

Economy

- The **economy** is the social institution responsible for the production and distribution of goods.
- The two dominant economic systems in the world are **capitalism**, under which resources and means of production are privately owned, and **socialism**, a system under which those resources are owned by the society as a whole.
- Welfare capitalism and state capitalism are hybrids of capitalism and socialism. **Welfare capitalism** features a market-based economy coupled with an extensive social welfare system. Under **state capitalism**, the government closely monitors and regulates the resources and means of production, which are privately owned.
- According to **Karl Marx**, capitalism brings workers and employers into conflict. The only way to resolve the conflict is workers' revolution to replace capitalism with **communism**.
- The economy is a quickly changing social institution. Economic trends include **globalization, demand for educated professionals, self-employment, and diversity in the workplace.**

Government

- The **government** is the institution entrusted with making and enforcing the rules of the society, as well as with regulating relations with other societies.
- Most of the world's governments fall into one of four categories: **monarchy, democracy, authoritarianism, or totalitarianism.**
- A **monarchy** is a political system in which a representative from one family controls the government and power is passed on through that family from generation to generation.
- A **democracy** is a political system in which the citizens periodically choose officials to run their government.
- **Authoritarianism** is a political system that does not allow citizens to participate in government.
- **Totalitarianism** is a political system under which the government maintains tight control over nearly all aspects of citizens' lives.
- The U.S. government is characterized by a **limited welfare state** and a **two-party political system.**
- Conflicts in governments generally take three forms: **revolution, war, and terrorism.**

Family

- The institution of **family** has three important functions: to provide for the rearing of children, to provide a sense of identity or belonging among its members, and to transmit culture between generations.
- There are two types of families. A **nuclear family** comprises a mother, father, and their children living under one roof. An **extended family** includes several generations and branches living nearby.
- **Marriage** is a foundation of family life. It exists in every society, with some variations.

- **Alternative families** such as single-parent households, unmarried couples, and gay and lesbian couples are on the rise in the United States.

Religion

- **Religion** is a social institution that answers our larger questions and explains the seemingly inexplicable.
- The world's major religions include **Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.**
- Religious groups include **churches, sects, and cults.**
- In the United States, social class, race, and ethnicity are factors in how religious a person is.

Education

- **Education** is the preparation of children for adulthood. It is an important agent of socialization and encourages social integration.
- The quality of education at public and private schools varies greatly in the United States.

Medicine

- The institution of **medicine** is responsible for defining and treating physical and mental illnesses among members of a society. The goal of a society's medical establishment is to promote **health**, the total well-being of its people.
- The definitions of physical and mental illnesses are different in different cultures.
- **Scientific medicine** is an approach to healing that focuses on illness. This method is common in the United States.
- **Holistic medicine** is an approach to healing that focuses on a patient's whole environment.