Work
What is Work?

• Work can be anything as long as society accepts is 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
## Shift from Industrial to Service Sector Jobs

Table 1. Distribution of employment by major sector, 1850-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>59.9</td>
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<td>20.0</td>
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<td>50.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<td>50.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.3</td>
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<td>43.1</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<td>30.5</td>
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<td>32.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GDP is growing --- employment is not
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
Modern Times
Critique of the Age of Mechanization

Rationalization of Work (Taylorism)
– Technical control (assembly line)
– Separation of conception and execution (deskilling)
– Alienation
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%
Kalleberg, Precarious Work, Insecure Workers

• Neoliberal globalization
  – Begins mid 1970s (oil shock)
  – Reagan/Thatcher revolution

Elements:
  - globalization
  - technological advances
  - deregulation
  - decline of unions
  - away from mass production to flexible specialization
    – customized products produced in smaller quantities using highly skilled labor
US

1940-1970 – increasing security
Since
Decline in attachment to employers
Increase in long-term unemployment
Growth in perceived insecurity
Growth in nonstandard work arrangements and contingent work
Risk shifts from employer to employee

**Flexicurity** – the US is slow to adopt it

**flexible labor market PLUS social security system**
Portability of
- health insurance
- pensions

Retraining – lifetime learning
New educational system emphasizing broader skills