


McDonaldization of Society

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## Extending bureaucracy

- ✓ Max Weber argued that bureaucracies were becoming the organizational model of the 19th Century
- ✓ George Ritzer argues that McDonalds is becoming the model for organizations in the 21st Century
  - McDonaldization: "the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world"

"McDonaldization is an extension of Weber's theory of rationalization. For Weber, the model of rationalization was the bureaucracy; for me, the fast-food restaurant is the paradigm of McDonaldization"



GEORGE RITZER  
The McDonaldization of Society  
Third Revised New Century Edition



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## Four elements of McDonaldization

1. **Efficiency:** the search for the optimum means to a given end
  - Includes streamlining processes, simplifying goods and services, and using customers to perform work
2. **Calculability:** emphasis on things that can be calculated, counted, and quantified
3. **Predictability:** emphasis on things being the same from one time or place to another
  - Achieved through offering uniform products, replications of settings, and scripting of employee behaviors
4. **Control (of people)** through replacement of human with nonhuman technology
  - Nonhuman technology includes machines, architecture/interior design, and limited options

Source: Ritzer, 2000. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Pine Forge. © 2008 David Schweitzer

## Irrationalities of rationality

- ✓ Ritzer claims that although McDonaldization is supposed to be rational, it can lead to results that are irrational. These include:
  - Inefficiency and higher costs: McDonaldization isn't efficient for everyone, especially customers, and may cost extra.
  - The illusion of fun: Fun has become a guiding principle of many McDonaldized institutions.
  - False Friendliness: Genuine fraternization is restricted or eliminated and replaced with either no human relationships or "false fraternization."
  - Health and environmental hazards: Includes health risks of fast food, food poisoning, litter, environmental hazards of factory farms.
  - Homogenization: Similar products are offered through the U.S. and world.
  - Dehumanization: McDonaldization offers low-skill jobs, treats customers impersonally, minimizes contact between human beings, and has negative effects on families.

Source: Ritzer, 2000. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Pine Forge. © 2008 David Schweitzer