

# The Bottom Line

## Unfortunate Side Effects of Capitalist Culture

Arthur McGovern

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

### Summary

This monograph explores the role of culture in modern societies and the side effects that result when that role is distorted. The basic premise of this book is that many of the dominant cultural characteristics of modern life, like the ideologies and values associated with materialism and consumer capitalism, are cultural phenomena with influences that are in many ways problematic and in some ways downright detrimental to our sustained societal well-being.

I argue in this book that the globalized capitalist economic system has become increasingly efficient in terms of scale and scope, but has also become less humane in many regards; less connected to human needs and concerns. Of particular concern is the encroachment of economic interests into areas of human society that traditionally have been free from profit motives, or at least only minimally influenced by them; areas such as scientific research, the justice system, and even family relationships.

I suggest that there is a slow but steady intrusion into these areas of human life that were once considered off-limits to naked economic incentives and calculations. This intrusion puts the idea of America as a free and democratic society increasingly at risk when private economic stakeholders meddle in the political and cultural areas of society in ever more insidious ways to further their own enrichment at the expense of the public. Furthermore, the vast capitalist economic

system is in many ways increasingly disconnected or disembedded from the contexts and regulations of traditional social relations as in the past.

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### About the author

Arthur McGovern started his career as a computer network engineer before retraining as a research psychologist. His academic credentials include a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and an M.S. degree in Gerontology, both from Oklahoma State University. His research interests have focused on areas like philosophical and theoretical psychology, social development, social issues, and culture. He has been a longtime member of a research team that studies health psychology and marginalized populations, and his work has been published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. More recently, Dr McGovern has turned his research attention to the cultural ramifications of the modern, globalized, economic system, which was triggered by the financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath. An Austrian by birth, and an immigrant, Dr McGovern is also completely Americanized, but retains that sense of observing America from the outside. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Sociology at Nichols College in Massachusetts, and lives with his wife in Providence, Rhode Island.

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