

# Weber's Rationality: Ritzer's McDonaldization 9/23/10



Social life, George Ritzer suggests, has begun to resemble drive-through food service—predictable and efficient but impersonal.

# Do Now

- What are the characteristics of McDonald's that you think have made it so successful?

# Agenda

1. Do Now
2. Objectives
3. Weber: Rationality
4. Ritzer: McDonaldization
5. What is McDonaldization?
6. Independent Reading (Article)
7. How does McD's demonstrate the 4 Characteristics?
8. Where else do you see McDonaldization?
9. Costs/Benefits of McDonaldization
10. Closing

# Objectives

- Content:
- **SWBAT**
  - **Explain** the concept of Rationality
  - **Explain** the concept of McDonaldization
  - **Apply** the 4 principals of McDonaldization to McDonald's
  - **Apply** the 4 principals of McDonaldization to another aspect of society
  - **Explain** some of the costs/benefits of McDonaldization
- Language:
- **by**
  - **Note taking** in class
  - **Discussing** the concepts in class

# Current Research in Sociology

## Rationality

### Max Weber's View

- -Max Weber predicted that as society progressed it would become increasingly guided by:
  - -rules
  - -regulations
  - -formal structures (institutions)
- -He called this **rationality**.

## The McDonaldization of Society

### George Ritzer's View

- -George Ritzer agrees with Weber's prediction.
- -Ritzer's version of Rationality is *McDonaldization*
- Ritzer believes parts of society are developing these characteristics of McDonald's:
  - Efficiency
  - Calculability
  - Predictability
  - Control
- -Ritzer calls this belief the *McDonaldization of Society*

# What is McDonaldization:

## The 4 Characteristics of McDonaldization

- Ritzer says that McDonald's has the following 4 characteristics
- He also says that many parts of society have the following characteristics
- 1. **Efficiency:**
  - a focus on maximizing speed and minimizing cost
  - creates **unpaid workers:** (customers who do work that employees used to do) ex: at Subway, the customer fills her/his own drink
- 2. **Calculability:**
  - a focus on measuring things based on quantity not quality
- 3. **Predictability:**
  - a focus on making sure everything is always the same. No surprises.
- 4. **Control:**
  - a focus on making sure workers and customers behaviors are kept in check

# Read the Article

- Take the next 10 minutes to read the article on McDonaldization
- Make sure to underline/mark/take notes on the important/interesting parts as you read

# How Does McDonald's demonstrate the 4 Characteristics?

Think about your experience at McDonald's.

Write 1 sentence for each of the 4 characteristics explaining how you notice that McDonald's has the characteristic of:

1. Efficiency (maximizing speed and minimizing cost)  
-Unpaid workers
2. Calculability (quantity not quality)
3. Predictability (always the same)
4. Control (workers and customers behaviors are kept in check)

Example: #1 McDonald's has the characteristic of efficiency because people in the back are always running around trying to get food made quickly. At McDonald's the customers are unpaid workers because they have to get their own ketchup.

# What part of society do you think is/is becoming McDonaldized?

Thinking back in time, have you ever encountered any aspects of society that you now realize are McDonaldized?

Pick one of those aspects you believe is/is getting McDonaldized.

Write 1-2 sentences for each of the 4 characteristics explaining how your aspect of society is becoming or already is McDonaldized.

1. Efficiency
2. Calculability
3. Predictability
4. Control

Example: The aspect of society I am choosing is a Mall.

Malls are focused on efficiency because they are designed so that customers can find parking and get into the store as quickly as possible.

Malls are also focused on calculability. Many malls only care about the number of people that shop there, and they don't seem to care much about how the shopping experience itself...

# Costs and Benefits of McDonaldization

Costs

Benefits

# Costs and Benefits of McDonaldization

## Costs

- New ideas are not really allowed
- Machines replace people
  - Face-to-face interactions decrease
- **Unpaid Workers:** when customers do work that employees once did

## Benefits

- Convenience and familiarity
- Interactions are quicker and more efficient

# Closing

- Max Weber came up w/  
**Rationality** (rules,  
regulations, formal  
structures)
- George Ritzer came up  
w/ his own version  
called **McDonaldization**  
(efficiency, calculability,  
predictability, control)