the notion of a Free Rapture, which holds that Christians must look towards Israel (not founded as a nation until 1948) for their rescue from Armageddon. He taught that Christ would be held hostage until the Jews carried out a preordained plan, leaving their native lands in Russia, Europe, Africa, and the United States to settle in Palestine. With the help of Christians, they were to demolish the Dome of the Rock, the most sacred Islamic shrine in Jerusalem. Then, once Christ returned, the Jews would be compelled to convert to Christianity. In his Scofield Reference Bible this doctrine was referred to as dispensationalism (Scofield, 1998).

This dispensationalist reference Bible is quoted by almost all premillennialist television and radio preachers and dispensationalism is taught at large and influential seminaries including the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Theological Seminary, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and the Philadelphia College of the Bible. Their absolute faith in Armageddon, coupled with the offer of a free escape, has converted an

expanding number of mainstream Americans. Attending a variety of Protestant churches, dispensationalists represent 15 to 20 percent of the 16 million members of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Southern Baptist Convention is of particular note as it represents the largest denomination in America and has a very traceable history of conservative resurgence in the late twentieth century. As late as the 1960s a large portion of the SBC could be viewed as moderate and leaning toward the Democratic Party, with support for removing compulsory prayer in schools and a significant pro-abortion stance. However, Sutton (2000) points out that conservatives began to view the theological and institutional condition of the SBC as having grown shabby under the prevailing moderate leadership, and were, therefore, not just driven by a quest for power but by a passion for restoring the evangelical faith. To the dismay of the moderates, successive conservative SBC presidents were elected from 1979 to the present. Hefley (1998) notes that the SBC has developed a new conservative agenda and role in the American political scene with a very high-profile public presence in the arena of controversial social issues. Once the conservatives within the SBC had wrested control from the moderates they turned the SBC into a conservative, pro-life, anti-Clinton social force. From the 1990s forward the SBC participated in the march for conservative power and influence, including emphatic anti-homosexual/anti-abortion activities and a major role in the impeachment of President Clinton. Hefley points out that until the rise of the conservative movement within the denomination, most Southern Baptists had paid little attention to how they were being represented in Washington, but not anymore. Hankins (2002) suggests that things have changed much since Rufus B. Spain wrote "At ease in Zion: A social history of Southern

Baptists, 1865 – 1900,” (2003), in which Spain discussed the close political and moral affinity between the southern culture and Southern Baptists during a time when the south was far more moderate and occasionally liberal. However, Hankins portrays the new SBC views itself as filled with conservative cultural warriors combating a decadent society.

Even though the Southern Baptists are not yet the most militant in carrying out dispensationalist doctrine, Gorenberg (2000) asserts that the threat of apocalyptic religious violence is happening now and everywhere, fueled to a large degree by Christian leaders in American fundamentalist churches. He shows how the Temple Mount, on which the Dome of the Rock is built, is the most desired piece of religious real estate in the world. It is where King David erected an altar and where Solomon and Herod built temples, and where the right-leaning Christians claim that a new Third Temple will be built (conforming to Schofield’s notion that the Dome of the Rock must be destroyed to fulfill prophecy, allow a new temple to be built in its place, and facilitate the return of Christ). The desire by the religious right to control this thirty-five acre plot at the southeast corner of Jerusalem’s Old City could create a deadly mix of religious extremism and violence fueled by nationalism and fundamentalist faith. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all believe that the Temple Mount is essential to their salvation. However, the danger lies in those who would risk the political consequences of hurrying religious prophecies, hoping to accelerate the apocalypse and the end of the world.

Therefore one may be compelled at this point, given the rising propensity for religious violence (Gopin, 2002; P. Jenkins, 2003; Kimball, 2002), to ask whether or not

religion is inherently violent, and if not, what provokes so much violence in the name of religion?

Ellerbe (1995) asserts that religion can indeed be violent and accuses the Christian church of oppressing and brutalizing millions of people over the last two millennia. She notes that this devastation of human freedom, dignity and spirituality is especially relevant today because the religious right is attempting to assert even greater influence upon American politics and society. Ellerbe argues that in the past the Church's desire to contain and control was the primary motivator for atrocities such as the persecution of heretics, the burning of libraries, the Crusades (Riley-Smith, 2001), the Inquisition (Peters, 1989), and the persecution and killing of so-called witches (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1993). This darker side of Christianity leaves America with a legacy and a world view which permeate every aspect of society, and which continues to foster sexism, racism, the intolerance of differences, and the desecration of the natural environment.

Ellens (2003) also argues that there are clearly destructive elements to religion and notes that while the Bible touts the unconditional love of God, Christian religious traditions are infected with ambiguity. He writes that the greatest tragedy is a religion that instigates violence and champions the metaphors of abuse, exploitation, legalism, and conditional grace. For Christianity's part, it shares the Old Testament with Islam and where one finds the most explicit stories of divine violence. Those stories, in turn, reflect a violent metaphor, borrowed from Persian Zoroastrianism, of a cosmic contest between the forces of absolute good and absolute evil. Ellens claims that this metaphor has morphed into the master story of American culture and has settled into the psyche of

Christianity. Apocalyptic evangelists are in the same category as Muslim suicide bombers regarding the unconscious metaphors by which they are shaped, to which they appeal, and that they constantly reinforce. Ellens notes that if these metaphors are not changed they will wreak such havoc upon society's psycho-spiritual dimensions that many may welcome a final cataclysmic Armageddon.

Ellens points out that some of the worst examples of violence in the Old Testament occurred when the Israelites were instructed to destroy a whole village, including every man, woman, and child, along with all cattle, food, and property. Included in this call for destruction were two demands, to worship the one and only God, and to kill those who refused or interfered. The chronicling of this kind of Old Testament violence has had a profound effect on the modern Christian mind.

A strong influence on Ellens' ideas are the writings of Girard (1986) and the notion of mimesis, or imitation. This mimetic desire lies, in his opinion, at the heart of how culture transforms our desires and fears. Early on people are taught to want what others want and to fear what others fear. However, mimetic desire often leads to mimetic rivalry, in which aggressive opponents resort to violence, each one justifying their behavior with the excuse that the other has crossed the line. Such rivalry can threaten a community or even destroy it. Therefore, one way to defuse such rivalries and to abate violence is to deflect the problem onto a scapegoat, a practice in which the killing of innocent third parties restores harmony and sanctity to the community. (The practice of using a scapegoat has deep ceremonial roots in the Old Testament.)

Ellens also claims that when Christians began to create a hierarchical priesthood, they also produced a sacrificial theology and the most brutal form of thought control yet

conceived. However, the religions persecutions were not limited to pagans. Christians who dissented from orthodox teachings were subjected to cleansings that approached genocide. Ellens points out that the Christian Emperor Heraclitus would have exterminated the Egyptian Christians in the 7<sup>th</sup> century if the Muslims had not invaded Egypt and saved the Coptic Church from their Christian brothers. These early persecutions extended into a centuries-long rampage against pagan religions and Christian heretics. The Crusades, the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions, the Thirty-Years War, and the persecution of Native American religions were all a continuation of earlier Christian violence.

Previously Armstrong (2000) stressed that the fear of impending annihilation causes the fundamentalist religious right to choose the first two of the fight-flight-freeze primitive response cluster (Hughes & Boothroyd, 1985; Villena-Mata, 2005), which apparently are firmly grounded in the reptilian brain of the religiously extreme conservative mindset and subsequent value system. However, Avalos (2005) proffers a new hypothesis for the role of religion in violent conflicts. Beginning with the premise that violence in general results from conflict over scarce resources, either real or perceived, he then asserts that religion creates novel scarcities that are unverifiable or based completely on illusory criteria. Over time, these obtusely scarce resources have repeatedly surfaced as the origin of religious violence. Using four categories, Avalos divides these false scarcities into conflict over sacred spaces, exclusive revelations, privilege for the few, and exclusive salvation. He further notes that religious violence is the most unnecessary of all because the resources over which there is religious conflict are either truly abundant or, in the final analysis, unnecessarily scarce. Avalos argues that if we routinely condemn nonreligious conflict over scarce resources as morally objectionable, then violence

provoked by scarcities that are merely alleged as such must be even more reprehensible. However, whether these visions of scarcity result in an implosion of mass suicide or an explosion of terrorism, they remain the result of a desperate vision of a world which has, in the mind of the perpetrator, gone terribly wrong (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

Note: Boyer (1992) points out that even comprehending in general how people in the United States respond to political and religious issues cannot be fully accomplished without realizing that millions of Americans view world events, at least in part, through the lens of religious prophetic belief.

Looking at the religious worldview that spawns violence Juergensmeyer (2003) posits that even though there are idiosyncrasies among groups, there are also common themes and patterns in religious violence. One theme is that of violence as performance, where religious ritual and symbolism often taking precedence over more strategic considerations. Another theme is the placing of violence within the context of a symbolic and transcendent cosmic war in which opponents are demonized and one's own casualties become martyrs. He also notes that religious violence is strongly influenced by the nature of religious imagination, which has a tendency to frame events within a context of absolutism and cosmic battle. Continuing along this line of reasoning Juergensmeyer proposes that the social tensions of the modern world cry out for absolute solutions, often fueled by people's sense of humiliation, loss, and longing to restore the integrity that may have been undermined by recent social and political shifts. He also points out the appeal of the valiant warrior, the strong, capable, self-sacrificing defender of the good, which often brings ex-military personnel into religious conflict. This call to valor, coupled with the prospect of male bonding, is an especially strong attractor to men who are already on



the margins of society and may be suffering from the lack of more meaningful connections.

Sloat (1990; 1999), observing another often-ignored group, argues that even the shame that is imposed on children by adults who mechanically apply scriptural mandates is a form of terrorism that can cripple these children emotionally and lead to further violence. Capps (1995) also laments that the religious shaming of defenseless children requires an amount of self-reproach on the part of the perpetrator that could never be too excessive. Arterburn and Felton (2000; 2001) submit that a healthy Christian faith as one that is centered on Jesus and reflects his example of mature love, respect for individuals, and realism regarding human weakness. Unfortunately, many Christians of all ages experience spiritual abuse and manipulation in evangelical churches and homes. They note that when religion becomes a way to control or avoid life it becomes toxic, and many unbalanced ministries, unscrupulous leaders, and misguided churches have lead their followers into a desolate and despairing experience of religion. Churches are meant to be safe places and true grace leads to freedom and joy (Yancey, 1997), but all too often spiritual leaders will twist scripture, exercise classic mind control (Lalich, 2004; Sargant, 1997; Taylor, 2005; Will, 2000), and use their authority to control, seduce, and dominate others, seeking to fulfill their own desire for power, importance, or intimacy. This form of spiritual abuse results in church members who are manipulated or shamed into behaviors that ensnare them in forms of legalism and guilt that eventually sap their spirit and promote blind obedience (Chrnalogar, 2000; D. Johnson & VanVonderen, 1991). VanVonderen (1989) shows that Christians often demonstrate very clear signs of having been manipulated and shamed through their feelings and behaviors, such as being caught up in

perpetual struggle, avoiding rest while being overly tired, feeling guilty and not good enough, feeling that they will never measure up to expectations, and losing the joy that should be inherent in a Christian life.

Therefore, in the wake of 9/11, the continuing Israeli-Palestinian atrocities, the Oklahoma bombing, Waco, Ruby Ridge, and various and sundry religious abuses at home and in the church, it has become common parlance for many Americans to accuse religion of perpetrating more evil than good. However, Kimball (2002) claims that every religion has the capacity to work either for good or evil, and contends that the faithful must attend to the warning signs that appear when religion moves towards the dark side. He points out that a religion is becoming evil whenever:

- It claims to hold the absolute truth to the exclusion of all other religions and cultures.
- Obedience to religious leaders is blind.
- There is an apocalyptic belief that the use of malevolent means and the declaration of holy war will fulfill its purpose in bringing about the end times.

Kimball suggests that religions can resist becoming evil by practicing an inclusiveness that allows each to retain its distinctiveness while working for the common good. Asserting that at the heart of all authentic, healthy, life-sustaining religions, one always finds a clear requirement, he then quotes:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets.

Matthew 22:37 – 40

Kimball contends that whatever religious people say about their love of God or the requirements of their religion, when their behavior towards others is destructive and violent, when it causes suffering among their neighbors, it is certain that the religion has been corrupted by evil.

In similar vein Gopin (2002) observes that while there has been a recent and meteoric rise in the power and importance of organized religion in many parts of the world, there has been a simultaneous and significant increase in violence perpetrated in the name of religion. He indicates, however, that history also shows religion performing a crucial role in peacemaking within numerous cultures (also see Kirk-Diggam, 2000). So the question in Gopin's mind becomes, "Will religion finally bring healing, justice, and peace or will it bring more war, persecution, and catastrophe?" From an even larger perspective Jenkins (2003) believes that America is at a critical fork in the road. Noting that Christianity is rapidly expanding south into Africa, Asia, and Latin America, he predicts that by the year 2050, only about one-fifth of the world's three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Caucasian. By numbers alone, they will be able to overwhelm the present political secular nation- and city-states and replace them with theocracies, similar to the Islamic Arab nations. However, this new Christian boom will not be in the service of white, upper-middle-class people. It will be overwhelmingly the faith of poor non-whites living south of the first world and will espouse values that are quite dissimilar to those of the wealthy northern hemisphere. Indeed, he asserts, it will emphasize healing and prophecy because its members will so much more closely resemble the poor, desperate, and oppressed who first embraced Jesus. This new burgeoning Christianity will require genuine charity by the rich and far better judgment by their leaders. Otherwise, the rise

of Islam and Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere could usher in a new age of Christian crusades and Muslim jihads.

Whether or not there will be global religious conflict as suggested by Jenkins, there certainly appears to be a strong propensity for apocalyptic dreams among the most right-leaning of conservative and fundamentalist Christians. This could be a bother in and of itself, however, the zeitgeist of American politics and the public mood after 9/11 has exacerbated this tendency while playing into a secular identity, that of America as an aggrieved superpower, that could explode with deadly synergism when coupled the religious zeal for apocalypse. Robert Jay Lifton asserts that America is in the throes of an aberrant pathology, one that he calls the superpower syndrome (Lifton, 2003). By this term Lifton means a national mindset that assumes a sense of omnipotence, of unique standing that allows it the right to hold sway over all other nations. This status was derived from America's emergence from the Cold War as the only superpower left standing. But wanting more than domination, America wants to control history. This ambition is accompanied by a vast sense of entitlement and belief in a special dispensation, that is, America is entitled to world domination and control precisely because it is the only remaining superpower. Unfortunately, however, the savagery of the 9/11 attacks violated America and made it vulnerable, which no superpower can permit. Therefore, this victimization brought about both a sense of humiliation and an angry determination to extend the previous boundaries of America's empire.

Lifton observes that, much like the prevailing mood in the Bush administration, a common denominator of the world's major religions is the theme of an angry God who destroys a corrupt world in order to recreate it. One who believes this, the apocalyptic,

always feels under pressure to express and impose his or her worldview on others. A restless missionary on the verge of becoming a righteous killer, this person will often assert an apocalyptic belief, frequently antagonistic to contemporary reality, to quell personal doubts and affirm the virtue of internalized convictions. When this is coupled with a sense that one's life or beliefs, or those of one's group, are profoundly threatened, the apocalyptic is most likely to become violent. The anxiety of annihilation that spurs this violence is attributed to the spread of evil, an evil that can only be exterminated by the apocalypse. This type of God-sponsored violence is both unbounded and holy. The apocalyptic claims the right to murderous purification and to make all judgments regarding who will live or die. In the final analysis, this ownership of life and death comes to include the ownership of all meaning (Lifton, 2000).

Therefore, this notion of destroying the world in order to save it is both grandiose and paranoid. Participants attribute the grandiosity to God, claiming that their actions are ennobled as part of a glorious and sanctified plan. However, threatened with the perception of personal annihilation, the apocalyptic must label as absolute evil and annihilate any person or group that seems to impede their own sacred mission. To a large degree this paranoia and grandiosity is perpetrated by charismatic leaders who also feel themselves constantly under attack.

Gray (2005) asserts that this kind of charismatic leader has clearly defined characteristics and opportunities:

- There must be a great cause that is founded on a unique understanding of the truth, thus, a calling for the charismatic leader.
- The truth must be expressed through the distinctions of good and evil.

- This truth must be shared through a compelling vision created by the leader.
- This truth and vision must be shared by devoted followers.
- The cause and the faithful must be formalized into a coherent organization
- There must be enemies, who are evil, who do not accept the truth.
- There must be enemies who wish to persecute those faithful to the truth, especially the charismatic leader whom they view as false.
- Victories must be obtained over the enemy. The more and greater the victories, the more influence the charismatic leader has.
- Upon the demise of the charismatic leader there must be a legitimate successor, or the cause may founder.

(Also see Oakes, 1997)

Lifton agrees, noting:

Followers of such zealots, through a process of merging with them, gain ready access to that grandiose realm. They share in the store of godlike and God-dispensed power and righteousness associated with destroying and purifying the world....

Ordinary people can be socialized to what most of us would consider a bizarre mindset of apocalyptic violence and the still more bizarre, even barbaric actions that tend to follow it. Such a participatory disciple is offered precious psychological rewards – repeated experiences of transcendence... which are bound up with a sense of collective transcendence that pervades the group, and the approval of the guru or leader, perceived as the approval of God or of history itself. Inseparable from this grandiosity is the paranoid edge of the apocalyptic mindset...

(Lifton, 2003, p. 24)

This sense of paranoid aggressiveness coupled to a divine mission was most likely present in the minds of the Bush administration who, through possessing overwhelming military dominance, express constant fear of national annihilation while embarking upon aggressive pre-emptive military actions. The severe paranoia of the apocalyptic contains

strong elements of an underlying death anxiety, a fear of annihilation, which engenders rage against ones alleged attackers. The feelings engendered by the perception of constantly being under siege and vulnerable inclines the paranoid to attack first.

Followers are likely to be drawn into the leader's paranoia, creating a group paranoia that provides a source for extreme action that would likely not have been considered by the individuals alone.

The progression from an apocalyptic vision to acts of apocalyptic violence requires a radical ideology that absorbs and articulates this intense paranoia. While the vision itself polarizes the world into clear categories of good and evil, the killing of those on the evil side of the divide requires the visceral sense of danger that paranoia provides. It is ordinarily not enough for an apocalyptic group simply to imagine itself ridding the world of evil for the sake of a glorious renewal. There must be a more immediate perception of threat related to death and annihilation...

(Lifton, 2003, p. 26)

The ancient Hebrews spoke similarly of impulses toward what they called forcing the end, that is, engaging in violence in order to hasten the coming of the Messiah. This type of hubris is currently expresses itself in apocalyptic militancy.

Throughout most of history, apocalyptic sects rarely have moved from dreaming of or praying for the end of time to forcing that end. Part of the reason was that the human means to force such an end did not seem to be at hand. But in our time, the means to force the end have caught up with apocalyptic dreams. Now those dreams are being married to apocalyptic weaponry... and the idea of acting immediately to force the end is increasingly taking hold in apocalyptic movements.

A compelling theology – or in secular terms, ideology – with a world-ending narrative has been required to activate this human potential. That theology must forcefully divide the world into good and evil, and prescribe the necessary world destruction and renewal, all the while infusing [the believer] with powerful currents of revitalization....

In dying to renew the world, both he and his cause are immortalized.

(Lifton, 2003, pp. 28)

## *Conclusion*

An historical tapestry has been woven from the warp and woof of religion, secularism, conservatism, and liberalism. Over the centuries fundamentalism has risen and fallen, rising to gain supremacy only to decline and retreat underground in defeat, only to resurface when the season again looked favorable. This warp of fundamentalism and secularism is complemented by a woof of conservatism and liberalism. It would be easy to assume that a rise in fundamentalism would serve a conservative cause, or that a rise in liberalism would serve a secular cause. But as has been pointed out earlier, this is not always the case. Martin Luther inadvertently moved the church in a modern direction when what he was trying to accomplish was to return to the values and protocol of the very early church. Therefore, the weaving of this religious tapestry is sometimes unpredictable and surprising. However, it is the force of religious fundamentalism coupled with political conservatism that has proven to be of greater concern among the various combinations.

Although the number is growing rapidly those in the United States who adhere to religious fundamentalism are still in the minority. Many Americans have come to believe that religion in general is irrational, based on fantasy, and, worst of all, inappropriately violent (S. Harris, 2004). Some see it, especially in its conservative form, as an impediment to their sexual freedom (Rowell, 1977). A few think there is simply a God gene that gives some people the genetic propensity to be religious while others have no such genetic leaning (Hamer, 2004; Kluger, 2004). Then there are those who view the teachings of Christianity as merely an ideological justification for the worldly interests of a ruthless slaveholding class (Parenti, 1999). While others simply see religion as boring,



based on a pre-packaged theology that hardly reflects real life, spawning stereotyped McDonald-like churches which offer uninventive and formulaic dogma to a dwindling minority (Drane, 2002). This fast-food approach to the spiritually hungry has simply left many on a path of perpetual spiritual seeking, a point that the evangelical church has not failed to miss.

However, even though they may not represent the majority of the population in America, evangelical Christian fundamentalism has re-emerged as a major social, economic, and political force in the early years of this new millennium. This new manifestation has drawn significant attention, sometimes in amusing, sometimes in disturbing forms. From the ridiculous to the sublime, right-leaning religion is either being supported by or foisted upon the American public. Talking Bible character dolls, animated vegetable cartoons that teach Christian values to children, and Trinity, Melody, and Harmony, three pious rock-stars, plastered on everything from dolls to room décor (Thatcher, 2005), and new museums of earth history – where visitors learn that the earth is only 6,000 years old, that dinosaurs and humans inhabited the earth at the same time, and that the great lizzards perished from habitat loss and human pressure (Barns, 2005) – have become part and parcel of everyday life. The next generation of creationism is invading America's classrooms (*Kansas moves to stem role of evolution in teaching*, 2005; Lemonick, 2005; Ratliff, 2004; C. Wallis, 2005; Wilgoren, 2005) with Kansas emerging as a focal point of anti-evolution activism reminiscent of the Scopes trial (Larson, 1998, 2003; Moran, 2002), while on college campuses Greek InterVarsity members knock on doors to invite students to bible study, prayer rooms are designated in dorms, and students protest abortion with bloody posters of aborted fetuses. Fraternities and sororities

are being pressured to better accommodate their Christian members (Chu, 2005). Many students also say that religious beliefs play a significant role in their political decisions (Smyth, 2004), and when an officer at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs gives the hand-sign for Jesus the cadets to whom he or she is signaling had better reply, "Rocks!" (Dionne Jr., 2005; Emery, 2005). And, in a last ditch effort to rid entertainment of homosexuality, the Christian right has declared the popular Nickelodeon cartoon character, Spongebob, to be gay, as they have Tinky Winky from the Teletubby children's show, Marcie and Peppermint Patty from Charlie Brown, Bert and Ernie from the Muppets, and Velma from the popular cartoon Scooby Doo (Miranda & Orlando, 2005). Hate mongering against gays has, at least in some parts of Kansas, become a family affair, making Topeka the unofficial homophobia capital of America with residents accustomed to seeing daily placards with slogans such as, "No special laws for fags," "God hates fags," and "Got aids yet?" (Kunz, 2005). Ironically, the Catholic Church has been mired in the recent publicity regarding scandalous child abuse by their priests, causing the potential bankruptcy of dioceses where the abuse was most intense and public (Van Biema, 2004a).

Regardless of the apparent absurdities, however amusing or horrific, there is also a sober, real, and significant influence being exerted by the religious right, and this influence has its genesis in the key turning points that have historically defined or redefined the church. Among these are the Great Awakenings, the fall of Jerusalem, the Council of Nicaea, the coronation of Charlemagne, the Reformation, the English Reformation, the French Revolution, and the conversion of the Wesleys (Fogel, 2000; MacCulloch, 2004; Noll, 2000; Synan, 1997; Wagner, 1983).

Currently the United States may be in the midst of yet another crucial turning point, perhaps yet another great awakening, which will redefine both the church and the state. In the tumult of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century America moved from a society that was industrial to a postindustrial one, from a white Protestant society to a religiously diverse, multi-ethnic one, from a society of masculine domination to one where men and women play roughly equal roles at home and at work, and from a society of geographically distinct country, suburb, and city to one of large megalopolises. In the midst of this transition was a conservative Republican realignment that was to a large degree a reaction to the turmoil, permissiveness, and democratic crisis of the 1960s. This realignment sought to reverse or at least contain the effects of feminism, environmentalists, consumer activists, welfare rights organizers, and civil rights protests. It was also a reaction to the transition to postindustrial capitalism which brought with it changes in family structure, neighborhoods, work, and ethnic composition. And, it was also a protest against expensive and ineffective government programs that did little to lift the stagnant economy.

This conservative reaction, though, brought its own evils and perils. It stigmatized homosexuals, denigrated single mothers, enflamed racism, worked to impose religion on education and scientific research, rejected any government involvement in the market, and sought to abolish entire sections of the federal government. By the mid-1990s technology-driven productivity created a market boom, but the economy also created new kinds of instability, inequity, corruption, and insecurity that would become even more apparent at the downturn of the market in late 2000. Unfortunately, Republican conservatives unrelentingly argued for reduced regulations and tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy. They continued to be unconcerned about the issues affecting average

Americans, such as air pollution, health care, wages, and global warming (eventually attempting to shut down the EPA). When George W. Bush became president, he undid the environmental regulations created during the Clinton administration, pulled out of the Kyoto global-warming protocol, and ignored popular concern for product quality and safety by appointing foes of regulation to run the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and also disregarded public concern over corruption in campaign finance (Judis & Teixeira, 2002). He has advocated getting bureaucratic government off of America's back by turning Medicare into a voucher system and partially replacing Social Security with private investment accounts – this to offset the sad fact that coverage from employers for health insurance and pensions either evaporated or moved from defined benefit packages to a far less appealing defined contribution plan. All the while Bush and the conservative Republicans have increased income inequality by giving generous tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy that have little to no positive impact on the poor.

The religious connection to this rise in Republican conservatism, and to the link between the religious right and corporate capitalism (Diamond, 1995b), was given a great boost when Ronald Reagan called on America to affirm the values of work, family, and neighborhood. Through this affirmation of conservative values he drew a distinction between the ones he advocated and what he believed to be the extreme values embraced by the 1960s counterculture. The conservative Republicans became the standard bearers of a party that rejected drugs, feminism, promiscuity, and New Age religion. However, once this conservative Republican movement embraced Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, they went beyond repudiating the values of the 1960s to rejecting the new values and so-

cial structure that was being created by postindustrial capitalism, most importantly women's equality at work and at home. This new movement contained apocalyptic and utopian extremes, but at its core it was attempting to resolve the contradiction between the older patriarchal ideology and the new movement for gender equality. Prodded by the religious right the Republicans rejected the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion. They also held up the old ideal of the family by resisting federal money for child care and reinforcing the notion of a natural dominance of the husband and father over the wife and children. Also, discrimination against homosexuals heated up as did controversy over sexual education for children in school. Goaded by the religious right, conservative Republicans have become the defenders of the mores of Middletown against those of the megalopolis. The ideals of family life and abstinence until marriage are not seen as merely the norm, but as moral imperatives. Clinton was eviscerated by the religious and political conservatives over his sexual indiscretions (Blumenthal, 2003), which, ironically, were not that different from many presidents, including George H. W. Bush.

Making a devil's pact with the religious fundamentalists, Republicans have often supported what others consider to be crackpot notions, such as making science and education conform to Protestant literalism. Even prominent Republican intellectuals such as Irving Kristol, William Bennett, and Robert Bork have refused to repudiate the notion that dinosaurs roamed the earth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During Bush's first year in office this rejection of science reached its apogee with the controversy of government funding of stem-cell research. Republicans sided with the religious right who thought of all stem-cell use as the murder of unborn individuals (Judis & Teixeira, 2002). By climbing into bed with religious fundamentalists, the Republicans have placed themselves in the posi-

tion of providing remedies for problems that no longer exist and ignoring problems that do. Thus, by fighting the future on behalf of the past they have placed themselves squarely between the Psylla of 1960s values and the Charybdis of postindustrialism. This squeeze, coupled with the terrorism of 9/11, have lead, in large part, to the apocalyptic visions shared by the religious and political conservatives.

Using the fear engendered by the times, by packaging and selling it, the political and religious fundamentalists have promoted conspiracy logic regarding the world economy and its political and social systems. This logic is then used to promote an apocalyptic end-time paranoia (Camp, 1997). Regardless of the short-term gains made for those interested in promoting this paranoia, the long-term effect is likely to be unpleasant if not disastrous.

In the eyes of many religion in America has become, “divisive, quarrelsome and idiotic,” (Sachs, 2005), and the GOP has been declared the religion-friendly party, especially to white evangelicals (*GOP the religion-friendly party: But stem cell issues may help Democrats*, 2005). While there are clearly more offering criticism than solution, there seem to be some emerging religious-spiritual activism from the areas known as not-the-right. Sojourners, a centrist religious organization, has become more visible on the Net and has recently had some influence in Washington (see [www.sojournal.net](http://www.sojournal.net)). Faith-based service organizations are moving beyond Bush’s vision of faith-based activism (that merely provides services to the needy) to a larger vision of reforming public policies that neglect the disadvantaged (R. L. Wood, 2002). Left-leaning Catholic activists are beginning to surface in the news and religious writers and leaders on the left and in the center are emerging to provide solutions (Adamson, 2002; Armstrong, 2005; Battle, 1997; Be-

gley, 2004; Bhengu, 1998; B. Black, 2005; Block, 1993, 2002; Boff, 1978; Boff & Boff, 1987; Chopp, 1986; Cone, 2003; Gottlieb, 2002, 2003; Gutierrez, 1988; Krog, 2000; Sider, 1997; Smith, 1991; Sobrino, 1999; Sobrino & Ellacuria, 1996; Tutu, 2000; J. Wallis, 2005a, 2005c; Wallis & Sterling, 1995).

But so far these offerings have made little headway and certainly have failed to stem the tide of conservatism and fundamentalism. Kansas has proven to be a bellwether state of sorts when it comes to being on the beachhead of conservative political activity and religious fundamentalism. A good explanation is offered by Frank (2004) as he observes that Kansas is composed of largely blue collar citizens who can be counted upon to make Kansas a red state in any election, voting solidly Republican and possessing a deep animosity toward the left. This, according to Frank, is a fairly self-defeating state of affairs, given that the policies of the Republican Party benefit the wealthy and powerful at the great expense of the average worker. In straightforward but eloquent prose, Frank shows how the conservative establishment has tricked Kansans (I know, I grew up there), playing up the emotional touchstones of conservatism and perpetuating a sense of a vast liberal empire out to crush traditional values while barely ever discussing the Republicans' actual economic policies and what they mean to the working class. Thus the pro-life Kansas factory worker who listens to Rush Limbaugh will very likely repeatedly vote for the party that is less likely to protect his safety, less likely to protect his job, and less likely to benefit him economically. Frank chronicles the state's socio-political history from its early days as a hotbed of leftist activism to a state so entrenched in conservatism that the only political division remaining is between the moderate and more-extreme right wings of the same party. Thus, even if the leftists are reasonable and correct in the prob-

lems they see and the solutions they offer – even if these solutions would greatly benefit those on the political and religious right – they are rejected out of hand as an attack on America, God, and the family.

Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2004) agree, noting that American voters at large mold their political identities based on their values, rather than their economic interest. They also note that the GOP and other conservatives have benefited by America's unbri-dled optimism about social mobility. Pointing out that a third of Americans think they will be rich one day, Micklethwait and Wooldridge also note that a 2000 poll found that 19 percent of U.S. households thought that they belonged to the richest 1 percent. There-fore, it isn't surprising that so many voters allow every sort of tax cut while accepting a fraying social-safety net. Their rugged individualism and uncomplicated faith in capital-ism have provided very fertile ground for the conservative movement. In many church charters the defense of free market capitalism is as important as defeating gay marriage.

Therefore, understanding values and value systems, coupled with bypassing the values barrier long enough to expose true social norms and political realities can be es-sential to reversing the damage that has been done by the alliance of conservative politics and religion. As noted in Chapter 7, the fourth value system is based on loyalty, obedi-ence, certainty, sacrifice, and hierarchy. One proves ones worthiness by following the rules, motivated by the belief that one will always be rewarded eventually for following the rules, especially if it includes personal sacrifice. The fifth value system, however, is based on status, winning, ego, dominance, and bending the rules to fit ones own needs. Someone who has internalized this system can fairly easily pretend to share the system four values in order to manipulate and take advantage of those in that system. This ap-



pears to be the case both politically and in religion. Charismatic leaders, whose sense of self-importance is well developed, need loyal followers who will be dutifully obedient droids. They keep their followers frightened and angered in order to divert their attention from what is really going on, and to keep them pliant, compliant, and constantly seeking approval from the leader. More insidiously, the fascist and elitist ruling aristocracy of the neo-conservatives has no compunction about pretending to be holy while wholly fleecing and otherwise enslaving the religious right in an every expanding effort for global empire. All they need do is to utilize fundamentalist-evangelical code-speak when addressing the public, to mention the wedge issues of abortion, gay marriage, liberal oppression, sex education, stem cells, personal responsibility, moral conviction, and a personal relationship with Jesus and everything else is apparently swallowed hook, line, and sinker without further analysis (Cloud, 2004; Cottle, 2004; Dunham & Starr, 2004; Gibbs, 2004; Moon, 2004; A. Rogers, 2004; Van Biema, 2004b). This works in large part because if the right were to question one of their own, they would also have to question themselves. But as many authors have shown, the right chooses to externalize the law, looking for violators while refusing to introspect, but internalizes their spirituality so that they can ignore their external responsibility to others, especially the poor and needy. When interviewed about the religious controversy at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Wisconsin Congressman Obey replied, "I think if you asked God, he'd say the Ten Commandments were a road map for living. Instead, you have these self-appointed Pharisees who think the Ten Commandments can be turned into a stiletto to use against their political opponents," (Dionne Jr., 2005).

While Fogel presented the evangelical believers as being more flexible than other denominations, and, therefore, more capable of changing with the times and implementing egalitarian reform, Armstrong pointed out that conservatives, and especially conservative fundamentalists, who are theologically very similar to Evangelicals, are tied to the past and fear any reform that might humiliate them or threaten, even in perception, their beliefs or existence. Phillips (2006) observes that both evangelicals and fundamentalists are moving toward a rigid and more hierarchical structure that extends from the heads of the church to the male heads of households, also in contradiction of Fogel. And it is becoming more evident that they are adopting an elitist attitude that embraces free-market capitalism as a religious imperative, democracy and independent thought as an evil, the environment as something to be raped and pillaged, wealth as a sign of godliness and poverty as a sign of evil, and America as God's nation against an unrighteous world; all within an apparently growing context of fascist theocracy and paranoid apocalyptic ideology (Arbanes, 1998; Aukerman, 1993; Blaker, 2003; Camp, 1997; Clarkson, 1997; Diamond, 1989, 1995a, 1995b, 2000; Goldberg, 2006; Hardisty, 2000; Hedges, 2007; Hendricks, 2005; C. Johnson, 2006; Loehr, 2005; McGowan, 2001; Miller, 2004, 2005; Phillips, 2006; Rudin, 2005; Sager, 2006; J. Watson, 1997).

Currently the religious reform characterized by the influence of the religious right on the administration of George W. Bush seems, predictably, to be antithetical to many of the reforms of the past. The focus of this group seems to be more against than for anything. Therefore, the poor, hungry, disadvantaged, and helpless will likely have less of a security net if this group continues to exert influence, with even less opportunity to pursue inner-reflection and personal purpose, both spiritual equities.

And spiritual equity may be something that the fundamentalist-evangelical crowd also needs. Just before the last decline of fundamentalism in the 1980s the religious leaders of the day fell into disrepute. In a similar vein, nine years ago Ralph Reed was featured on the cover of *Time* as the new right hand of God and a powerhouse in Washington as the new leader of the Christian Coalition. However, a recent *Time* article cast light on his latest indiscretions, the most salient of which, so far, is the use of gambling casino money to thwart an attempt by the state of Alabama to establish a state lottery. His rationale for mobilizing the Christian right for his cause was an opposition to gambling casinos based on religious beliefs. Ironically, the money that he received to fund this campaign came from Choctaw casinos that were concerned about potential competition from the state. Reed kept these salient facts from his followers and supporters, but now is sweating under the light of scrutiny (Calabresi, 2005). More recently Ted Haggard, pastor of the New Life megachurch in Colorado Springs and one of a group of evangelical pastors who meet regularly with George W. Bush, was caught having regular interludes with a male prostitute for sex and methamphetamines. This was out of character with his overtly hyper-public condemnation of homosexuality, which, in his public view, epitomized America's current godlessness and was a result of liberal influence (Ewing & Grady, 2007; Gallagher, 2006). This is painfully reminiscent of Jimmy Swaggart's infamous foray into paying female prostitutes to let him beat them up. It would appear that fees, fun, and favors are more important than religious ideals when one is playing at the top.

But whether America is slouching towards Bethlehem or slouching towards Gomorrah, it is rapidly approaching a bifurcation that is, in part, due to a punctuated

equilibrium powered by the marriage of fundamentalist religion and conservative politics. If the members of the religious right discover that they have been made pawns, then the chances of things getting better will be much improved. If not, things could get pretty scary. Reconstructionism could easily be realized if the descending path is taken. This places Americans at a crucial decision point. So far, mystical and religious systems of knowledge have, in the last century, been balanced with the scientific. However, the scientific system of knowledge is again under attack, and the religious and mystical have been intertwined with the political in a way that impedes rational thought and intervention for the social good. America has not created, and may be slipping in its attempt, to achieve the good, just, free and decent society, impeded in large part by the conservatism of the political and religious right. And to a significant degree the beliefs that form this conservative and fundamentalist barricade to progress may be based on an acquired delusion.

In a recent movie about the Crusades, Two worthy adversaries – Balian, the leader of the crusading Christian army, and Saladin the Muslim warrior – meet to discuss what they're fighting over. "What is Jerusalem worth?" asks Balian. "Nothing," Saladin says. A pause, then: "Everything," (Corliss, 2005; "Kingdom of Heaven," 2005)

## Chapter Ten: A Brief Review of Elite Deviance

Old truths have been relearned; untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know not that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come the conviction that in the long run economic morality pays.

Franklin D. Roosevelt from the Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 1937 as quoted in (Huffington, 2003, p. 1)

What we have in this country is socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor.

Gore Vidal as quoted in (Huffington, 2003, p. 11)

Capitalism only triumphs when it is identified with the state, when it is the state.

Fernand Braudel as quoted in (Hardt & Negri, 2000)

We can have democracy in this country or we can have great concentrated wealth in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both.

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis as quoted in (Boyer, 2003, p. xiii)

It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once.

David Hume found at  
[http://thinkexist.com/quotation/it\\_is\\_seldom\\_that\\_liberty\\_of\\_any\\_kind\\_is\\_lost\\_all\\_at\\_once/10585.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/it_is_seldom_that_liberty_of_any_kind_is_lost_all_at_once/10585.html)

A pig like that you can't eat all at once!

Paul Kordis

While the previous chapter focused on the role of fundamentalist religion in helping to foster the economic and political ideologies that are hijacking the American Dream, Fogel (2000) observes that, at the individual and social levels, the modernist notion of a material improvement and redistribution that would ennoble the masses had, in

fact, promoted consumerism at the cost of spiritual regeneration and created a social estrangement that undermines America's quality of life. America's technological progress coupled with physiological improvement brought material affluence to many but has also opened the door to egregious abuse. Fogel laments that spiritual inequality has, in general, equaled or surpassed material inequality as an American concern, creating for many a spiritual estrangement from society that can frequently lead to debilitating spiritual impoverishment (also see D. G. Myers, 2000). This poverty of spirit, unsurprisingly, is often most visible within the political and corporate environments (John W. Dean, 2004, 2006a; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Peppers & Briskin, 2000; Simon, 2002).

And it is often in these environments, although it is not limited to them, that elite deviance prevails. So what is elite deviance?

As mentioned in previous chapters there is an attitude that prevails in certain social groups, and at certain times, regarding the character of both the rich and powerful and the character of those who are less than rich and powerful. This attitude involves the following beliefs:

- The rich and powerful are upstanding and virtuous, the poor and powerless are immoral and criminal.
- The rich and powerful are smart and industrious, the poor and powerless are lazy and stupid.
- The rich and powerful are above the law, the poor and powerless are accountable to the law.
- The rich and powerful are valuable and honored by God, the poor and powerless are worthless and despised by God.

- The rich and powerful are courageous and daring, the poor and powerless are cowardly and craven.

The above beliefs characterize elite deviance at the individual or social level. It is much like racism because it relies on the belief that one's position in life is due entirely to one's inherent characteristics. The veracity of this belief has been repeatedly debunked throughout modern history. The most recent study shows that social capital is by far the most deciding factor of one's success (Bowles, Gintis, & Groves, 2005; Laird, 2006), that is, whom one's parents are and whom one associates with are the most important contributors. This is no recent discovery, however. Colloquial wisdom asserts that, "It isn't what you know, it's who you know." Nonetheless, wealthy and powerful elite deviants apparently still cling to the notion that the circumstances of their birth and the social network they enjoy as a result have little to do with their success. They prefer to think, and often truly do think, that their willingness to work hard, persevere, get smart and be good are the keys to their achievements. As one contemporary joke states, "Bush was born on third but thought he hit a triple and deserved a walk home." But there are many in America who work very hard, are extremely tenacious, are quite intelligent, and are moral decent people; but find it overwhelmingly difficult, if not impossible, to succeed because of their life circumstances.

Some argue that rising through association and birth are anachronistic, and that the new aristocracy is based on merit (Brooks, 2001). And apparently Horatio Algiers do, on very rare occasion, manifest and when they do the elite deviants publicize the event with great fanfare. This still seems, however, far less frequent than the lazy, stupid, and

immoral characters who smugly rise to power and wealth as a result of their ancestry (Fussell, 1983; Hatfield, 2001; Krugman, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Phillips, 2004).

The new gospel of prosperity appears to be reinforcing the link between those on the evangelical and fundamentalist right to the elite deviancy of hyper-wealth and hyper-power. Imbued with a religious form of elite deviance, that is, the belief that one is in possession of final truth and that those who do not agree are a subspecies worthy of death and ruin, the additional belief that prosperity is a sign of God's love and approval help to increase the patina of respectability of elite deviance in general and to push the adherents of religious prosperity away from their spiritual roots towards a paradoxically secular form of conspicuous privilege and destructive snobbery (Balmer, 2000; Brouwer, Gifford, & Rose, 1996; Coleman, 2000; Phillips, 2006).

Simon (2005) asserts that there is also a counterpart to this kind of elite deviance in organizations, both corporate and governmental. Over the 25 years that he has been studying this phenomenon he notes:

1. The notion that elite deviance in and of itself is a great social problem in American life. Elite deviance consists of criminal and deviant acts by the largest corporations and the most powerful political organizations.
2. Elite deviance stems from a system of political economy in which power and wealth are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the power elite.
3. Within the activities of the power elite there has emerged a series of criminal and deviant behaviors that have been collectively designated as "the higher immorality."



4. Elite deviance is intimately interrelated to each and every type of non-elite deviance.
5. The solution to the problems posed by elite deviance involves a serious restructuring of the major institutions of postmodern society: the polity, economy, and mass media.

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According to Simon elite deviance is committed by people from the highest strata of society, often by the leaders of both corporations and government and-or by employees on their behalf. Acts of elite deviance are generally committed for the benefit of the elite deviant or for their organization. These acts of commission and omission are often illegal, but generally involve little risk because the elite deviant is seldom caught and punished and the punishments when applied are typically minimal. This is often because elite deviants are generally able to conceal their crimes and seem to be covertly assisted by the very institutions that are in place to prevent this sort of activity (also see Reiman, 2003).

Simon proposes that crime and deviance are patterned by society, that is, they are caused by sociological factors – the most important being America's power structure. C. Wright Mills (1956) proposed that the dominant institutional structures in America represent a power elite composed of the military, the government, and the largest corporations, and extension of the military-industrial complex identified by Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell address to the American people (Hartmann, 2002).

Simon comments:

These dominant institutions are headed by elites, people whose positions within organizations have provided them the greatest amounts of wealth, power, and often prestige of any such positions in the nation. Immediately below this power elite is a subgroup of corporations that comprise the mass media. The source of

their power is communications, which clearly differentiates elites from nonelites in American society....

The corporate, political, and military worlds are interrelated in numerous ways. Most members of the president's cabinet come from the ranks of big business and return there when their government service ends; numerous Pentagon employees, civilian and military, are employed by weapons industry firms upon retirement.

These interrelationships mean that the deviance within this elite often involves two or more organizations: one or more corporations and one or more government agencies. Power and private wealth are concentrated in the hands of the elite. Together, these institutions determine primary societal objectives, priorities, and policies and this greatly influence the so-called lesser institutions (that is, the family, religion, and education). The elite dominate these lesser socializing institutions and thus shape the American social character.

(2005, p. 14)

Simon observes that in America elites not only have power and wealth, but also great influence over decisions affecting the conduct of those in political power and exert a high level of control over resources such as education, prestige, status, advocacy, skills and leadership, information, knowledge of processes such as government and politics, organization, and the ability to communicate. In addition elites arise disproportionately from the upper class – i.e. those who own or control the most powerful economic, governmental, military, media, legal, civic, and educational institutions – and constitute only a few ten thousandths of a percent of the population. Kanter (1977) predicted that by the beginning of the twenty-first century that a mere 200 multinational corporations would be running the world's economy. While this has yet to manifest, the trend is certainly in that direction and it would be reasonable to suggest that this level of power is held by roughly 500 corporations (Hartmann, 2002; Simon, 2005). Simon points out that there are only 5,416 positions within the most powerful governmental, military, economic, media, legal, civic, and educational institutions in America and these institutions are often interlocked by shared ownership. The political elite, those who hold key positions of power in the

government, also come from the upper levels of the American economy and frequently come from elite corporations, law, lobbying, and financial institutions. This is especially true of the George W. Bush administration.

The power elite also influence government through the lobbying of special interests and financing political campaigns. This violates majority rule and offers the poor little influence of the political process.

Therefore, according to Simon, it makes little difference which political party is dominant because the same social and corporate class controls the decision making process. He also suggests that the media is largely under the influence and control of the same elite, and that it deflects scrutiny of elite deviance by portraying crime and deviance as perpetrated by non-elites, especially the poor, and corporate capitalism as a laudable and necessary system.

Although it may appear obvious, one might ask why the elite go to the trouble to influence government. Simon answers by showing the benefits acquired from the State by the elite. He observes that the United States has lost much of its share of the world's income and that the American manufacturing base has severely declined due to offshoring and downsizing. Currently the preponderance of jobs, roughly 75 percent, are found either in government or in the service sector. As a result, corporations no longer grow by expanding jobs, plants, and equipment within the country but rather through insider trading and mergers, and-or growing internationally. Therefore it is in the interest of corporations to require tax relief, bailouts, legal and market protection, government contracts, subsidies, loans and loan guarantees, and other forms of corporate welfare. In addition corporations in America improve the bottom line by externalizing the true cost

of production to people and the environment. This often requires expensive government programs to undo, either completely or partially, the damage (Bakan, 2004; Kennedy Jr., 2004). But to supply both corporate welfare and remediation programs and state assistance for social programs exceeds government revenue. Therefore, at least since the 1980s, social programs for the poor, the elderly, the disabled, veterans, and other needy groups have been seriously curtailed. In essence, the government is serving the wealthy at the expense of the poor (Simon, 2005).

Note: Smaller businesses, the nation's biggest employer, also suffer from foreclosures, bankruptcy, bank failure, high interest rates, and declining demand due to domestic policy and corporate globalization (Bianco, 2006a; Fingleton, 2003; Greenwald, 2005; Osenton, 2004; Spotts, 2005).

Simon argues that in addition to its interrelated links to government, the power elite also have covert connections to organized crime. Among the most prominent and deviant are the connections and interdependencies between the corporate, military, government, and crime elite regarding the acquisition and distribution of drugs for profit and to cover the expense of covert operations. He also notes that this activity has gone on at least since the opium wars during the time of the British Empire, but has accelerated in the United States since the Reagan administration. Paradoxically, the more money that is spent on the ostensible "war on drugs" the more drug abuse increases in America. This is in large part due to the activities of the CIA, especially regarding the introduction of crack cocaine to the ghetto.

According to Simon elite deviance includes three types of acts, most if not all of which are practiced in the United States:

1. Economic domination, including: violations of antitrust laws; price fixing; false advertising; defrauding consumers; ecological damage; hazardous or unsafe goods; unsafe working environments; political bribery; and association with organized crime.
2. Crimes of government and governmental control, including: tax loopholes; subsidies; special favors; electioneering; concealing and whitewashing corruption; violation of civil liberties; graft; warfare; and political assassination.
3. Denial of basic human rights, including: torture, false imprisonment; denial of legal representation; denial of public participation; general injury of dignity and quality of life; sexual harassment; racism; sexism; arbitrary arrest; kidnapping; stockpiling nuclear arms; starvation; invasion of privacy; and stealing property.

Although the evidence of elite deviance is widespread, the consequences can be narrowed to a few categories:

1. Physical harm, including death and-or injury or illness.
2. Financial harm, including robbery, fraud, and denial of appropriate goods or services after payment.
3. Moral harm, eliciting deviance on the part of others, distrust, cynicism, and-or alienation on the part of non-elites.

Simon suggests that all of the above center on a single factor of elite deviance, the primacy of profit and power over anything else. In part, from a purely personal perspective, this is understandable. After all, it is generally demonstrated that status and wealth

improve overall well-being and longevity and people seek status as a means for improving their lives (R. H. Frank, 1985; Marmot, 2004; J. Scott, 2005). But the elite deviant seems to desire the destruction of democracy (Lasch, 1996) and large government while secretly relying on them for protection and welfare (Phillips, 2002). In paraphrasing a previous quote, one can either have elite deviance or democracy, one or the other, but not both. For the great majority of Americans who are the victims of elite deviance rather than the benefactors, an egalitarian and democratic government, economy, and society would most likely be worth the price to the elite deviant.

However, the benefits of elite deviance to the rich and powerful seem to prevail and to be the reason that the ills of previous chapters have continued to escalate. While most people appear to gain little from their lifestyles of overwork and overconsumption, often finding themselves dreaming of something better and more fulfilling, the primary tool of the elite deviant, fear, still seems to work its magic and keep people on the treadmill (Altheide, 2002; Furedi, 2006, 2007; Glassner, 2000; Ingebreetsen, 2001; Siegel, 2005). (This issue will be covered in more depth in the following chapter.)

Therefore a more detailed examination of elite deviance in the literature is useful. As mentioned previously, elite deviance can manifest in key areas, including those of government, media, and the corporation.

### *Corporations*

Although individual, corporate, and political elite deviance would wax and wane throughout America's history one could argue that it peaked in the Gilded Age of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But by the year 2000 moral and ethical issues had moved again to the

forefront of business and politics. This was, in part, due to the apparent failure of many large organizations, their leaders, and their political counterparts to act within conventional protocol and legal constraints – and even more to their visible displays of unbridled greed and avarice at the expense of the less-than-rich (Callahan, 2004; Fox, 2003; Hertz, 2003; Huffington, 2003; McLean & Elkind, 2003; Rosoff, Pontell, & Tillman, 1998; R. Smith & Emshwiller, 2003; Zinn, 2003).

The year 2002 saw its newspapers, magazines, TV shows, Internet content, and radio programs littered with articles and exposé's regarding the seemingly catastrophic breakdown of ethics in corporate America, and this trend appears to be a long one. From deceptive accounting to fraud to insider trading to egregious salaries and benefits for executives to the pillage and rape of employee retirement funds, the articles are too ubiquitous to list in anything close to their entirety. Adding a notable log to the fire, the July, 2002 issue of Forbes magazine offered a cover article entitled, "Bad Boys: From Rape Allegations to Fraud Convictions – Some Companies Will Ignore Anything to Protect Their Top Performers." Subsequent books about corporate and political deviance abound. It appeared that either something has recently gone terribly wrong, or a more profound problem has just begun to be exposed.

Maltreatment of employees and deception of the public is certainly an historical problem. Even in the 1950s, the ethical hey day of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were still those individuals who cheated their employees and hoodwinked the public, and certainly there were those whose wealth was ostentatiously greater than those of the people who worked on the shop floors of their factories. However, in the main, the ethical code of the time had evolved to one that required companies, and their executives, to bear a social and

moral responsibility to the consumer as well as to their employees. An exorbitant disparity between the salary of the factory worker and the executive was considered shameful and improper. Businesses were required to contribute to the general welfare. The organization was considered the bastion of the social ethos (Schor, 1998). In the 1970s, however, this ethic began to degrade and continued to degenerate through the greed minded 1980s until present day, making the current trend of exposing corporate faux pas but a renewal of an old outrage. The May 25, 1987 edition of Time magazine ran a cover story stating, "Not since the reckless 1920s and the desperate 1930s have the financial columns carried such unrelenting tales of vivid scandals, rascally characters and creative new means for dirty dealing (insider trading, money laundering, greenmailing)." The story continues by revealing "pinstripe outlaws," savings-and-loan officers in Texas, all with six-figure salaries and bonuses, who loot their institutions to buy trips to Paris and Rolls-Royces, and investment bankers with million-dollar incomes who sneak into Wall Street alleys to sell insider tips for \$700,000. This story from 15 years ago would fit nicely into the litany of today's headlines.

And evidently corporate elite deviance is being passed down to America's future business leaders. In an article by the same name (J. W. Dean, Brandes, & Dhwardkar, 1998), organizational cynicism is defined as a negative attitude toward an organization due to the belief that the organization lacks integrity. It includes feelings of anger, distress, and contempt toward the organization and demonstrates a tendency to disparaging and critical behavior toward the organization. Underlying this cynicism is a fundamental belief that the leaders of the organization sacrifice sincerity, honesty, and fairness to further their own self-interest. These feelings and attitudes lead to the belief that leaders act



in a deceptive and covert way based on hidden motives. In the current business environment cynicism and disloyalty are on the rise, both inside and outside of organizations' employ. According to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll cited in BusinessWeek ("Can trust be rebuilt?: In aftermath of string of corruption by corporations and corporate leaders," 2002), only 20 percent of Americans in 2002 had "quite a lot" or a "great deal" of confidence in Corporate America, as opposed to 30 percent in 1999. They note that, in the aftermath of a string of corruption by corporations and corporate leaders, Americans are feeling very little confidence in corporate America. Koestenbaum (2001) states that to succeed in the Post New Economy, leadership must bring organizations to new and unprecedented levels of personal responsibility and accountability. Unfortunately, a study conducted by the Aspen Institute (*Where will they lead?: MBA student attitudes about business & society (executive summary)*, 2002) of nearly 2200 MBA students from 13 major international business schools found that:

- There is a shift during the two years of business school from the importance of product quality and customer needs to the importance of shareholder value. Students come to believe that the primary responsibility of a well-run company is shareholder return.
- Students believe that they will have to make decisions during their career that will conflict with their values, but they do not believe that they can change the prevailing corporate values or culture.
- Students also say that they would choose jobs with work-life balance, approximately 45 percent, and challenging, diverse responsibilities, approximately 70 percent, over a job with high ethical standards, approximately 10 percent.

- They rank the needs of shareholders, customers, and employees well above social and environmental concerns.
- They believe that socially responsible behavior is a Human Resources issue.

Even though they did not know exactly how to define social responsibility, these students believed that business schools should do a better job of teaching students about it, and they also believed that they would do a better job than their predecessors in promoting it once they were hired as managers. Unfortunately, it seems that if they do not change their current attitudes the status quo will prevail – and in the meantime elite deviance continues apparently unabated in the corporate milieu.

Rebellion against corporate deviance committed by the East Indies Company was an important instigator of the Revolutionary War in America. Therefore, incorporation at the time of the founders was only temporary, a privilege, held separate from other corporations, and created for the purposes of the public good. However, it has apparently devolved into a machine for the express purpose of profit and power regardless of the consequences for others. Although the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was created to grant personhood to people of color after the Civil War, corporations quickly utilized every resource available to make it grant all of the rights and privileges of personhood, with fewer of the responsibilities, to corporations. Although never formally approved by the Supreme Court, rather, manifest as a mistake by a court recorder (Hartmann, 2002), corporate personhood has, nonetheless, been used to endow corporations with far more power and protection than they had previously experienced. Therefore, if one were to evaluate corporations as a person a potentially surprising result would occur. Corpora-

tions are psychopaths. In general, if one were to apply the World Health Organization Personality Checklist ICD 10 and assess the behavioral characteristics outlined in the Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV one would find that corporations quite often demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Callous unconcern for the feelings of others
2. Incapacity to maintain enduring relationship
3. Reckless disregard for the safety of others
4. Deceitfulness: Repeated lying and conning others for profit
5. Incapacity to experience guilt
6. Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors

In other words, corporations often demonstrate psychopathic behavior (Bakan, Crooks, & Achbar, 2004). Although corporations complain that putting profit before all other considerations is required of them by law, as a person they appear to be a failure as good members of society. Persons who only care about themselves generally lack moral conscience and place society at risk.

In support of the notion that corporations are often ill behaved the literature offers the following:

- Through campaign financing, lobbying, gifts, quid pro quo, intimidation, and other methods corporations exert an undue influence on both government and the justice system (Bakan, 2004; Derber, 2004; Draffan, 2003; M. Green, 2002; Nader & Smith, 1996; Rasmus, 2006; Simon, 2005; Sirota, 2006).

- Corporations often blatantly disregard environmental law, work to eliminate environmental law, and-or employ environmentally destructive methods (Butts, 2003; Caldicott, 2004; Farmer, 2003; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Simon, 2005; Zinn, 2003).
- Corporations are fostering a global capitalist oligarchy that is in opposition to democracy (Barber, 1996; Boyer, 2003; Chomsky, 2006; Derber, 1998, 2004; Faux, 2006; Hertz, 2003; Holland, 2006; Juhasz, 2007; Kelly, 2001; Korten, 2001; Nace, 2003; Perkins, 2004; Ritzer, 2004a, 2004b; Simon, 2005; Sirota, 2006).
- Recently many corporations have made headlines by being accused or found guilty of corruption, employee and customer fraud, crime, greed, scandal, endangering the public, undermining democracy and the American people, war profiteering, defrauding the government, and often supporting tyrants, terrorists, despotic regimes and fascism (Ante, 2005; Bakan et al., 2004; Barker, 2005; Brewster, 2003; *Child labor is back: Children again sewing clothing for Wal-Mart, Hanes, and other US companies*, 2006; Cruver, 2002; Eichenwald, 2005; Fox, 2003; Glasbeek, 2002; Greenwald, 2006; B. Hare, 2004; Hartmann, 2002; Huffington, 2003; Jeter, 2003; Jones, 2006; Kahn & Minnich, 2005; Krugman, 2003b; Maxwell, 2003; Maynard, 2006; McLean & Elkind, 2003; McNamee, 2005; S. Mitchell, 2006; Mokhiber & Weissman, 2006; Newton, 2006; Phillips, 2006; Pringle, 2006; Simon, 2005; R. Smith & Emshwiller, 2003; Squires, Smith, McDougall, & Yeack, 2003; Swartz & Watkins, 2003; Toffler & Reingold, 2003; Warrick, 2006). These corporations include: AIG, Global Crossing, Tyco, Xerox, Enron, Haliburton, KBR, Bechtel, McDonald-Douglas, DynCorp International, Citigroup, J. P. Morgan, HealthSouth, KPMG, Citigroup, WorldCom, ImClone,

Adelphia, Qwest, Dynegy, Sunbeam, Rite Aid, Sotheby's, Cedant, Tyson Foods, Arthur Anderson, Waste Management, Homestore, Wal-Mart, Pfizer, BP, Exxon-Mobile, Ford, Delphi, Roche, W. R. Grace, Janus, Invesco, Merck, Reliant Energy, K-Mart, Xerox, Blackwater, and Lockheed Martin.

- According to the film *The Corporation* (Bakan, 2004; Bakan et al., 2004) corporations often engage in activities that produce, utilize, or involve: sweatshops, child labor, toxic waste, union busting, dangerous products, pollution, carcinogens, environmental destruction, birth defects, habitat destruction, animal experimentation, factory farms, exploitation, dangerous working conditions, deforestation, acid rain, mountain top removal, nuclear waste, intergenerational tyranny, and dumbing-down the populace through withholding information and disseminating disinformation and misinformation (also see Tirman, 2006).

Although some suggest that due to brittle interdependencies the global corporation may be teetering on the brink of destruction (Lynn, 2005; Prestowitz, 2005).

### ***Government***

Howard Zinn (2003) offers an enlightening history of the United States in which elite deviance, although not under that name, is demonstrated repeatedly in the process of government and building the nation-empire. From the moment that Columbus landed on the new world European-style elite deviance in North America began in earnest, including:

- Enslavement of Native Americans

- Theft of their lands, dislocation, and decimation of their population including germ warfare
- Treaty infringement and disregard
- Denying power and participation to any but white male landowners
- Denying power and participation to women
- Denying power and participation to people of color
- Enslavement and dislocation of people of color
- Forced military service
- Religious persecution
- Political persecution
- False arrest and imprisonment
- Torture and murder
- Disseminating lies and obfuscating truths
- Denying legal representation
- Criminal acts
- Abuse of civil and human rights
- Manipulation of the government by corporations and the wealthy
- Mistreatment of military personnel, denying them appropriate supplies, clothing, protection, food, medical treatment, properly functioning arms, and compensation
- Discrimination against the poor on the basis of their poverty
- Election fraud
- Environmental destruction and depletion
- Refusing to let minorities, including poor whites, associate with each other

- Wars of aggression and imperialistic expansion
- Usurping the commons by the wealthy and powerful for personal gain

(Also see Kagan, 2006)

Recently, however, elite deviance in government appears to have reached a discernable peak (Tirman, 2006), incorporating the following:

- Hiding and removing evidence from the 9/11 attacks, accompanied by either mismanagement, complicity, or even responsibility for the disaster (Chomsky, 2003a, 2003b; Clarke, 2004; Coll, 2004; Earp, 2004; Griffin, 2004a, 2004b; Griffin & Scott, 2006; Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Jones, 2006; Leopold, 2006; Marrs, 2004, 2006; M. Moore, 2004; Morgan & Henshall, 2005; Rich, 2006; Ridgeway, 2005; Shane & Lewis, 2006; Tarpley, 2006; Zwicker, 2006).
- The inability to catch Osama Bin Laden, the President's release of the Bin Laden family to return to Saudi Arabia (without FBI interrogation) a few days after the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush's close business and family association with the Bin Laden's for the past 40 years, and the removal of the section on Saudi Arabia from the 9/11 Commission Report even though the great majority of the attackers, money, and leadership for the attacks came from Saudi Arabia (Berntsen & Pezzullo, 2006; Chomsky, 2003a; M. Moore, 2004; Rich, 2006; Unger, 2004).
- The plans of George W. Bush to invade Iraq since the first few days of his presidency and the false evidence given by him and his administration (including Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction, association with Al Qaida, and purchase of materials to build nuclear weapons) to justify the attack after the opportunity given them by the events of 9/11 (*Atricles of impeachment against*

*George W. Bush*, 2006; Baker et al., 2006; Bamford, 2004b; Blix, 2004; Clarke, 2004; Greenwald, 2004; Huffington, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Lando, 2007; M. Moore, 2004; Rampton & Stauber, 2003; Rich, 2006; Ritter, 2006; C. Scheer, Chaudhry, & Scheer, 2004; Wilson, ; B. Woodward, 2004).

- Abuse of power, secrecy, theft, and lying in general by the George W. Bush administration including: false flag operations; disregard for international law; intimidating or eliminating opponents through bribery, burglary, perjury, wiretapping and eavesdropping, harassment tax audits, and threatening family members; election fraud; economic mismanagement; mismanagement of the Iraq war as well as non-competitive-bid war profiteering and the waste of government funds (including “misplacing” \$9 billion in Iraq, which has never been recovered); unlawful renditions, execution, and torture at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and secret prisons; selling arms to America’s enemies; the creation of perpetual war; and using the World Trade Organization and the World Bank to impoverish other nations and place them under an undue burden of debt in order to pillage their natural resources and coerce votes in the United Nations favorable to the United States (Altman, 2005; Blumenthal, 2006c; Bugliosi & Ivins, 2001; Chandrasekeran, 2006; Chomsky, 2006; Cousins, Perks, & Warren, 2005; Danner, 2004; John W. Dean, 2004, 2006a; Dershowitz, 2001; Devine, 2004; Dreyfuss, 2005; Dworkin & Dworkin, 2002; Eisenberg & Burger, 2005; Eisendrath & Goodman, 2004; Faux, 2004; Franken, 2003, 2005; Freeman & Bleifuss, 2005; Galbraith, 2006; Gellman & Linzer, 2006; Gibbs, 2005; Goodman & Goodman, 2006; Gordon & Trainor, 2006; Greenberg & Dratel, 2005; Greenwald, 2004, 2006;



Gregg & Rozell, 2004; Grey, 2006; Gumbel, 2005; Gutman, 2006; Halper & Clarke, 2004; Harbury, 2005; Haugse, Perez, & Sekler, 2002; Hersh, 2004; Holding, 2007; Jack Huberman, 2006; Huffington, 2003, 2004; Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Juhasz, 2007; Kennedy Jr., 2004; Lapham, 2006; Mackey & Miller, 2004; McCoy, 2006; A. Miller, 2005; M. C. Miller, 2004, 2005; J. Moore & Slater, 2006; M. Moore, 2001; Moyers, 2006; Newhouse, 2003; "Outing secret jails," 2005; Packer, 2005; Paglen & Thompson, 2006; Perkins, 2004, 2007; Pope & Rauber, 2004; Prados, 2006; Prestowitz, 2003; Raskin, 2003; Ratner & Ray, 2004; Rich, 2006; Ricks, 2006; Risen, 2006; Ritter & Hersh, 2005; Saar & Novak, 2005; Tarbell & Burbach, 2004; Tiefer, 2006; Vidal, 2002b; Waldman, 2004; Waller, Burger, Shannon, & Allen, 2005; Wilson, ; Zagorin, 2005; Zagorin & Duffy, 2005).

- A buildup to a fascist or near-to-fascist approach on the part of the George W. Bush administration including: extreme nationalism, abuse of and disdain for civil and human rights, hyper-patriotism and dehumanizing or demonizing anyone criticizing the regime, punishing the non-punisher, an obsession with limited immigration, an intrinsic alliance with large and powerful corporations, association with religious fundamentalism, utilizing or creating crisis to gain power, supremacy of the military and hyper-militarism, rampant sexism, censorship, support of foreign dictatorships, control and manipulation of mass media, obsession with national security, protection of corporate power, terrorist activities, suppression of the rights and power of labor, fraudulent elections, strong reliance on mercenaries and a privatized military, discrimination against race or culture or creed, disdain

for intellectuals and the arts, obsession with crime and punishment, widespread cronyism and corruption, projecting all evil onto an external enemy to unify the state and-or to justify a failing economy, restricted travel, and the creation or approximation of a police state (Ackerman, 2006; A. Bacevich, 2005; Berlet & Lyons, 2000; Blinkorn, 1990; Boggs, 2003, 2005; Boggs & Pollard, 2006; Bovard, 2000, 2003, 2006; Brecher, Cutler, & Smith, 2005; Brin, 1998; Brown & Neier, 2003; Cassel, 2004; *Censored 2006: The top 25 censored stories*, 2005; Chang, 2002; Chomsky, 1989, 2003a, 2006; Chomsky & Barsamian, 2005; Cohen & Wells, 2004; Coker, 2004; Conason, 2007; Darmer, Baird, & Rosenbaum, 2004; Delgado & Hochschild, 2003; Dershowitz, 2006; Drohan, 2004; Eakman, 1998; Eisendrath & Goodman, 2004; Enloe, 2007; Etzioni, ; Falk, 2003; Fallows, 2006; Frum & Perle, 2003; George, 1991; Gilbert, 2006; Giroux, 2004a, 2004b; Goff, 2004; M. Goldberg, 2006; Gonzales & Delgado, 2006; Grandin, 2007; "Great Teller's ghost," 2005; Greider, 1992; Gross, 1980; Halper & Clarke, 2004; Hayes, 2004; Hedges, 2003, 2007; Hentoff, 2003; Ivins, 2006; Johnson, 2000, 2004, 2006; Juhasz, 2007; Leone & Anrig Jr., 2003; Lieven, 2005; Lifton, 2003; Lind, 1996; Lochr, 2005; J. Mann, 2004; G. T. Martin, 2005; McGowan, 2001; Mcgrath, 2004; Mearsheimer, 2001; M. C. Miller, 2004, 2005; Monahan, 2006; M. Moore, 2003; Norton, 2004; O'Harrow Jr., 2005; Olshansky, 2002; Palast, 2006; C. Parenti, 2003; Picolotti & Taillant, 2003; Pontin, 2004; Rajiva, 2005; Risen, 2006; F. Rosen, 2005; J. Rosen, 2005; Russo, 2006; Ryan, 2004; Scahill, 2007; Schumacher, 2006; Seder & Sherrill, 2006; Simon, 2005; P. W. Singer, 2003; Soley, 2002; Solomon, 2005; Solomon & Erlich, 2003; Sorluccho, 2006; D.

Steinberg, 2001/2002; J. Steinberg, Papert, & Boyd, 2003; Sunstein & Epstein, 2001; Suskind, 2006; Whitman, 2003; Wilson, ; Yoshino, 2006). Note: Many observe that the radical far left can be just as conspiratorial and fascist in the application of their ideology (Bernstein, 1994; Bruce, 2001; Elder, 2002).

- Although certainly not a new phenomenon, there has been a recent resurgence of elite deviance perpetrated by the church involving child molestation, sexual abuse, violence, sexism including domination and subjugation, and an American version of social dominion (Berry, 1992; *Betrayal: The crisis in the Catholic Church*, 2003; Bruni & Burkett, 2002; S. Diamond, 1989, 1995, 2000; France, 2004; M. Goldberg, 2006; Gorenberg, 2000; Handlin, 2005; Hardisty, 2000; Hedges, 2007; Kennedy, 2001; Linker, 2006; Loehr, 2005; W. Martin, 1997; Phillips, 2006; Plante, 2004; Rossetti, 1996; Rudin, 2005; Simon, 2005; Sipe, 1995; Taylor, 2005; C. Thomas & Dobson, 1999; Weaver & Appleby, 1995).
- Government alliance with organized crime, radical religious conservatives, and corporations in order to inappropriately influence the American public, national and international policy, the Iraq war, and the legal system (Abel, 2006; Abraham, 2000; Bennett, 2007; Rossell S. Bowen, 1992; Russell S. Bowen, 2001; Bryce, 2004; Chomsky, 2006; Clark, 2005; Eisenberg, 2005; Garten, 2005; Goodman & Goodman, 2004; J. Green, Rozell, & Wilcox, 2003; M. Green, 2002, 2006; Holland, 2006; Kelley, 2004; C. Lewis, 2004b; Palast, 2002, 2006; Perkins, 2007; Phillips, 2004; Rasmus, 2006; Seder & Sherrill, 2006; Sperry, 2003; Tiefer, 2006; Tumulty & Cooper, 2005; Unger, 2004; Vidal, 2002a).

- It has become nearly a default assumption that political campaigns cost so much that politicians are both in the pocket of their contributors, usually corporations and special interests, and are perpetually in the process of campaigning. Therefore it is quite likely that bills will not get read or that politicians will not be at their assigned posts for legislative deliberation, with the style of campaign having apparently become so much more important than the substance of governing (Blumenthal, 1980; Drew, 2000; M. Green, 2002; C. Lewis, 2004a; M. Moore, 2001; Sifry & Watzman, 2004; Simon, 2005).
- George W. Bush's psychological profile as described and diagnosed by others: embracing groupthink as a method of management and governing, insensitivity to the pain and suffering of others, inflexibility, refusal to learn, denial of reality, lack of curiosity, megalomania, sadism, refusing to admit or feel guilt, lack of introspection, large discrepancy between words and action, extreme secrecy, narcissism, lying and deception, arrogance and indifference, projection of fantasy, simplistic-black-and-white world view, desire for revenge, and paranoia. (Allen, 2006; Alterman & Green, 2004; Bartlett, 2006; Blumenthal, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Bonifaz, 2003; Byrd, 2004; Clarke, 2004; Corn, 2003; John W. Dean, 2004; J. A. Frank, 2004; Franken, 2003; Fritz, Keefer, & Nyhan, 2004; Gibbs & Dickerson, 2004; Jake Huberman, 2003; Jack Huberman, 2006; Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Ivins, 2004; M. C. Miller, 2004; Minutaglio, 2001; Rich, 2003; C. Scheer et al., 2004; R. Scheer, 2006; P. Singer, 2004; Suskind, 2004; b. Woodward, 2006). Among other disorders, this aligns with the personality of a sociopath, or Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD). Using a DSM-IV Associated Features and Disorders

scale (*Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, 2000) an individual with APD is described as being callous and lacking empathy, cynical, and contemptuous of the feelings, rights, and suffering of others. They may have an inflated and arrogant self-appraisal, display a glib, superficial charm and their image of self reflects unrealistic notions of superiority. When they encounter evidence of their human limitations, they will attempt to restore self-esteem by exerting power. Individuals with APD have learned that they can, or should be able to, ignore the needs of others, do whatever feels compelling, and seduce or bully others to avoid adverse consequences. They are often untroubled by guilt and may develop a talent for pathological lying. Individuals with APD make their personal desires paramount, believing that they alone deserve every advantage. They also become adroit at feigning innocent victimization to absolve their own blame. These individuals also frequently demonstrate glibness and superficiality, a quick temper, deceitful and manipulative behavior, emotional shallowness, egocentricity and grandiosity, lack of remorse or guilt, and a lack of empathy. The resemblance to George W. Bush seems evident (R. D. Hare, 1993; Stout, 2005).

- The CIA is and has been involved in the political overthrow of foreign governments (often replacing democratically elected officials with dictators who are more amenable to America's interests), misinformation and disinformation campaigns, and drug trafficking, especially in heroin and crack cocaine, while the funds for the failed war on drugs is apparently used for black operations (*Allegations of CIA providing drugs to American cities*, 1996; Bamford, 2004a; Baum, 1997; Bertram, Blachman, Sharpe, & Andreas, 1996; Castillo III, 1994; A.

Cockburn & Clair, 1999; L. Cockburn, 1987; Donnelly, 2006; Gray, 2002; Kinzer, 2003, 2006; Kwitny, 1987; Lando, 2007; Masters, 2001; McCoy, 2003; Ricks, 2006; Risen, 2006; Ritter & Hersh, 2005; Schou, 2006; P. D. Scott, 2003; P. D. Scott & Marshall, 1998; Simon, 2005; Sniffen, 1998; Webb, 1999).

Finally, more than the sad conviction of Scooter Libby for revealing the identity of Valerie Plame, or even more embarrassing and disgraceful than the association of the George W. Bush administration with Ken Lay, Jack Abramoff, and Ralph Reed, which appeared to demonstrate in an obvious way the interrelated dependencies between religion, lobbying, corporations, and government, was the outing of Tom Delay, the House majority leader from 2003 to 2006. Delay, having given strong support to the aforementioned group, and a man who touted his Christian values and anti-abortion stance, was revealed to have implemented, sanctioned, supported, and concealed child servitude and prostitution in the Mariana Islands, including forced abortions (Allen & Bacon Jr., 2006; Bianco, 2006b; Carney, 2006; Dubose & Reid, 2006; Dunham, 2005; Dunham & Javers, 2006; Franken, 2005; "A hammer blow," 2005; "Jack in a box: Besieged lobbyist Jack Abramoff offers his take on the ethics scandals roiling Washington and threatening his good friend Tom DeLay," 2005; Sasseen, 2006; Stone, 2006; E. Thomas, 2005; Tumulty, 2005, 2006; Tumulty & Allen, 2005; Zagorin & Allen, 2006).

### *Media*

Although Jefferson's Fourth Estate has the potential to be a menace or a messiah (Demers, 2002) it seems to have fared poorly since the tragedy of 9/11. Because of the very real influence of most media by government and corporate interests many accuse the

media of dishonesty in omission and commission and of a bias towards the left or right. However, the greater danger appears to be that most media, especially television, offer no content at all and yet appear to keep viewers addicted, dumbed-down, frightened, and distracted from the real issues that need their attention, which most certainly could serve those who wish to perpetrate elite deviance (Alterman, 2003; Altheide, 2002; Bagdikian, 2004; Bakan et al., 2004; Barnouw, 1997; Beinhart, 2005; Blumenthal, 2006c; Boehlert, 2006; Brock, 2002, 2004; Brookes, 2006; Buncombe, 2006; Chomsky, 1989, 1997; Conason, 2003; E. Diamond & Silverman, 1997; Downie & Kaiser, 2003; Entman, 2003; Fallows, 1997; Fenton, 2005; Fisher, 2006; Franken, 2003, 2005; Fritz et al., 2004; B. Goldberg, 2003; Goldsmith & Wu, 2006; Goodman & Goodman, 2004, 2006; Hamilton, 2004; P. Hart, 2003; R. P. Hart, 1999; Healy, 1999; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Herts-gaard, 2003; Holahan, 2006; Kitty, 2005a, 2005b; Klein, 2006; Lerner, 1997; Mander, 1978; Massing, 2004; McAllister, 1996; Robert Waterman McChesney, 2000; Robert W. McChesney, 2002, 2004; McGinniss, 1988; Norris, Just, & Kern, 2003; M. Parenti, 1992; *Perceptions of partisan bias seen as growing - especially by Democrats: Cable and Internet loom large in fragmented political news universe*, 2004; Postman, 1986; Rajiva, 2005; Schiller, 1989; Shachtman, 1995; Siegel, 2005; Snow, 2002, 2004; Solomon & Erlich, 2003; Steyer, 2002; H. Thomas, 2006; Turse, 2006; Viguerie & Franke, 2004; Waldman, 2004; Winn, 2002; Young, 1998; Zwicker, 2006).

### ***Iron Quadrangle***

The military-industrial complex first spoken of by Dwight Eisenhower evolved into an iron triangle of business, government, and the military; then into an iron quadrangle

gle of business, government, the military, and a revolving door of other interests (Abraham, 2000; Birnbaum, 2006; Rossell S. Bowen, 1992; Briody, 2004, 2005; Caldicott, 2004; John W. Dean, 2004; Domhoff, 2002; Drutman, Cray, & Nader, 2004; Dye, 2001; Goodman & Goodman, 2004; Greenwald, 2004, 2006; Hiatt, 2007; Hossein-zadeh, 2006; Huffington, 2003; Jones, 2006; Lee, 2004; C. Lewis, 2004a; McCartney, 1989; T. C. Miller, 2006; Mills, 2000; M. Moore, 2003, 2004; K. D. Myers, 1995; Perkins, 2004, 2007; Phillips, 1995, 2004, 2006; Rossi, 2005; Rothkopf, 2005; Sifry & Watzman, 2004; Wink, 1998) as illustrated in Figure 46:

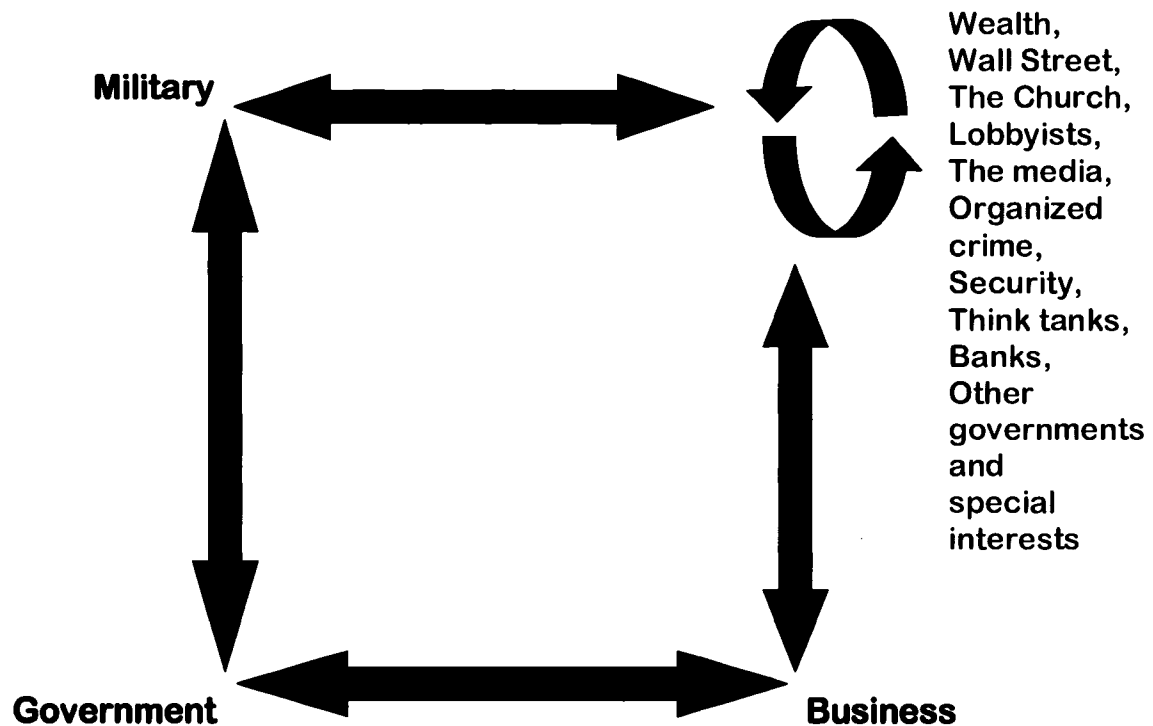


Figure 46. Relationship between parts of the Iron Quadrangle.



Figure 46 show how the interests of individual wealth, religion, banks, the stock market, lobbyists, organized crime, and other special interest can revolve in and out of the iron quadrangle, depending on their needs and the needs of the corporate-military-governmental complex. In the same vein, those operating within the military, government, corporate sector, or any of the other interdependent interests can and often do change careers within this superstructure. Often ex-military personnel will work for weapons manufacturers upon retirement. Corporate officers often are assigned to high positions in government while government officials often go on to work for large corporations or lobbying firms, and so on. In this way the interests of the elite continue to be served by a small group of interchangeable guardians and directors.

### *Imperialism*

One of the more blatant expressions of elite deviance seems to be the establishment of empire. But does the United States fit the bill? Thompson (2004) asks:

Is there an American empire?

It is probably our most cherished item of national faith that the United States is not an imperial power. Empire, after all, is for those others, the French and the Belgians with their steaming tropical domains; the Axis powers and their brutal conquests; the Soviet Union imposing its system on a host of enslaved nations; and, above all, the British and the splotches of red that on old maps and globes used to highlight the colonies on which the sun never set. America, we are convinced, possesses no such empire.

Yet when we say "empire," the principle example we have in mind is the British, the British Empire was always more than the sum of its formal colonies. It embraced also a host of protectorates, especially along the searoutes between India and Gibraltar; its investment underwrote the economics of Asia, Africa, and the Americas; the Royal Navy ruled the waves and, combined with the British army, carried out the highest goal of Victorian foreign policy, the containment of Russia.

And America? America most certainly possesses *de facto* colonies. What else are Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, Grenada, Guam, and Okinawa, and the military bases that encircle the globe from the North Pacific to the North Atlantic? In number, furthermore, America's protectorates – Japan, North Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, the emirates of the Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bosnia, and all the members, old and new, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – far exceed those of the *Pax Britannica*. American investments, private and public, cover the earth. The American military rules not only the waves but also the rocks and rills, deserts and forests, and much of both hemispheres besides. In containing Russia... the United States took up where Great Britain left off. America is the very model of a modern major empire.

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Imperialism and imperialistic tendencies appear to have been part of American aspirations since its inception, but it was made abundantly clear when in 1941 the era was declared the American Century (de Grazia, 2005; Lafeber, 1998; N. Smith, 2003; Zinn, 2003). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are still those who deny the reality, but it seems that the facts have been laid to rest. America to all appearances is culturally, economically, politically, and militarily a global dynastic empire (A. J. Bacevich, 2002; Boggs, 2003, 2005; Boot, 2002; Brzezinski, 1997, 2004; Chomsky, 2003a; Chomsky & Barsamian, 2005; A. Cockburn & St. Clair, 2004; Dershowitz, 2006; Dorrien, 2004; Earp, 2004; Eland, 2004; Ferguson, 2004; Foster, 2006; Garrison, 2004; Gowan, 1999; Grandin, 2007; Gregory, 2004; Griffin, 2006; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Harvey, 2003; Hiatt, 2007; Hudson, 2003; Jamail, 2006; Joffe, 2006; Johnson, 2000, 2004, 2006; Khalidi, 2004; Kiernan, 2005; Kinzer, 2006; Landau, 2003; Lifton, 2003; Mailer, 2003; M. Mann, 2003; Merry, 2005; Newhouse, 2003; Odom & Dujarric, 2004; M. Parenti, 1995; Perkins, 2007; Phillips, 2004; Prestowitz, 2003; Rajiva, 2005; Ritter & Hersh, 2005; Rothkopf, 2005; Roy, 2004; N. Smith, 2003; Stephanson, 2000; Tarbell & Burbach, 2004; Taylor, 2005; Thompson, 2004; Tremblay, 2004; Vidal, 2004), although the empire may be in

decline (Bello, 2005; Engelhardt, 2006b; Johnson, 2000, 2004, 2006; Nye Jr., 2002; Rupert, 2004; N. Smith, 2005; Soros, 2004; Todd, 2002; Wallerstein, 2003).

There are many seeming contradictions involving empire and its constituency of government, religion, and corporations. Currently corporations and the religious right appear to be working with the government to promote empire (Newberry, 2006; Taylor, 2005). But this is coupled with the strange bedfellow of nationalism. However, if one is part of the ruling nation it can still be congruent. Globalization like nationalism is another potential contradiction but is often a tool of corporate and political empire, and would likely not exist in its present state without it (Beder, 2002; Bernett, 2004; Hiatt, 2007; N. Smith, 2005; Stiglitz, 2003). So far the neoconservative agenda seems to both seek empire to establish law and order and be willing to break the law in order to get it (M. C. Miller, 2004; Norton, 2004; G. F. Smith, 2006). And although the theocons want the help of government to establish their new world order they seek the end of secular government (Berger, 1999; Linker, 2006; Taylor, 2005; C. Thomas & Dobson, 1999).

All of these distortions and convolutions appear to facilitate what was previously mentioned as a fascist or near-to-fascist style in contemporary American government. It is almost as if George W. Bush were using Sinclair Lewis's 1935 classic, *It Can't Happen Here* (S. Lewis, 2005), as a road map (Conason, 2007). Sinclair wrote of a right-wing president and a brilliant but unscrupulous political strategist who collaborate with religious fundamentalists and corporations to destroy civil liberties, consolidate power, and establish an America form of fascism through propaganda and the manipulation of security threats to the nation. Conason reasons that George W. Bush and his administration have used religious fundamentalists, media propaganda, a war based on deception, politi-

cal secrecy, intimidation, attacks on civil rights, and strong corporate connections to create an authoritarian government that verges on a similar fascism, including military tribunals and torture (Conason, 2003, 2007). The comparison is made complete by Bush's adviser, Karl Rove, and Rove's seemingly dishonest and scurrilous tactics in removing any resistance to their schemes (J. Moore & Slater, 2003, 2006; Slater, 2006). (Also see Bryce, 2004; Phillips, 2004).

Based on the evidence one could conclude that the prevailing model for becoming President of the United States would be as follows:

The presidential twelve-step program:

1. Get money, influence, and power through any means possible.
2. Get elected through any means possible.
3. Give power and money to your closest friends.
4. Punish, impoverish, demonize, and neutralize your enemies.
5. Protect and pay off those who gave you the money, influence, and power to get elected.
6. Deceive the general population.
7. Enslave the general population.
8. Steal their money.
9. Incite divisions and wage war through any means necessary.
10. Centralize wealth through any means regardless of the cost to the general populace or the environment.
11. Claim to be doing God's work.
12. Repeat cycle.

But the prevailing conservatism and neoconservatism in America (Friedman, 2005) seems to wave away all the nastiness and contradiction by painting the imperialistic drive of the United States with a veneer of cheerful pastels. For example, Bevin Alexander (2005), author of *How America Got It Right: The U.S. March to Military and Political Supremacy*, observes:

The concept of America as an island explains virtually all of American history. It explains why we turned our back on Europe for the first century and a quarter of our independence in order to conquer and populate the most important and favored part of this island, and to eliminate any threat to it from the north or the south. It explains why – although weak, newly independent, and lightly populated – we laid out the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 to close off colonization or interference in the Western Hemisphere, thereby preventing any world power from challenging us on our island.... But to protect this treasure, we found that we needed to establish the world's paramount military structure and become the world's preeminent political power... America's march to economic, military, and political supremacy....

We have made the right decisions in the vast majority of cases throughout our history, choosing democracy over plutocracy, equality over privilege, liberty over oppression, and the prosperity of the many over the greed of the few.... This inclination to do right has been virtually unique among the nations of the world, and for this reason we have been often misunderstood. How could a country so rich and successful be so unselfish and caring? We *must* have darker motives, critics say. We *must* be seeking to create an empire, to dominate everyone else, to grab the oil or the trade or whatever else for our own selfish purposes. People from more grasping, less-idealistic societies find it impossible to accept that we honestly believe that giving everyone opportunity is the recipe for abundance and happiness everywhere, not merely in the favored reaches of the United States of America. We honestly believe that securing other people's freedom is the best guarantee that we can keep our own. We do not *want* to dominate the world. We want to live our lives in peace, and we hope other peoples will do the same. We go out into the world to redress errors, to stop unacceptable behavior, to challenge threats to our island and our liberty. When we have settled the problem, we want to go home, not stay and build an empire.

From the outset of our history, Americans have focused on creating a great nation in North America, not on conquering other peoples. For more than a century after the Revolution, Americans were preoccupied with establishing the economic and political foundations of this nation....

[But] in the first decade of the twentieth century.... the United States saw that protection of the western Hemisphere now rested on its own shoulders. Far more significant, we saw that we could not wait until an aggressive power had built enough strength to invade our hemisphere, but that we must go out to the aggressor, wherever he was, and smash him there. In short, we must take over the world hegemonic role that Britain had exercised since 1660....

It took the United States until 1940 to undertake fully the task of creating the world's greatest military power. The spark came with the disastrous collapse of France and the ascendance of Nazi Germany, and in the next five years, the United States developed a military able to defeat any provocation anywhere on earth. We have never relinquished our place since. Indeed, the superiority of the U.S. military has grown exponentially since the end of World War II. Its power now exceeds that of all the rest of the world combined. Along with this power had grown American political strength....

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, no nation was able to match the United States. Some countries feared we would use our power to dominate the world. To prevent this from happening, they tried to tie down the United States by means of international bodies like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. Since the United States saw no insurmountable dangers on the horizon, it was more or less willing to work within an international context. Then the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. For Americans, the world changed in an instant. The terrorists had struck directly at our island, at what we hold most precious – at the very treasures we built our overwhelming military and political power to protect in the first place. The attacks transformed our nation from a benign hegemon into a ferocious avenger.

This was another right decision of the United States, and a most vital one. For terrorism and dictatorial rogue nations pose as great a danger to the peace of the world as ever Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin did. We saw this with absolute clarity on that horrible day of death and tragedy. And we resolved that *this* we would *not* allow to endure.... [But] misconceptions about American motives and aspirations are not limited to lands that harbor terrorists....

This has led Americans to conclude that ours is the only nation that will actually go into the world and strike down evil. We were encouraged when Britain and Australia especially, but also some Continental nations, lined up with us. But we know that they would do little without the active determination of the United States. For these reasons, we *must* dominate the political life of this planet, and we *must* keep an invincible military as an ever-present deterrence.

pp. 1 – 6

But America seems to have stumbled in its current attempt to win the hearts and minds of other nations at the point of a gun, and so far coercive diplomacy has generally

failed to work (Art & Cronin, 2003). And the American people seem to have suffered under the burden of an elite deviance that serves fewer and fewer people.

In the forward to the 1972 edition of *Road to Serfdom* Hayek wrote:

The most important change which extensive government control produces is a psychological change, an alteration in the character of the people. This is necessarily a slow affair, a process which extends not over a few years but perhaps over one or two generations. The important point is that the political ideals of a people and its attitude toward authority are as much the effect as the cause of the political institutions under which it lives. This means, among other things, that even a strong tradition of political liberty is no safeguard if the danger is precisely that new institutions and policies will gradually undermine and destroy that spirit. The consequences can of course be averted if that spirit reasserts itself in time and the people not only throw out the party which has been leading them further and further in the dangerous direction but also recognize the nature of the danger and resolutely change their course.

pp. 11, 12

Many influential Republicans (and Libertarians), including those in office, are distancing themselves from George W. Bush, his neoconservative agenda, and his strong alliance with the evangelical right (Bartlett, 2006; Blumenthal, 2006a; Bovard, 2004; Buchanan, 2004; Cornwell, 2006; John W. Dean, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Engelhardt, 2006a; Gold, 2004; Halper & Clarke, 2004; Hirsh, 2006; Hulse, 2006; Landau, 2006; Milbank, 2006; G. Mitchell, 2006; Phillips, 2006; Przybyla & Woodruff, 2006; Sager, 2006; Savage, 2006; *Sky falls in on Bush the outcast*, 2006; Slivinski, 2006; *Specter takes Senate lead on eavesdropping*, 2006; Sullivan, 2006; E. Thomas & Barry, 2006; Thomma & Kuhnhenh, 2006; Viguerie, 2006; J. Weisman & Asthana, 2006; S. R. Weisman, 2006).

There are also those who believe that both Democrats and Republicans have run aground, spilling whatever supplies they had left of integrity and intelligence, through relinquishing their power of navigation to special interest and ideologies and risking any chance of a fair voyage into the future (Peterson, 2004). (They have also been accused of running metaphors into the ground, but that is a different issue.) And many suggest that

America needs to move away from the excesses of both the Right and the Left, reaching a center of sane progress and policies (Halstead & Lind, 2002; Satin, 2004; Sosnik, Fournier, & Dowd, 2006).

Is it, however, because the American people don't know what is going on – or that they don't want to know? This will be the subject of the next chapter.



## **Chapter Eleven: False Social Norms Marketing**

So far I have suggested that many in American have become slaves (through overwork and overconsumption) to elite deviants who use fundamentalist religion, corporations, the military, and government to realize an apocalyptic vision of imperialistic dominion.

I have also noted that quality of life in the United States appears to be severely lagging for a nation with so much power and money. As one may recall, there is a marked difference politically and socially between the United States and the countries of Scandinavia.

Figure 47 shows a continuum of individualistic concern moving toward group concern on the horizontal axis, concern for the present moving toward concern for the future on the vertical axis, and disconnection to integration on the “z”, or third-dimension axis.

As noted previously the quality of life in Scandinavia excels in almost every aspect in compared to the United States. Although I cannot at this point prove causality, it is interesting that America has apparently evolved into a nation that is primarily concerned with “getting mine for me now and screw everyone else,” whereas the countries of Scandinavia appear to look to the future with the common good in mind. Americans are less happy, Scandinavians are much happier and less depressed. Is there a connection? I believe so.

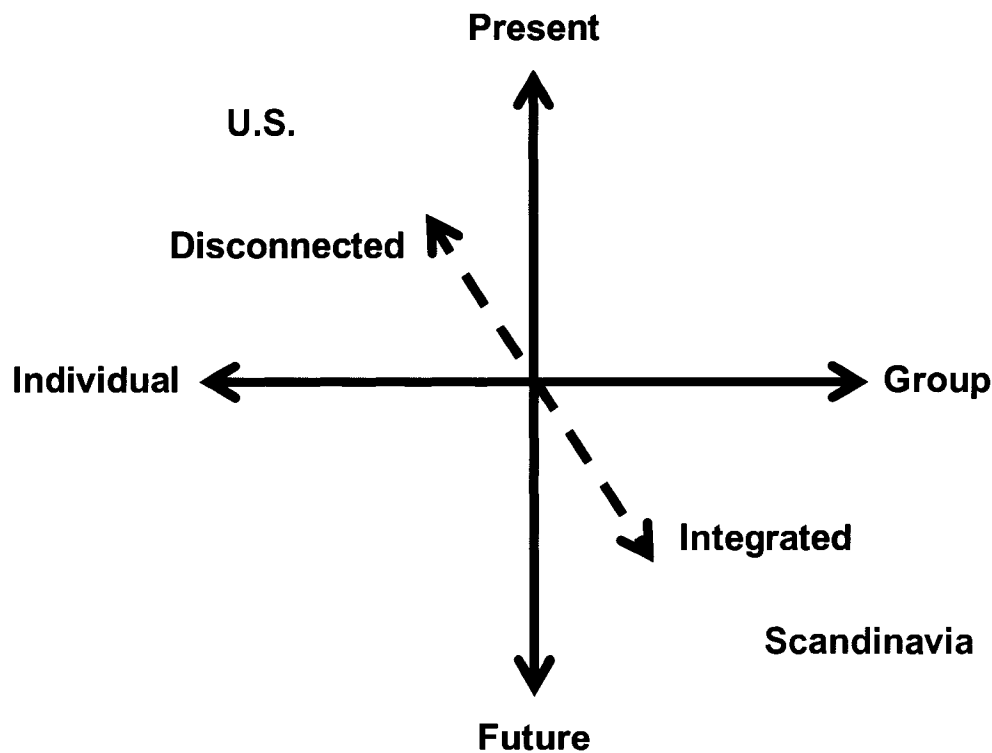


Figure 47. Three-dimension model plotting time horizon, level of community, and level of integration within an economy or culture.

Therefore I have questioned why people in America allow this to happen, since to all appearances only an extremely small percentage of Americans benefit from an ongoing expression of elite deviance and its affect on the nation. Do Americans allow this to continue because they don't know, don't care, or don't want to know?

In this chapter I propose that the most powerful tool in the elite deviant's arsenal is the creation and dissemination of false social norms, or false social norms marketing. This technique can produce ignorance, a lack of concern, and a fear of knowing more.

In the matrix in Figure 48, a type 1 false social norm (FSN 1) occurs when people personally believe that something is true or false when in fact it is not. A type 2 false social norm (FSN 2) occurs when people believe that other people believe that something is

true or false when in fact other people do not. Therefore, the elite deviant can promote type 1 and type 2 false social norms through lying and-or making people believe that other people believe these lies. Of the two, however, the marketing of type 2 false social norms appears to be by far the more effective.

|                                             | Valid            | Invalid                  |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| People believe It                           | True Social Norm | Type 1 False Social Norm |
| People believe that other people believe It | True Social Norm | Type 2 False Social Norm |

Figure 48. Definitions of Type 1 and Type 2 social norms.

The marketing of false social norms exists among an array of techniques that can be used to manipulate people's perceptions, beliefs, and actions. Some of the alternate techniques and phenomena will be articulated in this chapter, but the marketing of false social norms appears to be among the most powerful and effective methods currently used to sway the American people.

Because false social norms marketing (FSNM) is a term that I have invented, a distinction between social marketing, social-norms marketing, and false-social-norms marketing needs be made. Of the three, social marketing appears to be the most common and emerged in the late 1960s as the application of commercial marketing techniques to further social consciousness and social programs. It was originally defined as the design, implementation and management of programs designed to influence the acceptability of social ideas, using aspects of product planning, pricing, communications, distribution, and marketing research (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). It was later defined as a planning process that promotes the voluntary behavior of target audiences through offering desired benefits, reducing barriers to those benefits, and persuading people to participate (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). More currently it is defined as:

The use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole.

(Kotler, Roberto, & Lee, 2002, p. 5)

Much like those who sell products and services, social marketers are selling something. The difference, however, is that they are generally selling behavioral change in the form of getting people to accept or reject a new behavior or change or abandon an old one. This may involve the rejection or acceptance of a product or service, such as the rejection of alcohol and tobacco or the acceptance of guidance and counseling, but its target is a change in behavior that benefits the individual or group and can also be targeted at broad social change (Andreasen, 1995, 2005; Weinreich, 1999). The goal may ultimately be a change in public policy under the auspices of a public cause (Earle, 2000) or even the marketing of a public cause in order to promote a specific brand (Adkins, 2000; Marconi, 2002; Pringle & Thompson, 1999). However, social marketing typically

pertains only to issues and ideas that are of wide societal concern because they involve harmful but freely chosen individual or group behaviors that result in social costs for which other members of society must pay, either directly or indirectly (M. Rothschild, 1999).

Different in many aspects, social-norms marketing nonetheless arose from the convergence of social marketing and social norms theory. Social norms theory states that group norms not only characterize the group but also regulate group members' actions to perpetuate the collective norm (Perkins, 2002). People commonly choose to behave in a manner that is consistent with the group norms of those reference groups that they deem to be most important. People are allelomimetic – that is, similar to other herd animals, their behavior is influenced by the behavior of those around them (Frauenfelder, 2001). Although many people see themselves as individuals, and this belief is culturally reinforced, they demonstrate a strong tendency to conform to group patterns and expectations. This tendency is consistently documented in laboratory experiments, social surveys and participant observation of cultural contexts. Thus, group norms are powerful independent variables in accounting for or determining individual behavior (Perkins, 2002).

Therefore, social-norms marketing is used to change people's behavior based on their perceptions of the behavioral and attitudinal norms – what is normal, acceptable, or even expected – within a particular social context (Ritzel, 2002). The process rests on the observation that peer influences are more influential in shaping individual behavior than biological, personality, familial, religious, or cultural influences (A.D. Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986; Perkins, 2002). These peer influences come in two forms: the perceived norm

based on what people think their peers believe or do, and the actual norm based on their peers' real beliefs and actions. Of the two, the perceived norm is the more powerful peer influence (Ritzel, 2002). If people misperceive the social norm with respect to a problem behavior (i.e., the perceived norm does not match the actual norm), they are likely to engage in that problem behavior in the attempt to comply with the perceived (false) norm. It has been shown that overestimates of problem behavior will increase these problem behaviors, and underestimates of healthy behaviors will discourage individuals from engaging in them (Beck & Trieman, 1996; Clapp & McDonnell, 2000; Page, Scanlan, & Gilbert, 1999; Perkins, 1985, 1987; Perkins & Wechsler, 1996; Thombs, Wolcott, & Far-kash, 1997). Social norms marketing theory predicts that correcting misperceptions is likely to result in decreased problem behavior or increased prevalence of healthy behaviors (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003). If actual (true) peer group norms are understood, perceived peer pressure is reduced, and individuals are more likely to express pre-existing attitudes and beliefs that are health promoting (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003; Ritzel, 2002). The process of social norms marketing consists of learning and publicizing the actual (true) norms with respect to specific behaviors, in a fashion that is both credible and compelling.

Social norms marketing was pioneered in the alcohol abuse prevention community on college campuses beginning in 1986 (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003; Perkins, 2002) (also see Seaman, 2005). It has since shown positive results in student populations on numerous campuses in many states (A.D. Berkowitz, 1997; Haines, 1996, 1998; Haines & Spear, 1996; Jeffrey, 2000; Johannessen, Collins, Mills-Novoa, & Glider, 1999; K., Collins, Mills-Novoa, & Glider, 1999; Perkins, 2002). It is now being applied to other social issues including smoking prevention in teens (Linkenbach, 2002b), driver educa-

tion and traffic safety (Ritzel, 2002), sexual assault and sexual violence prevention (Fabiano, 2001, 2002), and the reduction of prejudicial behaviors (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003). (Because the most thoroughly documented application of social norms marketing to date lies in the alcohol abuse and alcoholism prevention arena, examples from this arena are used to explain how and how well the process works.)

Social norms can be misperceived in three ways. The three mechanisms of misperception operate differently and may, in turn, affect behavior differently. The first and most common mechanism is pluralistic ignorance. This occurs when members of the majority within a group falsely believe that they are in the minority and that most of their peers think and behave differently. It is common, for example, for college students to overestimate the permissiveness of peer attitudes and behaviors with respect to smoking, drinking, and other drug use. It is also common for them to underestimate the degree to which their peers engage in healthy behaviors (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003; A.D. Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986; Miller & McFarland, 1987, 1991; Perkins & Wechsler, 1996). In other words, many moderate drinkers perceive that everyone else drinks more than they do. This is a salient example of pluralistic ignorance. The danger in pluralistic ignorance is that it encourages people to suppress any attitude or behavior that they incorrectly believe is non-conforming and, instead, to engage in those behaviors that they incorrectly believe to be normative. This behavior is often motivated by fear of embarrassment (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003). An otherwise light drinker, for example, who is suffering from pluralistic ignorance might be compelled to drink heavily in an attempt to fit in at a party.

The second mechanism of misperception, false consensus, works differently. It is the incorrect belief that others are like oneself when they are not (Ross, Greene, & House,

1977). For instance, a heavy drinker might believe that most others are heavy drinkers as well. This misperception allows heavy drinkers to maintain the denial that their behaviors are problematic or unusual (Ritzel, 2002). Heavy drinkers can justify their unhealthy behavior by believing that everyone else does it.

The third misperception mechanism is false uniqueness. Individuals who have this type of misperception believe that their behavior is more unique than it really is. An example would be an abstainer who falsely believes that he or she is the only abstainer on campus.

Table 5 summarizes the findings of five studies that have recently demonstrated a link between a widely held misperception of the social norm pertaining to alcohol consumption within a student population and problem behaviors within that population.

Social norms theory suggests that correcting these misperceptions is likely to result in decreased unhealthy behaviors and increased healthy behaviors (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003). This is the basis of social norms marketing, which uses the tactics of commercial marketing to learn and publicize real social norms. The objective of a social norms intervention is to communicate the truth about peer norms in terms of what the majority of students actually think and do. Thus the message is generally a positive one. In the alcohol abuse prevention arena, this message is that the norm is one of safety, responsibility and moderation – not because this behavior is the right and moral thing to do, but because that is what the majority of students think and do in most student populations (Perkins, 2002).



Table 5

Summary of Recent Social Norms Marketing Research

| Study                                            | Findings                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Perkins & Wechsler, 1996)                       | The perception of campus drinking climate explained more of the variance in drinking behavior than any other variable.                                       |
| (Clapp & McDonnell, 2000)                        | Perceptions of campus norms predicted drinking behavior and indirectly influenced drinking-related problems.                                                 |
| (Perkins, 1985)                                  | Misperceptions predicted alcohol use for students from different religious backgrounds.                                                                      |
| (Perkins, 1987)                                  | Misperceptions predicted problem alcohol use for students from different religious backgrounds.                                                              |
| (Thombs et al., 1997),<br>(Beck & Trieman, 1996) | The best predictor of alcohol use was the misperception of alcohol use and social climate/context, which predicted heavy drinking and negative consequences. |
| (Page et al., 1999)                              | Overestimates of binge drinking were directly correlated with rates of binge drinking.                                                                       |

The Montana Model of Social Norms Marketing, developed in 1988 by Linkenbach (2002a), is an example of a social norms marketing process that has been successfully used at both college and high-school campuses using the following steps:

1. Planning and Environmental Advocacy – This consists of planning considerations and environmental advocacy, both of which stand to guide the scope and direction of the campaign. Environmental advocacy entails creating a political, economic and social atmosphere conducive to change.
2. Baseline Data – The current and available data is analyzed to establish a baseline of data related to behaviors and perceived norms. The disparity between perceived behaviors and actual norms drives the social norms process.
3. Message Development – This is a rigorous process that involves deriving a statistic from baseline data. The scope of the message is determined by the target population's readiness for change, their current behavioral practices, and normative perceptions.
4. Market Plan – The plan begins by seeing things through the eyes of the target population. Traditional and non-traditional media approaches are assessed for their potential to reach the target population. The results of these assessments are incorporated into the campaign-specific plan.
5. Pilot Test and Refine Materials – Normative messages and pilot materials are tested with the target population for believability and appeal. Focus groups, in particular, are a key resource for gathering input from the target audience.
6. Implement Campaign – All the fundamental elements necessary to run the campaign on a daily basis are used. These elements include campaign fundamentals such as locally developed activities promoting the social norms message, distributing promotional items, and placing print and broadcast media messages.

7. Evaluation – Continual examination of the campaign’s effectiveness ultimately drives the social norms marketing process, with the end goal being changed behavior within the target population. Qualitative and quantitative data are gathered, analyzed, and fed back into the campaign to refine its process and implementation.

Methods that have been used to disseminate the social norms message include, but are not limited to, the following: newspaper display and classified ads, flyers, posters, e-mail, Web sites, screen savers, electronic kiosks, television ads, radio ads, voice mail messages, shuttle bus ads, banners, sidewalk chalk, blackboards in classrooms, table tents/notices/palm cards, message printed academic calendars, phone directories, napkins, ticket stubs, giveaways (pens, highlighters, flashlights, tee-shirts, water bottles, ID holders, coffee mugs, keychains, Frisbees, coasters, stress balls, mini-footballs, food, back of tip cards, paper holders, mouse pads), talks and presentations, new student orientation, reinforcement activities, information booths (at health and activity fairs), newsletters, brochures, press releases, and temporary tattoos (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003).

Marketing, social or commercial, works because people tend to act primarily out of self-interest. Research in several domains points to the importance of considering self-interest. These include behaviorism beginning with Skinner (1935); evolutionary psychology (Richard Dawkins, 1976; R. Wright, 1994); the evolution of cultures, norms, and conventions (Coleman, 1990; Young, 1996); neoclassical economics (Block, 1994; Hausman & McPherson, 1996); behavioral decision theory (Daniel Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982); and economic sociology (Coleman, 1990). While there are exceptions

including instances of true altruism, heroism, and compassion, most human behavior is motivated by self-interest (M. Rothschild, 1999). In commercial marketing, this self-interest is not only acknowledged, it is actively pursued and exploited. Consumers' self-perception of short- and long-term self-interest (e.g., "Buy this product and you will be better off," or "Buy this product and you will feel better about yourself.") is the basis of all advertising. In traditional social marketing (not social norms marketing), which tends to be educational or moralistic rather than transactional, people are typically asked to behave in ways that appear to be the opposite of their perception of self-interest. Since people's behavior is usually a reflection of their perception of self-interest, this type of marketing also asks people to behave in a manner that is opposite of their current behavior (M. L. Rothschild, 1979). As the degree of self-interest in the proposition is perceived to be low, this type of marketing is not very effective. In the substance abuse arena, for instance, where drug education programs have changed attitudes, those attitudes have been shown to be both anti-drug and pro-drug (Perkins, 1997).

Social-norms marketing differs from traditional social marketing in two ways. First, it appeals to the individual's perception of self-interest. In this case, one aspect of that self-interest is the desire to conform to group norms. When individuals experience a misperception of a group norm, their apparent self-interest in conforming may be in conflict with what they know to be healthy behavior. When this conflict exists, especially in young people, the peer pressure to conform is usually stronger than the desire to engage in healthy behaviors (Ritzel, 2002). When people learn the real group norm, there is no such conflict – conforming and engaging in healthy behaviors require the same course of action. The second way that social-norms marketing differs from traditional social mar-

keting is that it does not ask the majority of the population to change their current behavior.

The results of social norms marketing initiatives conducted on college campuses to date have been overwhelmingly positive, consistent, and promising. Several institutions who have publicized accurate norms about healthy majorities of students, in an intensive and persistent manner, have shown decreases in high-risk or heavy episodic drinking rates of up to twenty percent (A.D. Berkowitz, 1997; Haines, 1996, 1998; Haines & Spear, 1996; Jeffrey, 2000; Johannessen et al., 1999; K. et al., 1999; NIAAA, 2002). The positive impact of social norms marketing interventions has been demonstrated at demographically diverse institutions across the country. These results are noteworthy given that nationwide data indicates no reduction in high-risk drinking behaviors among other students over the last decade (L. D. Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1997; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000). The following are examples of results gained and recently documented:

1. Agostinelli, Brown, and Miller (1995) report an experiment that randomly assigned a sample of college students identified as heavy drinkers at a southwestern university to two groups. One group received mail feedback about personal use compared with actual population norms, and a control group received no feedback. After 6 weeks, there was a significant reduction in alcohol consumption in the group that received normative feedback, and there was no change in the control groups.
2. Schroeder and Prentice (1998), invited first-year students at an eastern university to participate in alcohol education discussions in small residential groupings as

part of their initial orientation program. Half of the randomly assigned groups, the experimental groups, were shown a presentation of data showing students' misperceptions of their peers' comfort with campus drinking practice (actual and perceived norms). The other half of the groups, the control groups, participated in a discussion of how to make responsible personal drinking decisions. According to follow-up data collected 4 to 6 months later, students in the experimental groups that had been introduced to actual and perceived norms at the beginning of the year consumed significantly less alcohol on a weekly basis.

3. Haines (1996) introduced a social norms marketing initiative at Northern Illinois University in 1989. By 1995, students at NIU reported a 17 percent drop in high-risk drinking rates (from 45 percent to 28 percent) and a 26 percent drop in their perception of other student's high risk drinking rates (from 69 percent to 43 percent). By 1999, incidents of heavy drinking (5 or more drinks per incident) had decreased by 44 percent over the ten-year period.
4. At Western Washington University, Fabiano (2001) documented a relatively stable high-risk drinking rate among students over a 6 year period (33.8 percent in 1991-92 and 34.1 percent in 1996-97). A social norms marketing approach was then initiated. It focused on the majority of students who were not high-risk drinkers and correcting the misperception that everyone drinks a lot. After 18 months a 20 percent reduction in high-risk drinking was observed.
5. Perkins and Craig (2002) recently completed what is likely the most thorough and comprehensive evaluation of a social norms marketing campaign to date. The components of their intervention included a poster campaign with electronic me-

dia, an interactive web site, class projects that developed parts of the campaign, and teacher training for curriculum infusion. The intervention began in 1996 at a college with higher than average alcohol use. A 21percent reduction in drinking increases during the freshman year has been observed. A campus-wide decrease in high risk drinking from 56 percent to 46 percent has also been observed. Successive decreases in alcohol-related arrests over a four-year time period have also been observed. Corresponding reductions have also been found in misperceptions of use, heavy drinking at a party, and negative consequences associated with alcohol use. Surveys conducted at three time periods over a five-year period indicate successive linear decreases in all of these measures over time (A.D. Berkowitz, 2003).

In summary, social norms marketing has been shown to be a powerful tool in the alcohol abuse prevention arena on college campuses. Universities across the country have begun to adopt social-norms marketing strategies. In 2001, all 23 campuses in the California state university system initiated social-norms campaigns to curb drinking, as have dozens of universities elsewhere in the United States (Frauenfelder, 2001). The social norms approach is now being applied to numerous other social issues affecting youth, including smoking prevention, sexual assault and violence prevention, traffic and highway safety, and eliminating prejudicial behavior. Social norms theory has been repeatedly shown to be predictive of individual behavior, particularly in instances where the misperception of a social norm drives unhealthy individual behavior. It has been shown that communication of the accurate social norm leads to increased healthy behavior and decreased problem behavior.

One hypothesis of this dissertation is that the converse is also true: the intentional perpetration of an inaccurate social norm can lead to a decrease in healthy beliefs and behavior and an increase in unhealthy beliefs and behavior for the individuals under its influence, and is generally promoted for the benefit of those who are not under its influence. This creation of, or ongoing support for, an inaccurate social norm I call false-social-norms marketing. To reiterate, a type 1 false social norm is one in which people in a given population are led to believe in something that is purely false. A type 2 false social norm is one in which people in a given population are led to believe that most others in the same or another population believe or behave in a certain way when, in fact, they do not. A type 2 false social norm appears to have the same power as a perceived social norm. As mentioned before, both type 1 and type 2 false social norms are, in many cases, propagated in for the benefit of people in groups other than the target population.

Many in the commodity marketing community have not remained ignorant of this technique, suggesting that one should understand the hype cycle and the customer learning curve (Hellman & Burst, 2004), the rules of marketing to mass affluence (Nunes & Johnson, 2004), positioning (Ries & Trout, 1986), emotional rewards (Pooler, 2003), the customer of the future (Raymond, 2004), communicating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Austin & Aitchison, 2003), the post-television age (Cappo, 2003), fads and consumer culture (Berger, 2000), what women really want (L. Johnson & Learned, 2004), vanity, vitality, and virility (Emsley, 2004), the 22 irrefutable laws of marketing and when to break them (Newman, 2004), branding for progress (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2004), emotional branding (Gobe, 2001), how to use sound and smell (Caplan, 2006; "Here you hear it, there you don't," 2003), and lifestyle marketing (Michman, Mazze, & Greco, 2003) in



order to enhance people's allelomimetic response. From this perspective the marketing machine is simply in the business of creating fauxmemes for the consumer. But the methods of marketing are often transient, as one might suspect. However, the one good fauxmeme generator that an elite deviant can almost always rely upon is fear (Robin, 2006).

With this in mind, to understand why any form of behavioral manipulation is effective, it is useful to examine the process of decision-making and how it is that people go about making decisions in their everyday lives. Until very recently, most economic analysis presupposed that people always made rational decisions (Thaler, 1980). Recent research in the field of decision theory, however, has shown that there are many more quirks in the human reasoning process than many earlier economic and psychological theories had contended, especially within the bounds of economics (Diestler, 1994; Freeman, 1996; Haacke, 2004; Paulos, 1990; Shiller, 2000; Tvede, 2002). Researchers have demonstrated that people do not, for example, typically exercise rational decision-making processes under conditions of risk and uncertainty. Perhaps more importantly, they have demonstrated that people tend to be irrational under these conditions in a predictable and consistent way (Daniel Kahneman, 2002).

In 1979, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky introduced the concept of "prospect theory," a model of decision-making behavior that explains common patterns observed in the areas of statistics, financial markets, medical diagnoses, jury proceedings, and public policy decisions (Hastie & Dawes, 2001; Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). The development of prospect theory and the body of work that followed from it laid the foundation for the field of Behavioral Economics, the study of how a decision-making

process influences decisions that are reached. Prospect theory is pertinent here because it provides a plausible, if not robust, explanation of the mechanism by which social norms marketing works. Before examining prospect theory in particular, however, it is useful to consider the historical and philosophical context in which it was derived.

### *The Origins of Decision-Making Theory*

Most of what is currently believed to be true about the decision-making process was documented during the last half-century (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). Prior to the 1950s, the field of psychology was concerned less with cognition – including thinking styles, problem framing, and heuristics for problem solving – and more concerned with psychoanalytic theory (Langer, 1943) and behaviorism (Skinner, 1953). Cognitive psychology, in its modern form, emerged coincidentally with the study of information processing during the 1950s and 1960s. At this point, scientists began to view thinking as a symbol-manipulation process and to use computer simulation as a means to build and test theories of thinking (H. A. Simon & Kaplan, 1989). One branch of cognitive science focuses on the actual neurological mechanisms of learning and problem solving (Posner, 1989). Another branch deals with the process of decision-making under conditions of risk and uncertainty. The latter branch includes the work of the post-World War II game-theorists, including computer architect John Von Neumann (1947) and mathematician John Nash (1950). It also includes the work of experimental psychologists, including Kahneman and Tversky (2003; 2003; 2001; 2000), who did not rely as heavily on computer simulation as did their game-theory counterparts. Instead, they designed human-subject experiments to test their hypotheses. It is this body of work that led most directly to the development of

modern decision theory and that is most pertinent to understanding the efficacy of social norms marketing.

### *A Framework for Decision-Making*

Though formal study of the decision-making process did not gain momentum until the 1950s, philosophers and scientists have been pondering it for centuries. Swiss mathematician Daniel Bernoulli, for example, developed the general utility function – a primitive form of the function described by prospect theory – in 1738 (Bernoulli, 1738/1954). One of the more concise descriptions of the rational decision making process, in fact, is documented in a letter from Benjamin Franklin (1772) to his friend Joseph Priestley:

London, September 19, 1772

Dear Sir,

In the Affair of so much Importance to you, wherein you ask my Advice, I cannot for want of sufficient Premises, advise you what to determine, but if you please I will tell you how. When these difficult Cases occur, they are difficult chiefly because while we have them under Consideration all the Reasons pro and con are not present to the Mind at the same time; but sometimes one Set present themselves, and at other times another, the first being out of Sight. Hence the various Purposes or Inclinations that alternately prevail, and the Uncertainty that perplexes us. To get over this, my Way is, to divide half a Sheet of Paper by a Line into two Columns, writing over the one Pro, and over the other Con. Then during three or four Days Consideration I put down under the different Heads short Hints of the different Motives that at different Times occur to me for or against the Measure. When I have thus got them all together in one View, I endeavour to estimate their respective Weights; and where I find two, one on each side, that seem equal, I strike them both out: If I find a Reason pro equal to some two Reasons con, I strike out the three. If I judge some two Reasons con equal to some three Reasons pro, I strike out the five; and thus proceeding I find at length where the Ballance lies; and if after a Day or two of farther Consideration nothing new that is of Importance occurs on either side, I come to a Determination accordingly. And tho' the Weight of Reasons cannot be taken with the Precision of Algebraic

Quantities, yet when each is thus considered separately and comparatively, and the whole lies before me, I think I can judge better, and am less likely to take a rash Step; and in fact I have found great Advantage from this kind of Equation, in what may be called Moral or Prudential Algebra. Wishing sincerely that you may determine for the best, I am ever, my dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately

B. Franklin

Franklin is describing a linear cue-weighting and summation approach to decision-making. Today, one might implement his Prudential Algebra using a spreadsheet or a relational database. Researchers have shown that when people make decisions in their heads, they actually carry out a variation of this linear weighting and summation process (Hastie & Dawes, 2001), though they are typically unaware that they are doing so. This process can be illustrated using the lens model first proposed by Egon Brunswik (1952) shortly after World War II. Decision theorists use a variation of this model to study judgments made under irreducible uncertainty, i.e., uncertainty that cannot be eliminated before a decision about what action to take must be made.

The lens model shown in Figure 49 gets its name from the idea that people are unable to make direct contact with objects and events in the world outside of their sense organs. Instead, they perceive objects and events through an informational lens that mediates between external stimuli and internal perception. According to Brunswik, the lens model resembles a bundle of rays scattering from a light-source which are brought back to convergence in a distant second point by a convex lens. In this case, the light-source is the external object or event ( $Y_E$  in the diagram), and the second point is one's perception thereof ( $Y_S$  in the diagram).

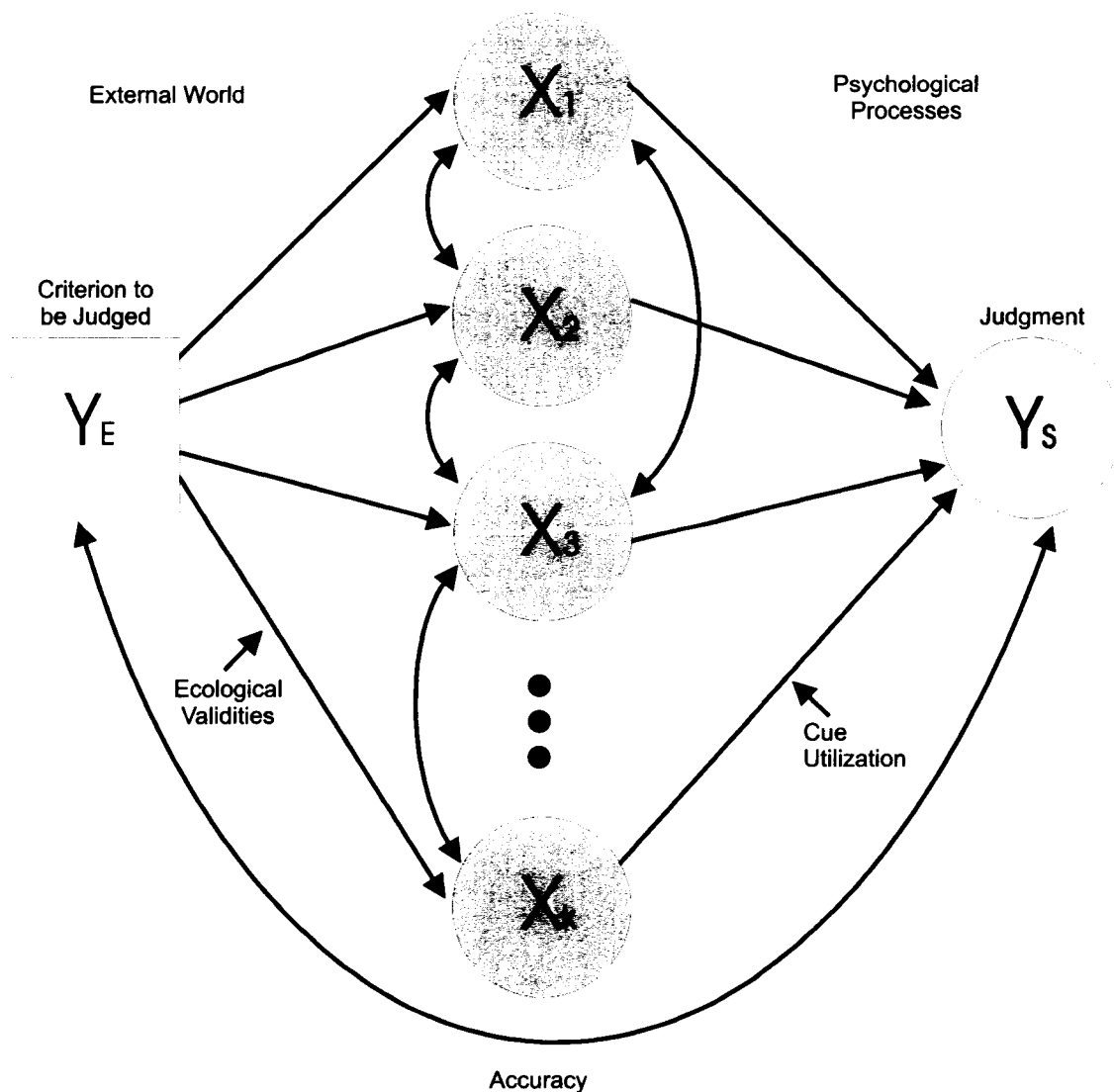


Figure 49. Lens Model framework for judgment (Hastie & Dawes, 2001)

An example of the lens model would be trying to judge a woman's age as one passes her on the street. The woman's age would be  $Y_E$ , the criterion to be judged. The cues would be her skin tone (smooth or wrinkled), her posture (straight or bent over), her gait (quick or slow, even or limping), her clothing and hairstyle (current or dated), her voice (youthful or old-sounding), and other signals that might indicate her age. The assessment of her age would be  $Y_S$ , the judgment. One would likely weight the different

cues in different ways. For instance, if the woman's skin were very wrinkled but her clothes were fashionable, one would likely judge her to be an older woman. In this case, the skin tone cue is more heavily weighted than the clothing cue.

In the context of a purchase decision, the lens model offers a construct for comparing two brands or similar items. If a person were shopping for a car, for example,  $Y_E$  would be the car itself and any available information about the car (the specifications, the J.D. Powers & Associates owner satisfaction poll data, the crash-test ratings, etc.). The cues would be features that were important to a potential buyer: the appearance of the car (which one would assess visually), its performance (test drive), its reliability (owner satisfaction ratings), its fuel efficiency (MPG ratings), its safety (crash-test data), its accessories (examination), its trunk capacity (specs), etc. A shopper would weight these cues according to what he or she values most in a car. The shopper's judgment,  $Y_S$ , would be a relative ranking of this car versus similar models.

The lens model is useful to researchers, as it allows them to design experiments in a consistent fashion regardless of the decision-making milieu. It has been used to model medical diagnosis, professional performance, assembly-line productivity studies, materials testing, historical events, as well as other type of decision-making contexts (Cooksey, 1996; Hogge, 2001; McQuire, 1985). First, researchers identify and measure the cues used by representative judges. Next, they create a model that describes how the criterion to-be-judged is related to the cues. A linear regression model is often used to determine what this relationship looks like. The relationship describes the ecological validity of a cue. Finally, researchers construct another model that reflects how cues are combined to

produce the judgment. The respective weights of the cues are called the cue utilization coefficients.

Researchers have determined that the most general principle used to describe cue utilization processes is the linear equation (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). In other words, research has found that people tend to make judgments in everyday situations as if they were actually measuring cue information on numerical scales, weighting those cues, and adding them up – applying Benjamin Franklin’s Prudential Algebra, if you will.

### ***Decision-Making Shortcuts and Judgment Quality***

If people do, indeed, use a linear combination of weighted cues to make decisions, how is it that they sometimes make bad ones? Researchers have found that when people make decisions intuitively – that is, not using a spreadsheet or some other formalized linear method – they tend take shortcuts in the lens model process. To date, hundreds of studies have been conducted in many different contexts, including medical diagnosis, stock value predictions, highway safety, and livestock quality (Cooksey, 1996). In each experiment, participants were asked to make a judgment based on a fixed set of parameters. Their judgments were then compared to real examples of parameter sets (cues) and outcomes. Regardless of the context, researchers found that, while there were notable exceptions, most so-called experts were no more accurate in their judgments than complete novices (Sherdon, 1998). According to Hastie and Dawes (2001) the following observations have also been made about judgment habits that are true of both amateur and expert judges:

1. Judges, including experts, tend to rely on relatively few (3-5) cues. This is not true in some highly technical domains like weather forecasting and livestock quality judgments. It is generally true, however, in other domains including medical diagnosis.
2. Most judgment policies are linear – despite what people think about their “intuitive” judgment processes.
3. Judges lack insight into their policies. Even experts are unable to accurately estimate their own relative cue utilization weights.
4. Many studies show large individual differences in patterns of cue utilization weights and low inter-judge agreement on the judgments themselves. This, again, is true in the case of medical diagnosis as well as other fields.
5. When associated but irrelevant information is presented to judges, they tend to become more confident in the accuracy of their judgments, though true accuracy does not increase.

These findings would suggest that the unstructured interview, often the basis of medical diagnosis and hiring decisions, is a highly unreliable decision-making strategy (Hunter & Hunter, 1984; Kelley, 1954). Linear statistical models, on the other hand, have been shown to be as or more accurate than human experts in numerous fields including psychodiagnosis (Goldberg, 1968; Meehl, 1954), predicting violence in psychiatric patients (Werner, Rose, & Yesavage, 1983), medical prognosis (Einhorn, 1982), and bankruptcy prediction (Libby, 1976). These studies show that while experts are good at



choosing the variables that are important in making predictions, they are not as accurate as a linear statistical model in combining weighted variables to produce a judgment.

If people were, in fact, interested in achieving the most accurate and predictive decisions possible, they would discipline themselves to consistently use a formal linear model to make judgments. People don't typically do this in everyday life, however. Enforcing this type of discipline is expensive in terms of both mental energy and time. With the exception of major purchases, investment decisions, or medical choices, a formalized approach is not usually warranted. Instead, people use heuristics – cognitive shortcuts – to simplify the decision-making process (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Some of these heuristics are effective and lead to sound, predictive judgments. Some are less effective. Some are systematically dangerous. These heuristics, as well as common biases that influence our decision-making, will be explored later. First, however, it is necessary to draw a distinction between rational choice and irrational choice.

### ***Rational vs. Irrational Decisions***

For the purposes of this work, a rational choice can be defined as one that meets the following four criteria (Hastie & Dawes, 2001):

1. It is based on current assets. Assets, in this context, can include money, psychological capacities, physiological state, social relationships, and feelings.
2. It is also based on possible future consequences of the choice.
3. When consequences are uncertain, their likelihood is evaluated according to probability theory.

4. The choice is adaptive within (1) the constraints of those probabilities and (2) values/satisfactions associated with each of those consequences.

The last two criteria suggest two deeper assumptions. The first is that people are able and willing to correctly calculate or estimate the probability that certain outcomes will happen. The second is that people always act in their own best interests. These assumptions are often not valid, however (Doyle, 1999). When people make choices out of habit, for instance, they do not even attempt to calculate the probability that certain outcomes will occur, nor do they necessarily choose in their own best interests. According to these criteria, habit is an irrational decision-making strategy (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). Other irrational strategies include conformity – either conforming to a social norm or emulating someone whom one admires – and choosing according to religious or cultural mandates that one has been taught (Russell, 1991).

### *Expected Utility Theory*

As one proceeds, it is useful to understand a number of terms and principles that form the basis of modern decision theory. The first is the “expected utility theory.” This idea was first explored by Daniel Bernoulli (1738/1954) in the early eighteenth century. It was further developed by game theorists von Neumann and Morgenstern (1947). The theory, which presupposes the four criteria for rationality noted earlier, is best explained via example. Consider the following gambles:

- (a) With probability 0.20, win \$60, otherwise nothing.
- (b) With probability 0.25, win \$40, otherwise nothing.

The expected value associated with a given outcome is equal to the probability of that outcome multiplied by the amount to be won. The expected value of gamble (a) is  $0.20 \times \$60$ , or \$12. The expected value of gamble (b) is  $0.25 \times \$40$ , or \$10. All other things being equal, assuming people are operating rationally, they would choose gamble (a) and, therefore, maximize their expected value. Most people do, in fact, choose gamble (a) when faced with the choice between these two gambles.

In some cases, however, expected value is not as important as expected utility – the specific meaning and significance of a given outcome. For example, if one were completely out of money and \$40 were exactly what one needed to buy food until one's next paycheck arrived, one might choose gamble (b) to increase the odds of winning. In this case, the extra \$20 available in gamble (a) would not be as important as the first \$40. Thus, because gamble (b) offered higher odds of winning, it would have a higher expected utility than gamble (a). Choosing gamble (b) would still be a rational decision according to the criteria.

To express the idea of expected utility mathematically, let  $U(\$60)$  represent the expected utility of \$60 to a given individual and  $U(\$40)$  represent the expected utility of \$40 to that same individual. A preference for gamble (b) over gamble (a) would be represented as follows:  $0.25 \times U(\$40) > 0.20 \times U(\$60)$ . Thus,  $U(\$40)/U(\$60) > 0.20/.25$  (which is equal to  $4/5$ , or 0.80).

Now consider the following two gambles:

- (c) With probability 0.80, win \$60, otherwise nothing.
- (d) Win \$40 for sure.

In this example, the expected value of gamble (c) is  $0.80 \times \$60$ , or \$48. The expected value of gamble (d) is  $1.00 \times \$40$ , or \$40. Looking at expected value only, the rational choice would be gamble (c). Most people, however, choose gamble (d).

In laboratory experiments, most people prefer gamble (a) to gamble (b) AND gamble (d) to gamble (c) (Hastie & Dawes, 2001).

This is represented symbolically as follows:

gamble (a) over gamble (b)

$$0.20 \times U(\$60) > 0.25 \times U(\$40)$$

$$U(\$60)/U(\$40) > 0.25/0.20 = 1.25$$

gamble (d) over gamble (c)

$$1.00 \times U(\$40) > 0.80 \times U(\$60)$$

$$U(\$60)/U(\$40) > 0.80/1.00 = 0.80$$

This represents a logical contradiction, since the ratio of  $U(\$60)$  to  $U(\$40)$  cannot be both 1.25 and 0.80. The most common choices made by participants in this experiment demonstrate a violation of expected utility theory. These choices also violate the four criteria for rationality. Even in this simple experiment – in which neither emotions nor any other complex mitigating influences are involved – participants are consistently irrational in their decision making. How can this be so?

Shortly after the publication of von Neumann and Morgenstern's book (1947), researchers set off in two distinct directions to attempt to answer this question. One direction was to find some rational principle that decision-makers use – other than maximizing expected utility – that would not violate the four criteria for rationality. The early work in this domain focused on normative questions about how decision-makers should

choose if they were to observe the four criteria for rationality. The other research direction was to observe and document how people actually do choose, both as individuals and as organizations (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). What researchers discovered is that, while people are not typically rational in their everyday decision-making, they are irrational in predictable ways (Daniel Kahneman, 2002).

### ***Manifestations of Irrational Decision Making***

There are two common ways in which people manifest irrational decision-making: incomplete thinking and over-inclusive thinking. Each can lead to poor decisions and, in some cases, to dangerous consequences (Fischhoff, 1996). Both pitfalls are ubiquitous in 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. Though some people tend to be more disciplined than others in their decision-making, few – regardless of vocation or educational attainment – appear to be completely immune to these pitfalls.

In each stage of the gamble experiment discussed earlier, participants were asked to make a single, simple decision: the choice between two gambles. In real life, decisions are much more complex. A real life decision usually consists of many smaller decisions, the expected utilities of which need to be not only computed, but also summed to determine the expected utility of the overall decision. A typical real life decision is not a simple either/or choice but rather a tree of smaller decisions, with each small decision defining a new branch. It is rare that people do the calculations necessary to navigate through the decision tree to the outcome with the highest expected utility. Instead, they tend to focus their attention on one or two salient decision points, reason extensively

about those, and ignore the rest (Pennington & Hastie, 1991). This is known as incomplete thinking.

When people engage in incomplete thinking, they tend to focus on the gains and losses associated with the alternatives they intuitively believe to be more attractive but ignore the gains and (especially) the losses associated with the other alternatives. People also tend to focus on a few salient possibilities and consequences and ignore others (Fischhoff, 1996). Jurors, for example, who form an early impression that a defendant is innocent usually evaluate only the consequences that might ensue if they make the decision to acquit (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). Everyday decision-making is, in fact, often inappropriately biased by initial impressions. This is called the primacy effect or confirmatory hypothesis testing (Nickerson, 1998). This mechanism has such a powerful influence in dating and job interviews that people will usually go to great lengths to ensure a good first impression. In these contexts, relying on intuitive preferences may be a good strategy, albeit not a rational one. In some contexts, however, the consequences of incomplete thinking can be dire. No one would ever decide to drive after drinking or have unprotected sex with a relative stranger, for instance, if they took the time to accurately assess the risks associated with these choices. Unfortunately, people – especially young people – apparently choose to manifest incomplete thinking around these particular behaviors on an all-too-frequent basis.

The other pitfall, over-inclusive thinking, refers to the tendency to consider irrelevant historical information when making a decision. This is most often done to honor a sunk cost, an expenditure that has already been made and that cannot be recovered to any significant degree (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). An example might be a prepaid movie ticket.

Imagine that Joe, a fictional character, has purchased a ticket online for the late showing of *Green Giant Amazons from Mars* for \$8. A few minutes later, a friend relates that the movie is terrible. Joe goes to movies.com in order to get a second opinion and finds that Ebert and Roeper agree with the friend: two thumbs down. It starts to snow, and the roads will ice up as soon as the sun goes down and the temperature drops. At this point, Joe suspects that he would be better off staying home and reading a book, but decides to see the movie anyway, since the ticket is purchased and shouldn't be wasted. Unfortunately, the movie is awful, the popcorn is stale, and bubblegum gets stuck to both of Joe's shoes. On the way home, his car hits an icy patch of road and slides into a stop sign, putting a nasty dent in the fender. On Monday, the body shop gives him an estimate: \$250 to remove the dent and repaint the fender. To honor a sunk cost of \$8, Joe had a miserable experience and is now facing a \$250 repair bill.

Arguably it is inappropriate to consider sunk costs when making decisions, because sunk costs have already been incurred by the time the decision is confronted, and they are not a consequence of any current alternatives. Though one might feel emotionally compelled to honor a sunk cost, there is no rational reason to do so – and there often is a rational reason not to. The previous example was lighthearted, but the sunk cost fallacy can have much more profound consequences. The continuation of war and expensive but doomed business projects are but a few examples (R. Dawkins & Brockmann, 1980; R. Dawkins & Carlisle, 1976; Hastie & Dawes, 2001).

It is often tempting, if not compelling, to honor sunk costs in decision-making, especially when the investment has been high. And sometimes people attempt to save face when an earlier decision to make the expenditure comes into question. This is not,

however, rational behavior. Decisions involve future consequences only, and people would most likely fair better if they were to limit their concern to these future consequences.

### ***Causes of Irrationality: Heuristics and Biases***

Given that people do not typically use a calculator or a spreadsheet to make everyday decisions, what tools do they use to navigate the right-hand side of the lens model and reach a decision? Kahneman and Tversky (1974) have proposed that people use a collection of cognitive heuristics to simplify the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values. Heuristics are commonsense rules that help solve problems. People learn these heuristics over the course of a lifetime – mostly through trial and error, but sometimes through folklore from family or peers. The heuristics indicate which cues are important and how the cues should be integrated. A heuristic is different than an algorithm, which is a precise rule specifying how to solve some problem. The process of long division, for example, is an algorithm. A heuristic is a quick and dirty problem-solving tool. It requires much less resource, and it usually works. Occasionally, however, a heuristic doesn't work. Sometimes, in fact, heuristics fail in a systematic way. In these cases, failed heuristics lead to common decision-making biases.

#### *The Availability Judgment Heuristic*

One common heuristic is the availability judgment heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This tool relies on memories that people have acquired in the past to quickly create an association with and judgment about the problem at hand. The heuristic hinges



on ease of memory retrieval. When using this heuristic, people judge the frequency of a class or the probability of an event based on the ease with which instances or occurrences can be brought to mind. For example, when asked which is more common, murder or suicide, most people choose murder (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). Suicide is, in fact, much more prevalent in this culture. Why, then, do people think that the opposite is true? One explanation is that murders get more publicity. Suicides of people who are not celebrities are not often publicized; all murders are publicized. One study has demonstrated that people's estimates of the frequency of various causes of death is correlated with the frequency with which such causes appear in newspapers, independent of their actual frequency (Combs & Slovic, 1979). Deaths due to vivid circumstances (plane crashes, hurricanes, shark attacks, etc.) were overestimated; deaths due to mundane circumstances (heart attack, stomach cancer, old age, etc.) were underestimated.

To understand how the availability judgment heuristic works, it is useful to break it down into seven steps (Hastie & Dawes, 2001):

1. Original acquisition or storage of relevant information in long-term memory.
2. Retention (including some forgetting) of the stored information.
3. Recognition of a situation in which the stored information is relevant to another decision.
4. Probing or cueing of memory for relevant information.
5. Retrieval or activation of items that match or are associated with the memory probe.
6. Assessment of the ease of retrieval (based on the amount recalled, the quickness of recall, subjective vividness of the recalled information, etc.).

7. Estimation of the to-be-judged frequency or probability based on sensed ease of retrieval

Steps 3-7 of this process are executed according to the flowchart shown in Figure 50.

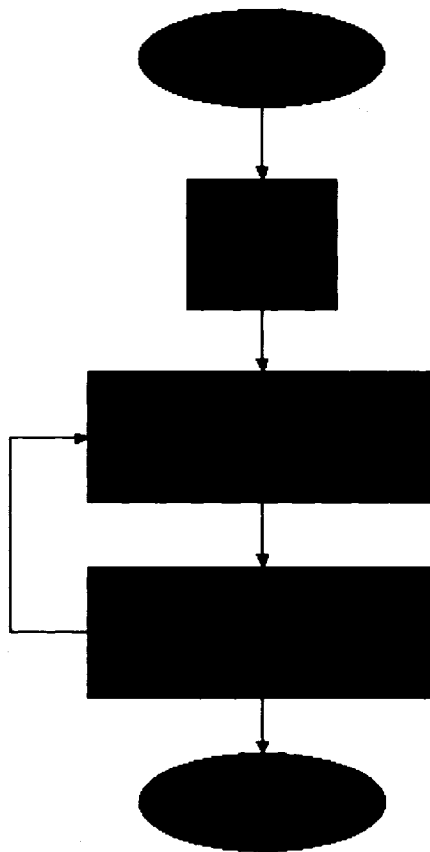


Figure 50. Flowchart of the Availability Heuristic.

Sometimes, ease of recall is a good predictor of frequency or probability. Other times, however, its usefulness can be hampered by inherent biases in the availability heuristic. As demonstrated in the murder-suicide experiment, the relative retrievability of instances of a class can bias the judgment. If it is easier to remember instances of murder, we will judge these to be more prevalent. Ease of recall can be influenced by the salience,

vividness, or familiarity of a particular instance. Recent occurrences are likely to be more available than past occurrences.

Another bias associated with the availability heuristic happens when people choose an ineffective search set. Consider the following example: Is a word (3 or more letters) selected at random from an English text more likely to begin with the letter “r” or to have an “r” in the third position? Because it is easier to think of words that begin with “r” (run) than it is to think of words that have “r” in the third position (car), people consistently judge that words beginning with “r” are more prevalent. They are, in fact, much less prevalent than words with “r” in the third position (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973).

A third bias associated with the availability heuristic is called the imaginability bias. This bias occurs when people don’t have a pertinent memory to recall and, thus, fail to imagine the judgment in question. When people are asked to compute something for which they don’t know the algorithm, for example, or in which the computation is mentally difficult to perform – as is often the case when combinations or permutations offer the correct solution – the imaginability bias often hampers their decision-making effectiveness. The bias can also occur when people try to assess the inherent risk in a new situation. In the case of a mountaineering expedition, for example, the degree of risk could be assessed by imagining all the contingencies for which the expedition is unprepared. If these contingencies are vividly depicted, the expedition is likely to be judged more risky than it really is. If the contingencies are too difficult to imagine or simply do not come to mind, the risk can be underestimated (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Another bias that can be experienced when the availability heuristic is used is the emotional state or *mood* bias. When people are in a particular emotional state, they are

more likely to remember events that are thematically congruent with that state. In an early experiment related to this phenomenon, subjects were asked to assess risks associated with certain accidents. One group of subjects was asked to wait in a room where a radio played upsetting news stories designed to induce a state of anxiety and worry. The other group of subjects heard pleasant or neutral news stories on their waiting room radio. The first group rated the risks significantly higher than the second group (E. J. Johnson & Tversky, 1983). In a follow-up experiment, hypnosis was used to put subjects in happy, neutral, or sad emotional states. Participants rated events consistent with their mood as much more likely to happen than events inconsistent with their mood. For instance, a participant hypnotized to feel happy would rate “blessings” (e.g., world peace, discovery of a cure for cancer) as much more likely to occur than “disasters” (e.g., being injured in a plane crash, nuclear power plant accident) (W. F. Wright & Bower, 1992)

When using the availability heuristic, one often makes two common errors: subadditivity or superadditivity. Both of these errors occur when assessing the probability that mutually exclusive events will occur. This was demonstrated in a compelling study in which 52 physicians were asked to estimate the probability that hospitalized patients would experience each of the following outcomes based on descriptions of their cases:

- Dies during the present hospital admission
- Discharged alive but dies within 1 year
- Lives more than 1 year but less than 10 years
- Lives more than 10 years

These events are mutually exclusive and exhaustive for the possible outcomes.

The total probability allotted to a mutually exclusive and exhaustive set of events must

equal 1. When the physicians assessed the probabilities of these outcomes, however, the mean sum of their four judgments was 1.64 (Redelmeier, Koehler, Liberman, & Tversky, 1995). The researchers attributed this to the descriptions of the events and the physicians' memories of similar events. If a patient dies in the hospital, for example, it is likely from some dramatic cause, such as surgical complications, infection, or an anesthesia problem. Such events would be traumatic for the physicians and would, therefore, create vivid, concrete, and salient memories that were easily recalled. The second outcome listed, survives the hospital but dies within 1 year, is much more vague and thus did not trigger memory cues for the physicians. These results have been replicated in numerous domains ranging from car troubleshooting, weather forecasting, and sports predictions (Tversky & Koehler, 1994) to reports of alien abduction (Mulford & Dawes, 1999). These findings show that people tend to overestimate the probability of outcomes that are described in detail compared to those that are described vaguely – even when that means violating the rules of probability for mutually exclusive sets of outcomes.

The superadditivity error occurs when the probability of the global whole is estimated to be greater than the sum of its component subevents. This is likely to happen when the subevents are difficult to think about, imagine, or recall and are thus estimated to be less likely in sum compared to the whole (Macchi, Ocheron, & Krantz, 1999).

The biases inherent in the availability heuristic can be exploited by those who wish to influence the thinking and decision-making patterns of others. The “if it bleeds, it leads” thinking of news providers, for example, causes many people to believe that they run a high risk of being killed in a violent crime. With the exception of people living in inner city neighborhoods, however, this risk is relatively low (0.7 percent of all U.S.

deaths in 1999) – much lower than the risk of being killed in an accident (4.2 percent of all U.S. deaths in 1999) (Hoyert, Arias, Smith, Murphy, & Kochanek, 2001). These biases are also exploited by financially and politically motivated efforts to control the agenda of public fears of crimes, diseases, and other hazards (Glassner, 1999).

### *Conclusion to Heuristics and Biases*

One of the most common decision-making heuristics has been presented here, and more have been described in the literature (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). There is no doubt that heuristics have their place in the decision-making process. The cost, particularly in decision-making speed, of carrying out full-blown quantitative rational analysis for every decision people make would be intractably high. Without heuristics, for instance, early humans would likely have been eaten by carnivorous beasts. Heuristics do, however, induce biases that make people vulnerable to the consequences of poor quality decision-making. If people are cognizant of these biases, they can learn to compensate for them and shield themselves from the inherent (usually negative) consequences. If people are unaware of these biases, they are vulnerable to being manipulated.

In today's consumer society, product and idea promoters understand the availability heuristic and its inherent biases. Manufacturers, for instance, use repeated exposures, vivid and provocative images, and catchy jingles in the attempt to position their products or brands most accessibly in our minds. Retailers put their logos on T-shirts, handbags, and hats (and billboards, vehicles, football stadiums, bathroom stall doors, foreheads, etc.) to keep their brand names fresh in the minds of shoppers. Manufacturers spend large

sums to position their products prominently in movies and television shows. The process of advertising is, in essence, the targeted exploitation of the availability heuristic.

Social norms marketing works because people have the perception that their peers believe a certain thing or routinely behave in a certain way. This perception develops not through systematic research, but largely through anecdotal personal experience or folklore. The availability heuristic causes people's perceptions of social norms to be weighted toward more salient ideas or behaviors. For example, say a college freshman attends a party with 100 other students, and ten of those students are severely intoxicated, obnoxious, and loud, while the other 90 are not intoxicated and are mild-mannered and quiet. Even though the drunken students are in the clear minority, the memory of their behavior is more salient. The impressionable student is likely to believe that "everybody" gets drunk at parties when, in fact, most people do not. Social norms marketing has been used on college campuses to teach students about the real alcohol consumption habits of their peers as assessed by sound survey research. It has been proven to be an effective tool in reducing alcohol abuse on campus (Alan D. Berkowitz, 2004).

A false social norm can be used to encourage consumers to buy things they don't need. A true social norm can be used to encourage college students to drink responsibly. Regardless of the intent or outcome, the process of social norms marketing exploits the availability heuristic to supplant a new and salient impression in the mind of the decision maker. How that impression is most effectively formulated is explored in the following discussion of prospect theory.

### *Mechanisms of Irrationality: An Introduction to Prospect Theory*

Thus far a number of models have been examined in order to understand the decision-making process and characterize more common manifestations of irrational decision-making. To better understand how and why people make irrational decisions, it is useful to look to the field of Behavior Economics and, in particular, the pioneering work contributed by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman. Their collaboration began in the late 1960s (Tversky & Kahneman, 1971) and continued until Tversky's death in 1996 (K. Arrow, Bower, Efron, Maccoby, & Ross, 1996). Their work created a robust body of experimental research that laid the foundation for the exploration of its application to such diverse disciplines as health management (Bickel & Vuchinich, 2000), securities law (Choi & Pritchard, 2003), personal economics (Schug & Reinke, 2003), genetic law (Elliott, 2001), public policy (Brock, Durlauf, & West, 2003), and criminology (Weisberg, 2003). So noteworthy, in fact, was this foundation, that Daniel Kahneman was awarded the 2002 Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel<sup>1</sup>.

Kahneman and Tversky studied the psychology of bounded rationality in the domains of judgment and decision making under uncertainty (Daniel Kahneman, 2002). In other words, they studied people's departures from rationality and the mechanisms that explain those departures. Their work assumed an evolutionary perspective on intuition, as shown in Figure 51.

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<sup>1</sup> The Nobel Prize is not awarded posthumously. Had Amos Tversky survived, the prize would have been awarded to both collaborators.



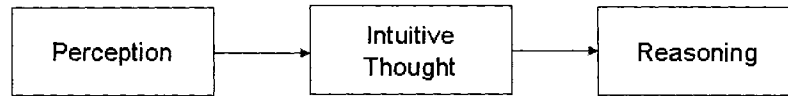


Figure 51. Kahneman and Tversky's evolutionary view of intuition.

In this model, intuitive thinking is viewed to be a computational compromise between the real-time activity of perception and the methodical process of reasoning.

Heuristics, for example, would be an example of intuitive thinking tools. As discussed earlier, intuition is prone to systematic biases and errors. These errors are sometimes not corrected at all, and are rarely corrected properly (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Expected utility theory suggests that decision makers multiply the perceived value (utility) of each potential outcome by the probability that that particular outcome will occur, compare the alternatives, and choose the best option based on its effect on their wealth (or other pertinent maintained state) while avoiding undue risk (Hastie & Dawes, 2001). Upon its introduction (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947), the principles of expected utility theory were widely accepted as both a normative (Keeney & Raiffa, 1976) and a descriptive model of economic behavior (K. J. Arrow, 1971; Friedman & Savage, 1948). In other words, there were two prevailing assumptions: (1) that all reasonable people would wish to obey the axioms of expected utility theory, and (2) that most people actually did, most of the time.

When Kahneman and Tversky began their work on decision theory, expected utility theory was the prevailing decision making model. There were, however, three phenomena consistently observed in experimental groups that violated the mathematics of expected utility theory (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). The first was the cer-

tainty effect. This occurred when people over-weighted outcomes that were certain versus those that were probable but not certain. This tendency led to risk aversion in situations involving sure gains and risk seeking in situations involving sure losses. The second phenomenon was the reflection effect. Experimenters expected to see similar risk seeking or risk aversion behaviors whether an outcome represented a gain or a loss. In reality, however, people demonstrated risk seeking in the negative (loss) domain and risk aversion in the positive (gain) domain. This behavior was not consistent with the value function for losses and gains, which is symmetrical about the origin in expected utility theory. The final phenomenon was the isolation effect. In order to simplify the choice between two alternatives, people tend to focus on their dissimilarities and ignore their common characteristics. This process requires the use of a decomposition algorithm, which is not always consistent from decision to decision or from person to person. Thus, the isolation effect can lead to different decision outcomes when the same choice is presented in different forms (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Table 6 summarizes the violations of expected utility theory.

Aware of these violations, Kahneman and Tversky decided to approach decision theory from a different perspective, drawing an analogy to the process of sensory perception. Science acknowledges that perceptual representations rely on changes or differences in sensory stimuli and are relatively insensitive to maintained levels. This describes the process of perceptual adaptation. If judgments and choices work like perception, they surmised, changes would be salient, and maintained states would be ignored.

Table 6  
Observed Violations of Expected Utility Theory

| Effect:    | Pattern Observed:                                                                        | Implications:                                                                                      |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Certainty  | Over-weighted outcomes that were certain versus those that were probable but not certain | Risk aversion in situations involving sure gains; risk seeking in situations involving sure losses |
| Reflection | Asymmetrical response to risk for gains versus losses                                    | Risk seeking in the negative (loss) domain; risk aversion in the positive (gain) domain            |
| Isolation  | Focus on dissimilarities and ignore common characteristics                               | Results vary depending on how the decision is framed                                               |

Prior to prospect theory, it was assumed that wealth was the carrier of utility; i.e., when making economic decisions, people assessed alternatives based on the impact each alternative would have on their accumulated wealth. While framing outcomes in terms of wealth may be normatively appropriate (Givens, 1988; Kiyosaki & Lechter, 2001; Orman, 2001), it is psychologically unrealistic (Daniel Kahneman, 2002). Kahneman and Tversky proved that the true carriers of utility are gains and losses, as experienced via the transitory emotions of winning and losing. This idea is the most salient difference between expected utility theory and prospect theory (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), a

model that describes and predicts the functionally myopic responses to change typically observed in intuitive decision-making strategies under conditions of uncertainty.

Kahneman and Tversky used a simple experiment to highlight discrepancies between behavior and expected utility theory (Thaler, 1980). A *prospect* is a gamble  $(x, p_x, y, p_y)$  that pays  $x$  with probability  $p_x$  and  $y$  with probability  $p_y$ . A certain outcome has a probability of 1; i.e.,  $p_i=1$ . In the following experiment,  $N$  refers to the number of subjects who responded. Participants were given problems such as these:

**Problem 11:** In addition to whatever you own, you have been given \$1,000. You are now asked to choose between the following:

A: (\$1,000, 0.5) and B: (\$500, 1.0)  $N=70$

**Problem 12:** In addition to whatever you own, you have been given \$2,000. You are now asked to choose between the following:

C: (-\$1,000, 0.5) and D: (-\$500, 1.0)  $N=68$

In Problem 11, prospect A offers a 50 percent chance of gaining an additional \$1,000, and prospect B offers a 100 percent chance of gaining an additional \$500. In Problem 11, 16 percent of the subjects chose prospect A, and 84 percent chose prospect B (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In this case, participants demonstrated risk aversion by preferring the prospect with a higher probability of gain.

In Problem 12, prospect C offers a 50 percent chance of losing \$1,000, and prospect D offers a 100 percent chance of losing \$500. In Problem 12, 69 percent of the

prospects chose prospect C, and 31 percent chose prospect D (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In this case, participants demonstrated risk seeking by preferring the prospect with a lower probability of loss.

The subjects in these experiments demonstrated risk aversion for positive prospects (Problem 11) and risk seeking for negative prospects (Problem 12). In this particular pair of problems, the following statements are true:

$$A = (\$2,000, 0.5) = (\$2,000, 0.5) = C$$

$$B = (\$1,500, 1.0) = (\$1,500, 1.0) = D$$

This means that when viewed in terms of final states (wealth), the two choice problems are identical. This example demonstrates the reflection effect discussed earlier. The results of this and similar experiments led to the following empirical generalizations (Thaler, 1980):

1. Gains and losses are not treated equally. With the exception of cases in which the probabilities are extremely small, risk aversion is observed for gains, and risk seeking is observed for losses.
2. Outcomes that are certain are overweighted compared to outcomes that are probable but uncertain.
3. The structure of the problem may affect the decisions made.

According to expected utility theory, an individual with initial wealth  $w$  will value a prospect  $(x, p_x, y, p_y)$  as follows:

$$EU = p_x U(w+x) + p_y U(w+y) \text{ if } p_x + p_y = 1$$

where the utility function  $U(i)$  represents the utility of amount  $i$  to the decision maker. In prospect theory, however, the objective probabilities are replaced by subjective decision

weights,  $\pi(p)$ . The utility function,  $U$ , is replaced by a value function,  $V$ , that is defined over *changes* in wealth rather than final asset position. This is expressed mathematically as follows:

A prospect  $(x, p_x, y, p_y)$  is “regular” if one of the following statements is true:  $p_x + p_y < 1$ ,  $x \geq 0 \geq y$ , or  $x \leq 0 \leq y$ . For regular prospects, the value function,  $V$ , is described as follows:

$$V(x, p_x, y, p_y) = \pi(p_x)v(x) + \pi(p_y)v(y)$$

where  $v(x)$  represents the subjective value of outcome  $x$ . If  $p_x + p_y = 1$ , and either  $x > y > 0$ , or  $x < y < 0$ , then:

$$V(x, p_x, y, p_y) = v(y) + \pi(p_x)[v(x) - v(y)]$$

The examples described here involve prospects with two mutually exclusive outcomes,  $x$  and  $y$ . The theory, however, is extensible to prospects with any number of outcomes. More generally, the value function,  $V$ , can be described as follows for a prospect with  $n$  possible outcomes:

$$V(x_1, p_1, x_2, p_2, \dots, x_n, p_n) = \sum (\pi_i(p_i)v(x_i))$$

In order to describe the behaviors demonstrated by experiment participants, the subjective value function of an outcome,  $v(x)$ , must satisfy the following criteria:

1. It must be defined in terms of gains and losses with respect to some natural reference point.
2. It is concave for gains and convex for losses.
3. Its shape must match the psychophysical principle that the difference between 0 and 100 seems greater than the difference between 1000 and 1100.
4. It is steeper for losses than for gains.

The following mathematical function is an example of a function that satisfies all four of these criteria:

$$v(x) = x^\alpha \text{ if } x > 0$$

$$-\lambda(-x^\alpha) \text{ if } x < 0$$

$$\text{typical } \alpha = 0.88, \lambda = 2.25$$

Plotted over a range of  $-10 \leq x \leq 10$ , with  $\alpha = 0.88$  and  $\lambda = 2.25$ , this function looks like this:

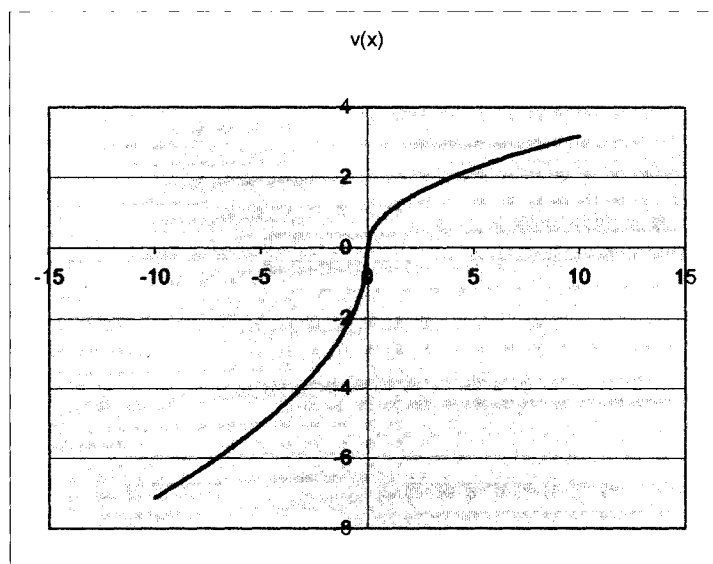


Figure 52. Kahneman & Tversky value function,  $\alpha=0.88$ ,  $\lambda = 2.25$ .

There are three noteworthy characteristics of this function. First, there is a reference point that defines the boundary between the negative (loss) and positive (gain) domains. In this case, the reference point is the origin. Second, the function reflects the principle of gain/loss satiation (i.e., diminishing returns). The constant  $\alpha$  determines the concavity or convexity of the curve. For example, if  $\alpha$  is 1, the curve is piecewise linear.

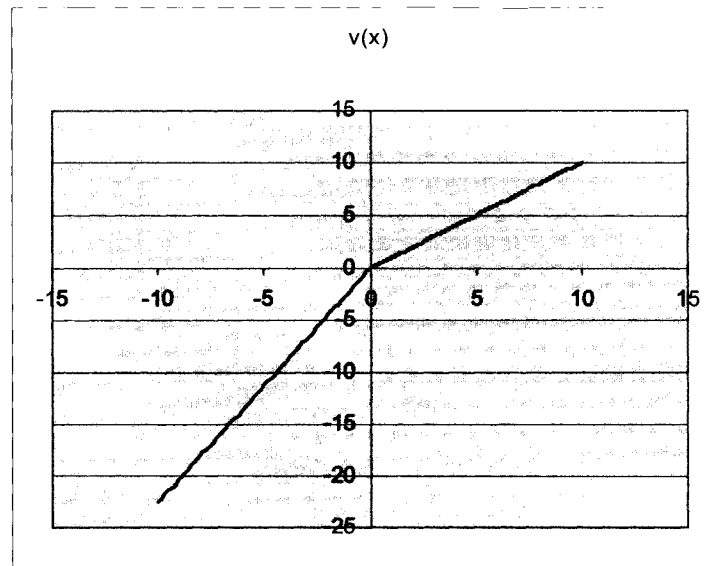


Figure 53. Kahneman & Tversky value function,  $\alpha=1$ ,  $\lambda = 2.25$ .

The third noteworthy characteristic of this function reflects loss aversion. The degree of loss aversion is controlled by the value of  $\lambda$ . If  $\lambda=1$ , gains = losses; if  $\lambda<1$ , gains are more profound than losses; if  $\lambda>1$ , losses are more profound than gains.

The basic hypothesis underlying prospect theory is as follows (Daniel Kahneman, 2002):

- The logic of many tasks of judgments and choice requires an assessment of the sum of values in a set.
- The judgments and choices that people make sometimes substitute an average for the sum.
- The judgments and choices that people make are generally biased in the direction of the average.



- Because the sum is not automatically accessible, but the average is, intuitive performance of these tasks is systematically flawed.

Figure 54 describes the stages of the decision making process according to prospect theory. The steps shown in yellow are the steps in which decision makers are particularly vulnerable to framing errors and process related biases. These steps constitute the process of “editing” the available alternatives and evaluating the potential outcomes. The purpose of editing is to simplify the subsequent evaluation and choice processes. Editing consists of the following seven distinct functions (Hastie & Dawes, 2001):

---

Table 7

Steps in the Editing Process

---

| Editing Step:          | Task Accomplished:                                         |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coding                 | Setting a reference point                                  |
| Combination            | Combining probabilities associated with identical outcomes |
| Segregation            | Separation of riskless components from risky components    |
| Cancellation           | Discarding of shared components                            |
| Simplification         | Rounding and discarding extremely unlikely outcomes        |
| Detection of Dominance | Discarding of all dominated prospects                      |

---

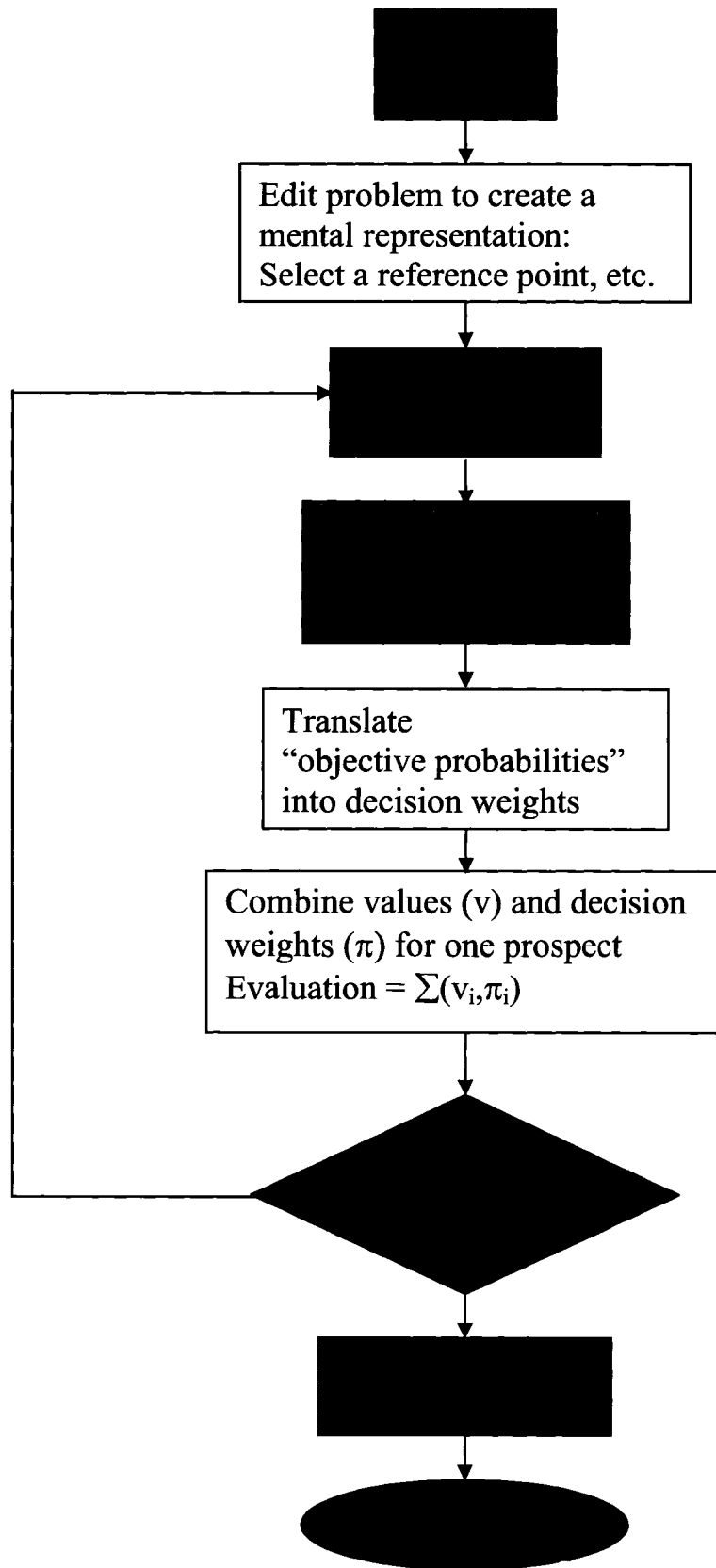


Figure 54. Stages of the decision making process according to Prospect Theory.

The first editing step, coding, consists of selecting a reference point. Of all the editing steps, coding arguably has the most profound influence on the decision outcome. Although many factors influence the location of the reference point, it is usually determined by the current asset position, or status quo (W. Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988). The selection of the reference point can be affected both by the formulation of the offered prospects and the expectations of the decision making process. According to Tversky and Kahneman (1981) a diversity of factors determines the reference outcome in everyday life. The reference outcome is usually a state to which one has adapted; it is sometimes set by social norms and expectations; it sometimes corresponds to a level of aspiration, which may or may not be realistic.

In most cases, the reference point is the status quo – or what we believe the status quo to be. People are most sensitive to changes near the reference point. Specifically, Kahneman and Tversky showed that people demonstrate the following tendencies when making decisions involving risk and uncertainty (K. Arrow et al., 1996):

- They give very small risks disproportionate weight.
- They do not treat prospective losses and gains symmetrically.
- They often reverse their preference ordering depending on the presence or absence of non-selected alternatives.

Although the simple gambles previously discussed provide a convenient laboratory mechanism for assessing decision-making strategies, the terms uncertainty and risk apply to a broader range of decisions than simple gambles (Camerer, 2000). Conditions of risk and uncertainty are inherent in any purchase or investment decision, whether the costs and benefits are measured in terms of money, time, status, emotional value, or a combina-

tion thereof. A purchase, for example, may or may not produce the benefit one hopes to receive from it (i.e., the expected utility). In this case, the risk is the purchase price. Buying a new car, for instance, may or may not result in an increase in the driver's sex appeal. Buying a certain brand of frozen entrée may or may not result in weight loss. Buying a house in the right neighborhood may or may not result in a high-quality education for one's children. In other cases, the risk is not monetary. Getting married, for example, may or may not result in increased happiness. Attempting a 2-point conversion after a touchdown may or may not result in a win. Eating only organically grown foods may or may not protect one from cancer.

Skilled marketers understand that they can exploit various weak points in the decision-making process as described by prospect theory (Schor, 2004). This is evident in product and idea promotion, branding, sales strategies and tactics, physical product positioning, demand generation, and consumer buying patterns (Ries & Trout, 1981). There are three points in the decision-making process at which consumers are particularly vulnerable to manipulation: (1) the establishment of the reference point (Festinger, 1954); (2) risk seeking in the loss domain (W. Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988) ; (3) computational errors in the influence assessment and evaluation of both decision weights and values (Cook & Clotfelter, 1993) (Jullien & Salanié, 2000) (Cicchetti & Dubin, 1994).

Skilled marketers can move the reference point with respect to what consumers believe is appropriate for or expected of them (Schor, 1998). The manner in which options are semantically or mathematically framed can exert undue influence on their decision-making behavior (Bandler & Grinder, 1981). As Kahneman and Tversky state, changing the reference point alters the preference order for prospects.

Moving the referencing point is arguably the simplest and most effective way to manipulate the decision-making process. One way to do this is to create the perception of a pertinent social norm (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). For instance, if a parent believes that most of the children with whom her child attends high school have their own cars – and that those cars are provided by their parents – she may feel obligated at some level to purchase an additional car to attempt to preserve the social standing of her child. Or, if a member of a housing cooperative feels that most of the other members drive hybrid cars, he may feel that he, too, should drive a hybrid car. Or, if a young woman perceives that all the other women in her office have professionally manicured fingernails, she may feel compelled to devote two or three hours worth of her pay each week to professional nail care. A perceived social norm – whether or not it reflects reality – is a powerful influence on where people believe the reference point to be (Alan D. Berkowitz, 2004).

Another way to manipulate the decision-making process is to frame a purchase decision as a loss instead of a gain (Benartzi & Thaler, 1995). People tend to demonstrate risk-seeking behavior around losses and risk avoidance around gains. A purchase – or any transaction, including investments or voting – always represents a risk of some kind. People are more likely to buy when they believe that a purchase will prevent some type of a loss than when they believe the purchase will result in an equivalent gain. Marketers work hard to associate their products with intangible assets such as social status, happiness, health, sex appeal, sexual prowess, physical or financial security, and professional success (Ries & Trout, 1981). Then, they carefully frame a lack of their product or service as a likely and, usually, catastrophic loss of the associated intangible asset. To avoid this loss, consumers feel compelled to purchase their products.

A third way to manipulate the decision-making process is to interfere with the accurate assessment and evaluation of both the risk and value associated with each of the available options – including the option to make no purchase. The post-coding steps in the editing process can be rather easily disrupted, as can the translation of probabilities into decision weights and the summation of the component values and decision weights (E. J. Johnson, Hershey, Meszaros, & Kunreuther, 1992). In either case, the consumer either assesses an incorrect probability that a given outcome will occur or makes an error in the comparison of the value of one outcome relative to the other possible outcomes. Since these processes are computationally intensive, they are relatively easy to disrupt through distraction or clever problem framing. Framing the price of a purchase as “pennies per day,” for example, keeps them in the “petty cash” account. (Gourville, 1998) Contemporary payment mechanisms help to obscure the real risk associated with purchase decisions. Credit cards, for example, decouple the purchase decision from the feeling of loss because it combines small individual purchases into a sum total which, by comparison, any one purchase seems to be a barely perceptible loss (Prelec & Simester, 1998).

One of the key mechanisms that allow the decision-making process to be manipulated is that people tend to view decisions in terms of the potential losses or gains. In terms of decision-making quality, however, this is not optimal. The better approach is to formulate decisions in terms of final assets (Daniel Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Thus, one critical step in helping people to become wiser consumers may be to train them to evaluate purchase decisions with respect to their net worth, not their short-term cash flow (Kiyosaki & Lechter, 2001).

Nonetheless, the key idea is that a change in reference point appears to be tremendously powerful in creating fear, and fear seems to be one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, motivator for, paradoxically, taking risks (which may come in the form of misunderstanding reality, not caring about reality, or wanting to avoid reality).

For example:

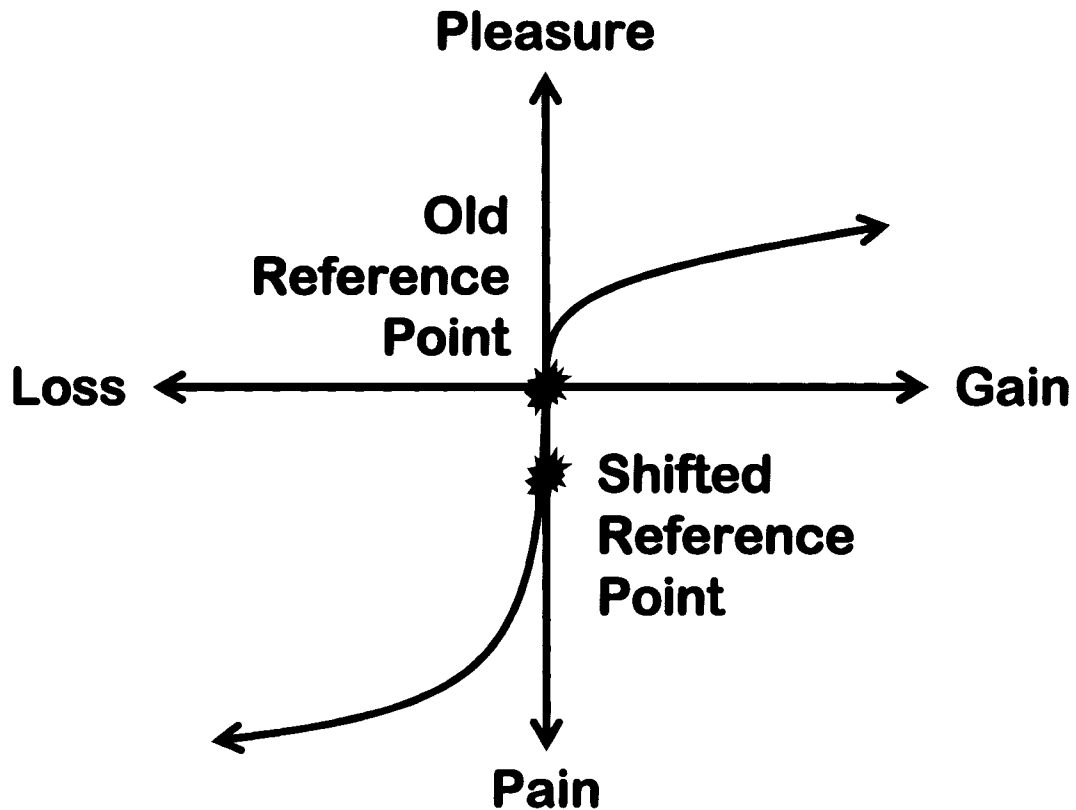


Figure 55. Relating reference shift to Prospect Theory value function.

(Adapted from previous figures.)

In Figure 55, the horizontal axis represents a continuum of loss and gain, with the center point being neutral. The vertical axis represents a continuum of pleasure and pain with the center point again being neutral. The green arrow represents the progressive risk

people will likely take to achieve pleasure and the red arrow represents the progressive risk people will take to avoid pain.

The reference point in green designates a stable condition. In other words, one is at a point of equilibrium between pain and pleasure; loss and gain. If someone wished to manipulate another person's behavior, a powerful technique could be to shift their reference point downward by creating a new standard for equilibrium, or "normal." When the bar for normalcy and equilibrium is raised, one's relative position is moved downward towards a perception of more pain and loss. Because of this, one will be more likely to take greater risk in order to achieve the new "normal" in order to avoid the pain of being left behind, or losing.

In addition the introduction of an authority, celebrity or socially influential figure, such as in viral marketing, stealth marketing, and marketing with social influencers (Cohen, 2002; Keller & Berry, 2003; Kirby & Marsden, 2005; Sherif, 1966; Silverman, 2001; Woolf, 1996), can both initiate or exacerbate the effect of reframing the reference point. But by far the most complementary technique, especially in the suggested near-fascist environment in which many Americans find themselves, is a method articulated by Axelrod (1997) called punishing the non-punisher. With this method people who do not punish other people for transgressing the social norm are themselves punished. For example, Axelrod notes that at a racist rally against black Americans a lone man who was not a racist wandered into the crowd and asked what all the fuss was about – at which point another man angrily called him a "nigger lover" and smashed him in the mouth with a beer bottle. The Nazis used this technique with great results and apparently the



bashing of those who criticize the Bush administration's war on terror, corporate elitism, or religious dominion has a similar effect.

The marketing of false social norms, reference-point shifting, and punishing the non-punisher have apparently been used to great effect by the America elite deviants currently in power. In many cases this has been accomplished through:

- Reframing language in order to change the meaning of or obfuscate the meaning of something (Heath & Heath, 2007; Luntz, 2007). Examples include using the words free-market economy instead of globalization, death tax rather than estate tax, and electronic intercepts instead of eavesdropping, failed consumer instead of poor, and climate change instead of global warming.
- Playing on people's natural sense of and need for community; giving them a preferred arena in which to get and compare their ideas (Sosnik, Fournier, & Dowd, 2006).
- Associating words without overtly connecting them. For example, the use of "mushroom cloud, 9/11, Al Qaeda, and Saddam Hussein" frequently and in the same sentence (Franken, 2003).
- Using the media to give false impressions of how normal people live and using the aspirational gap to frighten people into living beyond their means (Schor, 1999).
- Using globalization, offshoring, and outsourcing to make people overwork for fear of losing their jobs (Schor, 1993).
- Talking about wedge issues such as abortion, gays, and prayer in school before presenting the real issues (Hacker & Pierson, 2005).

- Frightening people by implying that if they do not agree with one's policies or ideology that they will be plagued with unreasonable specters of terror (Camp, 1997; Furedi, 2007; Glassner, 2000; Gonzales & Delgado, 2006)
- Repeating lies over and over until people believe them (Rich, 2006).
- Making scapegoats of and demonizing opponents, real or imagined, in a way that eliminates critical thought and promotes a polarized world view (Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Tarbell & Burbach, 2004).
- Playing on the illiteracy or innumeracy of the populace. Examples include giving false evidence under the illusion of authority that those things that benefit the rich will benefit everyone else equally, or using the median rather than the mean in government data as an indication of the average (D. C. Johnston, 2003).
- Giving oneself a heroic persona and claiming to have the moral upper hand while secretly perpetrating immoral, illegal, cowardly, and harmful deeds (Bartlett, 2006; Dubose & Reid, 2006; "George W. Bush: Faith in the White House," 2004; Stone, 2006).
- Concealing the flag draped coffins of the dead when they are returned home from war, refusing to accurately account for collateral damage, obfuscating the real cost of war, and claiming that the mission was accomplished when for certain it was not (Franken, 2003, 2005; Greenwald, 2004; Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Ricks, 2006).
- Perpetuating the impression that the playing field is level and that hard work, intelligence, persistence, and ethical behavior are the only things needed to guarantee success (D. R. Simon, 2005).

- Coupling the truth with something people find repugnant (Levitt & Dubner, 2005).

(Also see Bauman, 1998; Brocas & Carrillo, 2003; Dobbin, 2004; Frankfurt, 2005; Ganovetter & Swedberg, 2001; Gigerenzer & Selten, 2002; Glimcher, 2004; Godin, 2001; Loewenstein, Read, & Baumeister, 2003; Mackay, 1995; Maule & Svenson, 1993; Puu, 1997; R. J. Samuelson, 2001; Shefrin, 2000; and Whyte, 2004 for additional factors that motivate behavior.)

Therefore, elite deviants can, and apparently do, use the marketing of false social norms as a method of making people believe that everyone else believes certain things. Therefore people can feel isolated in their true beliefs (if they disagree) and fail to act upon or express them for fear of further isolation, punishment, or failure (a type 2 false social norm). Otherwise, if they truly believe a lie being perpetrated by elite deviants they can be manipulated through this belief as well (a type 1 false social norm).

So how, then, does all of this relate to the American Dream? That is the topic of the next chapter.



DISSERTATION

The Superhighway to Serfdom:  
How False Social Norms Marketing is Hijacking the American Dream

Volume III  
Chapters Twelve and Thirteen  
References

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## **Chapter Twelve: To Dream the American Dream**

The “American Dream” is that anyone can, with hard work and perseverance, bring themselves up out of poverty and achieve greatness in some fashion. Sometimes it might take a couple of generations, but material prosperity is thought accessible to all. There is a dark side to this dream, however: if anyone can achieve prosperity with hard work, then those who don't achieve must not be working hard enough. Right?

(Cline, 2006)

The real passion of the twentieth century is servitude.

Albert Camus

From “State Terrorism and Rational Terror” pt. 3, *The Rebel* (1951, translated 1953) found in *The Columbia World of Quotations* # 10291

At the core of this dissertation is the idea that the American Dream has been hijacked and replaced with servitude. But one must first inquire about the nature of the American Dream. As stated above, part of the American Dream is the notion that perseverance and hard work will yield a better life, if not for oneself then for one's children.

In an address to the Democratic Leadership Council in 1996 President Clinton stated:

The American dream that we were all raised on is a simple but powerful one – if you work hard and play by the rules you should be given a chance to go as far as your God-given ability will take you.

(Hochschild, 1996, p. 18)

The belief in the American Dream is as sacrosanct in the United States as any formal religion (Cullen, 2003). Yet, it seems to have long been under attack from within and finally stolen from the many, since it could not be outright killed by the few. The notion that if people would only work hard, work long, get smart and be good they will

prosper and their children will prosper more greatly has been sorely damaged. The hope of the masses for a better life, one that made America a country to envy, has been replaced by a vague and empty hopelessness. If entitlement became the problem du jour in the 1950's and 1960's it was bracketed by the opposite problem of elite deviance in the early and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This elite deviance, supported and promulgated through the marketing of false-social norms, has laid waste to the American Dream for most people. Things, for the most part, are no better for Americans in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and they surely will be much worse for their children if the current trends continue (Barlett & Steele, 1992, 1996; Bernstein, 2003; Buchdahl, 2004; Calder, 1999; Danaher, 1996; Davis, 2000; DeParle, 2004; Ehrenreich, 2005; Garfinkle, 2006; Harrison & Bluestone, 1988; Hedges, 2007; Herbert, 2005; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Johnson, 2006; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Miller-Adams, 2002; Moen & Roehling, 2004; Newman, 1994; Palley, 1998; Schwarz, 1997; Stiles, 2005).

Bardwick (1991) observes:

Generation after generation of Americans have climbed up the economic ladder, each standing higher than the one before it. The American Dream is based on a contract that says, "If you work hard, you are going to be more successful than your parents were." Those born in the Depression years found themselves, after the war, with opportunities and resources their parents had never imagined. Their children, the baby boomers, grew up with even higher expectations of success....

The years after World War II offered more people the opportunity for success than ever before in the United States. The boom years lasted approximately from the end of the war in 1946 to the recession and oil embargo of 1973.... The fat times were created by four extraordinary conditions that occurred simultaneously.... The first was the growth rate of the economy.... The second was our dominance in the world economy.... The third variable was the incredibly high birth rate that began in 1946.... In combination with the high growth rate of the economy, the high birth rate created the fourth condition: the tremendous expansion in the size of companies and organizations.... Together these four extraordinary conditions created unparalleled opportunities. And the people who could take advantage of those opportunities had been born in the 1920's and



1930's when the birth rate was the lowest in U.S. history. Thus, people who grew up during the Depression went to work at a time when the opportunity rate was at its highest....

On the surface, unlimited growth would seem to be a good thing. Companies [were] strong and profitable and people [had] no trouble finding good jobs, so everyone [was] secure and happy. But... it is possible to have too much of a good thing... those years of prosperity have now backfired.

pp. 7, 8

Herbert (2005) also expresses concern:

I'm troubled as never before about what's happening in the United States right now. I grew up at a time when the great promise of America probably was at its peak. Optimism ruled in the 1950's and 60's. Jobs were plentiful and standards of living were improving. Access to a decent education was becoming easier. Despite tremendous problems – the war in Vietnam, bitter and sometimes deadly racial struggles, assassinations – there was a sense that the nation was trying to right its wrongs; that it was moving in the right direction, however difficult and dangerous the road might seem.

I don't feel that sense as I travel the country now, meeting and talking with ordinary men and women who are directly affected by the major events of our time. The winds have shifted and are blowing from a more ominous direction. There are too many stories now about anxious and bewildered men and women who are desperate for work but can't find jobs, about middle-class families drowning in debt, about public schools swarming with students but starved of books and supplies, about gays caught in the backlash of disputes over values, about sick people who can't afford lifesaving drugs, about young men and women killed and maimed in George W. Bush's dark venture in Iraq.

It's not that life in America was better in the 1960's. It wasn't. But it seemed to be moving in a better direction....

The United States today is more powerful and prosperous than ever, but it feels very much like a nation on edge. The electorate is sliced right down the middle, with the two sides glaring at each other, as if from armed camps. The joy and optimism that one would expect to be widespread in the most successful nation in the history of the world are oddly missing. Instead there is a sense of things out of whack, of the center caving, of obligations unmet and promises betrayed....

The nation has grown largely indifferent to abuses of power and social injustice. Flag-waving politicians still give lip service to the great American ideals of freedom, justice, equality, and opportunity, but in an era of preventive war and so-called conservative values, we've all but stopped pursuing them. And that's dangerous. Throughout our history the pursuit of those ideals – however imperfect

the effort, however strained, timid, slow, and haphazard – was the only thing that made the United States special.

The war in Iraq, immorally launched and incompetently waged, will not be characterized by history as the noble campaign of a powerful nation striding toward greatness. It will be seen as the tragically foolish act of a nation unwilling to learn the lessons of Vietnam. The abuse of prisoners abroad and the war on civil liberties at home are hardly evidence that the better angels of our nature are in the ascent. The United States was always at its best at those points in history when it chased its cherished ideals like a mariner following the stars. At this moment, at the pinnacle of its power, the United States is a country that has lost its way....

Franklin Roosevelt told us: “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have too much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” Square that with the current appalling disparities in wealth and income in the United States and the emergence of a mind-bogglingly irresponsible ruling class whose core mission is indisputably to serve the interest of the very rich. The total wealth of the lucky 1 percent at the top of America’s social pyramid is a colossal \$2 trillion, more than the wealth of all of the Americans in the bottom 90 percent combined....

Today’s disparities rival, and maybe even exceed, the garish inequities of the Gilded Age at the end of the nineteenth century. The barons of twenty-first-century America, otherwise known as CEOs, have salaries 400 to 500 times the income of the workers, our present-day serfs, who labor for them full time.

In Chicago I spent time with a few of that city’s 100,000 young people, ages sixteen to twenty-four, who are at the very bottom of the economic pyramid. They are out of school, out of work, and, in my view, all but out of hope. In New York there are 200,000 youngsters, and across the United States a staggering 5.5 million... They’re all part of the American family but there is virtually no effort to find employment for them, or get them into training programs, or back into school. They’re not even counted when the official jobless statistics are tallied....

Connect the dots. Many of the young American men and women who ended up as the targets of snipers and bombers in Iraq had joined the military precisely because their economic opportunities and social options back home were grim. Again and again they will tell you that they joined the army to get a steady paycheck or an education, any opportunity to get ahead. Official statistics mask the reality of the nation’s difficult economic landscape. Nearly 9 million employed are underpaid. Nearly a third of all American working families live in poverty. According to the Department of Agriculture, more than 12 million families are struggling just to feed themselves. Record levels of household debt and personal bankruptcies are being recorded as cash-strapped families increasingly borrow just to make ends meet.

In 1946, after a long depression and the worst of all wars, Harry Truman looked out at a world that was largely in ruins. He did not wring his hands or shrink faintheartedly from the task at hand. He embarked on the greatest renewal and reconstruction program the world has ever known. Recognizing the crucial importance of American leadership, he led the way to the creation of the United Nations and NATO, and to the Marshall Plan to rebuild Western Europe.

Here at home he built the platform that was used to launch America's great post-war run. We built schools and housing and highways, and over the next few decades developed a standard of living that was the envy of the world. We made big advances in civil rights and women's rights and civil liberties. We committed ourselves to protecting the rights of workers and consumers, and even the criminally accused. We made the environment a priority....

Now where are we? At some point late in that postwar run, we took a wrong turn. That can-do era sputtered to an end, and we let the selfish, the vain, the greedy, and the incompetent take control of our nation and tell us what we can't do. We can't build first-class schools. We can't provide a reasonable wage for all working men and women. We can't follow through on the promise of Social Security. We can't deliver affordable drugs to the sick and infirm. We can't clean up the slums, or rescue the millions of children trapped in the clutches of poverty. We can't protect the environment.

The nation's leaders have looted the Treasury, mortgaged the future for generations to come, and driven us into a sinkhole in Iraq. And they've done it with impunity. Remember President Bush's "middle-class" tax cuts? "Over the coming decade," says Robert Reich, a former secretary of labor, "the Bush tax cuts will transfer more wealth to the richest one percent of the population than any fiscal policies in history...."

Time is not on our side. We've been attacked from without, but the greater danger to the essence of America is within. There's a fire in the basement of the United States and we're behaving as if we cannot even smell the smoke.

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As mentioned previously, times are certainly hard for the poor, the working poor, and the blue collar worker. But now they are also hard for many professionals and other white collar workers who have traditionally made progress on the economic playing field.

Ehrenreich (2005) contends:

Stories of white-collar downward mobility cannot be brushed off as easily as accounts of Blue-collar economic woes, which the hard-hearted traditionally blame on "bad choices": failing to get a college degree, for example, failing to postpone

childbearing until acquiring a nest egg, or failing to choose affluent parents in the first place. But distressed white-collar people cannot be accused of fecklessness of any kind; they are the ones who “did everything right.” They earned higher degrees, often setting aside their youthful passion for philosophy or music to suffer through dull practical majors like management or finance. In some cases, they were high achievers who ran into trouble precisely because they had risen far enough in the company for their salaries to look like a tempting cost cut. They were the losers, in other words, in a classic game of bait and switch. And while blue-collar poverty has become numbingly routine, white-collar unemployment – and the poverty that often results – remains a rude finger in the face of the American Dream.

p. 2

But apparently even more important to the American Dream than economic prosperity, better education, nicer things, more leisure, and a leg up for one’s kids, is the desire to live in a good, just, free, and decent society. Of course, this idea taken to its final and ultimate conclusion would be a utopia.

Utopia, or the ideal society, has been a staple literary subject throughout recorded history. The New York Library provides an extensive list of historical references from its *Utopia* exhibition (*Utopia*, 2004). Utopia’s manifestation, however, varies radically between visionaries and is often contradictory. That is, one person’s utopia often turns out to be another’s dystopia. One vision of utopia may be agrarian, another urban (Bellamy, 2003), one individualistic, another totalitarian (K. R. Popper, 1971), one requiring a minimal state that exists only to protect the rights of its constituents (Nozick, 1977), another whose operation supercedes any rights and moral obligations of and to the citizen (Machiavelli, 1998).

In reality, if one will excuse the pun, Utopia defined a place that was never to exist (More, 1965). However, that did not stop a host of efforts to realize the essence of Utopia, especially through government (Curley, 1962; Frankell, 1970; Locke, 1986; Marx, 2002; Plato, 1955).

However, as Bloch points out:

The main thing is that utopian conscience-and-knowledge, through the pain it suffers in facts, grows wise, yet does not grow to full wisdom. It is rectified – but never refuted by the mere power of that which, at any particular time, is. On the contrary it confutes and judges the existent if it is failing, and failing facticity precisely as departure from the Right: and above all to measure it immanently: that is, by ideas which have resounded and informed from time immemorial before such a departure, and which are still displayed and proposed in the face of it.

Bloch (1970; 1986) as quoted in Martin (2005, p. 205)

Therefore, a better treatment of the American dream would provide both an improved vision of society against which the current state may be examined and a desirable social construct which could serve as an attainable goal. Although this may demand a vision that falls short of the absolute utopian ideal, it will likely be one that still requires the emulation of a good, just, free, and decent society, and one that better approximates the American Dream.

As mentioned, the literature is heavy with the fruits of utopian ideals, but there are fewer of these resources available to define and guide the development of the component concepts such as social goodness, decency, freedom, and justice. This may, in part, be due to the rigor required to clarify such concepts. However, among the literature there are sources that seem to meet the requirements of critical thinking and broad perspective regarding the higher qualities of a better society. Ten of these sources are Rawls, Margalit, Galbraith, Roosevelt, Reich, Friedman, Callahan, Garrison, Carville, and Soros. Rawls addresses social justice, Margalit social decency, Galbraith social goodness, Roosevelt essential freedoms, Friedman freedom within a capitalist context, Carville the social responsibility of the republic, Garrison and Soros the proper behavior for the United States in a global society, Callahan the need for a culture of honesty in America,

and Reich the decent working society. (Both Reich and Callahan address the decline of the social contract and the necessity of its renewal.)

### *The Just Society*

Rawls' (1971) definition of a just society is founded on two principles:

1. Everyone has an equal right to basic liberties with appropriate honor and punishment accorded to those who deserve it.
2. Inequalities must benefit the least advantaged members of a society, with all offices and positions appointed with equal opportunity.

Although challenging to implement, Rawls definition is decidedly short and sweet. Further critique and development of Rawls' theories (Young, 2002) point out that while the diversity of ethnocultural and religious systems preclude the likelihood of ever conceptualizing justice in a way that would be affirmed by all individuals in all societies, restricting Rawl's application to a Western liberal democracy might meet more modest and feasible goals.

Reader's note: Foucault (1977) further articulates the concept of justice in discipline and punishment later in the text.

### *The Decent Society*

Margalit (1996) posits that a just society is built upon a decent society, and that a decent society is preceded by a bridled society, that is, one that does not allow physical cruelty.

According to Margalit, a decent society is one whose institutions do not humiliate people. This distinguishes itself from a civilized society in which its members do not humiliate each other. A decent society may also be civilized, but it is not a requirement. A civilized society is a microethical concept, while a decent society is a macroethical one concerning the organization of society as a whole.

Margalit rejects the radical argument of anarchism, that the very existence of governing institutions constitutes a reason for humiliation because they remove individual sovereignty, and the opposite but also radical argument of stoicism, that no governing institution can provide reason for humiliation because society is unable to humiliate anyone who does not wish to be humiliated, for the more moderate assertion that governing institutions can and do humiliate people, but do not necessarily need to do so. Therefore, his definition of a decent society as one in which institutions do not humiliate people takes the middle path philosophically and appears to remain well grounded in the common experience of society.

He notes that:

1. A decent society is founded on self-respect, as opposed to self-esteem or social honor, because self-respect is derived from merely belonging to the human race, while self-esteem and social honor are based on achievement. Therefore, self-respect provides the grounds for treating people with basic equality, whereas self-

esteem and social honor provide a basis for ranking people. Just as pride is the expression of self-esteem, dignity is the expression of the feeling of respect people feel towards themselves as human beings. The decent society, then, is one in which social institutions do not violate basic human dignity in a way that would affect self-respect.

2. There are a wide array of reasons for according people respect including:
  - a. A positive outlook that sees common human traits as deserving of respect.
  - b. A skeptical outlook that doubts the existence of these common human traits, but accords the action of respecting people as the source of respect.
  - c. A negative outlook that sees no reason for according people respect, but finds utility in not humiliating them.
3. Humiliation is the rejection of a person from the human commonwealth and-or inflicting the loss of basic control. Humiliation can also be transferable. That is, if one identifies with a victim and shares the characteristics for which the victim is being humiliated, then one is justified in feeling humiliated as well.
4. Social institutions can and do humiliate people.

Margalit observes further that a decent society might also be described as one that does not violate the rights of people dependent on it. He suggests that one possible argument for a relationship between human rights and self-respect might lie in the argument that humiliation does not necessarily mean that one's rights have been violated, but rather that one is made incapable of demanding them. This notion is also supported



by Feinberg (1970) who proposes a necessary link between self-respect and the concept of human rights.

Margalit makes clear that a society that tramples on the civil rights of its citizens is not a decent society. And although civil rights differ between societies, civil rights within a society enable people to express their humanity as it is shaped by their society, and the violation of this expression constitutes humiliation. Therefore equal access to civil rights are necessary for the dignity of citizens in a society.

Civil rights fall within the larger domain of human rights, and the basic human rights that are characteristic of a decent society are defined nicely by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as articulated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations. Paraphrased, these rights are as follows:

- Every human is born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- No one will be held in slavery or servitude.
- No one will be subjected to torture or to cruel, degrading, or inhuman treatment.
- Human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want.
- Everyone is equal before the law.
- Everyone everywhere has the right to recognition as a person before the law.
- Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.
- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

- Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
- Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon their honor and reputation.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, and has the right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's country.
- No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.
- No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- Everyone has the right to take part in the government of one's country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

- The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.
- Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.
- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work and everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for oneself and one's family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of one's interests and the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and of one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond one's control.
- Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

- Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free and shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.
- Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.
- Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of one's personality is possible.
- In the exercise of one's rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

*(Universal declaration of human rights, 2003)*

To justify a compliance with civil and human rights Margalit argues for human traits that justify respect for people as human beings. A trait of this quality must satisfy the following constraints:

- It must not be graded, as respect must be given equally.
- It must not be one that can be abused in a way that would cause abhorrence or disrespect
- It must be morally relevant to respecting humans.
- It must provide a humanistic justification for respect without relying on divine entities.

Immanuel Kant (Beck, 1960; Kant, 1953, 1964; Seidler, 1986) provides a list of traits that justify the intrinsic worth of a human including:

- Being a creature who determines ends and assigns value.
- Having the capacity for self-legislation.
- Having the ability to perfect oneself.
- Demonstrating the capacity to be a moral agent.
- Being rational.
- Being the only creature able to transcend natural causality,

According to the criteria set by Margalit these traits would satisfy moral relevance and humanistic requirements, however they can be graded and are subject to abuse. This provides somewhat of a logical paradox as Margalit asserts that the best trait for justifying respect for humans is the capacity to continuously or at any time reevaluate and

change one's life for the better. In this sense even the worst criminals are worthy of basic human respect because they may someday reevaluate their lives and live in a worthy manner. This trait is based on the concept of radical freedom, the idea that people are capable of transcending their past environment, actions, and character in order to live a future life that is discontinuous with the past. This is a laudible trait and one that I believe truly exists. However, the paradox is that this trait is very closely aligned with Kant's idea that people have the ability to act as moral agents and to perfect themselves, traits rejected by Margalit because they can be abused, such as acting immorally when one could act morally, and graded, for example, because some people's ability as a moral self-legislator is greater than others.

Despite this paradox, it seems allowable to let people's potential for acting in a moral manner, to self-improve and self-legislate, and most importantly to be capable of reevaluation and commitment to a better and more productive life to justify granting all people basic human respect. Arguably, only one good reason is required, and the capacity to better oneself seems a very good one. Without it, people would likely lose their humanity as well as their human dignity, cast about on the choice free waves of nature and nurture.

According to the skeptical view, however, human value is acquired similarly to the value of money. Human beings have value because other human beings value them. It is not a trait that gives people value, but the act of valuation itself. The skeptical view does not negate human dignity but acknowledges that humans often accord dignity to each other, and that this is self-justifying regardless of whatever traits we do or do not possess.

Similarly, justifying human dignity negatively aspires only to avoid humiliation, not to provide a rationale for respecting people. And in the end this is all that is required to explicate the idea of a decent society, since it is defined as a society that does not humiliate through its institutions. This justification is also important because it addresses the idea that human beings can experience pain and suffering, and that this pain and suffering can take place symbolically as well as physically. The rationale is as follows:

Humiliation is the extension of physical cruelty into the dimension of psychological suffering. Humiliation is mental cruelty. Therefore, a decent society must not only be committed to the eradication of physical cruelty in its institutions, but also to the elimination of mental cruelty caused by these institutions.

So, then, how is it that humiliation takes place? Margalit notes that often humiliation is achieved by treating people as non-human. This negation of humanity can take the form of treating people as if they were animals, machines, or sub-humans (such as treating adults as children), or as demons. (The demonization of the Jews by the Nazis and the witch-hunts of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe are salient examples.) These forms of humiliation can extend beyond the boundaries of a society or state to its enemies. A decent society does not treat any part of its constituency as non-human, and it also restricts such treatment of others outside of its jurisdiction.

Methods of treating others as non-human include simply ignoring them, that is, treating them as if they were not there. Denis Silk (1990) uses the metaphor of vanishing powder that is sprinkled on Arabs from the occupied territories who work in Israel, because a good Arab is one who works but is not seen. Another method is to see people as stigmatized, to note some anomaly as a defect in their humanity. These anomalies, which

range from dress and diet to speech and scent, are signs that may instantly stigmatize one human in the eyes of another, signs that place them outside the humanity of the observer. Margalit notes that this behavior is often unintentional, since, in his view, people consciously avoid most decisions and rely on culture and habit to decide for them. Therefore, most individuals are not evaluated on an ongoing basis, but rather on observable traits that are easily scanned and qualified. In a decent society, however, much effort is given to developing a-stigmatic vision with respect to people's humanity.

Humiliation may also be accomplished through inflicting an utter loss of freedom and control over a person's vital interests, making them totally subject to the will of their tormentors. According to Margalit, humiliation involves an existential threat. The institutional humiliator has power over the victim and imposes a sense of absolute helplessness. In this same sense humiliation may occur when institutions compel and coerce people to violate their own integrity, that is, to compromise personal self-definition, values, ideals, and principles.

A decent society does not violate the integrity of its people, nor does it reject legitimate groups to which a person belongs as a part of their own self-identification. The institutional rejection of legitimate encompassing groups, groups that help to determine how one shapes one's life as a human being such as gender, nationality, religion, and race, constitutes a mediated rejection that is common in normal societies. This type of humiliation is not typically associated with attitudes and acts that can be directly linked to rejecting humans as human. It is much more mundane and everyday. However, this type of rejection and humiliation is insidious because it attacks groups to which people often



do not belong by choice or achievement, but are groups to which people belong because of what they are.

To briefly summarize, a decent society does not humiliate people through its institutions. The three concepts of humiliation discussed have been rejection, treating humans as non-human, and the removal of control. Cruelty, then, is the mediating concept between the justification of respect through non-humiliation and the elements of humiliation. Shklar notes that the first duty of society is to remove cruelty (Shklar, 1984). However, Margalit argues that the decent society is not simply based on the notion of non-cruelty. Whereas the bridled society does not employ physical cruelty, physical punishment, or backbreaking labor, it also does not avoid the institutional humiliation of its dependents. Therefore, the bridled, non-cruel, society must first be put into place, and then the decent and just society can be added in order, each building on the foundation of the other.

Margalit goes on to note that a decent society does not violate civic honor through the creation of second-class citizens. This violation can occur both in the form of withholding full citizenship rights from legal citizens and in withholding citizenship from those who are entitled to it. T. H. Marshall claims that there are three essential aspects of citizenship, legal, social, and political, each with its own set of rights and privileges. Legal citizenship involves the rights people have under the law, political citizenship involves the totality of political rights, such as voting and holding office, and social citizenship involves rights to social benefits including social security, health services, education, and employment. Historically the idea of legal citizenship was emphasized in the eighteenth century, political citizenship in the nineteenth century, and social citizen-

ship in the twentieth century. However, the first two forms of citizenship do not guarantee full belonging in society. All three are necessary. However, Margalit adds a fourth dimension to citizenship that is also essential, that of symbolic citizenship, or sharing in societies symbolic wealth. This may be stated positively, such as requesting formal recognition of a language. However, Margalit posits that a decent society is better defined as one that also does not develop or support, on an institutional level, any symbols that are directed implicitly or explicitly against some of the citizens of the state. This includes the transformation of features that are historically and culturally dependent into inborn characteristics in the form of stereotypes, making a decent society also one that does not contain collective humiliating representations of that are actively and systematically used by societies institutions.

Humiliation may also occur when an encompassing group is not given representation in the media. Institutionally this can manifest within schools, newspapers, radio, television, historical archives, libraries, museums, theatres, and other modes of institutional interaction where information is exchanged or presented. This does not require insult or degradation, merely the absence of presence. Deliberate disregard of a legitimate group (legitimacy may be defined as legal and non-humiliating) implies the denouncing and disqualifying of the group's form of life. Margalit points out that these groups are being denied the legitimacy of expressing themselves as human beings by presenting their form of life in public. However, he does not require society to be pluralistic, only tolerant. A pluralistic society embraces and declares value in diversity whereas a tolerant society acquiesces to competing ways of life, but see no value in them. A decent

society might view tolerance as a price that is worth paying to avoid the long history of repression that is the inevitable result of intolerance.

The culture of a decent society, however, must also include the material culture at its disposal as well as the means of expression. For example, the technology available in a society is a significant factor in determining what is humiliating. This does not simply mean access to material wellbeing, but can include special support required by the aged or those with a physical handicap.

According to Margalit, institutions in a decent society must not encroach upon personal privacy. He notes a direct link between the idea of decency and separating the public and private spheres. Exposing private things to the public is considered an indecent act. Violation of privacy must be considered humiliating because it fosters loss of control and autonomy, and may lead to rejection by society. It restricts control, against people's will, over things that should be within their control. The private realm is the minimal sphere in which individuals can control their own interests. Although there is no one area that is considered private in every culture, every culture has the concept of privacy. Therefore, institutional surveillance of the private sphere is humiliating and shameful. In a totalitarian regime, such as during the McCarthy era in the United States (Cohen, 1996; Fried, 1990; Schrecker, 1999), revelation of private information may be intentionally used to humiliate people, causing rejection from society, or as blackmail in which people are forced to violate their integrity, such as informing on relatives or friends. Foucault (1977) notes that institutional surveillance that violates privacy has a normalizing function that channels society into new standards of behavior, thus turning deviants into perverts, with the goal of rejecting deviants from society. This defines the

deviant as less-than-human and, therefore, as unworthy of human dignity. This violation of privacy can become circular – a violation of dignity can create social standards whereby the victim is considered non-human and therefore his or her dignity has not been violated.

In addition to blackmail, compromised integrity, and rejection from society, invasion of privacy appears to have the power to destroy intimacy. According to Margalit intimacy is a vital element in deep relationships and certainly plays a part in even moderate friendships. Violation of privacy may impair or even destroy significant relationships. In a totalitarian regime, the interest is in foiling relationships that may prove dangerous to the regime. Therefore, totalitarian institutions seek to become the absolute arbiter of relationships between people. Because of this, the first victim of terror is friendship.

In reviewing the structure of a decent society the question regarding the compatibility of decency and bureaucracy seems to appear with regularity. Can there be a bureaucracy that does not systematically humiliate its dependents? According to Margalit bureaucracy has a bad reputation and is at best considered a necessary evil. Part of what gives a welfare state a bad name is its dependence on bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is one of the greatest problems for social democracies because distribution of justice seems to require it. The question is, however, not whether bureaucracy is irritating, but rather whether or not it is humiliating.

Bureaucracies are built upon impersonal and mechanistic relations that are generally indifferent to people's personal attributes or suffering. This impersonal attribute can become humiliating when people come to be treated as non-human or sub-human, or, in

some cases, people are not seen at all. Margalit states that the most common complaint regarding bureaucracies is that they treat people as numbers and that often the representatives of the bureaucracy see only the written form, not the individual. Weber (1968) considers this impersonal attitude and machinelike quality to be the best attribute of a bureaucracy. He compares feudalism, based on favoritism, to Wilhelminian bureaucracy based on non-discrimination. He notes that bureaucracy is at its best when it avoids feudal whims, that is, you cannot play favorites with people whom you do not know. (The modern interpretation is that bureaucracy can be the great equalizer, in that it treats everyone badly.) However, Weber did not consider the possibility of a feudalistic bureaucracy, one that combines both personal and impersonal relations. This is one in which the government is very personal and concerned with those who are considered an included or special group, but lacks concern and is quite impersonal with those who are not. This combination of behaviors leads to humiliation on the part of the rejected group.

To evaluate the quality and necessity of bureaucracies in a decent society it may be valuable to observe its operation within a welfare state. The subject of the welfare state has been studied extensively (Bruce, 1961; Robson, 1971; Wilensky, 1975) from many perspectives including Christian, market, socialist, and statist. Although justifications differ, common themes are the preservation of society and the elimination of degrading treatment of the poor. Paradoxically, humiliation has often been employed as a means to eliminate the abuse and exploitation of the welfare system. Support is often offered under humiliating conditions to deter laziness and undesired dependency. Underlying the suspicion of welfare abuse was often the notion that the poor were to blame for their fate. Many believed that humiliating treatment was a method for discerning whether

or not a person requesting assistance truly had any alternative choice. After his first visit to the poorhouse to which he was to become a trustee, George Lansbury wrote:

Everything possible was done to inflict mental and moral degradation.

(Bruce, 1961) p. 109

However, testing the needy through humiliation is not entirely a thing of the past. The modern welfare society can create people lacking in self-respect, and can replace judgment about what is in their own interest with its own discretion. According to Margalit, this paternalistic approach creates second-class citizenship among the poor and assigns to them the status of non-adult human beings. Thus, he concludes that the welfare society has the ability to abolish the humiliation of the needy that disqualifies a society from being decent, while, on the other hand, a welfare society may itself be debasing at the institutional level, therefore disqualifying itself as decent.

At this point, several distinctions may be useful. According to Margalit:

- Poverty is relative. A poor person in the United States may be middle-class or even rich in another country. Poverty is defined as the minimal conditions necessary to lead a human life. This minimum reflects the concept of humanity prevalent in each society and constitutes a threshold for economic citizenship.
- The claim that poverty results from failure is unjust
- Poverty may be noble if it is chosen and does not involve dependents. One example would be a person who chooses poverty for religious reasons.
- Assistance is least humiliating when it can be viewed as an entitlement. That is, society should not only eliminate poverty that causes humiliation, but it must also

eliminate the humiliation associated with poverty. The distribution of welfare should acknowledge the right of the recipient to obtain it.

Based on these assumptions, one might argue that a charitable society, rather than a welfare society, might offer more dignity to the poor. However, Margalit states that a charitable society is saddled with very similar problems even though the charitable support is not necessarily dependent on institutions.

Von Mises (1966) notes:

The indigent has no legal claim to the kindness shown to him. He depends on the mercy of benevolent people, on the feelings of tenderness which his distress arouses. What he receives is a voluntary gift for which he must be grateful. To be an almsman is shameful and humiliating. It is an unbearable condition for a self-respecting man.

p. 238

Margalit points out that a charitable society free from bureaucracy may still, even at its best, insult and even humiliate those who receive its charity. Therefore, Margalit concludes that the welfare state, and the bureaucracy that apparently must accompany it, is a conundrum. Poverty is humiliating, a decent society will eliminate poverty, a charitable society based on pure benevolence may not better provide dignity to the needy, yet the bureaucracy needed to fairly distribute welfare through state institutions is, by definition, subject to methods and behaviors that can instill humiliation.

A related topic that may be more easily examined is unemployment. A society that honors the human rights articulated by the United Nations will provide every person with employment even if the person's social rights are provided for by unemployment benefits. The more pertinent question, however, is whether or not work helps to provide human dignity. Margalit notes that work can give people the autonomy and economic

citizenship that helps to preserve their human dignity. This does not mean that bureaucratically provided work will be free from indignity. But work can support people through their own labor without being dependent on the goodwill of others and helps to avoid the humiliation associated with charity or welfare. There are, of course, other ways to avoid poverty, such as property ownership, passive income, and the like. However, most people are dependent on work to provide income.

Although many individuals do not value their work directly, Margalit identifies four types of dependence that have historically served to determine people's attitudes towards work:

1. Dependence on getting paid. Slaves are the ultimate form of this type of dependence, although their remuneration often takes the form of mere survival (Classical concept).
2. Dependence on others when one is unemployed. Work and property liberates one from relying on the kindness of strangers (Capitalist concept).
3. Parasitic dependence on the work of others when one is not working violates the directive of work as the source of all economic value (Socialist concept).
4. Dependence on God. Man's work is divine service while idleness neglects one's holy work and may cause one to become dependent on others, which is a terrible sin (Calvinist concept).

However, one may argue that work can be valued beyond these concepts. One argument for making employment a condition of the decent society is the concept of man as a working animal. That is, human nature finds its ultimate expression in work.



Therefore, involuntary unemployment denies the humanity of the unemployed. There is, though, a distinction between employment and meaningful occupation. (Many people value their time off more than their time at work.) Purposeful work implies an occupation that provides relevant satisfaction, fulfillment, and meaning. The essence of meaningless work is that it demeans those who do it, and can, therefore, be humiliating. A decent society is one that supports self-worth and self-respect through relevant and meaningful occupation.

Even though work can be rewarding and fulfilling, Margalit finds many opportunities for coercion and exploitation in the workplace. Work under coercion is a clear case of humiliation. The existence of slavery, serfdom, and impressments into service are inexcusable in the decent society. However, is it necessary to eradicate exploitation for a society to be considered decent?

According to Margalit, most exploitation is hidden, for if it were not well disguised, the exploited would rise up against the exploiters. In feudal times the exploitation of serfs by their masters was masked by a pretense of protective partnership. The serfs were to work the fields while the lord provided protection. In capitalist societies exploitation is disguised as a relationship of mutual benefit. The workers provide skill and labor while the employer provides the means of production. However, even if one were to discover the exploitation, would they be justified in feeling humiliated? Margalit would answer, "No." Exploitation that is not coercion does not reject people from the human race nor does it remove total control. Therefore, a society that allows exploitation can remain decent, but it cannot remain just. Exploitation, while it may not humiliate, is clearly neither fair nor just.

Finally, the ultimate litmus test of a decent society is how a society conducts its punishment policies and procedures. A decent society is one in which criminals are punished without being humiliated by its institutions. The question, then, is can the humiliating element of punishment be removed, or is this a utopian ideal? A claim could be made that any punishment that involves suffering and disgrace is humiliating, especially if it involves removing the criminal from society.

There is another argument, however, that it is precisely the punishment and the suffering it involves that acknowledges that the person being punished is a moral agent, and therefore worthy of respect. They are seen as being responsible for their actions and are accorded the honor of being punishable, that is, they are taken seriously as human beings.

Margalit suggests, however, that punishment for crime inherently involves disgrace. The question is how to transform the disgrace involved in punishment into a loss of social honor without personal humiliation. This may well take the form of the biblical requirement of hating the sin without hating the sinner. A decent society cares about the human dignity of its criminals and relies its strongest justification, the ability for people to reevaluate their lives and to change for the better.

There is a salient similarity between Rawl's view of a just society and Margalit's view of a decent one. In Rawl's model, self-respect is based on people's self-value, the feeling that their life plan is worthy, and the confidence that they have the ability to realize this plan, insofar as it is up to them. Without this self-respect there is no point in doing anything – one has no sense of value, one's life has no meaning. Therefore, a just society will avoid humiliating institutions or social conditions that diminish self-respect. In this sense, a just society and a decent society are nearly identical. With this in mind,

often the worst humiliation in the modern world is perpetrated upon people who are not members of a society in which they live (Walzer, 1983). Illegal aliens are the salient example. A decent and just society extends its protection from humiliation to all people in its jurisdiction, whether they are members or not.

### *The Free Society*

Noted as one of the greatest economists in history, Milton Friedman (2002) advocates a trichotomy of economic freedom, civil freedom, and political freedom. He notes, however, that:

...while economic freedom is a necessary condition for civil and political freedom, political freedom, desirable though it may be, is not a necessary condition for economic and civil freedom.

(Friedman, 2002) p. ix

Friedman believes that Americans must constantly strive to keep government from becoming a Frankenstein that can destroy the very freedoms it was established to protect. He also notes that the greatest threat to freedom is the concentration of power. Therefore, concentrating power in political hands is very dangerous. The question then becomes, "How can a society benefit from the promise of government without the threat to its freedom?"

He states that first the scope of government must be limited. In Friedman's view government's major responsibility is to protect society's freedom from enemies both outside its borders and within them. Government should foster competitive markets, enforce private contracts, and preserve law and order. Voluntary cooperation and private enterprise are the necessary checks on the power of government. Secondly he notes that government power must be dispersed. According to Friedman the greatest advances in

civilization have not come from centralized government. Government cannot replace the variety and diversity of individual action; it merely substitutes uniform mediocrity for the variety essential to elevate the bottom of society. When enacted, government is best when it occurs at the lowest appropriate level, that is, first in the community, then the city, then the state, and only then at the federal level.

Friedman notes that politics and economics are widely believed to be unconnected. For example, the political domain may be concerned with individual freedom while the economic domain concerns itself with material welfare. A modern manifestation of this illusion takes form in the idea of democratic socialism. In this concept individual freedom is preserved through political action while the economy is regulated by the state. However, economic regulation impinges on individual freedom; therefore a society that is socialist cannot also be democratic. The converse, then, is the idea that economic freedom may be used as a means for creating political freedom (Hayek, 1944).

What, then, are the links between political and economic freedom? Friedman points out that one must first consider the market as an essential component of freedom. Therefore, the basic issue in social organization, and thus the creation of a free society, is the coordination of economic activities. Even backward societies employ division of labor and specialization to effectively use available resources. In a society of millions, large-scale coordination is required to fully take advantage of modern resources, such as science and technology. The challenge then becomes one of maintaining individual freedom within widespread interdependence. Friedman states that there are only two ways of achieving coordination among millions. One is by coercion, the other through voluntary cooperation. If all parties involved in a transaction benefit from it, the resulting

exchange can bring about coordination without coercion. This coordination results in a free private enterprise exchange economy, or more commonly known as competitive capitalism. Specialization and division of labor would be of only limited use if production were limited to the needs of a household. Therefore, in a modern society the production of goods and services for others, combined with intermediaries and money as a vehicle of exchange, create the exchange economy. In this case, voluntary cooperation exists without coercion if the enterprises are private, that is, the contracting parties are individuals, and if the individuals enter or exit the exchange of their own free will. Therefore, freedom of exchange generally prevents one person from interfering with another in economic activities. The seller is protected from coercion because there are many buyers, the buyer is protected because there are many sellers. The employer is protected because there are many employees and the employee is protected because there are many employers. This is accomplished without centralized authority.

Under these circumstances the government is essential for determining the rules of exchange and to interpret and enforce these rules. The market, however, greatly reduces the issues upon which government must act. By removing the larger organization of economic activity from government, a system of checks and balances is accomplished that removes a large source of coercive power. On the other hand, if economic power is joined with political power, there will be an almost inevitable concentration of institutional power that is contradictory to the concept of individual freedom.

As has been stated, a free society is also free from coercion. The appropriate method for attaining goals is through free discussion and voluntary cooperation. According to Friedman, a free market creates proportional representation. On the other hand,

political channels tend to strain social cohesion. The best one can do is to win by a majority. However, the minority remains dissatisfied. The market relieves this strain by making conformity unnecessary within the economic domain. Yet some issues are too difficult or expensive to handle through the market and require political channels. For example, the general rules through which people agree to have their relationships governed, and the interpretation, arbitration, and enforcement of these generally accepted rules are the domain of government. Therefore, the organization of economic activity through voluntary exchange requires on government for the maintenance of law and order to prevent coercion, enforcement of contracts voluntarily entered into, definition of property rights, and provision of a monetary system. As voluntary exchange cannot exist in a monopoly, the government is also chartered to prevent monopoly unless monopoly proves to be the best alternative for all. A second case in which voluntary exchange is impossible occurs when individuals have an effect on other individuals for which the perpetrator will not be charged and the victim will not be compensated. A salient example is pollution. Those who pollute cause others to exchange good for bad. If appropriate compensation is not provided then the exchange is not voluntary. This process has been labeled a negative aspect of the “neighborhood effect.”

Friedman concludes:

A government which maintained law and order, defined property rights, served as a means whereby we could modify property rights and other rules of the economic game, adjudicated disputes about the interpretation of the rules, enforced work, engaged in activities to counter technical monopolies and to overcome neighborhood effects widely regarded as sufficiently important to justify government intervention, and which supplemented private charity and the private family in protecting the irresponsible, whether madman or child – such a government would clearly have important functions to perform.

(2002, p. 34)

However, he notes current activities undertaken by the government that cannot be justified in terms of the above principles. These include:

- Agricultural price support
- Government control of output
- Import tariffs or export restrictions
- Rent control
- Minimum wage rates or maximum prices
- Detailed regulation of industries
- Violation of free speech through the control of radio and television
- Social security programs that compel people to spend their income
- Restriction of enterprises, occupations, or professions to people who have a license
- Subsidy of housing
- Conscription to military service in peacetime
- National parks
- Legal prohibition of mail carrying for profit
- Toll roads

Friedman shows that this list is far from comprehensive, but sufficient to make a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate government involvement.

Economic growth and full employment have often been used as excuses for increasing government intervention in economic affairs. Private free enterprise is viewed by many as unstable and vulnerable to recurrent cycles of boom and bust. Friedman

points out that these arguments are misleading. He observes that for economic stability and growth, what is urgently needed is a reduction of intervention by government, not an increase. The few areas of governmental policy relevant to economic stability are monetary and fiscal (budgetary) policy. However, even though government must have some responsibility for monetary issues, there is great potential for inappropriate control over the economy through this involvement.

Friedman points out that the Great Depression in the United States was not an indication of the inherent instability of private enterprise, but rather a testament to the harm that can be done by mistakes by a few people in a government where they exercise vast power over the monetary system. How, then, can a monetary system be established that is stable, yet devoid of irresponsible governmental manipulation? Friedman suggests that the only way that shows promise is to legislate rules for the conduct of monetary policy enabling public control through political authorities, while preventing policy from the daily whim of these authorities. The most appropriate rule would be to instruct the monetary authorities to achieve a specified growth in the stock of money. Additional rules could then be applied as to how this growth would be achieved and would further reduce government intervention.

Friedman also argues that the best way to convert a market economy into an authoritarian economic society is by the imposition of direct controls on foreign exchange. He notes that the problem of international monetary arrangements is the difference among national currencies. As a rule he advocates free-floating exchange rates determined in the market without governmental intervention as a counterpart to monetary rules. In addition, Friedman suggests the elimination of any restrictions on trade. Even if



other countries did not lift their trade barriers, the United States would benefit from dispensing with tariffs. Rather than making grants for foreign governments in the name of economic aid, the lifting of trade restrictions would allow free cooperation among the individuals of the world in a way that would promote greater freedom and wealth.

With respect to fiscal policy Friedman notes that, since the New Deal, the first excuse for governmental expansion at the federal level was the notion that federal spending was needed to eliminate unemployment. Perpetual deficit was seen as an antidote to an otherwise intractable problem. In more modern times the prevailing philosophy required government spending to increase whenever private spending began to decline, thus, supposedly, creating a balancing effect. Unfortunately, many spending programs do not come into effect until the recession has passed. This exacerbates the succeeding expansion rather than mitigating the recession because cuts in federal spending during an expansion are seen as jeopardizing the expansion. This promotes an inflationary bias into governmental policy. This policy creates ever-increasing government expenditures, and causes government to become a larger and larger part of the economy as a whole. It is axiomatic that the government will have more difficulty in avoiding significant effects on the economy. Friedman states that for fiscal policy, the correct counterpart to monetary rule would be to have expenditure programs based on what the community wants to do through government without any regard to the problems of economic stability.

Regarding education, Friedman notes a positive neighborhood effect. That is, education contributes to both a common set of values and a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge that are essential to a stable and democratic society. Therefore, the benefits of education accrued by the child extend to the community and beyond. This

neighborhood effect can justify the imposition of a minimum required level of schooling and the financing of this schooling by the state. However, grounds for governmental administration of education are more difficult to prove. Friedman suggests that the government supply vouchers to parents that would allow for the education of their children with approved providers. The role of government would then be limited to insuring that these schools met minimum standards.

The replacement of status arrangements with contract agreements constituted the first step toward freeing the serfs in the Middle Ages. Friedman continues with the idea that the development of capitalism through history has been responsible for a major reduction in racial, religious, and other social discrimination. However, he notes that legislation designed to prevent discrimination interferes with individual freedom. By the same token, right-to-work laws, those that make it illegal to require membership in a union for employment, are also a violation of the employment contract. Given adequate competition among employers and employees, there is no reason why employers and employees cannot be free to offer whatever terms they see fit.

However, there are times when a sufficient number of employers or providers is absent. The existence of a monopoly limits voluntary exchange by reducing the available alternatives. It would be easy to argue that there should be laws that impose a sense of social responsibilities upon monopolists. But Friedman argues that this would also destroy a free society. He also argues that monopoly in industry, labor, and government is not so large an issue as to make a dent in the overall diversity of the economy. If action is necessary in the domain of government it would be to eliminate those things that directly support monopoly. Interference with private activities, destruction of property

should be dealt with and antitrust laws should apply to enterprise and labor alike. Beyond this, the most effective step towards the reduction of monopoly power would be extensive tax reform. Corporate tax should be abolished and corporations should be required to attribute non-divident earnings to stockholders. The stockholder should then pay tax on this earning plus dividends. This would remove the incentive for corporations to inappropriately reinvest. Also, our current highly graduated income tax provides strong incentive to avoid its impact. The solution is to scale down the higher rates while eliminating the legal devices created to avoid them.

Friedman states that social responsibility has been inappropriately assigned as an obligation to labor unions and corporations. A corporation's sole responsibility is to increase profits through open and free competition without deception or fraud. A labor union's sole responsibility is to serve the interest of the members. It is the responsibility of society to establish a framework of law such that, as Adam Smith would have put it, an individual in pursuing his own interests is frequently led to promote the interests of society.

Regarding the distribution of income, Friedman asserts that a capitalist system involving payment for production can produce considerable inequality of income and wealth. There is a misinterpretation, however, that capitalism produces wider inequality than alternative systems. In fact, according to Friedman, the more capitalistic the country, the smaller the fraction of income is paid for the use of capital, and the larger the fraction paid for human services. It is, in his belief, capitalism that provides for less inequality than any other system. He also notes that capitalism promotes more economic mobility and equality of opportunity than more status societies. He states that the pro-

gress and development in capitalistic societies has freed the masses from harsh toil and made accessible luxuries that were at one time only available to the wealthy.

Friedman further notes that graduated taxation and inheritance tax, those used most by government to distribute income, have been ineffective. Because even people at the same economic level may pay quite different taxes depending on the source of their income and their opportunity to evade taxation. A further factor is that these taxes are levied more on becoming wealthy than on being wealthy. While they limit the use of income from existing wealth, they more greatly impede the accumulation of wealth. The taxes on accumulated wealth do nothing to reduce the wealth itself. The accumulation of wealth requires a large income that is likely to be more greatly taxed.

As a solution, Friedman suggests a flat-rate tax on income, with income broadly defined and deductions allowed only when expenses are strictly defined as those involved in earning income. This, combined with the abolition of corporate tax, could be extended to the elimination of numerous deductions and exemptions. Under these conditions, a flat tax at a reasonable rate, such as might be considered very moderate under graduated tax, would yield higher revenue than a graduated rate because a larger amount of taxable income would be reported, it would be a more efficient method, it would create more disincentive for tax avoidance, and would allow for far fewer vehicles currently used to avoid tax. Also, social action of a very different kind than what is currently practiced is required for the distribution of income. Special monopoly privileges granted by government, tariffs, and provisions benefiting special groups should be eliminated. Widening and increasing education will also reduce inequality by dealing with the source rather than the symptom.

He notes that in contrast, humanitarian and egalitarian sentiment has produced a plethora of other measures to promote the welfare of society. These include minimum wage laws, farm price supports, medical care for certain groups, special aid programs, public housing, and social security.

According to Friedman:

- Public housing can be justified only on the grounds of paternalism. Public housing has not reduced the number of people needing to be housed and the number of dwellings destroyed to erect public housing is greater than that which replaced them. This occurred because, once the program is adopted, it becomes dominated by special interests it could serve. Often this interest is held by local groups, particularly those who are merely anxious to have blighted areas cleared. Even so, urban blight does not seem to be going away and schools within these districts have been adversely affected. According to Friedman, cash grants to families would have been much more effective.
- Minimum wage laws also produce the opposite of the intended effect. The state can enforce a minimum wage, but it cannot require employers to hire all who were formerly employed at wages below the minimum. Friedman notes that the true effect of minimum wage is to increase unemployment.
- Farm price support is justified only by the over-representation in the electoral college and Congress of rural areas. Farm price supports do not help farmers who need help. Benefits are in proportion to the amount sold on the market. The poor farmer sells less than the wealthy one, and gets less support. In addition, benefits to farmers are less than the total amount spent. Often benefits go to others such as

the suppliers of storage and not to the farmer. The main effect of this program has been to make output larger, not to raise the income per farmer. It also causes the consumer to pay twice for food, once for the purchase, twice for the taxes for farm benefit. Foreign policy is also affected because quotas on imports are imposed to protect domestic product from world price.

- The social security program has come to be taken so much for granted that its benefit is rarely brought into question. However, Friedman sees it as an unjustified invasion into the personal lives of America's citizens. He notes that social security consists of a special tax imposed on payroll, and payments to people of a specified age, of amounts determined by family status, prior earnings, and age at which payment begins. He sees three separate elements in the program:
  1. The requirement that a wide class of persons must purchase specified annuities, i.e., compulsory provision for old age.
  2. The requirement that the annuity must be purchased from the government; i.e., nationalization of the provision of these annuities.
  3. A scheme for redistributing income, insofar as the value of the annuities to which people are entitled when they enter the system is not equal to the taxes they will pay.

(2002, p. 183)

Friedman points out that these elements do not need to be combined. Individuals could be required to pay for his or her annuity. Individuals could purchase an annuity from a private firm. Individuals could be required to purchase specified annuities. The government could engage in redistribution without using annuities and the government

could sell annuities without compelling individuals to buy specified annuities or require that the business be self-supporting.

However, Friedman continues his argument against social security by noting that those who enter the system at a young age will receive far less relative to their contribution than those who enter at an old age. Also, the benefit to the wealthy is greater than that afforded the poor, the tax constitutes a higher rate for the poor than those of high income, it is doubtful that taxes paid will suffice to finance the obligation, therefore eventually requiring a subsidy. Therefore, a law requiring individual purchase of annuities from private providers without the use of taxation could easily be preferable. The compulsory purchase of car insurance is a close analogy. Friedman notes that competition from private enterprise, and individual freedom to choose, would promote the variety and diversity required to meet individual needs. This would also reduce expansion in the scale of government. However, Friedman continues, why should purchase of annuity be compulsory?

Compulsory purchase of annuities has therefore imposed large costs for little gain. It has deprived all of us of control over a sizable fraction of our income, requiring us to devote it to a particular purpose, purchase of a retirement annuity, in a particular way, by buying it from a government concern. It has inhibited competition in the sale of annuities and the development of retirement arrangements. It has given birth to a large bureaucracy that shows tendencies of growing by what it feeds on, of extending its scope from one area of our life to another. And all this, to avoid the danger that a few people might become charges on the public.

(2002, p. 189)

Friedman notes that regarding poverty, the rapid economic growth in Western countries and the wide distribution of the benefits of free enterprise have greatly reduced absolute poverty. However, he continues, poverty is a relative matter. Still, there is some justification for alleviating poverty through governmental action. Rates of subsidy could

be graduated to produce a floor below which no one's net income could fall – this floor being decided by what the community could afford. This method would give help to the poor in the form of cash and would substitute for a host of other benefits now in effect. It also would reduce the cost of administration by reducing the degree to which government is involved.

Friedman states that the heart of his philosophy is a belief in the dignity of the individual and one's freedom to make the most of one's talents, capabilities, and opportunities as long as one does not interfere with the freedom of others to do the same. Each person has an equal right to freedom, that is, equality of rights and equality of opportunity. However, material equality or equality of outcome are not guaranteed. A free society tends towards material equality, but this is not its justification. State action to eliminate monopoly power and amelioration of poverty are seen as laudible, but also regrettable when they substitute compulsory for voluntary action. To take from some to give to others cannot be based on justice. This form of equality sharply conflicts with freedom.

In the 1920's and 1930's intellectuals in the United States were overwhelmingly persuaded that capitalism was defective and that future hope lay in greater state control over economic affairs. This occurred because they compared the existing state with the hypothetical ideal one. Since that time, however, long experience with centralized control and government intervention allow the comparison between this and how the market truly operates. Based on this notion, Friedman states that the reforms of the past century have not truly met their objectives. Protection of industry, monetary reforms, agricultural programs, and social security have all fallen short of their goals and have often promoted



the very opposite of the intended result. Some programs, on the other hand, such as public health, the Sherman antitrust laws, and public education have done much to improve life for much of society. On balance, however, Friedman notes that government has failed to achieve its objectives. Although people are better clothed, fed, transported, and housed these advantages are the product of the initiative of individuals cooperating through the free market. Government has hampered, not helped this development. This is because government programs have sought to force people to act against their own immediate interest while striving to promote the general interest. They seek not to eliminate the conflict but to force people to act against their own interest. They take from some to benefit others and tell people what is good for them. This runs counter to the attempt of individuals to pursue their own interests, and thus creates results that are counter to those intended. The greatest threat to the preservation and expansion of freedom comes from people of good intentions and good will who wish to reform others. They use the power of the state to hasten their objectives without realizing that great social changes require persuasion that requires time. Concentrated power is not made harmless by good intentions. Freedom in the face of the size of military programs and the size of economic power concentrated in Washington is only possible if citizens wake up to the threat they face and persuade themselves that free institutions provide a surer, if perhaps slower, route to the ends they seek.

I have used Friedman's concept of the free society because, taken whole, it would provide a much more free society than Americans experience today. I also chose Friedman because he has been touted as the father of modern conservative economics.

However, if implemented completely his program would curdle the blood of most conservatives today.

But for my money Franklin D. Roosevelt made the best argument for freedom and what it should represent in America. In his address to congress on January 16, 1941 he assured the American public that:

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear – which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor – anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception – the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change – in a perpetual peaceful revolution – a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions – without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God.

Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose.

To that high concept there can be no end save victory.

Congressional Record (1941), Vol. 87, Pt. I.

### *The Good Society*

Another renowned economist, John Kenneth Galbraith (1996) asserts that the responsibility for economic and social wellbeing is transnational. Concern for the suffering and deprivation of other people should not diminish because the afflicted live in another part of the world. He notes, however, that a line must be drawn between what would be perfect and what would be achievable, and that there is no chance for a better society unless the good and achievable society is clearly defined.

Galbraith introduces the idea that there is a strong commitment in industrial societies to the consumer economy as the primary source of human satisfaction, benefit, and achievement. But, there is also an even more urgent need for the income a consumer society provides. In modern economy, employment is a more necessary result of production than goods or services. Therefore, nothing so comprehensively denies the liberties of the individual as the total absence of money.

Poverty, then, is one of a variety of things that the good society cannot accept. However, even though a society desires to be good, it is important to recognize that there is a political attitude that supports the very conditions that require correction. Contrary to the conservative belief in the general benefit of pursuing self-interest, a great deal of socially desirable change is regularly denied because of self-interest in the guise of

impracticality. When a change is considered good but impractical, this is a political justification for protecting the interests of the privileged.

Galbraith (1992) points out that in the United States there is a new political dialectic. At one time the scenario was worker against employer, capitalist against the working masses, landlords against the farmer and peasantry. Although there was implicit conflict in all economic and political thought, there was generally an effort to point out that the system as a whole served the interest of everyone. However, in modern society the division is quite different. The political and economic dichotomy takes the form of a division between the wealthy and everyone else. The rich and well-to-do are now more numerous, diverse, and politically articulate than the old capitalist class.

The contest, then, has become unequal. The wealthy have money and influence, and they vote. The middle class and poor have less money and are more numerous, but the poor do not vote. Therefore, our democracy is a democracy of the fortunate. For the poor, the government can be strategic for their survival and wellbeing. For the wealthy, government is a burden unless it serves their particular interest, as in the case of military expenditure. Then it becomes a social necessity. Accordingly, because the massive swing towards the political right in the congressional and state elections of 1994 has only exacerbated this problem, the need to articulate the good society in clear terms has become even more important.

Galbraith postulates that in the modern economic and political system ideological identification serves as an escape from specific decision making and unwelcome thought. In addition, he notes that the ideological definitions of socialism, capitalism, and liberalism attributed to political and economic thinking no longer apply as controlling concepts.

For example, one purpose of a good economy is to effectively produce goods and services and to dispense revenues in a socially acceptable and economically functional manner. In the United States the market economy has produced these things in a lavish fashion, even to the extent of creating the wants that it satisfies. That the cherished sovereignty of the consumer has been surrendered to advertising and merchandising is an idea that is strongly resisted. Yet it is evident in any case. It defies sensibility that the supply of consumer goods and services would be taken over by the state. Therefore, to advocate socialist public ownership of the production of consumer goods is unreasonable. In addition, the control and ownership of business enterprise is no longer united, replaced by massive corporate bureaucracy and stockholders (this does not mean that corporate managers have not fixated on their own compensation). Monopoly power has been subjugated by international competition and technological change. The voice of business is now one among many and to single it out for social ownership would be an anachronism. The principal case for socialism has vanished.

As socialism has disappeared as an acceptable ideology an opposing doctrine has emerged in the form of privatization. However, Galbraith notes that capitalism in its classic form is no longer the controlling framework of society. As modern economy has developed, more responsibilities have been imposed on the state. Also, there is a wide range of public activities that are consistently required for the function of private economy.

Galbraith notes that in the good society decisions must be made on the social and economic merits of the specific case. We are no longer in an age of doctrine. To have good and intelligent society social policy and action must not be subordinate to ideology.

This idea is even more urgent since the 1994 election provided the power base for supporting the rigorous Republican Contract with America doctrine.

According to Galbraith, the essence of the good society would be manifest if every member of the society, regardless of race, ethnic origin, or gender had access to a rewarding life. In order for this to occur there must be economic opportunity for all, the young must have the physical care, the discipline, and education that will allow them to seize the opportunity. If these things are not available from one's family, society must provide them. Opportunity can match aspiration only when the society works well for everyone. This requires reliable economic growth to promote greater wellbeing. Economic stagnation cannot be accepted by the good society. As long as there is opportunity there will be social tranquility, but when people are unemployed, economically deprived, and without hope, the likely recourses are drugs and violence. The same is true on a global scale. Poverty and a perverse class structure that ignores or disparages the poor are responsible for crime and social convulsion. Many seek to curtail the crime. But to end the poverty is less expensive than to deal with the symptom.

The good and affluent society cannot leave anyone without income and vulnerable to untreated illness, homelessness, or starvation. Also, ample and secure retirement income must be provided for the old. Medically or mentally infirm or incapable must be cared for, and those between jobs must be given some form of assistance. Basic support for all so situated must be accepted and there should be nothing derogatory or stigmatizing about being dependent. Employment must be provided for all and those who choose not to work must be accepted. Those employed on Wall Street measure the quality of life by income; the poet does not.

However, there are some sources of income that are socially indefensible or intrinsically damaging to the economy. These must not be allowed by the good society. A good society must distinguish between the accumulation of wealth that is contributive, or at least benign, and that which harms society. The good society must also bestow a large role for the state on behalf of the less fortunate. This must be paid for in accordance with the ability to pay. A marginal loss of income for the wealthy is less painful than it would be for the poor. In addition, the middle class and poor are reliable spenders whereas the wealthy are not. Therefore, progressive taxation has a stabilizing role while at the same time returns to the market as demands for goods.

Further, Galbraith notes, the good society must expect reasonable price stability, within close and predictable limits. And a good society must live in peace and mutually rewarding association with its global trading partners. World peace and cooperation among nations must be an important objective. Effective recognition and support must be given to less fortunate members of the global community.

He observes:

Such are the broad specifications of the good society in its social dimension. Employment and an upward chance for all. Reliable economic growth to sustain such employment. Education and, to the greatest extent possible, the family support and discipline that serve future participation and reward. Freedom from social disorder at home and abroad. A safety net for those who cannot or do not make it. The opportunity to achieve in accordance with ability and ambition. A ban on forms of financial enrichment that are at cost to others. No frustration of plans for future support and well-being because of inflation. A cooperative and compassionate foreign dimension.

The specifications are rather evident, even commonplace, and, with some very notable exceptions, acceptable, especially in the oratory of the time. It is the actions necessary to achieve these ends that are more controversial.

(1996, p. 32)

A central problem for the good society, Galbraith continues, is the tendency of modern economy to periods of recession and stagnation, inevitably accompanied by more unemployment. These episodes, as opposed to the expansion needed to reliably increase the number of employed workers, are characteristic of the market system, and have come to be known colloquially as business cycles. (In modern times, there is continuing unemployment even in periods of market growth and health.) The good society must counter these periods of distress and ensure steady, reliable production and employment. It is the total employed in the labor force that sets the upper limit on productive capacity. Aggregate demand for products and services must remain near that limit. If not, cyclical or enduring unemployment will result.

Three methods of corrective action will increase the flow of aggregate demand, taxes can be lowered, interest rates can be reduced, and government can directly influence the flow of demand by creating new expenditures in excess of tax receipts, that is, through deficit. Unfortunately the results vary widely in the effectiveness of these actions. In addition, there is also the problem of inflation. And there is also the covert preference of many for stagnation and unemployment rather than taking the measures necessary to ensure economic growth and high employment. Monetary policy, or manipulation of interest rates, has the highest establishment approval for effective action against stagnation and unemployment and is often used first. The authority for this intervention in the United States is the Federal Reserve. Unfortunately, monetary policy may have little or no effect on aggregate demand. When times are poor and unemployment is high, lower interest rates, assumed to encourage consumer borrowing and spending and business investment, simply do not reliably inspire consumer spending. And with evident



excess business capacity, business may not be encouraged by low interest rates to borrow and invest, the outcomes are too uncertain.

None of this, however, discourages faith in monetary action as a decisive economic instrument. Quasi-religious conviction here triumphs over conflicting experience.

(Galbraith, 1996, p. 38)

Galbraith maintains that the effectiveness of tax reductions is also at odds with reality. There is no guarantee that the funds released by tax reduction will be spent or invested. In bad times people and businesses may hold on to their money. Also, taxation in the upper-income bracket may compel the spending of funds that would otherwise go unspent or uninvested.

Therefore, intervention by the state to create employment remains the only corrective measure. To do this, the state must impose a deficit on the public accounts. This is offset by increased earnings and tax receipts. Over time, public borrowing can be fiscally conservative. When the economy recovers, stimulative spending must end. According to Galbraith, this action is difficult but there is no effective alternative.

Finally, he notes, unemployment is regularly blamed on the workers, often because they are not sufficiently trained. Whereas education and training is clearly part of the good society, depression or recession affects the trained and untrained alike. A simple call for better-prepared workers as a remedy for unemployment induced by recession is, as Galbraith would say, the last resort of a vacant liberal mind.

The search for the good society can be plagued by two very challenging problems. One is the inflation that is likely when employment is nearly full and the economy is expanding. The other is the preference of a large and influential sector of society for stagnation and unemployment over the measures that would effectively address them. In

the past, high employment and inflation was considered preferable to unemployment and stable prices. The community of economists considered full employment as the prime test of economic performance. However, there has been a significant shift in thought among the most politically influential making inflation the central threat to economic performance. Among these people unemployment is considered to be a price-stabilizing instrument.

According to Galbraith, unemployment does have some attractive effects. Workers are eager and services are well staffed. Employed workers may be more docile and cooperative. And for most citizens, joblessness is not a threat. In contrast, inflation threatens those who live on fixed incomes, pensions, and savings. The financial community wishes for money to be returned to them with equal or better purchasing power, and therefore are prominent among those preferring price stability. However, the good society cannot relegate parts of the citizenry to distress, deprivation, and idleness to achieve price stability. The lesser evil of gradual inflation must be accepted.

In addition, Galbraith states that there must be generous compensation for unemployment and a general indexation of fixed and contractual income. This includes pensions, wages of teachers and civil servants, and the minimum wage.

What, then, constitutes the controlling rule for public borrowing and public deficit in a good society? According to Galbraith, there is no law or tradition that requires a budget to be balanced, although this does not mean that it should be casually treated. He notes that there are three types of public expenditure, those that serve no purpose, those that protect the economic or social condition, and those that create an improvement in income, production, or wellbeing. The first two expenditures do not justify borrowing or

deficit and must be covered by tax revenue. However, borrowing for expenditure that improves conditions is not only legitimate but also desirable. Even those who oppose public deficit wholly approve similar borrowing in the private sector. Therefore, what business takes for granted is also good policy for the state. Only the federal government counts all capital expenditures as current expense. According to Galbraith, this logic lacks defense and is based entirely on convenience, tradition, rhetoric, and error. The good society assumes an economic policy that is in step with future economic growth and wellbeing. Assuming that tax rates remain constant and the economy remains stable, expanding future revenues will cover the cost of the deficit. To blame this kind of deficit for creating a burden on future generations is inappropriate as they will be the beneficiaries of the societal improvements. These improvements include public works, better transportation, postal service, and health care. However, nothing will provide such great benefit for future generations as better education. Unfortunately, the budget deficit is currently being used to resist socially necessary public policy under the premise that it will increase the tax load on future generations. However, extreme expenditure on the military, excluding the military personnel themselves, and other programs to advance political objectives seems to garner support rather than resistance. Yet, these programs yield no discernable benefit for future generations and may indeed impose an untenable deficit.

Galbraith points out that the good society does not seek absolute equality of income. The good society must accept people as they are, and people are motivated differently with respect to income. However, the modern market economy distributes

wealth and income in an extremely unequal, socially adverse, and functionally damaging fashion. He notes:

In the United States, now the extreme case among the major industrial countries, the Federal Reserve, an impeccable source said, as reported in the *New York Times*, that the top 1 percent of American households owned nearly 40 percent of the wealth in 1989, the top 20 percent more than 80 percent. The lowest-earning 20 percent of Americans had 5.7 percent of all after-tax income; the best-rewarded 20 percent had 55 percent. By 1992, the top 5 percent were getting an estimated 18 percent, a share that in more recent years has become substantially larger, as that of those in the poorest brackets has been diminishing. This, the good society cannot accept. Nor can it accept intellectually the justification, more precisely the contrivance, that defends this inequality. The latter is one of the most assiduously cultivated exercises in economic thought. Never, however, does it quite conceal the fact that the economic and social doctrine involved is subordinate to the pecuniary purpose (and forthright greed) that it serves.

Specifically, it is held that there is a moral entitlement: the man or woman in question has the right to receive what he or she earns or, more precisely, what he or she receives. This can be asserted with emphasis, on occasion with asperity and often with righteous indignation. It encounters opposition, however, in both history and hard fact.

Much income and wealth comes with slight or no social justification, little or no economic service on the part of the recipient. Inheritance is an obvious case. So also the endowments, accidents and perversions of the financial world. And the rewards that, from its personal empowerment, modern corporate management bestows on itself. As noted, the modern corporate management is committed, as in all orthodox economic doctrine, to profit maximization. Because it is exempt to a substantial degree from stockholder control or restraint, it extensively maximizes return on its own behalf. With compliant boards of directors of its own selection it effectively sets its own salary, provides its own stock options, establishes its own golden parachutes. That such return is unrelated in any plausible fashion to social or economic function is largely accepted. The frequent and sometimes fervid assertion of such function is a cover story for the patently improbable.

(1996, p. 61)

Galbraith asserts that the wealthy and affluent do not defend their own good fortune, rather, they speak as the benign servants of the common good. They are also protected by the class structure of the United States. The upper and lower classes are held in the shadows and rarely mentioned. Most references to class emphasize the mid-

dle class as dominant, thus obscuring the rich. Americans live in a three-class social structure, but one that is typically viewed as one very large class. In addition, the upper class enjoys a choice of income uses that people of modest means cannot exercise. They can spend, they can invest, or they can simply hold on to their money. This does not contribute to aggregate demand. Therefore, the more unequal the distribution of income, the more dysfunction it perpetuates.

What, then, constitutes the appropriate distribution of income in the good society? Since the current system does not give itself over to arbitrary rules, the best course is to remediate the damaging effects of inequality. Galbraith states that the first action should be support for the poor. Second, there is a need to better deal with the foibles of the financial world such as insider trading, propagation of false information, hostile takeovers, speculative insanity, and other deviant investment behavior. Third, there is the need for critical analysis by stockholders and an informed public regarding the personal income maximization of corporate management.

In addition to these measures, Galbraith suggests the removal of tax and expenditure concessions to the affluent combined with strong support for progressive income tax. He notes that distribution of income in the modern economy ultimately comes from the distribution of power. Power promotes income and income provides power. The good society will respond by empowering and protecting the powerless. The good society will also promote the right of workers to join together and assert a countervailing authority. For many, however, organization of workers is not practical, as in the widely dispersed

service industries. Therefore, health insurance, employment compensation, and a livable minimum wage is required in the good society.

Focusing on education, Galbraith asserts that the good society endows a larger political and social role to education than the service of economics. Education provides the means for escape from the less-favored economic strata and has a vital role in maintaining social peace and tranquility. Social decency and political stability require that there be an effective path for upward mobility. If not, social discontent will flourish with the possibility of violent revolt. Currently the ignorant must choose between tedious and burdensome toil and no work at all. Aside from incredible good luck, education is the only path to improvement. Education provides greater freedom to choose one's employment and avocation, it allows people to govern themselves intelligently, and it enhances their ability to enjoy life. Without it the most common recourse is crime, violence, and the despair, rage, and political malleability that too often comes with insufficiently large personal resources. According to Galbraith, democracy lives in fear of the ignorant. The most extreme religious fundamentalist or militant knows that a certain portion of the population is available to avidly support any form of political and social disaster. Conversely, without education, the illiterate and ignorant can be scattered and kept in subordination, silent and under authoritarian control. Dictatorship of the poor and illiterate is commonplace.

Whereas democracy may be considered a basic human right, it is also the natural consequence of education and economic development. Education makes democracy possible. Combined with economic development it makes democracy necessary and even inevitably. The good society will provide every child with a good elementary and second-

dary education accompanied by the requirement of good discipline. Compulsion and discipline are both necessary. In addition, the income and social recognition provided to teachers must reflect the high importance of education. Education must attract and celebrate the best. Funding for education in the good society will meet or exceed expenditure on the television children routinely watch and on the military.

Regarding government regulation Galbraith notes:

The market economy is based on the unplanned, uncontrolled response of individual producers and of corporations, small or large, to the will and the purchasing power of the consumer at home and abroad. The purchasing power that drives this mechanism originates from the productive activity to which the purchasing power responds. A closed circle. This is the essence of the market system ... A central question, as all know, is how much this economic entity, this machine, functions independently and how much it requires support for, and restraint on, the purchasing power – the effective demand – that impowers the system. Additionally and urgently there is the question of what guidance and control this machine must have so that it will serve and not impair the public interests; specifically, what government regulation is needed. This last ranks as one of the most contentious social and political issues of the time. The conflict is between those who support the autonomous, self-motivated operation of the system and, in particular, the pecuniary interest of those so engaged, and those who see the evident need for intervention to arrest socially damaging or deeply self-destructive tendencies. In recent times in the United States a massive ideological attack has been mounted on public regulation in and of the economy. This again is an escape from thought...

(1996, p. 76)

Galbraith articulates five factors that force public regulation; the long-term protection of the planet, protection of the worker (this includes health insurance, protection from and compensation for work-related injury or health damage, and income protection), protection of the vulnerable from the economic machine, technically deficient or physically damaging goods or services, and the self-destructive tendencies of the system. Each of these factors creates conflict between those who see themselves deservedly rewarded by a fully independent system and those who advocate protective and corrective action. The most urgent and debated area of regulation, however, has to do with the op-

eration of the economic machine, which can operate effectively only with firm rules of behavior. Galbraith notes:

It must be recognized that from few matters has modern society more suffered than from the excesses and errors of what is now called the financial community, although it once had the more luminous sobriquet of high finance. The uncertain association of money and intelligence has already been suggested. In the financial world the good society must assume less than perfect performance, especially as each generation returns with enthusiasm to the derelictions and frequent insanities of the one before.

(1996, p. 80)

The first rule of protection, then, would be to require honesty with investors, consumers, and the public at large. The second rule of protection would be to search out any self-serving interest as the motivating factor in the institution or removal of regulation. Other general rules may or may not apply, therefore regulations must be considered on a case-by-case basis within the larger context.

Galbraith states that the good society has three closely related economic requirements. There is the need to supply the required goods and services, to ensure that these do not have an adverse effect on the public, and to ensure that they do not have an adverse effect on the lives and wellbeing of future generations. The last two requirements are frequently in conflict with the first. A massive advertising and marketing industry combined with contemporary media are now necessary to promote increased consumption by telling people what they want. Often this has little to do with what people truly need, and sometimes it is even against their true desire.

As a result of this conflict there has been an undesirable environmental impact on the health, comfort, and quality of life of the larger community. In addition, future effects may include depletion of the environment and the exhaustion of natural resources. The delayed effects will certainly have a negative affect on future generations. Air and



water pollution, growing waste disposal, sprawl, and visual and auditory pollution are among the many quality of life detractors that are currently experienced and are likely to grow without increased regulation.

To remedy these effects Galbraith suggests that there first be strong and enlightened citizen concern. Next he suggests that the economic and political situation be clearly understood. He notes that the current short-term attitude regards the sacrifice of freedom and profit in order to protect the larger community and its unborn children as a violation of the freedom that produces economic success. However, there is no divine right accorded to free enterprise or its consumers. The interest of the larger community must be protected. A compromise between current financial and long-term public interest is inevitable. However, compromise must favor the community, present and future. In the good society environmental concern must be supported with the necessary financial resources. Money, unfortunately, lies with the other side. The good society requires a balanced public platform.

Galbraith also addresses immigration by first noting that current thought deeply deplores and resents our increasing reliance on immigrant labor (recent proposals made by President George W. Bush possibly to the contrary). It is, therefore, a major political issue. In the United States there would be little fruit, few vegetables, and fewer canned goods available at affordable prices if not for migrant workers.

As previously mentioned, the good society provides the opportunity for upward social and economic movement. When this happens a vacuum is created at the bottom that requires the service of immigration. There is a need for a constant refilling of the labor force when monotonous and nonprestigious work is needed. Most often these peo-

ple are fleeing even more tedious and ill-paid employment, or no employment at all.

However, negative reaction to immigration often asserts that immigrants are stealing jobs that properly belong to others. A further negative response is based on ethnic and social issues.

Regardless, given the need for a migrant work force, should not migration be favorably controlled? Galbraith would answer, "Yes." He notes that there is no need for limiting the international movement of high achievers, and there should be an open door for those escaping political aggression and oppression, with no discrimination regarding ethnic identity or race. But for those seeking the real work of unfavored toil, admission must be tied to the availability of jobs. A surplus of immigrant workers exceeding the demands of lower levels of employment would be too great a burden to society.

Galbraith also states that a serious failure in the democratic process has resulted in the discrepancy between military and civilian needs. One major exception to the exercise of democratic control is military power. The military in the United States decides on its own budget and on the use of the money it receives. Rarely does Congress or even the President, let alone the ordinary citizen, challenge the autonomy of the military. The financial and political powers of industries that produce military equipment and weapons are also protected by this aura. Galbraith notes that total power is obtained by the American military through unchallenged ability to obtain funding and designate its use. Under this circumstance democratic control is relinquished.

Under these conditions there is no requirement to justify the resources the military commands, which are not determined by need. Galbraith points out that this is what Dwight D. Eisenhower, General of the Army and Republican President, warned against:

an independently powerful military-industrial complex. The good society, however, does not concede this type of authority to the military. The autonomy of the military must be brought under effective democratic control.

Galbraith addresses bureaucracy by pointing out that the first and most adverse tendency of organization is that discipline is substituted for thought. The person of independent view, he contends, who finds weakness or error in the system or sees the need for change will often be considered irresponsible, uncooperative, eccentric, and often unuseful (the recent label of unpatriotic accorded to those who criticize the current political regime in the United States is a case in point). Galbraith notes that regarding foreign policy this is especially true. The Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Pentagon administer policy rather than legislation, services, or public programs. This policy requires belief, without which the conduct of the policy would be impossible. But though circumstances change, an established belief does not. A disciplined and comfortable culture often replaces one of innovation and change. Bureaucracy, unlike public organizations subject to the shock and trauma of the market, tends to remain in stasis.

The second feature of organization is a relentless proliferation of management and other professional personnel. Efforts to limit this expansion, such as budget limits, are often symbolic. It is only as one approaches the bottom of the organization that proliferation is held in check. The workers on the assembly line and the clerical staff, or those with similar status, are often held in close scrutiny. The result tends to be the removal of workers who are considered nonfunctional, typically known as downsizing. This often casts those discarded into unemployment or underemployment while forcing them to live

with the stigma of being unnecessary. Galbraith points out that a solution to the problem of proliferation is not clear, but the good society must find it.

The ultimate objective of the good society, Galbraith continues, is in the area of foreign policy and the search for peace among nations. He notes that nothing contributes so much to death, deprivation, and sorrow as war. The prevention of military conflict, along with a solution to worldwide poverty, should be the most urgent task of humanity. With this in mind, economic success is central to peaceful relations both within and between nations. There is also the need to negate the presumption by the military that war is inevitable, with the consequent demand for more weapons of even more fearsome capacity.

Of central importance is also the conflict between social and economic responsibilities within the nation and the increasingly internationalized aspect of politics and the economy. The easiest choice in public affairs is between what is obviously right and wrong. The most difficult is when all options seem harmless. Each course of action, then, will have its ardent advocates and each group will see itself as operating for the common good. Paradoxically, the economically guided welfare state is an inevitable good and so is the internationalization of economic and cultural life. But there seems to be an inescapable conflict between the two. Internationalization is viewed as threatening the welfare system of the nation-state as well as its cultural and social identity. Conservatives are caught between a strong preference for free trade and a commitment to national identity and patriotism. Liberals applaud the peaceful aspect of international community with close political, cultural, economic and scientific ties, but decry the loss of employment to lower-wage, lower-cost countries.

According to Galbraith, the solution is easy and inevitable. Closer association between advanced countries cannot be avoided, nor should it be. Among these countries there must be a coordination of social and economic policies. The economic and social responsibilities of nation-states are in transition, with the ultimate goal a transnational authority with subsidiary powers. The good society must support the larger international forces to which the nation-state is subject.

The good society must also have concern for the world as a whole. Fortunate countries must deal with their imperial legacy and with the human suffering left in its wake. Therefore the good society must be sensitive to anything that may suggest a resurgence of colonialism. This is especially necessary in the United States, as it is the largest and most militarily dominant of the former imperial powers (although there is strong evidence to suggest that this imperialism is alive and well) and thus arouses great fear in formerly colonized countries. This is exacerbated by constant references to the need for world leadership by the United States. Leadership may still be required, but is not a manifestation of imperial right.

The good society begins with generosity. It provides financial help based on a concern for fellow human beings, not on self-interest. Educational assistance must be primary in countries where there is internal peace and a sufficiently functioning government. However, the breakdown of law and order is predictable in poor countries. Therefore, a good society will rescue and protect distressed and endangered populations. This intervention must be internationally sanctioned and under international control. The poverty of nations instigates and nurtures internal and external conflict. Therefore, international peace can be promoted through the creation of economic and social wellbeing in

all countries. Compassion has a human, face, but Galbraith notes that it also renders a practical service.

Galbraith states in closing that the prime essential for achieving the good society is a genuine and inclusive society. In the United States the withdrawal of the safety net that protects the poorest citizens and their children, further denigrating them as inherently inferior, won its victory with less than one fourth of all eligible voters. Had the poor turned out to vote, the result would have been decidedly different. The media represented the result as the voice of the public, but the public did not vote. Funds, voice, and activism are now extensively controlled by business and the very affluent. Their goals then become what are considered to be public opinion. In the good society, however, influence cannot be confined to a small part of the population. In the United States the only solution is greater political participation by the concerned and the poor through the Democratic Party. There is little potential for a third party, and the Republican Party acts to benefit those who wish to preserve their income, capital, and business interests.

This does not mean that in a good society that there would be no affluent or poor. However, democracy would succeed in that everyone would be heard, everyone would vote, and the poor would be part of the political system.

### *The Decent Working Society*

Former Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich (2002) observes:

It is far too early to know what historians will see when they look back on the years 2000 to 2002 from their perches in the future, but it's likely they will chronicle a profound change in America. The years leading up featured almost breathless excitement about getting rich quick in dot-coms, irrational exuberance in the stock market, and boundless confidence about the nation's power and place in the world. Then, in rapid succession, the dot-com bubble burst, the

economy drifted into recession, and terrorists attacked with a deadliness and ferocity never known or even imagined before. Then one of our most successful corporations suddenly imploded, revealing a sham of accounting gimmicks and regulatory lapses; investors and employees lost big while top executives walked off with fortunes.

What have we learned, other than humility? We remain a blessedly optimistic people. But these two years have shaken our certainty about some things we had begun to take for granted – especially, I think, the idea that each of us can make it solely on our own.

p. vii

Reich (2002) continues by noting that things have gotten pretty bad in the United States. Hundreds of billions of dollars will be added over the next few years to the cost of fighting the war in Iraq (and on terrorism in general), security at home, and to the biggest military buildup in two decades. In addition President Bush has enacted a \$1.35 trillion tax cut over the next ten years and is proposing nearly \$600 billion in additional cuts in capital-gains taxes and income tax. The lion's share of these benefits goes to large corporations and the wealthy. The middle- and lower-income Americans will be those left holding the proverbial bag. While most Americans pay more in payroll taxes than in income taxes, these taxes are paid only on approximately the first \$80,000 of income. Therefore, the wealthy pay little payroll tax as a percentage of their income. None of the proposed or enacted tax cuts involve payroll taxes. They do, however, increase the likelihood that payroll taxes will need to be increased. This is because the tax cuts combined with the military buildup will, in a decade, drain the Treasury of sufficient funds for Social Security and Medicare. This will happen just as the early baby boomers begin to retire, thus increasing the need to hike payroll tax to fill the gap. This means tax cuts for the rich now, higher tax for everyone else later.

Since the terrorist attack of 9/11, job losses have been greatest among the low paid. However, unemployment insurance is now harder to get and America's welfare-to-

work programs leave the jobless few options. Federal job training programs and low-income housing have been diminished by budget cuts. Higher education is beyond the reach of many families and health care benefits are decreasing or becoming more expensive.

In short, Reich notes, the fast and reckless years of the nineties left people unprepared for a slower economy. When Americans faced a common problem such as the Great Depression people understood that they were all in it together. Social insurance became a first cousin to patriotism. But the separate worlds of privilege and insecurity have endangered this sense of commonality and community, the social contract. Even the ten years of economic expansion did not much benefit the bottom half of the economy. The median wage is not now much higher than it was in 1989, and health and pension benefits for the bottom half continue to diminish.

A large portion of American families has kept afloat by working longer hours and sending all adults to work. The average middle-income married-with-children couple works nearly 4,000 hours a year for their income, approximately seven weeks more than in 1990. However, more work hours do not translate into higher standard of living. Jobs are less secure. Health care is more expensive. Childcare expense is at an all time high and adding elder care can topple the working family's budget.

Concurrently the wealthy have never had it so good. We are clearly headed towards a two-tiered society. Reich points out that the problem is not that some are getting wealthy, or wealthier, but the many are making no progress even though they are working harder than ever. The United States is creating a society where a minority is greatly profiting from economic change at the expense of the majority. The despair and cynicism of



this outcome is glaringly wrong and mocks the American belief in the link between effort and reward. It hollows out the middle class, closes the door to the poor, and makes people feel like suckers. To have a decent working society, the middle class and poor must benefit in the same manner as the wealthy. True national security begins with economic security. But as we proceed with the war on terrorism, the domestic agenda is in shambles.

Americans were raised to believe that anyone who worked hard could create a better life for themselves and their family. Everyone could do better together and growing together was how it worked in America. However, America is now growing apart at an accelerating rate. This split between the have's and have not's began with two revolutions, one in computer technology, the other in global integration. Demand shifted in favor workers with the right skills and education. Meanwhile the real minimum wage has declined, taking its biggest toll on people without college degrees. But if education and skill are so important, why has more not been done for schools? Why is the government cutting job training? Why is college becoming more and more expensive, raising tuition much faster than inflation would require? Why are more Americans not given the opportunity for success? Why has the social contract come undone?

Reich suggests that in a decent working society, those who benefited from technology and integration would compensate those who bore the biggest burden. In this way, the social contract could be strengthened. Throughout the history of the United States the public's interest has been asserted when market outcomes threatened social peace. Antitrust laws, food and drug laws, the progressive federal tax, the forty-hour week, laws against child labor, social security, health care to the elderly, and expanding

access to higher education are but a few examples. Part of this was accomplished through laws and regulations, part through social norms regarding how people should live and work together. The social contract gave credence to the idea that everyone could prosper.

He notes that the implicit moral code of American capitalism consisted of three promises:

1. As companies did better their employees and community would also
2. Working people would be paid enough to support themselves and their families
3. Everyone should have an opportunity to fully develop his or her talents through publicly supported education

This social contract defined fair play but was not primarily concerned with redistribution of wealth. The rich and poor would still be around. However, we would, at some fundamental level, all be in it together. As a society, we would all depend on each other. A better-educated workforce was in the interest of everyone. Money in the pockets of workers helped the economy prosper. Sharing economic risk helped to provide general security.

But today, the social contract is coming undone. Profitable businesses no longer offer job security and resort to downsizing, rightsizing, down-waging and down-benefiting. Full-time workers are being replaced with temporary and part-time workers with less associated overhead. Older workers with higher pay are being replaced with younger workers at lower wage scales. Health benefits are declining and health costs are being shifted to higher copayments, deductibles, and premiums. Defined-benefit pension

plans are giving way to defined-contribution plans with little or no employer contribution. Nearly half of those on private payrolls have no employer-sponsored retirement plan at all.

Ironically, Reich notes that the compensation of senior management, highly skilled technicians, and professionals has visibly escalated. At the highest corporate level generous health benefits, platinum parachutes, pension benefits, access to company jets and cars, club memberships, stock options, and other opulent perquisites are commonly offered to top executives and their families.

The second provision of the social contract, a job paying enough to keep a family out of poverty, with social insurance when no job is available, is also falling apart. The real value of the minimum wage is 20 percent below its value in the late 1970's. Unemployment insurance has become inadequate and does not cover part-time employees. And, welfare reform has removed the social safety net that traditionally offered an alternative to those without employment. Private medical savings accounts personal security accounts are being proposed to replace Medicare and Social Security. However, these methods simply allow the healthier and wealthier to opt out of the system, leaving the poor and sickly with fewer resources and the greater responsibility for risk.

The third provision of the social contract, access to good education, is also severely strained. Americans are increasingly segregating by level of income, leaving local tax bases in poorer areas incapable of providing the same quality of education available to the wealthy. Tuition is also rising faster than median family income and elite colleges and universities are abandoning policies that would allow a poor, but qualified, student to

attend. Families from the top 25 percent are three times as likely to have their children attend college than are children from families in the bottom quarter.

Reich asserts that the social contract is coming undone, in part, due to the same forces that divided the workforce, advances in technology and global trade and investment. Capital can move instantaneously and skilled professionals have become more mobile. As a result, these people can work from home and can move to more remote areas where property tax is lower, leaving the average and poor working people bearing a larger proportion of the cost of social programs. In part this happens because social contracts are premised on the idea that certain risks are commonly shared. However, the chances of the rich becoming poor or the poor becoming rich are less and less likely. The wealthy know that any social contract is likely to be one-sided, requiring them to subsidize the poor.

Yet, as inequality widens, economic and social viability become threatened. The United States is the richest country in the world and is richer now than at any other time in history. However, as the rich increase their wealth many of the poorer members of society have become even more so. Even those who have employment are not guaranteed an escape from neediness. The working poor have become a new class in society. Working at least forty hours a week, they cannot earn enough to lift themselves out of poverty. If the poor or even average income person has no discretionary income, from whom will the wealthy profit?

One solution to reviving the social contract is political action. However, Many Americans have given up on politics. They have lost confidence that the government can or will work in their interest. Because of this, they often don't vote. Meanwhile, big

business and the wealthy dole out campaign contributions to ensure powerful political influence. The decent working society will support campaign reform. But a vibrant democracy also depends on the participation of all of its members.

Currently large corporations are in control of government, and with the absence of political resistance, the business community no longer disciplines itself. Washington is buried in special interests while, as Reich observes, the President and Vice President call for market patriotism, that is, admonishing Americans to continue to buy stock and retail goods in the aftermath of terrorism. Typically, patriotism suggests sacrifice for the good of the nation. Market patriotism, however, urges citizens to remain on the consumer binge they have been on for years, to spend more and save less. Reality betrays the truth behind this ruse – the immediate threat is not that production can't meet demand, it's that there isn't enough demand for what is produced.

Since the economic downturn in 2001 the emphasis in Washington has been on bolstering consumer confidence because consumer spending accounts for 66 percent of economic activity. While business spending came to a near standstill consumer spending kept the economy above water. Unfortunately, savings are at a seventy-year low, personal debt has set an all time record, and mortgage debt is now a testament to rocket science.

Additionally, most corporations no longer feel responsibility towards the community or their employees. Electronic capitalism, the instantaneous electronic movement of capital to where it can gain the highest return, is offering today's CEO the opportunity to maximize short-term profit and artificially boost share price, thus resulting in handsome rewards for the top brass. This narrowing of the corporate vision may increase immedi-

ate shareholder returns, but it damages the workforce. Paychecks are inadequate, health care and pensions are decreasing, and layoffs are proliferating. A more appropriate display of market patriotism would be for Washington to ask profitable companies to avoid laying off more workers. The social contract, to remain vital, requires companies to adhere to other responsibilities than simply maximizing profits.

The question becomes, according to Reich, beyond the bottom line do corporations have a duty to their employees and communities? More to the point, do the interests, and benefits to, all stakeholders eventually converge? Reich notes that a 1996 BusinessWeek poll found that 95 percent of Americans believe that companies have responsibilities beyond making a profit including those to employees and communities. He also notes that there is growing evidence that good corporate citizenship is beneficial to long-term profitability. Flexible work schedules, employee involvement, profit sharing, training and development, generous family and medical leave, employee childcare, pensions, and health care all contribute to employee morale and productivity, often boosting the bottom line and compensating for the expense of the program. Helping the community, such as support for education and apprenticeship programs, has also been shown to benefit the corporation with better-trained and more committed employees.

Cynics, Reich observes, say that business leaders should not be required to care about the fate of their employees or communities. However, it is difficult to justify the notion that bad corporate citizenship is good business over the long haul. It is difficult for business to prosper while civic culture decays and the middle class withers. Therefore, there must be an ethical base to American business. Socially responsible investing should extend beyond market stocks to human capital.

According to Reich, this investment should include a living wage and appropriate insurance for those who cannot work. He notes that Social Security, including unemployment insurance and welfare, was conceived by Labor Secretary Frances Perkins and was signed into law by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. Thirty years later, President Johnson did the same for Medicare. It was assumed that a decent society would pool its resources to help those who had experienced misfortune. Citizens would be expected to pay premiums, but, unlike private insurance, all people would be included regardless of their need, or potential need, for financial support. However, Reich continues, current economic philosophy in Washington supports a return to the time when people had to assume personal responsibility for saving for bad times or for buying their own private insurance. If American government continues this trend, people who are likely to have bad things happen to them, traditionally the poor, the old, and the sick, will not have a safety net. However, the rich, the young, and the fit will be able to opt out through the privatization of Social Security and Medicare. In a decent working society, this must not be allowed to happen.

Reich points out that work is the most fundamental economic responsibility for American citizens. It reflects the Protestant ethic that holds work as an ethical norm that affirms human dignity. Therefore, those who are willing and able to work, and their families, should not live in poverty, should be able to get ahead, and should be able to make the most of their talents. Reich notes that in poll after poll 80 percent of Americans strongly support an increase in the minimum wage even though it benefits a small fraction of the workforce, and that this is evidence of our belief in the social contract. He argues that people are not concerned solely with their own advancement, that our society

is merely a competition among individuals and groups for special advantage, or that the economy only flourishes when workers are paid no more than what the market indicates. He argues that work, rather than being a mere economic transaction, helps to define who people are and confirms their usefulness, giving meaning and dignity to their lives. This dignity depends on the feeling of being valued, rather than being merely a matter of status or power. This is why the easy expendability and precariousness of many current occupations have made millions of American workers feel less valued.

Perhaps, Reich continues, it is this feeling of valuelessness, this subtle humiliation, which is sensitizing many in the American middle class to the vulnerabilities of other classes. The gap that used to separate the working poor from the working middle class has begun to close. With the enactment of welfare reform millions of people are now working in dead-end jobs, removed from the ranks of the undeserving poor because they did not work to the ranks of the deserving poor because they do. Among other things, this means that everyone on the lower half of the income curve will need access to better health care, education and training, and child care in order to get ahead. They are in the same sinking boat.

Reich notes that a sensible approach to this issue is to raise the minimum wage to half the median wage, then index it to inflation. This combined with food stamps and Earned Income Tax Credits would lift a minimum-wage family with two children and one full-time worker out of poverty. Unfortunately most Americans didn't get much out of the market boom of the 1990's because they didn't have much capital. The biggest consequence of the market boom was that the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans received 85 percent of Wall Street's gains, and the wealthiest 1 percent got 40 percent of



these gains. The children of the wealthy will receive the largest intergenerational wind-fall in history, free of taxes on capital gains. In addition, two-thirds of tax benefits for pensions and retirement savings go to families earning more than \$100,000 while only 7 percent of these benefits go to families earning \$50,000 or less.

To redistribute capital and encourage savings Reich suggests a universal savings account whereby people below a certain income would receive a tax credit plus an addition amount if they put a portion of their income into a government subsidized savings account. This would allow everyone to benefit somewhat from the asset elevator that has lifted America's wealthy.

Ultimately, however, the best approach would be to also ensure a sufficient education for everyone, giving each person the opportunity to earn a higher income. He also points out that redistribution of capital and encouraging savings could be important to widening the circle of prosperity. The free-school movement of the nineteenth century, the high school movement of the twentieth, and the post World War II expansion of public universities helped to support the third promise of the social contract. Concurrently, our rapid change environment has made lifelong learning the norm and human capital the most important asset.

Reich asserts, though, that many working families can't afford the attentive early childcare that fosters the ability to learn. Over 60 percent of children under the age of four are in childcare during the day, including 44 percent of infants under a year old. The cost for this care varies from \$4,000 a year to \$20,000, with equal variation in the quality of care. A decent working society would provide children with safe and stimulating childcare and education would begin earlier than kindergarten.

An additional obstacle to fully developing human capital is the poor quality of schools that the poorer children typically attend. This is a leading factor in, as well as a consequence of, the segregation of Americans by income. According to Reich, entire towns are either rich or poor, blue-collar or middle class. Poverty in America is becoming geographically concentrated. This unevenly distributed tax base creates a nation in which poor students typically live in districts that spend less per student on education than the state average. In addition, their teachers are paid less but face more formidable challenges. For the poor student, poverty-related problems such as drug abuse, violence, low self-esteem, and parents who are too overwhelmed and overworked to effectively parent are compounded by the presence of other poor children with similar issues.

Therefore, Reich suggests that the poorest students should receive more money, not less, than their wealthier counterparts. At the same time he advocates the breakup of concentrations of poverty in schools. This, he believes, could be accomplished with a progressive voucher system. He also advocates the removal of high-stakes standardized tests. That is, he believes that it is fine to test children in specific courses, but it is not fine to have one, big, high-stakes comprehensive test. This is true especially when standardization is being eliminated in the workplace of the new economy. Success in this new economy will not depend on the mastery of one uniform body of knowledge. Instead, it will require an ability to find the needed information and learn quickly. It will also require social skills, thinking skills, and the ability to listen and comprehend. But beyond this, the requirements will be extremely varied.

Reich additionally suggests that any person who qualifies should be able to get an undergraduate education. Unfortunately, while students are becoming more selective

about which universities will offer the best path to success, universities are also becoming more selective, placing pressure on students and families at ever-younger ages. Reich notes that there are larger social consequences of this trend towards increased selectivity and competitiveness, especially regarding how resources are being allocated. Sadly, while competition among universities for the best and brightest has become extreme, money is typically allotted for upgrading facilities, such as student centers and dorms, which are superficially attractive to students, rather than improving those things that would enhance learning. And too many universities are using scarce scholarship resources as incentive for star students, who often come from advantaged families, while tuition for the general student continues to soar.

According to Reich, the rich are winning the education game and the result is a feed-forward system. He illustrates with figures from the Census Bureau's annual Current Population Survey conducted in the late 1990's stating that the richest 1 percent of American families (2.7 million people) had nearly as many after tax dollars to spend as the lowest 100 million and owned most of America's marketable assets. (This represents the largest concentration of wealth in over a century.)

In addition, in 1998 the average income of families headed by someone with no more than a high school diploma was \$48,434, which is 8 percent higher, adjusted for inflation, than it was in 1990. A family income when the household head had a two-year-degree had an average income of \$63,524, 10 percent higher than in 1990. A household head with a B.A. brought the average family income to \$85,423, marking a 13 percent increase; an M.A. raised earnings to \$101,670, a 17 percent hike. With a professional degree, average family income was \$147,170, a 24 percent increase. The rich have a

built-in advantage as they can spend more to prepare their children for top institutions and can also smooth the road to entrance. Undaunted, however, middle-class and upper-middle-class boomers are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure the success of their offspring, often moving their families to communities in which they can barely afford to live, working extreme hours, going into deep debt, and making other profound sacrifices to compete with the even more well-to-do.

Ironically, the demand for workers with the education and skills for innovation has risen more quickly than the supply, while the demand for workers with few skills and little education has stabilized or, more often, is shrinking. A society concerned about the corrosive effects of inequality on the overall quality of democratic life would increase the supply of people capable of doing the work the new economy will reward, particularly by increasing access to postsecondary education for children of lower income families. Unfortunately, most attendance in these institutions is attributable to children from middle- and upper-income families.

Reich argues that resources should be allocated to recruit potential students from lower-income families. And instead of spending funds to make campuses more attractive to upper-middle-class students, tuition should be controlled and grants expanded so that more children can afford to attend. States must also make their public colleges and universities a higher priority and back that priority with funding.

An additional concern for Reich concerning the social contract is the role of women in the workforce. Since the late 1970's when the wages of men without college degrees began to drop, greater numbers of women have joined the workforce in order to supplement their family income. These women move in and out of the workforce, or

work part-time, in order to care for their families. This contributes to lower wages and eligibility for pension benefits and unemployment insurance.

He notes:

1. Working women are almost half the workforce – sixty million strong.
2. On Average, women earn less money than men.
3. Three out of five minimum wage workers are women. More than a third are the sole breadwinners in their households.
4. Nearly two out of three of all working women do not have pension plans.
5. Among those women who are fortunate enough to be earning a pension, the average amount of that pension benefit is only half of what men are getting. Once retired, women also tend to live longer than men, meaning what they have saved must last longer and is subject to further years of erosion by inflation.

Allowing the financial security of women to suffer because they have taken responsibility for bearing and rearing their children is wrong for women, wrong for families, and wrong for America.

(2002, p. 98)

Reich points out that the popular notion of family values needs to be revamped.

Even though average household income increased during the boom of the 1990's, working families have taken a pounding. The real wages of most Americans have fallen, along with the standard of living. Nearly 40 percent of unmarried mothers are not earning enough to lift their children out of poverty, even though the birth rate among all women, including poor women, has dropped. Jobs at the bottom of the income ladder don't pay enough to support a working woman with children. The welfare-to-work program of 1996 has certainly made women less dependent on government relief, but it has not helped them escape poverty.

The opportunist peddling of family values blames immigrants, or affirmative action, or government bureaucracy, or single mothers for the decline in the American Dream. But these things have nothing to do with real families or real values. This blame

slinging is simply another way to make it harder for families to succeed. Reich argues that these prophets of blame want to cut school lunches and Head Start, they oppose affordable child care and paid family leave, they want to cut the Earned Income Tax Credit to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy, and they want to make it harder to get job training and college loans.

These cowards and bullies attempt to advance their private agenda by ignoring the real problems and frightening people with false monsters and enraging people with false blame. Their strategy is to divide and conquer. Family values should be words that are used to heal and unite rather than to attack and divide. A civilized and decent society is also a civilized and decent economy. The Fair Labor Standards Act that made child labor illegal, the Veterans Reemployment Rights Act protecting those who defend their country, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protecting workers against discrimination, and the Family and Medical Leave Act granting unpaid leave to employees with serious family responsibilities are all examples of how arrangements benefiting all workers must be provided even in a country that deeply respects private decisions about the organization of work. And these benefits have proven time and again that they can lift morale and improve productivity. They are good for business.

So what does promoting family values truly mean?

Reich suggests:

It means taking the next step on Family and Medical Leave, and giving *paid* leave to employees who must take some time off to care for a child or elderly relative. It means ensuring affordable child care and elder care. It means automatically raising the minimum wage when inflation reduces the value of the dollar.

It means expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and putting more money back in the pockets of millions of working families with modest incomes. It means making unemployment insurance available to anyone who loses a job – regardless of how long she had held the particular job she lost. It means helping people save for their retirement by expanding pension coverage – broadening eligibility thresholds to enable more part-timers and in-and-outers to accumulate pensions. And in order to prevent any repetition of what happened to the employees of Enron, making sure that workers don't have to invest more than a small fraction – say 10 percent – of their 401(k) savings in the company they work for, and are allowed to sell their stock whenever they wish.

That's what "family values" means. It is an agenda centered on home economics.

Some politicians who speak fervently of family values leave out home economics. They talk passionately about the breakdown of American homes, but they neglect to mention the breakdown of family incomes.

The true test of a society is its willingness to face up to its core problems – not to deny them, not to project them onto scapegoats, not to be diverted by issues of the moment...

(2002, pp. 105, 106)

To perpetuate a decent working society in the long run Reich suggests that national security be recognized as more than a matter of building more and better weapons. Real security starts with the strength of America's society. Future security depends on the bonds America creates and sustains today. America must be bound by practical principles regarding what we owe and expect from one another as members of American society.

The social contract must be reenacted and strengthened. As companies do better, their employees should, too. Jobs should pay enough to lift families out of poverty and all of us should have a full opportunity to use and develop our talents and abilities. Reich

notes that these principles aren't liberal or conservative, but are the moral code of America. And they are imperative to economic growth as well as social equity.

He notes that cynics believe that the global economy prevents us from living in a decent society, that global capital will undermine any social contract, and that Americans must violate their core principles. Reich counters by illustrating two distinct ways to attract global capital. One is to become so inexpensive that global capital is lured by low cost. In this scenario taxes are waived, there is freedom to pollute, health or retirement benefits are nonexistent, safety regulations are absent, and wages are rock bottom. This approach, he concludes, will indeed create many jobs, but they will be terrible jobs that condemn families to a lower standard of living, degrade the environment, and create a very tentative economy. The other choice, Reich believes, is to be so productive and innovative that high wages, generous benefits, and regulations have no limiting effect on luring global capital. This second option, he contends, can only happen when people are well educated, their families are in good health, their children have good care, and they can make full use of their talents and abilities regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. This second choice will offer many good jobs and a high standard of living, and is completely consistent with the core principles of a decent working society.

However, to become a highly productive society America's ideas about role of government must change. Instead of seeing education, childcare, health care, and public transportation as government expenses Americans must see them as investments. To view them as problematic expenses condemns people to a steadily declining standard of living. Washington currently seems only to value the purchase of military hardware, pursuit of war, and the awarding of huge tax breaks to wealthy individuals and global



corporations (this occurring while state governments are cutting back on already inadequate public investments). The semi-religious faith exhibited by the government in trickle-down economics rests on the erroneous idea that wealthy individuals and large corporations will invest more of their money and spur economic growth. But global investment dollars move to where there is the highest return. This movement pools the investment capital in the lower-cost or more productive areas of the world, not necessarily in the United States. (And currently government leaders are generating intense international ill will for America, while at the same time enjoying, as it were, the most damaging trade imbalance in modern history.)

Reich argues that rather than give huge tax breaks to corporations and wealthy individuals government should invest in all of America's people because America's future standard of living depends on this. The true patriot, he asserts, will not allow the current Bush administration to talk about national security while undermining America's economic security, to ask for sacrifice but award tax cuts to those who need it least, to speak of unity but impose greater burdens on the neediest. America should disavow a government that gives energy companies freedom to pollute, massive airline bailouts that only benefit the executives, seeks to restore the three-martini tax-deductible lunch for lobbyists, and wishes to retroactively eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax that helps to prevent large corporations from exploiting tax loopholes.

The obstacles to truly patriotic reform include denial, escapism, and resignation. Some deny that over 40 million people in America lack health insurance, that many of America's schools are falling apart, that more and more working parents cannot afford safe and stimulating childcare, that a large number of workers lack the necessary skills to

improve their lot, that a fifth of America's children live in poverty, that the ranks of the homeless are growing, and that the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen.

Some American's accept these realities but continue to ignore them. It is easier to escape into television, office parks, suburban malls, and gated communities. Others acknowledge the problems and don't try to ignore them, but have resigned themselves to the idea that nothing can be done about it. Unfortunately, many of these people are the young on whose future we hang the hope of the nation.

Reich points out that these dysfunctional responses are not new to American history and have always been the largest barriers to progressive reform. He notes that these problems can be overcome with appropriate leadership, as leadership is the very art of overcoming denial, escapism, and resignation. However, until recently American's goal was to strike it rich by winning big in the stock market without noticing the unfortunate who were not benefiting by the market bubble. But now, Reich concludes, everyone must exercise the leadership necessary to recover functionally from terrorist attack and market collapse while remembering, most of all, that everyone is in it together. America's common strength lies not in individual wealth, but in universal productivity – not in bombs, but in bonds.

### *The Culture of Cheating and the Social Contract*

Callahan (2004) notes that America has become a cheating culture because people in America now have a well reinforced belief that:

- Everyone cheats.

- Americans live in a culture of increasing inequality that is often supported by cheating.
- America has become a winner-takes-all society.
- The bottom line is more important than anything else.
- Job security and success are always precarious.
- Corruption among the wealthy goes virtually unpunished.
- Only the poor are hounded by the law and by the I.R.S.
- Both the reward for winning and the penalty for losing are greater than ever before.
- Doing the right thing is becoming more and more difficult.
- One must work harder and harder just to keep up.
- Once people succeed they pull the ladder to success up with them.
- Values are more concerned with profitability than right and wrong.
- Conservatives express outright indignation over the perceived problems of teenage sex, teenage pregnancy, homosexuality, drugs, feminism, environmentalism, and mainstreet crime, but espouse doing whatever it takes to succeed and become rich.
- Taking illegal enhancement drugs is OK if you want to be a sports star.
- Most people are experiencing more stress and less sense of control.
- The size of one's paycheck determines one's value.
- Rabid consumption will create happiness.
- Social Darwinism is the new fact of life.
- The world is filled with corporate fraud that will likely never get addressed.

- Everyone should live like people on television.
- There is a two-tiered system of justice.
- Those who cut corners get ahead.
- The end always justifies the means.
- Failure is humiliating.
- Grades are more important than learning.
- Winning is more important than being good.

Callahan argues that in the 1950s and 1960s corporations behaved more like socialist republics and top executives behaved more like public-spirited bureaucrats. Companies and workers were bound in sense of trust and loyalty that was facilitated by an explicit social contract. An ethos of equality ruled where workers committed themselves to the company and management treated them with due caring and respect. Salaries at the top were not grossly inflated and labor unions were powerful. Companies had strong ties to the community and played a role in civic affairs. Management was required to maintain an equitable and fair workplace that balanced the needs of all individuals and groups.

However, by the 1980s the social contract in business was replaced by a myopic focus on shareholders and top ranking managers. Social norms regarding pay withered and top management essentially determined their own compensation. Even in the good times downsizing became common as concern for the bottom line bulldozed long-standing social agreements. Business became leaner and meaner, but mostly for the people at the bottom and middle of the organization.

Clearly, according to Callahan, a new social contract is in order.

He points out that:

Cheating thrives where unfairness reigns, along with economic anxiety. It thrives where government is the weak captive of wealthy interests and lacks the will to do justice impartially. It thrives where money and success are king, and winners are fawned over whatever their daily abuses of power. If we want to reduce cheating, we must tackle these root causes. We need to create a new social contract in America that gives people faith in a few simple principles: Anyone who plays by the rules can get ahead. Everyone has some say in how the rules get made. Everyone who breaks the rules suffers the same penalties. And all of us are in the same boat, living in the same 'moral community' and striving together to build a society that confers respect on people based on a wide variety of accomplishments.

Rediscovering these principles doesn't require an archaeological expedition. These principles are at the heart of the American Dream; they are deeply embedded in our psyche. Nearly all Americans embrace them at some level. This ethos is what the United States, at its best, is all about.

(2004, p. 263)

Callahan continues by stating that these basic tenets of Americanism are currently being pushed aside by unfettered capitalism. Therefore, creating a new social contract will require that the free market be tamed and a healthier balance be restored between humanistic values and those of the market. Both, he notes, have a deep roots in American society, creating a rather split American personality. The Tough American sees the unencumbered market as the path to wealth and liberty. The Fair American wants a society where everyone is treated equally and the weak are treated compassionately. However, according to Callahan, America needs less of the Tough American and more of the Fair American, especially in the economic sphere.

He concludes that America must:

1. Make work pay. The social contract dictates that everyone who can work should work and have a chance to improve their lot. To support this principle a living wage must be established, with an increase in the minimum wage indexed to inflation. Increased support for tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit

would also help those on the bottom to get ahead while government investment in transportation, scientific research, and energy efficiency could lay the groundwork for future prosperity.

2. Expand access to higher education. A new system of universal higher education would help people in any station in life to improve their circumstances.
3. Help people build wealth and personal assets. Far too many families don't make enough money to save for the future and don't have enough financial reserve to keep them afloat if they become ill or lose their jobs. Leveraging government money with Individual Development Accounts would encourage poorer people to save. Birth endowments that give every child a nest egg that later can be translated into real assets, special housing programs, and micro-credit loans can all help to invest in a true stakeholder society (Sklar, Mykyta, & Wefald, 2003).
4. Reduce key insecurities that are part of America's post-industrial society. Strong unions, good benefits, benevolent employers, and job security have virtually vanished. With 60 million Americans without health-care coverage during some time in the year, with ongoing childcare emergencies, and with half of Americas workers bereft of employer provided pensions and sufficient savings it is clear that more hustle or planning for the future will not remedy the situation. The government alone has the resources to provide affordable health care, childcare, and housing. A partnership between government, business, and non-profit groups to provide these essentials is starkly necessary.

Callahan notes that, taken together, these strategies would reduce the anxiety of struggling Americans and would reestablish faith in a workable system. If people feel

that the system will reward hard work with a decent life they will be far more likely to play by the rules. But to completely banish its cheating culture America must eradicate the plague of market fundamentalism, reform business and professions, and teach integrity to the young as necessary additions to a renewed and reinvigorated social contract.

### ***The Role of America as a Republic***

You know, back in 2000 a Republican friend of mine warned me that if I voted for Al Gore and he won, the stock market would tank, we'd lose millions of jobs, and our military would be totally over-stretched. You know what: I did vote for Al Gore, he did win, and I'll be damned if all those things didn't come true.

(Carville & Nussbaum, 2003, p. 2)

Carville opines that after the attacks of 9/11 President George W. Bush did not lead the country by calling out the best in the American people. Rather, greatness was measured in the number of American flag lapel pins worn, the number of *God Bless the USA* stickers on SUVs, and by how much the American people shopped. While telling the American soldiers to give it all Bush told everyone else they could have it all. This, Carville notes, belies the fundamental Republican question of whether or not an individual is better off now than four years ago, rather than the question of whether or not America is better off now than four years ago. Therefore, if Republicans, as represented by Bush, insist on asking about individuals, then Democrats should be asking about the nation. Unfortunately, the nation is clearly, according to Carville, not better off.

While admitting to being very partisan, which he certainly is, Carville calls upon a commonsense standard by which to judge the success or failure of the American government. Using the Preamble to the Constitution Carville notes that the republic of the United States should:

1. Form a more perfect Union.
2. Establish justice.
3. Insure domestic tranquility.
4. Provide for the common defense.
5. Promote the general welfare.
6. Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Reviewing each of these six items, Carville posits that only in the provision for common defense should the current government of the United States receive any credit. However, he notes even then that while America has exercised its military might to invade other countries, for no honest reason, as a provision for the common defense, homeland security is floundering and few steps have been taken to militarily, diplomatically, and domestically make America safer for its people.

Regarding the general welfare Carville points out that while the welfare of the well-off has certainly improved, most Americans have seen their incomes decline and the level of poverty rise. The blessings of liberty appear, according to Carville, to be manifesting in a mountain of debt for future generations, in a world that increasingly hates America, while education, clean water, clean air, and healthy forests continue to decline.

Carville also argues that justice is simply not a priority for the current administration. The Constitution is no longer even a road map, let alone a sacred document. Human rights are now an afterthought, with right-wing federal judges working to roll back decades of progress in worker's rights, women's rights, and civil rights.



The country is also more polarized now than it has been since the civil war. Currently there is a huge rift between rich and poor, rural and urban, young and old. The nation is angry and divided (Greenberg, 2004), with, according to Carville, far less domestic tranquility than before this administration.

With the gap between rich and poor widening, a smaller percentage of Americans hold a greater percentage of wealth than at any time in recent history (Andrews, 2003). This distribution of wealth mirrors the distribution of power, creating a Union that is far from being unified, except, perhaps, as a feudal system.

Therefore, asks Carville, if the government is not working towards the founding ideals of America, what is it working towards?

He concludes:

In a word: power....

The entire political machine – including the institutions of government – has been set to work trying to gain power, consolidate it, expand it, and use it, and not to the benefit of the country as a whole.

Since they've been in office we've seen an incredible transfer of power and wealth to powerful and wealthy people.

They've been working for the people who cut down the forests, not the families that enjoy them. They side with the drug companies, not the people who need the medicine. Their rules benefit the finance companies, not the retirees who depend on them. They seek to make things easier for the energy companies, not the people who work for them.

It's about accumulating ever greater power and wealth in the hands of the wealthy and powerful through tax cuts, deregulation, and flat-out crony capitalism....

When you take the ... predilection for power to its logical conclusion, you get a vision of American society where the only good regulation is a dead one, where the best rate of taxation is none, and where the heavy hand of government will no longer press down upon the populace.

Recently, we've seen such a place. A place where all regulation was a thing of the past, where all taxes were gone, and where people were free to pursue their hopes and dreams unfettered by a government that held them back. The date was April 2003. The place was Baghdad, Iraq.

(2003, pp. 14, 15)

Carville states that one solution to these problems is a more aggressive federal government committed to upholding the vision of America's founders. He notes that those benefiting from the current system will complain that the founders wanted smaller government. However, he argues, the founders wanted smaller government because, in those days, government was the largest threat to the power of the citizen. But now corporations are the biggest threat to citizen power. The corporate elite possess the power to abuse everyone and everything. Therefore, the only force powerful enough to oppose them is government. This seems to be, according to Carville, why those in power wish to either shrink or to own the government. Smaller government is desired for the same reason crooks want fewer cops.

Empowering government, however, is only one part of the battle plan to retake the nation and restore the original intent of the republic. Equally important is the involvement of the public in becoming better informed about the issues, actively monitoring the corporate-government machine, and participating in the political process (Crenson & Ginsberg, 2002; Patterson, 2002; Piven, 2000; Skocpol, 2003; Wattenberg, 2002). Fostering more public involvement, given America's lethargic constituency, may be a challenge but is also easier than other avenues. Carville suggests that changing the management of Enron or WorldCom, and their lobbyists, to prevent the wholesale robbery of stockholders is far more difficult than voting to change the management of government and how it does business.

Carville also suggests that the following would help to reestablish the appropriate role of government and the people towards renewing the republic:

- Rather than blaming others, blocking homeland security funding, and creating a meaningless, frustrating, and anxiety provoking color-coded alert system America should: Create a unified homeland security agency. Creatively and successfully secure borders, ports, food and water, bridges and tunnels, railways, roads, chemical plants, suppliers of biological agents, power plants and grids, and computer systems. Provide adequate tools and training for firefighters, police officers, and local health officials to handle emergencies. Prevent the proliferation and selling of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.
- Rather than antagonizing other nations, pulling out of international agreements, and waging preemptive war without validation or sufficient planning for the aftermath America should: Lead the world honestly and fairly instead of ignoring and bullying it. Use its strength to promote common interests and lead the world in solving shared problems. Be a good neighbor. And, if America must be feared, let it also be loved.
- Rather than saying that deficits and debt don't matter during a time of financial hemorrhaging American government should: Stop lying and tell the truth about current debt and spending, stanch the fiscal bleeding, control spending and tax cuts for the wealthy, and take appropriate measures to improve the long-term economy. In other words, make sense while making money.
- Rather than establishing vouchers as the default form of educational reform and without the appropriate resources America should: Make America the education

nation. Provide a student bill of rights that provides the necessary money and resources, encourages parental involvement, and promotes a creative approach, especially in high school.

- Rather than using everything as an excuse to abuse and deplete the environment in order to pad the pockets of political supporters and friends, while lying about and hiding negative changes in environmental policy, American government should: Adopt a sustainable environmental, industrial, and automotive policy that promotes the welfare of the ecology, including doing what it takes to become energy independent.
- Rather than using privatization, tax cuts, vouchers, deregulation, and employer escape clauses America's government should: Provide real health care to all citizens through increased coverage, controlled cost, and increased quality. Give all Americans the health care Congress gets.
- Rather than allowing money to buy politicians and political favors, referring to political whoring as free speech, begrudgingly signing legislation against soft money and then supporting a court challenge of the same legislation American politicians should: Get out of the bribery business. Allow people who wish to be members of Congress the opportunity to solicit money from whomever they please. However, all contributions must be immediately disclosed with 85% of the amount credited to the incumbent from a publicly guaranteed fund. If any candidate puts his or her own cash into their own campaign, equal funds are provided for the other candidates. In this way ideas, rather than money, will be the currency of politics.

- Rather than tough talk about slapping corporate robbers with handcuffs, while, in truth, merely slapping them on the wrist, American government should: Enforce transparency, protect pensions, make corporations pay their fair share of taxes, truly get tough on corporate wrongdoers, break up the crony capitalism of corporate boards, and end the pump and dump of stock options.
- Rather than preach tort reform to protect physicians and businesses from lawsuits the American government should: End insurance company monopolies, better police physicians, and reduce malpractice insurance rates.
- Rather than privatize Social Security and Medicare: Modernize, explain, and expand these programs while using their funding as intended rather than as a slush fund for other government programs. Increase the cap on taxation. Invest the trust fund like a pension plan. Make cost of living adjustments reflect real changes in the cost of living. Manage the chronically ill. Get the right care to the right people. Enforce competitive bidding for medical supplies and equipment.
- Rather than employing a policy of blanket lying, withholding of information, and misrepresentation of facts to support an ideology that likely would be unacceptable to most of the American people American politicians should: Gather information from expert and divergent sources, review the facts, reveal the facts, and act rationally to achieve results that are in everyone's best interest. Tell the truth and stop lying to everybody.

To distill the issues into three soundbites Carvill summarizes:

1. Change vs. more of the same
2. It's the people, stupid – all of the people
3. A strong America that's a good neighbor

***The Role of America as a Good, Decent, and Just World Citizen***

Soros (2004) observes:

The gap in perceptions between America and the rest of the world has never been wider. Abroad, America is seen as abusing the dominant position it occupies....

I contend that the Bush administration has deliberately exploited September 11 in order to pursue policies that the American public would not have otherwise tolerated. The Bush dream of American supremacy is both unattainable and in contradiction with the principles tha America has traditionally stood for. It endangers our values as well as our security. And it endangers the world because America is so powerful.

The United States enjoys a dominant position in the world today that cannot be challenged by any other state or combination of states for the foreseeable future. It can lose its dominance only as a result of its own mistakes. At present the country is in the process of committing such mistakes because it is in the hands of a group of extremists whose strong sense of mission is matched only by their false sense of certitude. By abusing the position that the United States occupies in the world, the extremists have made our nation weaker, not stronger.

These are fighting words and many people will violently disagree, but they are justified by the gravity of the situation. These are not normal times.... We have been deceived.

pp. vii - viii

Sentiments seem polarized from a political perspective (Greenberg, 2004), both locally and globally, and the United States has rarely if ever experienced such worldwide disdane. If America is to be a truly just, decent, and good society its role in global af-fairs, Soros asserts, must be brought under close scrutiny. The spectre of terrorism has served those with a neoconservative agenda with the opportunity to bully other nations,

“You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists,” (Bush, 2001), or to dilute the freedom of American citizens and their will to resist a repressive regime by promoting fear and impugning patriotism, “To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America’s enemies and pause to America’s friends,” (Ashcroft, 2001).

The perspective of the neoconservatives as well as their final vision is strongly influenced, according to Soros, by a crude form of social Darwinism. They believe that life is a struggle for survival, and that military superiority and force must be employed to survive. This view is closely aligned with the philosophy of market fundamentalism that also emphasizes fierce competition. The normal functioning of democracy, until the United States invaded Iraq, bound this ideological distortion. However, Soros notes that after this invasion the quest for American supremacy entered a far-from-equilibrium state that parallels a market boom-bust cycle, and now the bubble is bursting.

Note: More recent academic endeavor has pointed to nearly the opposite conclusion, namely, that cooperation as well as competition is fundamental to survival and is often the most facilitative behavior (Axelrod, 1984, 1997; Kenworthy, 1996; Kohn, 1986).

Soros contends that the neoconservative agenda preceeded the tragedy of September 11, 2001 and, in many ways, laid the groundwork for the terrorist attack. The underlying principles of this agenda assume that international relations are relations of power, not law; power prevails and law legitimizes what prevails. Because America is the dominant post-Cold War power, it can and will impose its values, views, and interests

on the rest of the world with the notion that the world will benefit because America has demonstrated its superiority. In other words, the pre-King Arthur notion that might makes right (evidently these people have not met Merlin). Previous administrations have failed, in the eyes of the neoconservative, to adequately use this power. This must be corrected. The Project for the New American Century, a policy advocate group and neo-conservative think tank, articulated a succinct mission statement in 1997.

It reads as follows:

American foreign and defense policy is adrift. Conservatives have criticized the incoherent policies of the Clinton Administration. They have also resisted isolationist impulses from within their own ranks. But conservatives have not confidently advanced a strategic vision of America's role in the world. They have not set forth guiding principles for American foreign policy. They have allowed differences over tactics to obscure potential agreement on strategic objectives. And they have not fought for a defense budget that would maintain American security and advance American interests in the new century.

We aim to change this. We aim to make the case and rally support for American global leadership.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century draws to a close, the United States stands as the world's pre-eminent power. Having led the West to victory in the Cold War, America faces an opportunity and a challenge: Does the United States have the vision to build upon the achievements of past decades? Does the United States have the resolve to shape a new century favorable to American principles and interests?

We are in danger of squandering the opportunity and failing the challenge. We are living off the capital – both the military investments and the foreign policy achievements – built up by past administrations. Cuts in foreign affairs and defense spending, inattention to the tools of statecraft, and inconstant leadership are making it increasingly difficult to sustain American influence around the world. And the promise of short-term commercial benefits threatens to override strategic considerations. As a consequence, we are jeopardizing the nation's ability to meet present threats and to deal with potentially greater challenges that lie ahead.

We seem to have forgotten the essential elements of the Reagan Administration's success: a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States' global responsibilities.



Of course, the United States must be prudent in how it exercises its power. But we cannot safely avoid the responsibilities of global leadership or the costs that are associated with its exercise. America has a vital role in maintaining peace and security in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. If we shirk our responsibilities, we invite challenges to our fundamental interests. The history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of this century should have taught us to embrace that cause of American leadership.

Our aim is to remind Americans of these lessons and to draw their consequences for today. Here are four consequences:

- We (sic) need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- We need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
- We need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;
- We need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.

Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary of the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next.

Elliott Abrams  
Gary Bauer  
William J. Bennett  
Dick Cheney  
Eliot A. Cohen  
Midge Decter  
Paula Dobrainsky  
Steve Forbes  
Aaron Friedberg  
Francis Fukuyama  
Frank Gaffney  
Donald Kagan  
Zalmay Khalilzad  
I. Lewis Libby  
Norman Podhoretz  
Dan Quayle

Peter W. Rodman  
Stephen P. Rosen  
Henry S. Rowen  
Donald Rumsfeld  
Vin Weber  
George Weigel  
Paul Wolfowitz

*(Project for the New American Century: Statement of principles, 1997)*

In 1998 many of the people who signed this statement sent President Clinton an open letter that argued for the invasion of Iraq. Five years later the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington presented an opportunity that could not be ignored. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz, among others, were in charge of the invasion and further fostered the fear that already had America in its grip.

Rather than a supremacist ideology, such as the one promoted by the Project for the New American Century, Soros supports the idea of an open society. According to his definition, an open society is founded on the idea that beliefs are provisionally true, but open to constant reexamination. It is recognized that nobody holds the ultimate truth. Therefore an open society requires institutions that allow people with divergent views and interests to live together peacefully. People must have the freedom to pursue their interests provided that these interests can be reconciled with the interests of others. Markets are designed to enable the pursuit of private interests, but not of common interests. Common interests require political institutions that ensure freedom of thought, expression, and choice and contain the mechanism for constant self-correction, as the quandary of fallability, of not having the ultimate truth, will apply to these institutions as well.

Soros argues that the tragedy of an American supremacist ideology is that it contradicts the principle of an open society because it claims to have an ultimate truth. For

example, the Project for the New American Century would say that because America is stronger it knows better and has right on its side and others should model American values and ideology. According to Soros, however, there is no one enduring model for national success and the American model is not available to others because America's success is dependent on having a dominant position at the center of the global capitalist system. Axiomatically, this position cannot be offered to other nations if America is to remain preeminent.

He observes that the first enunciation of the Bush doctrine, which is consistent with neoconservative philosophy and principles, was made in June 2002 in the President's speech to the students of West Point. In general it articulated support for two classes of sovereignty: the sovereignty of the United States, which takes precedence over international treaties and obligations, and the sovereignty of all other nations subject to the first. Bush noted in this speech that the United States will do everything in its power to maintain its unquestioned military supremacy and that the United States arrogates the right to preemptive action. In other words, America will be the biggest gorilla on the hill and will attack any others who, either individually or collectively, appear to be developing the capacity to challenge this dominant position or interfere with access to any banana it chooses. The Bush doctrine, under the auspices of a war on terrorism, claims the right to allow Attorney General John Ashcroft to curtail civil liberties at home while military force is used to impose the views and interests of the United States on the rest of the world.

Soros contends that this comes into strong contrast with the historical position of the United States as the most successful open society. Our current policies do not

strengthen our ties to our democratic allies. On the contrary, international cooperation is impeded. In addition, since the candidacy of Barry Goldwater the Republican Party has become dominated by an alliance between religious and market fundamentalists. Now the country is in the control of an extremist ideology, one that is changing America's character and its role in the world. This same ideology dominates both the legislative and executive branches of the government and President Bush is attempting to impose it on the judiciary. September 11 indeed signaled a change in the world, it became a world where the radical and extreme were redefined as politically normal.

Soros asserts that the war on terrorism has little to do with providing homeland security or ending terrorism, but rather it is being used as a pretext for waging war. Under the Bush administration the United States has become a victim-turned-perpetrator. This syndrome, articulated by James and Jongeward (1971) and further popularized by Eric Fromm (1973) and Lynch and Kordis (1988), denotes a strategy employed by those who would justify an aggressive and-or repressive regime by reminding its subjects of historical victimizations perpetrated by outsiders (Lifton, 2003), or by those who wish to perpetuate drama, through shaming, blaming, and justifying, rather than to resolve an issue. For example, Hitler rose to power in part by appealing to the German people's sense of being victimized. The victim-turned-perpetrator is part of a larger drama triangle of victim, persecutor, and rescuer. Without all three roles drama cannot continue and the issue at hand is either dropped or resolved. However, for drama to continue these three roles must rotate. The persecutor must eventually become the victim or rescuer, the rescuer must eventually become the victim or the persecutor, and so on. Unfortunately, while drama may be the essential ingredient of many forms of entertainment, it is dys-

functional within a problem solving or conflict resolution setting. The larger the conflict and the greater the number of people involved the more danger there is in employing drama and public posturing to promote a covert agenda and to falsely create the appearance of addressing the real issues. Although the terrorist attacks of September 11 were hideous and unjustifiable, the war on terrorism has claimed more innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan than were killed in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

On September 12, 2001 the North Atlantic Council invoked Article 5 of the NATO Treaty for the first time, requesting all member states to treat the attacks on the United States as an attack upon their own nation. The United Nations endorsed U.S. action against al Qaeda and the French paper *Le Monde's* lead headline heralded, "*Nous sommes tous americains*," we are all Americans. Little more than a year later America could not secure a United Nations resolution authorizing the invasion of Iraq, and in 2003 the United States continued to face very strong resistance. In 2002 surveys revealed that one third of all Britons viewed George Bush as a greater threat to world peace than Saddam Hussein (Wintour & MacAskill, 2002), and surveys in 2003 noted that among the British those holding favorable views regarding the United States slipped from 75 percent to 48 percent (*America's image further erodes, Europeans want weaker ties*, 2002). Throughout the world a large majority opposed the Iraqi war. Soros contends that even South Koreans regard the United States as a greater threat to their security than North Korea. While the world increasingly views the United States as a rogue nation (Prestowitz, 2003), America seems to fervidly embrace its victimized self-image.

Soros notes that most people in America would be shocked to find that they have been transformed from victims to perpetrators. The American public in general believes

that terrorism poses a threat and that waging war is only an act of defense. However, the advocates of American supremacy within the Bush administration are very clear about what they are doing, and were prepared to argue the case for war even if it involved lies and deception. According to Soros, waging this war required a false metaphor to justify repressive measures. The invasion of Iraq, as advocated in 1998 by the Project for the New American Century, had to be fitted into the context of war on terrorism. Unfortunately, this war cannot be won, among many other reasons, because it was based on false pretenses. Instead, the war on terrorism is likely to increase terrorism and to create a permanent state of war. Therefore, to be a good and decent member of the global community America must reconsider the war on terrorism.

Soros asserts that fear and misinformation have been used to exaggerate terrorist threats and foster even more fear. While fear can be a useful tool to marshal people against a common enemy, it is also useful for governments intent on exploiting it. Along this line, patriotism can also be used to silence any critics of government action. If one is not afraid, or if one does not support the current policy, then one is obviously unsympathetic to the victimization of one's own people, or simply a coward, or worse, sympathetic to the perceived perpetrators. However, terrorism triumphs if victims become perpetrators who escalate the cycle of violence. Soros argues that the most powerful nation on earth cannot afford to be consumed by fear, or to make terrorism the center of our national policy. America is obligated to lead the world in many ways, including the preservation of peace, assurance of economic progress, and protection of the environment.

Despite this mandate, the Bush administration, says Soros, is not only pursuing the wrong goals its policies have been counterproductive even in terms of its own objectives. The humble foreign policy and the opposition to foreign intervention and nation building advocated by President Bush during his 2000 campaign have been betrayed. Militarization of space is now being pursued with the goal of attack or reprisal against other nations and groups who oppose our objectives. The Bush administration has renounced the Kyoto Protocol, rejected the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention, and attempted to sabotage the International Criminal Court. They demonstrate an abhorrence of soft-heartedness, tolerance, and affirmative action. They advocate the pursuit of American military dominance. They exercised brute force in replacing the antiterrorism bill unanimously approved by the House Judiciary Committee with the USA Patriot Act. This act gives unprecedented power to the executive branch and removes many of the constraints imposed by judicial process. Together with the Homeland Security Act it limits government information accessible to the public while granting government access to, and sharing of, sensitive personal information. This invasion of privacy is transparent to most Americans because the PATRIOT Act is assumed by citizens to be aimed at the terrorists rather than at innocent civilians. Nevertheless, a way to serious abuses of power is opened by the PATRIOT Act beyond the expanded use of wiretap, e-mail monitoring, and the tracking of library checkout records. Senator Russel Feingold, who cast the one opposing vote to the act, states:

Preserving our freedom is one of the main reasons that we are now engaged in this new war on terrorism. We will lose that war without firing a shot if we sacrifice the liberties of the American people.

(Chang, 2003, p. 33)

Accused terrorists have been forced to plead guilty or be removed from the judicial process altogether, detained without trial or subjected to secret military tribunal. Visitors and immigrants to the United States have been detained or deported without recourse. Prisoners captured in Afghanistan are caged and denied the protection of the Geneva Convention. And the extension of government power is moving beyond the war on terrorism. The New York Times Reports:

The government is using its expanded authority under the far-reaching law to investigate suspected drug traffickers, white-collar criminals, blackmailers, child pornographers, money launderers, spies and even corrupt foreign leaders, federal officials said.

Justice Department officials say they are simply using all the tools now available to them to pursue criminals – terrorists or otherwise. But critics of the administration's antiterrorism tactics assert that such use of the law is evidence the administration is using terrorism as a guise to pursue a broader law enforcement agenda.

(Lichtblau, 2003)

The war on terrorism has also taken precedence in foreign affairs. In his 2002 State of the Union address President Bush (2002) introduced the concept of an axis of evil composed of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Of the three, only Iran has strongly established links with terrorism. It is ruled by a Shiite theocracy opposed to America, but the people of Iran have, for the most part, renounced Islamic fundamentalism and have elected a reformist president and parliament. It is also important to point out that during the late Truman and early Eisenhower administrations the Iranian people had a progressive president that was freely elected by the people, that is, until the CIA provoked and supported a coup that replaced the president with the formerly deposed Shah (Kinzer, 2003). (Soros notes that in the case of Iran, assigned membership in the Axis of Evil has only served to strengthen the opposition to creating an open and democratic society.) North Korea, on the other hand, is a ruthlessly oppressive closed society and has dangerous



missile and nuclear capabilities. And while Iraq under Saddam Husein was equally oppressive, its military threat was of no consequence compared to North Korea.

Soros points out that in Afghanistan the military forces of the United States have failed to find Osama bin Laden, failed to win the peace, and failed to give the United Nations the task of overseeing and administering the reconstruction. In the meantime the Taliban are reasserting themselves in the south and a great opportunity to demonstrate what international assistance can do for a Muslim country has dissipated.

Ironically, most of the terrorists involved in the September 11 attacks were from Saudi Arabia, as was a great deal of the funding, and Osama bin Laden is a Saudi. Unfortunately, within days after the attacks the dozen or so visiting members of the bin Laden family were secretly escorted via chartered jet from the United States to France. In a show of solidarity between the Bush and bin Laden families the United States government forbade the FBI to delay their departure or to conduct interviews or investigations. When a bipartisan investigation of the September 11 events was completed the portion of the document regarding Saudi Arabia was removed by order of the White House. In addition, no credible links have emerged between the terrorists of September 11 and Iraq or North Korea.

Soros argues that the war on terrorism has taken precedence over the promotion of political and economic reforms and failed to advance democracy even though the final public justification for the invasion of Iraq was the promotion of Iraqi freedom and democracy. Sadly, the real reasons for this invasion appear to be much more insidious. Former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill has stated publicly that the invasion of Iraq became of primary importance to the President and his cabinet immediately after

President George W. Bush assumed office (Suskind, 2004). This objective, however, preceeded the terrorist attacks by many months and was not made public. Soros conjectures that one of the covert motives for invasion may have been to assert American supremacy through the path of least resistance. At a key strategy session after the September 11 attacks Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz noted:

Attacking Afghanistan would be uncertain. He worried about 100,000 American troops bogged down in mountain fighting in Afghanistan six months from then. In contrast, Iraq was a brittle, oppressive regime that might break easily; it was doable. He estimated that there was a 10 to 50 percent chance Saddam was involved in the September 11 attacks. The US would have to go after Saddam at some time if the war on terrorism was to be taken seriously.

(Woodward, 2003, p. 83)

And in support of the extended conflict George J. Tenet, then Director of Central Intelligence, stated in his February 6, 2002 testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

Make no mistake: despite the battles we have won in Afghanistan, we remain a nation at war.

(Tenet, 2002)

Another reason for invasion, Soros suggests, may be that Iraq would provide a secure alternative to Saudi oil. Soros notes that reliance on foreign oil is the single greatest impediment to America's control of its own destiny. Saudi Arabia is becoming unstable and has proven itself a treacherous ally by supporting Islamic extremism. Iraq, however, is strategically located and is second only to Saudi Arabia in its oil reserves. Thus, control of Iraq would move the United States much closer to its goal of geopolitical power in Eurasia (Brzezinski, 1997) and might also help to stabilize Saudi Arabia.

Soros also considers the protection of Israel to be a motivating factor. Many religious fundamentalists in America believe that the rebirth of Israel is a fulfillment of a prophecy presaging the apocalypse and the second coming of Christ. Therefore, Israel

has strong support from the evangelical right, a group that is core to the President's constituency. A powerful military presence in Iraq would help to reassure Israel and weaken Palestinian extremists. However, whatever the case, or combination of cases, for invading Iraq, Americans were deceived.

Continued inspections by the United Nations could have controlled Iraq's weapons and held aggression in check (Blix, 2004), but the Bush administration, Soros notes, was determined to remove Saddam. Even though the invasion was a resounding success, no evidenced of any chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons of mass destruction were found. Although Saddam failed to provide evidence of the destruction of weapons material, Hans Blix, executive chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission, found nothing to justify the invasion of Iraq on the basis of weapons of mass destruction or related programs. Saddam's connection to al Qaeda, another reason given to justify the invasion, also turned out to be false.

In addition, Soros contends, little attention was given by the Bush administration to the aftermath of war on the Iraqi people and subsequent rebuilding of Iraq. Hence, the aftermath has been a dismal failure. Because of this America finds itself in a quagmire that is reminiscent of Vietnam.

Soros notes:

Having invaded Iraq, we cannot extricate ourselves. Domestic pressure for withdrawing is likely to build, just as it did in the Vietnam War, but withdrawing would inflict irreparable damage on our standing in the world. In this respect, Iraq is worse than Vietnam because of our dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

It could have been avoided. Nobody forced us into it; on the contrary, everyone warned us against it. We did not need to do it to fight terrorism or to protect ourselves from weapons of mass destruction. We had succeeded in getting a very strong resolution out of the Security Council, and as long as the inspectors were

on the ground, Saddam Hussein could not do anything that would hurt us. It was our choice to remove him; we set the agenda.

(2004, p. 62)

Few would argue that it was a bad thing to get rid of Saddam, although a great deal of his power and weaponry was conferred upon him decades earlier by the United States as an ally in the conflict with Iran. But the lack of preparation for occupation and rebuilding of both the government and infrastructure has created a staggering expense and left America's soldiers to do police work in the streets in full combat gear, targets to anyone who does not support their presence. America's soldiers are trained to bring military force to bear, not to perform occupation duties (Clark, 2003).

Occupation expenses were estimated at \$160 billion for 2003-2004, but this was a gross understatement. Only \$20 billion of this amount was allotted for reconstruction, but the total cost of reconstruction is estimated at \$60 billion and has grown since. Because of America's previous posture with the United Nations regarding the invasion of Iraq, America is receiving very little help, financial or otherwise, from the rest of the world. The United States is poised to bear the brunt of the expense and effort to rebuild and restore Iraq, that is, if it can hold its ground.

Additionally, Soros maintains that Saddam was only one of many tyrants in the world who need to be removed and questions why so much resource is being expended on Iraq. He notes that what America has done in Iraq has not only failed in solving the problem, it has made the situation worse because Americans are now more reluctant to render humanitarian intervention where it is needed, such as in Liberia. Pacification of the Middle East was the intention of America's presence in Iraq. Unfortunately, the opposite has been achieved and America's ability to extend power elsewhere has been compromised.

In a more recent attempt to justify America's military actions in Iraq the Bush administration has invoked atrocities, many committed by Saddam during the administration of George W. H. Bush without evidencing much, if any, negative response from the President or his staff. Soros states that if America has tolerated Saddam's abuses for so many years, why get excited now? The answer lies in the neoconservative objectives of President George W. Bush's administration. Ironically, the behavior of this administration has made the removal of others such as Saddam Hussein much more difficult.

Soros notes that even though President Bush positioned Iraq as the most important international problem, Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia were seething with latent conflicts. War was still pending between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Robert Mugabe continued to hold power in Zimbabwe and the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi were far from settled. Indonesia was being shaken by terrorists, in Burma a dictator had replaced the democratically elected leader, Pakistan's internal turmoil remained precarious, and there was still troubling rebellion in Aceh.

As stated earlier, North Korea had nuclear and missile capabilities. Iran was getting close to being able to produce nuclear bombs. Japan was also considering going nuclear. The established nuclear powers, in turn, had done nothing to effectively meet their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty while the Bush administration proposed the creation of tactical nuclear weapons and the militarization of space.

The situation was made even bleaker by the reversal of social programs and environmental protection measures in order to support business and military interests. While the United States has become less effective in promoting human rights and an open society, domestic poverty has increased and jobs have been lost. Large tax cuts have been

awarded that greatly favor the rich. The combination of increased military spending and tax cuts resulted in a breathtaking decline in government funds. A surplus of \$236 billion in 2000 has become a deficit of \$375 billion in 2003, and a \$565 billion deficit in 2004 not including the full bill for Iraq. The solvency of the Social Security system is in doubt and the deficit will undoubtedly affect interest rates.

Soros argues that the swing in America's budget matches the swing in its international position. And at no other time has America's position declined as quickly or as dramatically as it has during the administration of George W. Bush.

He notes:

Whatever the flaws in the ideology that has guided the Bush administration, the practical results have been nothing short of disastrous....

The reckless pursuit of American supremacy has put us and the rest of the world in danger.

(2004, p. 74)

What, then, would be a constructive vision of America's place in the world? Soros claims that the United States is at the center of the global capitalist system and is the main driving force behind globalization. The military budget of the United States comes close to equaling the combined budget of all other nations. Not even a combination of nations could rival America from a military perspective. This dominant position imposes a need to consider the wellbeing of the entire world rather than to narrowly pursue the interests of one nation. The United States exerts controlling power over the world order and therefore must provide leadership and active participation to ensure international co-operation.

He points out that common interest should, in general, take precedence over national interest when the concerns of humanity conflict with a nation's goals. The more

the United States prospers the more it needs to concern itself with global wellbeing. Advances in technology have given humanity the power to either make the world better or to self-destruct. It is incumbent upon the United States to lead the effort in finding better ways of protecting common interests.

One problem that must be addressed is a reconciliation of common interest and the notion of sovereignty. As Henry Kissinger (1995) noted, states have interests but no principles. Soros states that the best way to accomplish this reconciliation is to establish a multilateral system in which all nations submit to the same rules and participate in the same arrangements. International public opinion would then protect the common interest. In view of its dominant position Soros proposes that the United States should lead this effort. This would likely better rather than worsen America's international image, but it would require that the United States abide by international rules and conventions. Currently, Soros observes, the Bush administration demonstrates an aversion to multilateral arrangements, believing that international relations are purely ones of power rather than law. And as America is the most powerful nation, multilateral arrangements simply impose unnecessary limits on the America's exercise of its dominant position. Because of this the United States must make radical changes in its attitudes and actions if it is to truly become a respected world leader.

While political and security concerns remain cast within the sovereignty of nations, the economy has become truly global. Increasingly financial markets and transnational corporations dominate national economies, creating a global capitalist system. The key feature of this system is that it allows monetary capital to move freely whereas the movement of people and things remain tightly regulated.

Because of this fluidity, attracting international capital has taken precedence over other social objectives. Most resistance to globalization can be attributed to this problem.

Soros points out that global markets are very similar to a giant circulatory system that pulls capital into financial markets at the center and pumps it to the periphery through credits and investments or through multinational corporations. But this system is subject to breakdowns, affecting the center and the periphery very differently. If a crisis threatens the international financial system it is protected, but at the periphery catastrophic consequences may be suffered.

International trade could be beneficial to all parties if the winners compensate the losers without destroying the surplus. Private enterprise is far more efficient than the state in creating wealth and, while states tend to abuse their power, globalization offers individual freedom that no state could ensure. However, gross national product is not an accurate measure of human welfare. Market fundamentalism recognizes the benefits but ignores the costs of global markets. Markets are believed to move towards equilibrium and to produce the optimum allocation of resources. However, markets are often in crisis rather than in equilibrium and frequently operate with sub-optimum allocation. Markets are designed to promote the free exchange of products and services among willing participants. They are not, on their own, capable of satisfying collective needs or ensuring social justice. Only a political process can meet these objectives.

Soros argues that globalization impairs the ability of the state to provide public good as it interferes with taxation and reduces or eliminates customs duties. As a result, the welfare state cannot be preserved. The full effects of this phenomenon have yet to be fully felt. The burden of taxation is now on the consumer rather than the owner of capi-



tal, on the poor and middle class rather than the rich. This was not the promise of the market fundamentalists, but it was the intention. Collective needs and social justice now suffer in a lopsided system designed primarily to produce and exchange private goods. The development of international institutions aimed at collective benefit has not kept pace with international market development. So far, globalization has shunned the provision of public goods in favor of the pursuit of profit and the accumulation of wealth. As such, there is a growing inequality, within and among countries, between rich and poor.

This does not have to be the case. The increased wealth produced by globalization could be used to repair the inequities with extra left over. Unfortunately, the winners have yet to compensate the losers. In 2002 total international assistance amounted to only 0.18 percent of global GDP (*Human development report 2003: Millennium development goals: A pact among nations to end human poverty*, 2003; *Selected world aggregates, annual data*, 2003). The poorest 57 percent of the world do not make as much as the richest 1 percent, and the gap continues to increase. Roughly 1.2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day and 2.8 billion on less than two dollars a day. Over a billion people lack clean water (*Human development report 2002: Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*, 2002) and 827 million suffer from malnutrition.

In addition, countries positioned centrally to the global capitalist system enjoy many advantages over those on the periphery. This makes countries at the center more stable as well as wealthier. This divergence between the winners and losers in the global market is getting wider and wider. Breakdowns are now more common than progress and some countries seem to be forming an underclass in the global capitalists system (Collier et al., 2003), and our current international institutions seem inadequate to pre-

venting the civil strife and removing the recalcitrant dictators than perpetuate the trap in which these countries are caught. While the world continues to become more interdependent, political arrangements are still based on the sovereignty of states. This sovereignty stands in the way of international assistance but the invasion of Iraq was the wrong way to solve the problem. With this in mind, Soros offers some suggestions.

Soros shows that the idea of sovereignty was born in an era of rulers and subjects. With the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 it became a cornerstone of international relations. After the French revolution the concept of sovereignty by royalty was superseded by sovereignty by national government and remains the basis of world order to this day. The economy is globalized, but national sovereignty wields the political power. Therefore, how does a national community, when necessary, intervene in the affairs of sovereign states in order to ensure the common interest?

He suggests that offering help is not interference because the sovereign state can either take it or leave it. But foreign aid is only part of the answer. The principle of sovereignty itself must be reconsidered. Outside interference is justified if the abuses of power are egregious and people are prevented from correcting them. International intervention is often the only salvation available for the oppressed. If sovereignty were defined as belonging to the people, international assessment and intervention could protect their rights.

Soros also argues that globalization must be transformed as it impairs the ability of the state to provide public good because the burden of taxation is now on the consumer rather than the owner of capital, on the poor and middle class rather than the rich.

In addition Soros asserts that conflict prevention cannot start too early. The earlier the intervention, the less cost and bloodshed. However, early crisis prevention does not make the headlines nor does it currently warrant government attention. It is only when a gruesome scene is depicted on television that there is a public outcry, an outcry that is too often after the fact. Another problem lies in the fact that the public is becoming less responsive as the number of crises multiplies and people become more insensitive.

He postulates that the best form of prevention is to reduce the potential for crisis through systemic reform. As Jeffrey Sachs notes, the two major sources of poverty and misery are bad location and bad government (Sachs, 2003). Not much can be done about location, but much can be done regarding government. The ultimate key, according to Soros, is the development of open societies throughout the world.

The Warsaw Declaration, signed in 2000 by 107 states and sponsored by Madeleine Albright's State Department, was the first document to proclaim that it is in the interest of all democratic countries to foster the development of democracy in every other country. This declaration also establishes a valid basis for intervention both for the security and wellbeing of people within a state, and for the security and wellbeing of other nations. Soros asserts that the world has become increasingly interdependent. Failed states; repressive, corrupt or inept regimes, and internal conflicts now pose a threat to other nations. What goes on within individual nations can impinge on the security of the rest of the world. Therefore, it is in the interest of the world to foster democratic and open societies.

However, terrorism is a weak justification and should not be the sole reason for addressing the ills of the world. Economic development and the fostering of open societies are worthy on their own merit. Social justice, preservation of the peace, and protection of the environment have suffered because America and the global capitalist system have relied too heavily on the market system. In the future, intervention must serve the common interest in a world of sovereign states.

Unfortunately, the advocates of American supremacy are averse to the existing avenues for collective intervention, such as the United Nations Security Council, as they give other members equal rights. However, unilateral action unsanctioned by international public opinion is both unjustified and endangers our national security by fostering resentment and turning the rest of the world against us. The Community of Democracies established by the Warsaw Declaration could offer legitimacy for intervention, especially if the intervention is constructive and focuses on common objectives. As a bloc within the United Nations the Community of Democracies could make the UN more effective in influencing the behavior of other nations. Repressive regimes would be excluded from participation in making decisions and failed states could seek protection. However, this will be difficult unless there is both a change of heart and president in the United States.

This alternative in foreign policy would also differ in that it would radically reorder America's priorities. Preventive actions would be constructive, requiring far less money for military expenditures and leaving room for greater domestic spending within a balanced budget. Foreign aid would be accompanied by social benefits at home, and these constructive actions would help to change America's international image. For example, the \$8.75 billion annual cost for the participation of the United States in the

United Nations Millennium Development Goals would cost just one tenth of the 2003 supplemental budget for Iraq.

Soros notes that intervention and development ought to be focused on countries that are caught in a variety of traps and curses. For example, he points out that countries rich in natural resources are often cursed because they are just as poor as nations with fewer natural resources but have less democratic and more corrupt governments, making natural resources a potential curse. Many of the nations with an abundance of natural resources have repressive and authoritarian rulers and many armed conflicts occur over the control of these resources (Collier & Bannon, 2003; Collier et al., 2003). While the natural resources of a country should belong to the people, rulers often exploit these resources for their own profit. Most of the less-developed countries have their oil and minerals extracted by foreign companies. These companies only seek concessions and care nothing for the sovereignty of the people. The rulers of these nations provide the concessions for foreign companies and derive their power and wealth from the natural resources they control rather than from the people they rule. Therefore, the companies and governments of the developed nations tend to support the rulers, not the people, making it difficult if not impossible to develop democracy. Corruption, excessive dependence on natural resources, poor economic policy, financial crisis, ethnic divisions, and continued interference from foreign powers trap countries that are rich in natural resources in a continuing cycle of poverty and misery. These self-reinforcing processes contradict a major tenet of market fundamentalism, that is, the assertion that the pursuit of self-interest leads to equilibrium and optimal allocation of resources. Even if aggregate improvement is achieved, it is at the cost of greater disparity between rich and poor, free and oppressed.

To help countries escape from these curses and traps should be the primary focus of developmental policies.

Soros contends that the role of the United States in improving the world order is realistic. Historically the United States has been committed to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and comes closer to basing its foreign policy on guiding principles than do most other countries (Kissinger, 1995). America fought for democracy and human rights in World War II and was seen as a bastion of freedom and democracy. (The same kind of enlightened self-interest as was expressed by the Marshall Plan would help to rekindle the light that was America after the war.) Later the Cold War with the Soviet Union was characterized by a struggle between open and closed societies as well as between capitalism and Communism. Within the United States there was also a conflict between the concepts of an open society and capitalism. Whereas an open society is identified by universal principles equally applied, capitalism is based solely on the pursuit of self-interest. The distinction was clarified in the human rights movement during the Cold War. Capitalist neoconservatives criticized the Soviet Union because America was right and the Soviet Union was wrong. The liberals treated human rights as universal and criticized the United States as well as the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the distinction became even more important. The market economy was introduced by the capitalists without any consideration for nation building, while an open society would have required something similar to the Marshall Plan.

During the Cold War the United States had the luxury of being both a superpower and the leader of the free world. After the demise of the Soviet empire, it was not clear what the free world stood for: open society or capitalism. The fall of the Soviet empire in

1989 and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 created an historic opportunity to create an open society out of the ashes of an extremely closed one. In December of 1988, when Mikhail Gorbachev outlined his new view of a cooperative world order to the United Nations he was rudely dismissed. The United States continued to ask for concessions, and when these concessions were met, continued to ask for more. By the time it was clear that there was a true regime change, the United States government concluded that it was too late to offer assistance. The Russians were treated as beggars and were summarily refused.

However, the fall of the Soviet Union found America unprepared to choose between being a superpower or leader of the free world, and the conditions that once made the two roles inseparable were no more. Other countries became much less willing to submit to a superpower and the justification for Western unity under American leadership was lost. International institutions became much more multilateral and eventually were treated with disdain by the United States.

According to Soros, for the United States to regain its Cold War identity it must lead a community of democracies by building genuine partnerships and abiding by the rules it seeks to impose. However, this vision is at odds with the social Darwinism ideology of the Bush administration. Whereas the Bush doctrine was well suited to the Cold War, the new identity of America must be built on different premises. The validity of free enterprise was not proven by the failure of central planning. Rather, Soros believes that the flawed nature of all constructs contributed to the fall of Communism. Radical fallibility postulates that even scientific knowledge does not qualify as the ultimate truth (Kuhn, 1970; K. Popper, 2002). According to this view all notions about reality are ac-

cepted as provisional because no amount of corroborating evidence can completely rule out the possibility that contradictory evidence will surface in the future. Therefore, there is an asymmetry of verification and falsification that keeps the ultimate truth beyond reach. All people are wrong in some way or another and even a relatively valid idea can be mistakenly extended to areas in which it no longer applies. However, Soros states that deficiencies in one model, such as Communism, may be cured by taking some element from another, such as free enterprise. In this sense it is more appropriate to attribute Western victory to the fact that it remained an open society while the Soviet Union remained closed, except at the very last. Communism failed primarily because free enterprise was pursued in a less dogmatic and extreme way. However, market fundamentalism in the United States has now undermined the mentality of the New Deal, the United Nations, and the Marshall plan. According to Soros this leaves America in need of a way that avoids the excesses of both socialism and free enterprise capitalism, though market fundamentalism is certainly not this third way. The notion of introducing democracy through muscular military intervention is unrealistic and is certainly less desirable than creating democracy through cooperation and constructive actions. The United States has lost the moral high ground for advocating a better world and universal human rights. Regaining this high ground will require adopting a more benevolent role and the ousting of President Bush in 2004.

Currently, Soros suggests, America is overly preoccupied with national security in the sense that international security and cooperation should be the focus. Not that national security should take a back seat, but a broad definition of collective security would provide the kind of constructive and affirmative action proposed earlier. America has



provided this kind of leadership in the past and the world is angry because America is not providing it now.

To replace rampant unilateralism with an uncritical multilateralism would be a mistake. But to take a leadership rather than a dominant role in world affairs is clearly superior. After the fall of Communism and the terrorist attacks of September 11 the threats that confront our security have a very different character. Soros states:

We are not threatened by the conventional weapons of any state or combination of states. We enjoy an unquestioned superiority as the sole surviving superpower, and we could maintain that superiority with much less expenditure than we currently devote to it. At present we spend almost as much on defense as do all other countries in the world combined. We are way ahead of them in technology. Naturally they try to catch up with us the best they can, so we keep on pushing ahead on technology in order to maintain our superiority. This is an arms race between unequals that could be slowed down by international agreement. The agreement could be rigorously monitored, and the race could be resumed if there were any indications of cheating. We are in a position to dictate the terms that would satisfy us. We are prevented from doing so only by our own attitude: Nothing would satisfy us, because under the influence of extremists, we are opposed to the process.

(Soros, 2004) p. 175

Soros notes that American supremacy, while certainly a present phenomenon, may not persist as it is reaching a far-from-equilibrium state. As a metaphor Soros compares America's current situation with a bubble in a boom-bust market cycle. He notes that it is important to understand that these bubbles do not happen randomly. They have a solid basis in reality but a reality that is distorted by misconception. He explains that this misconception is a result of the discrepancy between what people think is going on and the actual state of affairs. Typically a self-correcting process bounds this discrepancy. This process occurs when people notice that outcomes fail to meet their expectation and therefore adjust their expectations accordingly. Soros calls these occurrences near-equilibrium phenomena. However, when a real trend is reinforced by a bias

or misconception a boom-bust process occurs in which both the prevailing interpretation of reality and reality itself are pushed into a far-from-equilibrium state. When the gap between reality and its false interpretation becomes unsustainable the bubble will eventually burst. This phenomenon was most recently illustrated in the technology bubble of the 1990's (Shiller, 2000). Exactly when the bubble enters a far-from-equilibrium state is difficult to predict. When the phenomenon is self-reinforcing participants are overly influenced by the prevailing bias and are blind to the discrepancies between their beliefs and reality. However, a boom-bust process can be halted at any time and the negative effects either avoided or reduced.

Soros argues that American supremacy qualifies as one of these bubbles. The United States does occupy a dominant role, but a crude form of social Darwinism is the misinterpretation of this reality. This distortion of reality became evident only when the ideologues of the Bush presidency began their pursuit of supremacy by military means. Until then the self-correcting process had kept things within bounds and the pursuit of self-interest was not carried too far. However, the terrorist attack of September 11 allowed the advocates of supremacy to hold sway with the nation, and the invasion of Iraq created a far-from-equilibrium state. Before World War II the American nexus of the military-industrial complex was kept in check by restricting the buildup of armed forces. After World War II and during the Cold War the buildup was accelerated, causing President Eisenhower to warn the nation in his farewell address. Currently, the neoconservatives in power, many of whom are associated with defense contractors and oil industries, are advocating even greater military spending and high-tech weapons development. Prior to September 11 the neoconservative agenda was held within bounds.

However, since that time it was not so much the terrorist attacks that created an abnormal disequilibrium but the administration's response to them. By linking the terrorist attacks with weapons of mass destruction President Bush gained a mandate for invading Iraq. Subsequently the occupation of Iraq provided self-reinforcing targets for terrorism. In this sense, the invasion of Iraq was an unexpected gift for the terrorists. The master plan of the neoconservatives, while initially self-reinforcing after September 11, will be eventually self-defeating because it is built on a misinterpretation of reality. In the same sense that al Qaida's master plan of preserving Islamic purity through terrorism was absurd, so was the masterplan to pursue American supremacy through military power.

Historically, once market fundamentalism aligned with religious fundamentalism it captured the Republican Party. Social Darwinism was then reinforced with the success of globalization and the fall of Communism. However, only with the election of George W. Bush did the pragmatism of the geopolitical realists yield to the revolutionary zeal of supremacy, and only after September 11 did the supremacists gain ultimate power. Ideology is now disproportionately large in its influence on government policy, and is accompanied by an abnormally wide discrepancy between perceptions and the real state of affairs. In a typical bubble participants do not see the absurdity of their convictions because reality seems to confirm their perceptions, at least in the early states. However, there is eventually a moment of truth followed by a reversal that becomes self-reinforcing in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, as is the case of American supremacy, when critical thinking is suspended or suppressed the discrepancy between reality and its interpretation can become unbounded. Soros maintains that America is at a bifurcation point where either a functional or a disastrous outcome will be decided by a

presidential election. The gap between the dream of American supremacy and the actual state of affairs could not be wider. Therefore, the Iraqi quagmire should provide the moment of truth needed to uncloud the perceptions of the American people. However, according to Soros America has boved too deeply into a far-from-equilibrium state to simply return to the status quo. Therefore, a positive vision of American leadership aligned with the previously stated objectives of cooperation and constructive policies, and a blanket rejection of the president, would provide the best alternative to the path the United States is following. If this were to happen the pursuit of American supremacy would be viewed as a dangerous but correctible aberration, and America could again operate as an open society that learns from its mistakes.

### *America as a Good, Decent, and Just World Citizen, Part 2*

Garrison (2004) takes a position that is both complementary to and slightly divergent from Soros. Garrison asserts that the United States is the sole superpower and has arrived at its position of supremacy and empire as a result of the last 200 years of political and economic maneuvering. He states that it would be impossible to resign from this position, but that America must position itself as a leader with the aspiration of making the United States both a final and transitional empire. In order to truly address terrorism the United States must focus on the causes of terrorism rather than a dubious war against it. He also strongly criticizes the Bush administration for entirely missing this point:

Tragically, the Bush administration does not appear to have made this connection. It seems content to pour billions of dollars into a desperate fight against the terrorist threat, emphasizing military responses, counterterrorism alliances, and heightened national security precautions. Nowhere in either rhetoric or policy is there any indication that the administration understands the complexities out of which terrorism arises or that addressing simple human needs is the most effective

way to induce people to forego violence. The Bush administration, so deeply influenced by the neoconservative and the evangelical Christian worldviews, obsesses over fighting fire with fire while ignoring completely the buckets of water that could actually put out the flames. It is consumed by a Jacksonian impulse for war and vengeance.

The single most important step the American people must take to provide creative leadership in the world is to stop using 9/11 as an excuse for further retributive action. Especially after the invasion of Iraq, the United States must declare that it has had its time of vengeance and that it is not time to move on. The battle against terrorism should no longer be the central pillar and exclusive focus of U.S. government policy. It is time for constructive politics and healing, not more 'regime change' in nations the United States does not like.

(Garrison, 2004, pp. 164, 165)

Garrison asserts that leadership during periods of turbulence, such as the United States is now experiencing, is extremely challenging. What people hold as secure, but is insufficient, must be abandoned while that which is sufficient, but seems insecure, must be embraced. Leadership can only accomplish this task through a vision of the future that inspires hope and emboldens people to take a leap of faith. Therefore, the United States must provide a vision of greatness for the twenty-first century that is not merely an excuse for exercising military power abroad or repressing democracy at home. What is needed is a combination of vision and practical tactics that will lift the world to a new order. A transition must be made from a disjointed amalgamation of nation-states to an integrated global system through a new sense of community and democracy.

In the spirit of presidents Wilson, Roosevelt, and Truman the United States should use its military strength, economic power, and democratic idealism to provide global leadership. This includes addressing failed and failing states and the need to solve international threats through new cooperative efforts. Effective global governance must be established within the context of network democracy and the common good. In addition, the United States must accept the temporary mantle of providing for global security.

It is the only nation with the resources to do so, and it is the most fundamental requirement of empire. America must lead the world in the spirit of a truly transitional empire to enforce a political agenda that will create the next generation of international norms and global institutions needed for world security.

Unfortunately, the United States has broken the laws and procedures that undergird the community of nations. In seeking security for America, the Bush administration eroded common security. It acted in defiance of other nations and it will take demanding and thoughtful effort to repair the damage. Even in the face of the endemic crisis in international order the United States is still unprepared to use its military on behalf of the common good and is not likely to be impeded by the community of nations when it chooses to exercise its military will. The neoconservative vision of policing the world is fraught with danger at every turn. Using coalitions of the willing to replace the community of nations sets in motion an inherently unstable equilibrium. In addition, the United States military is trained for war against aggressive nations, not for effectively dealing with nations that are disintegrating from within, which constitute the real security crisis. This underlines America's weakness in dealing with the roots of terrorism. According to Garrison the American military forces around the globe must become as much peacekeepers as warriors, as much nation builders as destroyers. This challenges the current Pentagon policy of precluding troops from peacekeeping.

However, roughly one-third of all nations in which the United States exercises military dominion are considered to be underperforming. The deleterious effects of globalization, the neoliberal policies of international financial institutions, and population growth are all contributing to this euphemistic underperformance. These failing states

inevitably threaten their neighbors through the migration of displaced peoples. To address the security crises that arise from failing states through military means would tax the United States beyond its capacity. Under a military scenario the best America could offer failed or failing states would be the legacy of Afghanistan, a quick victory in war followed by a confusing and bloody peace. During the 2002 and 2003 occupation of Afghanistan the United States spent approximately \$1 billion a month on military operations and only \$25 million a month in aid for reconstruction. As a result, Afghanistan is falling back into the influence of the warlords and many humanitarian agencies had to close their Afghan operations due to civil violence. America's ostensible purpose for the war, the defeat of al Qaeda, appears to have been forgotten as the Taliban and al Qaeda are still operating in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The United States did not reconstruct Afghanistan because its mission was solely a military defeat of the terrorists. Without a larger vision, the neoconservative element simply lost interest and moved on to Iraq. The reconstruction and relief efforts, including the cost, in Afghanistan were left to the Europeans and the United Nations.

This scenario is not unique. In the last five years the Europeans and the United Nations, with meager support from the United States, have engaged in nation building in Cambodia, Bosnia, East Timur, and Kosovo. The United States is operating in Iraq with limited support from Europe and the United Nations in its nation building efforts largely because America invaded Iraq largely without the consent or approval of the international community. The cost of reconstruction in Iraq is \$4 billion per month and constitutes a serious economic challenge for the United States. In addition, Iraq continues to experi-

ence guerilla subversion and economic instability, at the cost of more American lives after the war with Iraq than before.

Garrison argues that without a larger vision, the international community will limp from one crisis to another without resources and, especially without the direction of American leadership. Simply put, this ad hoc stumbling must be remedied. Sebastian Mallaby (2002) suggest a new institution for reconstruction designed with the models of the World Bank and IMF in mind, creating a hybrid organization that embodies American leadership with a multinational constituency. Even though the IMF and World Bank have had mixed success, this type of organization would be staffed by an international group of professionals that would be far less driven by national patronage and also would be much more flexible in a changing world. This institution could be established outside the direct jurisdiction of the United Nations, thus being spared certain constraints of the U.N. Security Council and the rigidities of the one-country/one-vote system. Its mandate would be the assembly of a nation-building institution with the resource, expertise, and political clout to be deployed however and whenever it was needed.

Mallaby (2002) notes:

Summoning such leadership is immensely difficult, but America and its allies have no easy options in confronting failed states. They cannot wish away the problem that chaotic power vacuums can pose. They cannot fix it with international institutions as they currently exist. And they cannot sensibly wish for a unilateral American imperium. They must either mold the international machinery to address the problems of their times, as their predecessors did in creating the U.N., the World Bank and the IMF after World War II. Or they can muddle along until some future collection of leaders rises to the challenge.

p. 7

Marie Slaughter (2003) also suggests that if another tyrant such as Saddam Hussein should emerge that, rather than marginalizing the U.N. and riding off like a sheriff with a posse of the willing, America should provide leadership in convincing the Security



Council to reexamine its definition of international security that requires the use of force. Linking the human rights side and the security side of the U.N. a new set of at least three criteria should be developed: possession of weapons of mass destruction, grave and systematic violations of human rights, and evidence of aggressive intent with neighboring nations. When these criteria were all present the Security Council could consider remedial use of force that would supersede national sovereignty.

Garrison concurs stating that humanitarian disasters, mass killings, weapons of mass destruction, and economic dislocation are endemic problems that will destabilize the world if not dealt with effectively. However, the United States is unable to deal with all of these issues on its own through military intervention. There must be international cooperation with criteria established for the United States to legitimately and in concert with the community of nations. The right to intervene must be redefined and the responsibility to protect. The international community must take up this task when individual sovereign states do not. However, military intervention should be the last resort and only when civilians are facing massive loss of life. It should also occur only when it is based on a motive to halt or avert human suffering with proportional means and a reasonable prospect for success.

Military intervention must be seen within a context of the changing nature of violence and politics, as well as a growing body of international laws and procedures in which it must act. Also, Schell (2003) notes that military power simply does not have the utility it used to. He cites, as a salient example, that peaceful resistance to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe was far more effective than the threat of the atomic bomb. The United States is now operating in a world system with two superpowers: the United

States and world opinion. In the future the international society may provide the balance to military intervention that was previously provided by competing imperial powers. Because of this the United States must focus its efforts on the creation of a civil society rather than intimidation through military force. It must support democracy rather than corrupt regimes that bow to its interests, and it must work within a multilateral framework rather than exercising disregard for the rest of the world. Simply put, cooperation will need to be the watchword.

Garrison contends that this notion must apply in the economic as well as the military sphere. America's corporate dominance is even more pervasive than that of its military. Forty-seven of the world's 100 largest economies are American corporations. America has continued to create free markets and trade zones in as much of the world as possible in order to fill the coffers of its corporations. However, in the future American economic power will need to position free market economics within a larger frame of social equity. Unregulated markets may lead to extraordinary wealth, but they also lead to inordinate social inequities and environmental devastation. Markets, therefore, must become moral, an ingredient that is missing in both the WTO regulations and U.S. economic policy. A better balance between competition and cooperation will help to close the gap between global capitalism and the truly open society. The precedent within the nation was established by Adam Smith, David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill, who all believed that governance in society should strive for the greatest good for the greatest number. This must now apply internationally as well. Currently, however, the relationship between the generation of wealth and the common good has been broken. Full rights have been provided to corporations while only limited rights

have been given to the consumer. Reestablishing and improving the relationship between wealth and the common good will mean radical reformation for the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund as well as many multinational agencies. Trade must not be given primacy over every other issue. The International Labor Organization should be given equal status, as well as a Global Environmental Organization for the coordination of environmental issues. This restructuring would create checks and balances so that trade, investments, and currency flow are regulated within the larger context of abiding concern for the environment and the welfare of the people.

Both Garrison and Soros agree that the leadership for all of these initiatives must come from the United States.

Soros notes:

The initiative has to come from the United States. It requires a profound change of attitude, a veritable change of heart. Such a radical change is not possible in normal times, but these are not normal times. We have become aware how precarious our civilization is. It does not make sense to devote all our energies to improving our relative position in a social system when the system itself is drifting toward disaster. The United States is the only country in the world that is in a position to initiate a change in the world order, to replace the Washington consensus with a global open society. To do so we must abandon the unthinking pursuit of narrow self-interest and give some thought to the future of humanity.

(2002, p. 165)

Garrison points out that giving primacy to trade is easy but creating social equity is complex, making a radically new form of governance essential if global economic reform is to be achieved. Therefore, democracy must be redefined at the global level through network governance. World governance is not the answer and would only provide yet another level of bureaucracy. Integrated world governance, not government, would tap into the emerging power of networks. Global networks would bring private

sector creativity, intelligence, and capacities to assist governments in making the nation-states more effective. Sovereignty would increasingly rest with networks as well as with nations.

According to Rischard (2002) there would be three stages to the formation of these networks. The first would be a constitutional phase in which networks of governments, international institutions, relevant business firms, and expert civil groups would be convened. The next stage would be a norm-producing phase dealing with knowledge aggregation. In this phase the problem would be identified and solutions would be evaluated through deliberative polling. The third stage would be an implementation phase where the network would use moral persuasion and publicity to get countries to enact the prescribed solutions.

(This model is advocated by Garrison and does a fair job of identifying three of the stages of team development on a very large scale. However, a crucial stage, that in which conflict among the various constituencies must be addressed and resolved, is blatantly absent and may represent the weakest link in Garrison's conceptual model. There is much precedent, though, for utilizing nominal grouping techniques to alleviate this problem, especially in light of new communication technologies.)

Garrison asserts that if the United States would give sanction to global issue networks they would have the benefit of legitimacy, diversity, and speed, building on current institutions and governmental bodies and in keeping with America's history of being a radical experiment. This means more than merely sending national representatives to intergovernmental meetings to deliberate. It means, instead, a deliberative democracy (Bohman & Rehg, 1999; Elster & Przeworski, 1998) in which communities of interest

come together to engage in establishing the rules in by which they must abide. Network governance reinvents democracy by extending to global concerns the spirit of town hall meetings.

Garrison challenges America:

Imagine the transposition of values and international respect the United States would experience if instead of fighting the world on global warming, it would ratify the Kyoto protocols, create a global issue network of interested governments, NGOs, and corporations on how most effectively to reduce greenhouse emissions, and then lead the campaign to legitimate this cross-sectoral process.

Imagine if instead of mocking the attempts of international institutions to fight poverty, the U.S. would actually lead an international effort of the wealthiest governments, multilateral institutions, corporations, foundations, and NGOs to guarantee the \$50 billion a year during the next twenty years that the World Bank and IMF consider necessary to virtually eliminate poverty and provide clean water, health care, and decent jobs for people in the developing world. Another coalition could be put in place to design the ways that could really deal with alleviating persistent poverty.

Imagine if instead of denigrating and withdrawing from the treaties and protocols seeking to reduce the threat of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, small arms and landmines, the United States would lead the international community in reducing stockpiles and stemming proliferation, starting with its own, and initiate a global issue network on innovative ways to ensure global security....

(2004, p. 199)

The world is weary of conflict and is ready for inspirational leadership and action.

If America would use its military to protect the world, champion the free market while focusing on the common good, build cooperative structures and use its sovereignty to pioneer network democracy on a global scale it could be both the greatest and the final empire. Garrison asserts that it now falls upon America to think consciously, to eschew the darkness, to become homo noeticus: a new species of humanity that uses its intuition to lead its intelligence, with a heart filled with light.

### *Thematic Summary*

Following are the themes and ideas common to most of the previous examples of a good, decent, just, and free society:

- By definition the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most broadly accepted articulation of basic human rights and should be followed.
- Everyone should have an equal right to basic liberties.
- Appropriate honor and punishment should be accorded to those who deserve it.
- Inequalities should benefit the least advantaged.
- There should be no physical cruelty or slavery.
- Institutions should not humiliate people or violate their basic human rights.
- No institution should humiliate through rejection, treating people as non-human, or removal of fundamental control.
- No institution should violate civic honor through assigning people second-class status or withholding representation.
- Failure in a society should not be automatically assigned to poverty or to moral deficiency.
- People should be treated with basic human dignity and respect.
- All people should be protected by and stand equal under the rule of law.
- All people should be treated as those who are born free and equal in dignity and rights without distinction of race, gender, language, religion, political persuasion, national origin, property, birth or other status.
- All people should have the right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- No one should be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.

- Everyone should be entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against them.
- Everyone charged with an offense should be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- No one should be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his or her honor and reputation.
- Everyone should have the protection of the law against such interference or attacks .
- Everyone should have the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- No one should be arbitrarily deprived of his or her property.
- Everyone should have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and, in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
- Everyone should have the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media.
- Everyone should have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association
- Everyone should have the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- The will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government; this will should be expressed in periodic and genuine elections that shall be by universal

and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

- Everyone, as a member of society, should have the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each nation, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.
- Everyone should have the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Self-worth and self-respect should be available through relevant and meaningful occupation.
- Everyone, without any discrimination, should have the right to equal pay for equal work.
- Everyone who works should have the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- Everyone should have the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
- Everyone should have the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself or herself and of his or her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his or her control.



- The government should maintain law and order, define property rights, adjudicate disputes, engaged in activities to counter technical monopolies and to overcome neighborhood effects widely regarded as sufficiently important to justify government intervention, and supplement private charity and the private family in protecting the poor, aged, or ill through rates of subsidy that are graduated to produce a floor below which no one's net income could fall.
- Everyone should have the right to an adequate education that provides the appropriate skills for success.
- Education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and should further the activities of peace.
- Everyone should have the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- Everyone should be entitled to a social and international order in which their rights and freedoms can be fully realized.
- Everyone should have duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- Individuals should be able to make the most of their talents, capabilities, and opportunities as long as they do not interfere with the freedom of others to do the same.

- In the exercise of his or her rights and freedoms, everyone should be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- No person, group, or nation should have the right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of these rights and freedoms.
- The concentration of power achieved through combining political power with economic power should be avoided.
- Individual freedom should be maintained within widespread interdependence through voluntary cooperation versus coercion.
- Each person should have an equal right to freedom, that is, equality of rights and equality of opportunity.
- The responsibility for economic and social wellbeing should be transnational. Concern for the suffering and deprivation of other people should not diminish because the afflicted live in another part of the world. Poverty is one of a variety of things that the good society should not accept.
- The good and intelligent society should not subordinate its social policy and actions to an ideology or doctrine. Decisions should be made on the social and economic merits of the specific case. Society should be open and introspective without a supremacist ideology.
- Every member of the society should have access to a rewarding life. In order for this to occur there must be economic opportunity for all, and the young must have

the physical care, the discipline, and education that will allow them to seize the opportunity. If these things are not available from one's family, society must provide them. Opportunity can match aspiration only when the society works well for everyone.

- The good and affluent society should not leave anyone without income and vulnerable to untreated illness, homelessness, or starvation. Also, ample and secure retirement income should be provided for the old. The medically or mentally infirm or incapable should be cared for, and those between jobs must be given some form of assistance. Basic support for all so situated must be accepted and there should be nothing derogatory or stigmatizing about being dependent. Employment must be provided for all and those who choose not to work must be accepted. However, there are some sources of income that are socially indefensible or intrinsically damaging to the economy. These should not be allowed by the good society. A good society should distinguish between the accumulation of wealth that is contributive, or at least benign, and that which harms society.
- Society should live in peace and mutually rewarding association with its global trading partners. World peace and cooperation among nations should be an important objective and effective recognition and support must be given to less fortunate members of the global community.
- There should be generous compensation for unemployment and a general indexation of fixed and contractual income. This includes pensions, wages of teachers and civil servants, and the minimum wage.

- Society should bring the autonomy of the military under effective democratic control. Extreme expenditure on the military, excluding the military personnel themselves, and other programs to advance political agendas yield no discernable benefit for future generations, may impose an untenable deficit, and should be avoided – with monies funneled into more productive avenues such as education and the elimination of poverty and disease.
- Society should not seek absolute equality of income. The good society must accept people as they are, and people are motivated differently with respect to income. However, society should remediate the damaging effects of market-imposed inequality. The first action should be support for the poor. Second, there is a need to better deal with the foibles of the financial world such as insider trading, propagation of false information, hostile takeovers, speculative insanity, and other deviant investment behavior. Third, there is the need for critical analysis by stockholders and an informed public regarding the personal income maximization of corporate management.
- Society should empower and protect the powerless. The good society will also promote the right of workers to join together and assert a countervailing authority. For many, however, organization of workers is not practical, as in the widely dispersed service industries. Therefore, health insurance, employment compensation, and a livable minimum wage is required in the good society.
- The good society should endow a larger political and social role to education than the service of economics. Education provides the means for escape from the less-favored economic strata and has a vital role in maintaining social peace and tran-

quility. Social decency and political stability require that there be an effective path for upward mobility. Whereas democracy may be considered a basic human right, it is also the natural consequence of education and economic development.

- Society should support the long-term protection of the planet, protection of the worker (this includes health insurance, protection from and compensation for work-related injury or health damage, and income protection), protection of the vulnerable from the economic machine, technically deficient or physically damaging goods or services, and the self-destructive tendencies of the system. The first rule of protection would be to require honesty with investors, consumers, and the public at large. The second rule of protection would be to search out any self-serving interest as the motivating factor in the institution or removal of regulation.
- Society should supply the required goods and services that people need while also ensuring that these do not have an adverse effect on the public or on the lives and wellbeing of future generations.
- Nations should coordinate their social and economic policies. The economic and social responsibilities of nation-states are in transition, with the ultimate goal a transnational authority with subsidiary powers. The good society must support the larger international forces to which the nation-state is subject.
- The good society must have concern for the world as a whole.
- The good society should begin with generosity. It should provide financial help based on a concern for fellow human beings, not on self-interest. Educational assistance must be primary in countries where there is internal peace and a sufficiently functioning government. However, the breakdown of law and order

is predictable in poor countries. Therefore, a good society will rescue and protect distressed and endangered populations. This intervention must be internationally sanctioned and under international control. The poverty of nations instigates and nurtures internal and external conflict. Therefore, international peace can be promoted through the creation of economic and social wellbeing in all countries.

- The prime essential for achieving the good society is a genuine and inclusive society that supports and promotes a political voice for and political activity by all members of the society. This is especially true regarding voter participation among the poor and disenfranchised.
- Society should promote the social contract. The middle class and poor should benefit in the same manner as the wealthy. Everyone should be able to grow and do better together.
- When companies do better their employees and community should also.
- Working people should be paid enough to support themselves and their families.
- Everyone should have an opportunity to fully develop his or her talents through publicly supported education.
- Everyone should be in it together (economic and social success).
- Appropriate and sufficient health care should be available to all who need it, whether or not they can afford it.
- Minimum wage should be raised to half the median wage, then indexed to inflation.
- Capital should be redistributed and savings encouraged.
- The burden of taxation should be equitable.

- Paid leave should be given to employees who must take some time off to care for a child or elderly relative.
- Affordable child and elder care should be provided.
- The minimum wage should be automatically raised when inflation reduces the value of the dollar.
- The Earned Income Tax Credit should be expanded.
- Unemployment insurance should be provided to anyone who loses a job, regardless of how long that job was held.
- Pension coverage should be expanded to include part-time and in-and-out employees.
- Employees should only have to invest a small fraction of their savings in the company they work for and should be able to sell their stock whenever they wish.
- National security should be recognized as more than a matter of building more and better weapons. Real security starts with the strength of America's society. Future security depends on the bonds America creates and sustains today. America must be bound by practical principles regarding what we owe and expect from one another as members of American society.
- Appropriate and sufficient education, childcare, health care, and public transportation should be seen as rights.
- The welfare of the environment should be held as imperative in any government or business action.
- Companies and workers should be bound in sense of equality, trust, and loyalty that is facilitated by an explicit social contract. Employees should commit them-

selves to the objectives of the company and management should treat employees with due caring and respect. Salaries at the top should not be grossly inflated and companies should have strong ties to the community and play a role in civic affairs. Management should also maintain an equitable and fair workplace that balanced the needs of all individuals and groups.

- Anyone who plays by the rules should be able to get ahead.
- Anyone who breaks the rules should suffer the same penalties.
- Everyone should have some say in how the rules get made.
- Everyone should be living in the same moral community, striving together to build a society that confers respect on people based on a wide variety of accomplishments.
- Successful or wealthy people should not be fawned over regardless of their ethical behavior or abuse of power.
- Work should pay. The social contract dictates that everyone who can work should work and have a chance to improve their lot. To support this principle a living wage must be established, with an increase in the minimum wage indexed to inflation. Increased support for tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit would also help those on the bottom to get ahead while government investment in transportation, scientific research, and energy efficiency could lay the groundwork for future prosperity.
- Access to higher education should be expanded. A new system of universal higher education would help people in any station in life to improve their circumstances.



- People should be helped to build wealth and personal assets. Far too many families don't make enough money to save for the future and don't have enough financial reserve to keep them afloat if they become ill or lose their jobs. Leveraging government money with Individual Development Accounts would encourage poorer people to save. Birth endowments that give every child a nest egg that later can be translated into real assets, special housing programs, and micro-credit loans can all help to invest in a true stakeholder society.
- Key insecurities that are part of America's post-industrial society should be reduced. At this point the government alone has the necessary resources to provide affordable health care, childcare, and housing. A partnership between government, business, and non-profit groups to provide these essentials is starkly necessary.
- People should feel that the system works.
- A powerful society should consider the wellbeing of the entire world rather than to narrowly pursue the interests of one nation. The United States exerts controlling power over the world order, and therefore must provide leadership and active participation to ensure international cooperation.
- Common interest should, in general, take precedence over national interest when the concerns of humanity conflict with a nation's goals. The more the United States prospers the more it needs to concern itself with global wellbeing.
- Society should be open and identified by universal principles equally applied, rather than by the sole pursuit of self-interest. The goal should be the greatest good for the greatest number.

- Common interest and the notion of sovereignty should be reconciled.
- International trade should be beneficial to all parties, with the winners compensating the losers without destroying the surplus.
- Political institutions should be required to ensure freedom of thought, expression, and choice and contain the mechanism for constant self-correction.
- Preventive actions should be constructive, requiring far less money for military expenditures and leaving room for greater domestic spending within a balanced budget. Foreign aid should be accompanied by social benefits at home, and these constructive actions should help to change America's international image.
- A valid basis for intervention both for the security and wellbeing of people within a state and for the security and wellbeing of other nations should be established. However, terrorism is a weak justification and should not be the sole reason for addressing the ills of the world. America should stop using 9/11 as an excuse for further retributive action.
- Society should resist both fear and the victim-turned-persecutor mentality. It should avoid making terrorism the center of national policy.
- Intervention should be redefined as a responsibility to protect and military intervention should be viewed only as a last resort.
- Intervention and development ought to be focused on countries that are caught in a variety of traps and curses, such as those that are being stripped of their natural resources and/or ruled by despotic leaders.
- America is overly preoccupied with national security while international security and cooperation should be the real focus. America should lead a community of

democracies by building genuine partnerships and abiding by the rules it seeks to impose. Effective global governance must be established within the context of network democracy and the common good.

- America should position itself as a leader with the aspiration of making the United States both a final and transitional empire. The United States should focus on the development of democracy in other countries and on eliminating the causes of terrorism, rather than to continue a dubious war against a nebulous foe.

### *Conclusion*

The barbaric attacks of September 11, 2001, have brought home with great force that we all share a single planet. We are a global community, and like all communities have to follow some rules so that we can live together. These rules must be – and must be seen to be – fair and just, must pay due attention to the poor as well as the powerful, must reflect a basic sense of decency and social justice. In today's world, those rules have to be arrived at through democratic processes; the rules under which the governing bodies and authorities work must ensure that they will heed and respond to the desires and needs of all those affected by policies and decisions made in distant places.

(Stiglitz, 2003) P.XV

In general, the good, just, decent, and free society follows a moral and ethical code that is fairly universal in its recognition. This code includes honesty, respect, compassion, cooperation, generosity, kindness, deliberation, introspection, responsibility, fairness, understanding, tolerance, humility, forbearance, and something that seems to have been missing from America's culture for a while, forgiveness. A national return to this code will require not only a change of behavior; it will also require a change of heart, a spiritual awakening of sorts.

Note: An excellent example is offered in the book *The Power of Ethical Management* (1988) by Kenneth Blanchard and Norman Vincent Peale, which was originally

published in 1988 but re-released in 1996 due to the prevailing moral climate. Among other salient behaviors, the exemplary manager models love for the others in his corporation.

But it is unlikely that America's awakening can occur in a vacuum. The United States has emerged from its cocoon of republic as a global military and economic empire. Because of this America can no longer do anything in isolation. Even though the United States is often reviled, it is as often imitated. Apparently every single cultural blip on the social radar is closely monitored and scrutinized. America's fashion, music, movies, fast food, sports, government, and television programs are scoffed, envied, criticized, and emulated with an unrivaled zeal. For better or worse, loved or hated, America is the empire to which every other nation seems to compare itself.

It is in this sense that the America Dream has been hijacked – for the entire world as well as for Americans – because America is not what it used to be. The American Dream was built to a great extent on the hope that children would always have a better life than their parents, and that the grandchildren's lives would be better still. Yet, America's apparent loss of ethical conduct, its rabid pursuit of profit, power, privilege, and empire over all other things has led to a near absence of hope, and this has affected the world as well as the nation. One cannot pursue privilege and power while simultaneously pursuing equality and justice, and this is true on both the local and global level.

Even as America's hollow lifestyle of overwork, overspending, and overconsumption is emulated, it is losing its inspiration. As the United States continues along its path of unbridled empire the stature of America and the American Dream will likely continue its decline. And perhaps even more insidious, if the incestuous cohabitation of

fundamentalist religion and market fundamentalism continues the separation of church and state may vanish entirely, creating a self-destructive progression of hubris, fear, and reactionary elitist groupthink that has become a familiar characteristic of falling empires.

The good, decent, just, and free society requires its citizens to move beyond the reptilian-brained drama-laden responses of flight, fight, and freeze to seek out win-win approaches and breakthrough ideas that go beyond mere compromise to cooperatively transcend current problems and fulfill a higher vision. In this way hope may be restored, empire may be made obsolete, and the American Dream may be revived.

In essence, what is called for is a value for making sense that supersedes making money or exercising power. This does not negate the value of the market or of capital, nor does this position seek to render people and nations powerless. Rather, it puts power, money and the marketplace in perspective. From this new perspective the priorities would encompass a larger space-time-complexity domain, one that seeks the common good and the benefit of future generations, one that pursues local optimization of resources while building a sustainable process for society and the larger physical environment. In this system everyone could potentially raise their personal standard of living while avoiding an infringement on others.

Politically this would appear to call for a new system. Socialism excels in the equitable distribution of income and allocation of resources, but it is starkly inadequate at producing wealth to be distributed. It is also prone to corruption and detailed state level planning has proven to be nearly impossible to implement successfully. In addition, socialism can produce indolence and a sense of entitlement that further drags down production and the economy while promoting an invasive state government that both ne-

glects and invades the individual. On the other hand, market Capitalism is a superb creator of wealth, although this wealth is continually centralized and poorly distributed. Capitalism inspires hard work and individual effort but also promotes greed, insensitivity to others, and a very shortsighted, self-interested utilization of resources, both human and natural. It is also prone to corruption and can turn fascist very quickly if the justification is sufficiently profitable for the ruling elite. Under such circumstances individual liberties are lost and privacy becomes the thinnest of veneers.

Similarly, the two bookends of political thought appear to fail in providing the necessary solution. Liberal thought is strongly aligned with personal and social security, with the establishment of equality a major force in providing this security. This includes taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, too often in an inefficient and ineffective way, while justifying this Robin Hood approach by pointing out that the rich and powerful are evil while the poor and downtrodden are merely victims. On the other hand conservative thought is strongly aligned with personal and organizational freedom, including the freedom to misuse people and do bad things for personal gain under the benevolent guise of the invisible hand. (Neoconservatism appears to operate in a reverse-Robin-Hood system that takes from the poor and middle class gives to the rich under the guise of helping the poor and middle class.)

Although each orientation has its benefit, each also has its cost. The trick in evolving a more effective system will be to garner the best of both worlds while eliminating the worst. This will likely be very challenging because, while freedom and security are both desirable, they are unlikely bedfellows and it is a remote possibility that freedom and security can coexist equally within the current system. Both Friedman, the consum-

mate conservative, and Galbraith, the consummate liberal, view their individual philosophy as operating successfully only in the absence of the other, and both seem to feel that a pure application of their economic perspective would offer everyone the greatest benefit. Compromise, then, would offer only a tentative solution as freedom and security, according to many, work best and more purely when the other is eliminated or at least minimized. To combine the best of both would indeed require a new system brought about by a breakthrough in thinking and a change of heart.

Perhaps a productive addition to the good, decent, free, and just society would be the rational and responsible society – one that reviews all aspects of a decision and weighs all benefits against all costs to all people, short-term and long. This society, in combination with the others, would understand that the pursuit of power and privilege are incompatible with equality and justice, and would strive to make collective sense before pursuing or using the power and money necessary to accomplish its goals (Etzioni, 2001). In this system it is possible that privilege as well as material gain would be more distributed, and that those with an abundance of both would feel a social responsibility to return to an ethic of noblesse oblige. However, it would also require the active participation of citizens from all socioeconomic levels in the political process to ensure a just review of the issues and the implementation of creative, non-partisan solutions. A people cannot give up their power and then complain that those who exercise power are the source of all evil. In the universe in which America resides entropy is the default mode, and is most often chosen because letting things fall apart, while blaming someone else, requires less effort than fixing the problem. But the just, good, decent, and free society will insist on

the participation necessary to make a better world and will not easily allow people to slip to the wayside or even stand there by choice.



## Chapter Thirteen: Finale

Throughout this dissertation I have suggested that many, if not most, in American have become slaves to elite deviants who use fundamentalist religion, corporate interests, and corrupt government to realize an apocalyptic vision of imperialistic dominion and usurp the American Dream. I also suggested that this phenomenon is expanding at an accelerating pace toward a bifurcation of no insignificant proportion.

I have also proposed that the elite deviants achieve their goals primarily through lies and making people believe that other people believe these lies. Otherwise people would likely not put up with what is going on.

Finally I have placed the study of human resources within the wider scope of human capital and economic development in order to provide the appropriate perspective for dealing with the problems facing Americans in the workplace and their interrelationship with more national and even global concerns (see Gassler, 2003; and Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2003).

In the previous chapter suggestions were made as to how to remediate the problems of servitude and loss of the American Dream. These were based on the literature but were not comprehensive with respect to the media search. Some sources made a case for changing nothing or for simply making moderate improvements to the current system (Aaron, Lindsay, & Nivola, 2003). But the scope of the impending bifurcation appears to require an immediate and extensive overhaul in America's (if not the world's) systems

and institutions as they affect the environment, the economy, and society. Given the length of this dissertation there was simply not enough time or space to offer a complete list of solutions for these problems or to articulate the plethora of good resources and references. This appears to be the problem of most of the information I found in this research. The media is long on identifying the problem but short on solutions. This does not mean that the solutions for creating a better world are not there. But the solutions can be as overwhelming as the problem. Averting environmental catastrophe, economic collapse, political breakdown, and the disintegration of society all at once is a tall order. As one of my advisors suggested, perhaps the purpose of this dissertation is to simply raise doubt about the prevailing systems and institutions. Hopefully it did.

However, in addition to what has already been said about creating the good, decent, just, and free society the following list of suggestions was offered in the literature:

- Simplify one's lifestyle, reduce consumption, and increase leisure (Andrews, 1997; Elgin, 1993; Luhrs, 1997; Pierce, 2000).
- Reinstate democracy in America and elsewhere (Bergen, 2005; Carter, 2006; Hartmann, 2002, 2004; Hedges, 2007; Lindorff, 2004; Shiva, 2005).
- Impeach President George W. Bush and his administration (*Articles of impeachment against George W. Bush*, 2006; Bonifaz, 2003; de la Vega, 2006; Holtzman & Cooper, 2006; "Let's impeach the president," 2006; Lindorff, 2006; Loo & Phillips, 2006).
- Use the world's new electronic connectedness to creatively improve knowledge and promote the public good (Benkler, 2006; Crumlish, 2004; Sustain, 2006).

- Eliminate poverty and war (Sachs, 2005; Shorrocks & van Der Hoeven, 2004; Smith, 2005; Vance, 2005).
- Institute campaign reform which would include voting techniques such as runoff voting and comparative ranking (Simon, 2005).
- Offer full employment at a living wage (Simon, 2005).
- Renew the social contract in America (Carter, 2006; Reich, 2002; Zunz, Schappa, & Hiwatari, 2002).
- Use new and creative technology to improve both the human condition and Earth's environment (Dorf, 2001; Hawken, 1993; Hawken, Lovins, & Lovins, 1999; Lovins & Nash, 1979).
- Improve the utilization of humanity's brainpower, critical thinking, and rationality (Benn, 1990; Dawes, 2001; Gardner, 2006, 2007; Lynch, 2003).
- Eliminate nuclear arms and waste (Caldicott, 2004; Lovins & Price, 1975).
- Employ ethical and spiritual enterprise, economics, and government with a focus on the common good and environmental stewardship (Abrams, 2005; Briggs & Peat, 2000; Burma & Margalit, 2004; Clark, 1967; Dovers, Stern, & Young, 2003; Edwards-Jones, Davies, & Hussain, 2000; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001; Hall, 1986; Hancock, 2002; Hendry, 2004; Martin, 2005; Kevin W. McCarthy, 2002; Nielsen, 2004; Pascarella & Frohman, 1990; Rifkin, 2002; Schumacher, 1999; Terris, 2006; Whyte, 1994; Young, 1996).
- Make one's passion one's work (Kordis & Kordis, 1998; R. Leider & Shapiro, 2004; R. J. Leider & Shapiro, 2001; Lieder, 1997; Kenvin W. McCarthy, 1992; Richards, 1995).

In addition and more specifically I personally would suggest that America:

- Reinstatement and preservation of individual human dignity, human rights, civil rights, and civil liberties for everyone. Period. There is no excuse ever, in my opinion, to violate these.
- Reinstatement of freedom of communication and the press. Eliminate the plethora of surveillance and suspicion and kill the Patriot Act once and for all. Those in power catch 'em when they want to and don't when they don't.
- Develop alternative and renewable fuel sources and replace those that harm the environment and cost Americans their lives and pocketbooks.
- Preserve the planet's natural resources plus reinstate and increase environmental protection standards.
- Eliminate the Electoral College and decide major issues by popular vote. If electronic voting is employed maintain a verifiable paper trail. Ensure that everyone who wants to can vote.
- OK, let's have a free market, a real one; no bailouts, no subsidies, no corporate welfare, no special favors, no lobbying, no campaign contributions, no secret funds, no tax shelters or corporate offices in the Caymans, no protection from competition, no corporate personhood, and no military support.
- Ensure that political candidates can read, write, do accurate elementary mathematics, can learn from their mistakes, are not sociopaths or psychopaths, and speak at least one language fluently.

- Do something to increase, rather than decrease, everyone's space-time-complexity processing capabilities so that Americans can influence the bifurcation positively, if there is any time left. This would include learning to learn from mistakes.
- Teach the Bible in school. You heard me. Teach it as an academic subject. That way the vast majority of churchgoers would actually have to read it and they might find out about the love part being newer and more important than the hate and fear part.
- Socialize the things that level the playing field and make success truly competitive. Provide free healthcare, transportation, child care, and education up through terminal degrees. Social capital will still be an issue, but less of one.
- Enforce a flat tax. About 30 to 40 percent should do it. Everybody pays because America should also ensure a living wage for all those who can and want to work. No loopholes for anyone, no matter how rich or where their corporate offices are. And, by the way, make the stockholders pay corporate income tax. This would cut the creative accounting in half.
- Raise educational standards and provide a complete curriculum including the arts and humanities. And teach real financial literacy at a very early age. Tell Congress that they can spend as much as they want on the military as long as they spend an equal amount on both education and healthcare.
- Bring the troops home from the Middle East and let them rebuild New Orleans.
- Put all political donations in a single fund and distribute it equally among all the candidates. Limit campaigns to six months and force the media to do what they are chartered to do – give equal and free time to all candidates.

- Unpack the media conglomerates.
- Take care of each other and take care of the planet. Only fish defecate where they eat.
- Gage everything by how the poor are doing. If they're doing well everyone else will most likely be doing great.
- Recognize that there will always be people who abuse the system, but that a poor person will do far less damage than a rich one.
- Recognize and reward people who are doing good and charitable work, including a bunch of rich people who are already doing it.
- Restore the balance of government and create oversight of all departments including the covert ones. Provide complete transparency to the American public and eliminate the excuse of national security.
- Go for redemptive love instead of redemptive violence.
- Let people vote on whether they want a war or not.
- Eliminate the blight of immersion advertising.
- Promote truth in media.
- Dismantle the empire and focus on democracy at home.
- Reduce the military by half and put them to work doing something useful and constructive such as helping people at home and rebuilding the good will America used to have abroad.
- Require military service of all people who are physically and mentally able.
- Promote "normalcy," that is, provide systems and institutions that seek a normal distribution of wealth, power, and resources.

- Economics is a science of poor prediction but of great potential for helping American and the world understand what the national and global economy should be in order to be good, free, decent, and just. In my opinion economists would do well to adopt the role of articulating a brighter future vision. It would also help them be less dismal. Oh, and by the way, economics should be reevaluated with each wave of change.
- America needs to relearn that it's good to be good. Be good, America. It's cheaper and you'll have more fun.

The above, of course, are just my opinions. However, there is one breakthrough that came from the literature that merits discussion. I believe, as do some (Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2005; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Satin, 2004; Sosnik, Fournier, & Dowd, 2006), that most Americans are not really all that divided and that, in their hearts, they are more moderate than radical in their beliefs. If this is true, then one way to help move things in a positive direction would be to get people to reveal their beliefs, ideas, and opinions more openly so that they would see that there is a great deal of overlap in both where people want America to be and what they think must be done to get there. This is one form of marketing true social norms. One problem, however, is that most people of influence, academically or otherwise, have regarded crowds as stupid, with the common denominator being far less accurate and intelligent regarding an issue than the experts within the group.

A 19<sup>th</sup>-century Scottish journalist noted:

Men, it has been well said, think in herds. It will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, and one by one.

(Mackay, 1995)

In the classic work *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* Gustave Le Bon (2002) points out that crowds accumulate stupidity rather than wit. And historically, large groups of people, or crowds, have been dogmatically thought of as foolish and misinformed in the best case and moronic, prone to violence, and devoid of moral inhibition in the worst case – in other words, they act as a mob. In popular movies or in the news one can frequently see crowds panic at the slightest provocation, trample each other at sporting events, lynch, scapegoat, and storm the castle whenever they suspect something strange, blanketed by anonymity and diluted personal accountability. However, the long-held notion that the many are less intelligent than the few is currently being challenged.

For example, when the audience of the television show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” is polled to answer a question because a contestant is stumped, they are correct 91 percent of the time, compared with an average of 65 percent accuracy for experts selected by the contestants (Shermer, 2004). This particular data is contrary to most literature to date on the subject of the crowd intelligence.

Therefore, under certain circumstances crowd stupidity appears to be a false assumption. But under what circumstance is this the case?

In his book *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Surowiecki (2004) points out that crowds can indeed be very smart, smarter even than experts within the crowd. But certain criteria must be established:



- There must be a diagonal slice of diversity and expertise. That is, there must be some expert, many moderately informed, and some fairly ignorant of the issue in question present in the deciding group. The group is also best poised for success when a diversity of background and perspective is present.
- Everyone in the group must be presented with all of the pertinent data regarding the issue.
- Participants are not allowed to influence each other during the process.
- Voting is anonymous.
- The solution is an average of the group's input.

Under these circumstances the wise-crowd effect generally takes place and the average group response is more accurate and useful than those of the experts. This process is very similar to voting with the exception of interpersonal influence. However, this can be eliminated through applying an electronic version of nominal grouping. Internet voting would be one example. Handheld electronic devices or electronic kiosks would be another. Nonetheless the technique appears to have great merit.

The key, however, would be for people to be presented with all of the pertinent information, which elite deviants generally hide, and to avoid any kind of outside influence during the process, also the purview of elite deviance. Nonetheless, under the prescribed circumstances accurate and useful decisions regarding important issues could be quickly made with minimal expense. The best news is it could be done without a spiritual awakening, a significant emotional event, or a catastrophe.

So often in the literature a grand event appears to be needed to remediate America's grand problems; a large and significant spiritual awakening, a profound shift in values, a breaking of the collective heart. But it could be that using a few simple rules are all people need to make good and long-lasting improvements.

Finally, aside from using smart crowds facilitated by nominal grouping techniques I might offer one last solution that was alluded to at the beginning of this dissertation. That is, America should tear down the nearly impenetrable wall which has been erected between spiritual- ethical considerations and everything else. Again this could be a tall order. But there are basic ethical-spiritual principles that are fairly universal. The spiritual principles include unity and responsibility. That is, no man is an island. Everyone is connected to everything else. And, therefore, whatever one does will affect everything else. This is accompanied by compassion and the notion that what goes around comes around - or cast one's bread upon the waters because we're all in this together.

Ethics can also be divided into camps. Religious ethics usually include love; forgiveness; caring for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the sick; kindness; charity; forbearance; tolerance; patience; humility; and so on. Secular ethics generally include equality, justice, freedom, plurality, honesty, and respect. And finally the ethics of civilized discourse include courtesy, tact, and discretion.

All of these ethical camps overlap each other in the fashion of a Venn diagram. I suspect that if Americans would just pick two, or maybe even one, and allow these ethics to pervade every aspect of life that much would improve and possibly wonderful things would happen.

At least if America were simply to return to the ethics of civil discourse, when Vice President Cheney publicly tells a member of Congress to, “Go fuck yourself,” the congressman could reply, “By all means, sir, after you.”

And now what you’ve all been waiting for:

It seems only fitting that since I began the second half of this dissertation with the lyrics from a song by the comedy group Monty Python, I should end the dissertation with another.

## ***Always Look on the Bright Side of Life***

Words and music by Eric Idle

Some things in life are bad  
They can really make you mad  
Other things just make you swear and curse.  
When you're chewing on life's gristle  
Don't grumble, give a whistle  
And this'll help things turn out for the best...  
And...always look on the bright side of life...  
Always look on the light side of life...  
If life seems jolly rotten  
There's something you've forgotten  
And that's to laugh and smile and dance and sing.  
When you're feeling in the dumps  
Don't be silly chumps  
Just purse your lips and whistle - that's the thing.  
And...always look on the bright side of life...  
Always look on the light side of life...  
For life is quite absurd  
And death's the final word  
You must always face the curtain with a bow.  
Forget about your sin - give the audience a grin  
Enjoy it - it's your last chance anyhow.  
So always look on the bright side of death  
Just before you draw your terminal breath  
Life's a piece of shit  
When you look at it  
Life's a laugh and death's a joke, it's true.  
You'll see it's all a show  
Keep 'em laughing as you go  
Just remember that the last laugh is on you.  
And always look on the bright side of life...  
Always look on the right side of life...  
(Come on guys, cheer up!)  
Always look on the bright side of life...  
Always look on the bright side of life...  
(Worse things happen at sea, you know.)  
Always look on the bright side of life...  
(I mean - what have you got to lose?)  
(You know, you come from nothing - you're going back to nothing.  
What have you lost? Nothing!)  
Always look on the right side of life...

From the film *The Meaning of Life* (Chapman et al., 1983)

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