



McDonaldisation of Society

George Ritzer

McDonaldisation of Society

- Business Corporations (BCs) are slowly but shockingly transforming the world around us
- BCs are rationalizing the market economy
- Rationality - in industry parlance - the process of organization of production according to the canons of logic and efficiency
- the process of rationalization as adopted by the BCs is increasingly dominating the different spheres of our lives

McDonaldisation of Society

- A society characterized by rationality emphasizes on **efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of non-human technology and control over uncertainty**
- **Max Weber – Rationalisation Process – A process marked by logic and empiricism – Attainment of goal by applying the most effective and efficient method**
- **George Ritzer – McDonaldisation (A process whereby the principles adopted in fast-food industry are increasing coming to dominate different domains of our society and life)**
- **McDonaldisation - A modification of Weber's Bureaucracy, Fordism and Taylor's scientific management**

Efficiency

- ❖ Efficiency is method that puts a premium on finding the best or optimum means to any given end
- ❖ The end product is to be achieved by emphasizing on the best means possible
- ❖ In the McDonald fast food chain, the quick making and delivery of food (such as McBurgers, McAloo) is attained by minimizing the number of items of the menu, thereby limiting the choice of the customers and consequently focusing on making only a few items for consumption

Efficiency

- ❖ The mass production technique used in chicken or milk production is a strong case in point
- ❖ Irrational element: feeding of chemicals to chicken & cows for more production – leads to diseases to animals as well as to final consumers
- ❖ The growing popularity of twenty-twenty tournament in cricket attest to the pervasive influence of efficiency principle of BCs
- ❖ Irrational element: Taking away the essence of the game

Predictability

- ❑ People want to know what is to be expected in a given setting and predict beforehand what lays in store for them
- ❑ In McDonald chain operations the chains keep a limited simple menu which the customers know in advance
- ❑ They even know how each of these items is going to taste
- ❑ The predictable end products are made possible by the use of similar raw materials, technologies and preparations and serving techniques
- ❑ the employees are similarly dressed in every chain
- ❑ The setting & The ambience is also predictable

Predictability

- ❑ The examples of such predictability are legion
- ❑ The tourism industry is thriving on the packaged tours where the journey plan, accommodation and sight seeing are pre-planned
- ❑ The shopping malls, departmental stores, instant *dosa* and *parathas* available in market, camping in the wild and use of artificial turf in hockey to negate the uncertainties of weather and bounce in games are all indicators of adoption of the principle
- ❑ In the process we are slowly and unconsciously getting rid of many important 'irrational' human experiences such as uncertainty, thrill and adventure

Calculability

- Calculability essentially implies increasing reliance on quantification in our lives than on quality
- The stress is on things that can be counted or measured
- In a McDonald chain, “A big Mac” or a “Combo” rather than “A good Mac”
- Size does matter in a McDonaldised world
- The focus is on how many burgers or pizzas one sells, how fast a particular food item can be made, how many customers is being catered to
- What we lack is quality of products

Calculability

- In academics, there is a substantial shift from descriptive answers to multiple choice questions and objective type answers
- Feedback form for Faculty members – Teacher's ability reduced to numbers
- Taylorism and Fordism – resulted in job dissatisfaction, lack of creativity, workers protest
- Reebok, Nike, Adidas – equate quantity with quality – costlier the shoe better the product

Substitution of non-human technology

- o It involves replacement of independent and thinking human beings by technologies that lack the ability to think and act in unpredictable ways
- o The use of drink dispensers, which shuts themselves up when the cup is full, buzzers, lights and bells which indicate when food is done (e.g., French fries), cash registers which have the prices of each item programmed in are the reflections of such use of non-human technology

Substitution of non-human technology

- o Taylorism and Fordism point to such extensive use of non-human technology
- o Deskilling is another offshoot of such an approach. In the Fordism and Taylorism, the skills are built into the routines rather than belonging to the skilled craftspersons
- o The work involves simple repetitive monotonous steps which any unskilled person can do with a little training
- o In fast food chain, it appears we deal with human robots than human beings

Control over uncertainty

- The rational systems are oriented to allow for greater control over the uncertainties of life – birth, death, food production, etc. and aims at control of major source of uncertainty in life: other people
- In a McDonald system, not only the employees but also the customers/clients they serve are controlled
- Unpaid employees
- Both the customers and the employees' behaviour are controlled

Control over uncertainty

- Such kind of practices are followed in departmental stores, malls, supermarkets etc.
- The other examples of such control can be found in medical services
- The notorious practice of ultra sound method to determine the sex of the child
- Bio-technology – use of killer/terminal seeds by companies to control food production
- We can also include cloning and other advances in genetic engineering as instances of endeavours to control our future
- What we need to look at is the ethical issues involved in it

Conclusion

- ✓ Excess of rational principles leads to irrational systems A Homogenized world which involves elimination of differences, less attention span of Gen Next, growing intolerance (indirect result of singular worldview)
- ✓ It will lead us to a situation in which rationality predominates, leaving no room for the mysterious, unpredictable qualities that make us human
- ✓ We will be trapped in a “Iron Cage of Rationality”

The background is a solid dark blue. Overlaid on this are three sets of concentric circles, each consisting of four thin, light blue lines. The circles are arranged in a triangular pattern: one set in the top-left, one in the top-right, and one centered at the bottom. The circles overlap, creating a complex geometric pattern.

Thank You