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**SociologicalYOU - Chapter 11 Audio Lecture Transcript**

**SociologicalYOU** by Angela Thompson and Keith Whitworth.

This is Next-Gen Introductory Sociology.

Welcome to Chapter 11: Economics and Politics

There are five modules in this chapter.

Module 1: The Intersection of Economics and Politics

Module 2: Social Characteristics of Economics and Politics

Module 3: Social Problems in Politics

Module 4: Sociological Imagination and the Economy

Module 5: Political Process and Change

This PowerPoint does not cover every key term in Chapter 11. Please read your textbook to see what is not covered in the PowerPoint. As we review the contents of this chapter, I would encourage you to consider the following points to ponder. These should help you think critically about economics and politics.

1. How are economics and politics intertwined?
2. What are key characteristics to predict your political engagement?
3. What social problems are associated with the political system?

**Module 1: The Sociological Perspective**

This module analyzes the intersection of economics and politics as it relates to political participation. Beginning with key terms, first we have political sociology; for our purposes political sociology is defined as the study of political groups, leadership and power within society.

Political participation refers to actions to support government or politicians.

Civic participation is individual and collective action to address issues of public concern and political consumerism refers to choosing producers and products with the goal of changing ethical or objectionable institutional or market practices.

Factors, such as your SES or socioeconomic status, voluntary involvement in high school and your social media habits are predictors of your level of political engagement.

Political engagement includes political participation, civic participation and political consumerism.

If your parents had political conversations at the dinner table then you are more likely to follow their patterns and be interested in politics.

Being politically engaged in college indicates you will most likely be involved later in life as well.

Let's take a look at women and politics by looking at political socialization.

Political socialization begins in the family and continues through school and into the workforce. This socialization has a long-term impact on your political views and participation.

There are fewer women involved in politics and in general women are less politically engaged than men. Much of the difference is the result of the socialization process that begins in childhood.

Boys are more likely to be encouraged to pursue a career in politics and are provided more information related to politics. Boys in general are active and more competitive which is conducive to running for political office.

The nation of Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in parliament. Countries such as Rwanda and Afghanistan have quotas that require specific percentages of women in parliament. Cultural shifts in countries can increase or decrease participation by women in politics.

This module addresses how economics, politics and climate change are interrelated.

Let's consider some key terms. First global warming is the rise in surface temperature on the planet.

On the other hand, climate change is the weather impacts of the rising temperature. The term global warming was publicized by Vice President Al Gore and politicized as a result of his position as a politician.

Democrats are generally more supportive of environmental issues and Republicans are more likely to question the scientific validity of global warming.

Climate change refers to the weather impacts of the rising temperatures due to global warming.

Republicans support free market capitalism and are against government regulations, such as stricter EPA guidelines. Climate change, economics and politics are closely intertwined.

**Module 2: Social Structures**

This module explains economic and political systems. Let's begin with past and present types of societies.

These include hunting and gathering, horticultural and pastoral, agricultural, industrial and post-industrial or information age.

Economic systems are a framework for the production and allocation of goods and services within a society.

Capitalism is an economic and political system based on private control of the production and distribution of goods and services within a free market system.

Laissez-Faire capitalism is a system of free enterprise without government intervention. Monopolies involve possessing near or complete control of commodities or production of goods and services.

Socialism is an economic and political system based on the cooperative management of the production and distribution of goods and services by citizens within a democratic government.

Communism is an economic and political system based on the ownership and regulation of all of the production and distribution of goods and services by the government.

The term totalitarian refers to a state-controlled government holding all authority over public and private lives.

Governing systems include democracy, absolute monarchy and constitutional monarchy.

A democracy is a system of government in which the power is vested in the people and free elections are held.

Absolute monarchy is a system of government ruled by a monarch who has control of the government and state. Constitutional monarchy is a system of government in which a monarch is the head of state and governed by a Parliament.

There are five types of societies and two predominant economic systems: capitalism and socialism.

Capitalism is based on a free-market system and socialism is an economic and political system based on the cooperative management of the production and distribution of goods and services by citizens within a democratic government. The United States and Japan are examples of capitalist countries.

Sweden and other Nordic countries are examples of socialist economic systems. Communist countries, such as Cuba and China, are examples of socialism with authoritarian governments.

The United Kingdom is an example of a constitutional monarchy in which the royalty are figureheads.

There are three models of power within government. Let's begin by defining power; power is the ability to exert control over others and achieve goals with or without the support of society.

The first model of power is the Marxist Power Model. This model contends that ruling forces formulate public policies that are in the best interest of capitalism and the ruling class.

The Power Elite Model says that power is concentrated among the elite and wealthy, particularly corporations, government and the military

The Pluralist Power Model says that power is fragmented and dispersed among groups within a society.

Lobbyists are individuals who persuade legislators to vote for the special interests of their group. They do three things. First, lobbyists disseminate information to legislators to assist in legislation.

Second, they identify public opinions about issues important to clients.

Third, they influence a political agenda by creating coalitions to support or oppose bills.

Political action committees and lobbyists are structural components within the political and economic systems. Lobbyists disseminate information to legislators, identify public opinions and influence political agendas.

Corporations utilize lobbyists for a variety of reasons, such as reducing tax liabilities and increasing profits. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by corporations for lobbying legislators.

The question is often raised as to whether legislators can be bought through the process or at least influenced in such a way that their interests are advanced over the interests of the general public.

Non-profit organizations utilize lobbyists in a similar way but with the goal of promoting the causes and agendas of their organization.

**Module 3: Social Problems**

This module looks at social problems in politics, beginning with redistricting. Redistricting is defined as changes in the boundaries of an electoral voting district.

Proportional representation is a system in which a political party's representation in government is proportional to the number of votes they receive.

Redistricting, also called gerrymandering, involves changing the voter boundaries in an attempt to manage election outcomes. The redistricting process occurs once a decade and is greatly influenced by the politicians in office at that particular time.

The success of redistricting for a political party is enhanced by a winner-take-all approach to governance. Some have argued that elections based on proportional representation would result in a much more balanced political system.

Figure 11.3.1 highlights the extremes of redistricting in Illinois Congressional District 4.

Let's summarize some of the social problems associated with early voting restrictions. Early voting restrictions shorten the number of days early voters can cast their ballot.

They eliminate the same day registration and voting option.

They restrict early voting to weekends and prohibit evening voting. They allow voting only in election offices and not neighborhood polling stations. They add early voting to white suburbs while simultaneously cutting it in minority inner cities.

The issues of how, when and where the electorate should be allowed to vote varies tremendously across the country depending on the laws of the individual states.

Proponents of early voting restrictions contend that reducing the days times and voting locations are all necessary steps to combat incidents of voter fraud.

Opponents argue that there are very few examples of voter fraud at polling stations and that such restrictions disproportionately impact the young, minorities and low-income voters.

What groups are often most impacted by disenfranchisement? Disenfranchisement is an effort to restrict or revoke the voting rights of an individual or group.

Due to their often-ambiguous residency status, college students encounter unique voting challenges. In some states laws have been passed that prohibit them from voting in that state's elections because the students are not considered permanent residents of that state.

In other instances, laws have been passed that expressly prohibit the use of a college or university ID as a valid form of voter identification. Both situations make it difficult for college students to vote and are arguably an attempt by those in power to limit voter participation by this segment of the population and thus manipulate the political process.

A poll tax is a fee members of the electorate must pay in order to participate in the voting process.

Across the country, laws have been enacted specifically that identification must be presented in order to vote.

The forms of identification typically have a financial cost associated with them which may put obtaining them outside the reach of many low-income Americans. Supporters of voter ID laws assert that they are necessary to reduce fraud and that low-cost alternatives are available for those in need.

Detractors contend that there is little evidence of voter ID fraud at the polls and the economic costs of obtaining the appropriate ID go well beyond the cost of the identification itself to include time and lost wages associated with getting to a state-run facility that issues the ID.

**Module 4: The Sociological Imagination**

This module looks at sociological imagination and the economy, beginning with outsourcing and offshoring.

Outsourcing is defined as hiring a subcontractor or outside agency to complete the work formerly done by employees within a company.

On the other hand, offshoring involves corporations transferring jobs overseas. Sweatshops are factories that offer their workers low wages and long hours in dangerous working conditions.

Knowledge workers are employees whose job involves designing, preparing or sharing knowledge.

Service workers are employees whose job it is to provide food, physical comfort and shelter or mechanical support.

Downsizing is a reduction in the number of employees that work for the corporation. The topic of job loss is used to illustrate public issues associated with the economy.

Outsourcing, offshoring and downsizing are used by corporations to save money and access a global workforce but each option has its disadvantages. Concerns over product quality, shipping costs and an overall disconnect between the workers and the company are just a few of the issues associated with changes in the business mode.

Table 11.4.1 presents the pros and cons of outsourcing and offshoring.

How can unemployment be both a personal trouble and a public issue? The personal economic troubles that people experienced do not occur in a vacuum.

If there are enough people in a society that experience similar challenges, then personal troubles become a public issue. The intersection between public and private often culminates in the political arena.

Outsourcing, Offshoring and downsizing result in job loss for employees.

The private side of job loss manifests not only in the daily lives of the individual workers but also in their ability to participate financially in the larger community. While knowledge workers are particularly vulnerable to having their jobs displaced by outside workers, service workers by definition are less likely to have their jobs taken away.

**Module 5: Social Change**

This module evaluates the role of money in the political process by looking at the Fair Elections Now Act, free elections and clean elections.

Money is intertwined in the political process and with the citizens united versus federal election commission ruling, it has allowed individuals, organizations and corporations to contribute more to campaigns.

The candidates who spend the most money are significantly more likely to win an election in Congress. As part of the campaign finance movement, the Fair Elections Now Act was introduced to Congress in 2013.

This reform would establish voluntary public funding of elections. Candidates would be required to raise numerous small donations from the community in order to qualify for government funding. Ultimately one must consider whether first amendment rights are at the crux of the campaign finance issue or the need to remove the influence of money from the political process.

This concludes the PowerPoint for **SociologicalYOU** Chapter 11 where we strive to “Connect Sociology and YOU!”

Length: 22:32