

**Work**

# What is Work?

- Work can be anything as long as society accepts it as such – put it differently: work is “socially constructed”
- In our society work is
  - compensated activity that is sold
    - Either directly      labor market
    - Or indirectly      through the goods produced by the labor
- Forms of work
  - Jobs
    - A collection of work tasks
  - Occupations
    - Set of jobs across different organizations considered equivalent by employers and the government . It has a stable set of tasks and necessary skills attached to it.
  - Professions
    - Occupations that collectively control their recruitment, compensation, standards of delivery and receipt of their services
- Primary vs. Secondary Labor Market

# Modern Times

## Critique of the Age of Mechanization

### Rationalization of Work (Taylorism)

- Technical control  
(assembly line)
- Separation of  
conception and  
execution  
(deskilling)
- Alienation



# Shift from Industrial to Service Sector Jobs

- Table 1 . Distribution of employment by major sector,
  - 1850-2005
  - [In percent)

• Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
• 1850 .....	64 .5	17 .7	17 .8
• 1860 .....	59 .9	20 .1	20 .0
• 1870 .....	50 .8	25 .0	24 .2
• 1880 .....	50 .6	25 .1	24 .3
• 1890 .....	43 .1	28 .3	28 .6
• 1900 .....	38 .0	30 .5	31 .4
• 1910 .....	32 .1	32 .1	35 .9
• 1920 .....	27 .6	34 .6	37 .7
• 1930 .....	21 .8	31 .7	46 .6
• 1940 .....	18 .3	33 .1	48 .6
• 1952 .....	11 .3	35 .5	53 .3
• 1957 .....	9 .8	34 .3	56 .0
• 1962 .....	7.8	33 .1	59 .1
• 1972 .....	4.4	31 .4	64 .2
• <b>1982 .....</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>27 .2</b>	<b>69 .2</b>
• <b>1990.....</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>72.0</b>
• <b>2000.....</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>76.2</b>
• <b>2005.....</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>78.6</b>

# Unions in the U.S.

- **Trade union membership**  
15.4 million
- **Percentage of workforce**
  - Total - 12.5%
  - Public sector - 36.5%
  - Private sector - 7.8%
- **Demographics**
  - Age 16 - 24 - 4.6%
  - 25 - 34 - 10.7%
  - 35 - 44 - 13.7%
  - 45 - 54 - 16.5%
  - 55 - 64 - 16.5%
  - 65 and over - 8.9%
  - Women – 11.3%
  - Men - 13.5%
- **Occupations**
  - Management, professional - 13.4%
  - Service - 11.6%
  - Sales and office - 7.3%
  - Natural resources, construction, and maintenance - 16.5%
  - Production, transportation, and material moving - 18.0%

# Leidner, Over the Counter

- What is peculiar about McDonald's?
- How does McDonald's achieve standardization?
  - What are the limits of standardization?
- Who are the workers at McDonald's?
- How are workers controlled?
- Why are workers keen on working hard?
  - (They make very little money, after all.)
- How are customers controlled?

# Three forms of controlling the labor process

- Richard C. Edwards:
  - Simple control – personal supervision, monitoring, surveillance
  - Technical control – the technical environment and machinery controls workers
  - Bureaucratic control – formal rules, internalized norms, identification with organizational goals