

Blue Collar Work

Feb. 24th, 2020

Economic Sectors

- Primary Sector
 - Mining, agriculture, forestry
- Secondary Sector
 - Manufacturing
- Tertiary Sector
 - Service (producer, distributive, social, personal)

Agriculture

- Involves hard labour, even though increasingly mechanized
- Rising costs
- Large corporate farms drive down farm prices based on economies of scale
- Technology not beneficial for all
- Migrant workers



Forestry

- Skilled work remains the norm
- Mechanization has had a huge impact in pulpwood production
- Vulnerable to price fluctuations



Fishing

- Largest exporter of fish in world with yearly catch of two million tons
- Once expected to feed the world but now catch only grows 1% annually
- Traditionally organized around independently owned boats
- Fish farming (aquaculture)



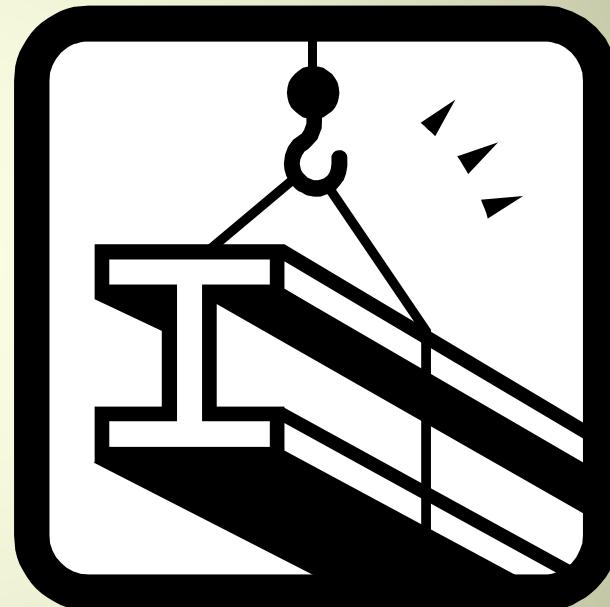
Mining



- Dangerous work (gasses, explosives, flooding, dust, cave-ins)
- Creates a culture of solidarity – occupational communities
- Miners in Canada face much better work conditions than many around the world

Construction

- Often have high levels of skill and exercise autonomy on the job
- High levels of unionization



Manufacturing

- Craft workers
 - Skilled workers
 - More security against layoffs and has been less effected by automation
- Machine operators and assemblers
 - Semi-skilled workers
 - Repetitive work, little control over pace
- Labourers
 - Unskilled labour
 - Closely supervised, requires little training, limited career mobility

Three Key Manufacturing Industries



Automobiles

- Key since mid-20th century → worldwide over 20 million employed
- Irregular growth
- Increased world competition
 - Management slow to respond to change in market demands and technology and work practices

Three Key Manufacturing Industries

Steel

- Has hit hard times
- Demand is increasing in developing nations, however high costs of transportation make it hard to trade internationally
- Largest producer in the world is Nippon Steel in Tokyo
- Mini-mills: use electric furnaces to turn scrap steel into basic steel products (e.g. re-bar, light construction products)

Three Key Manufacturing Industries

Textiles

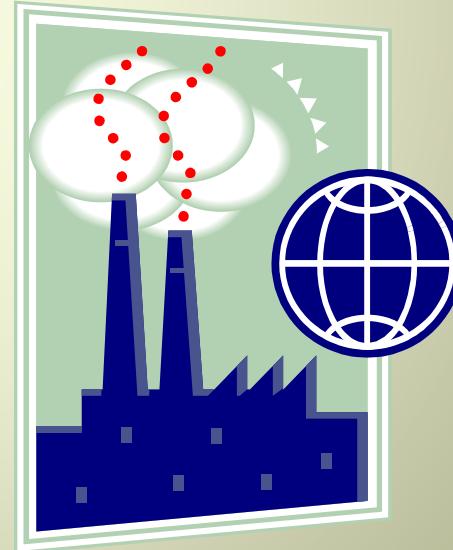
- Employs 25 million worldwide (not to mention millions of unregistered workers); has increased four-fold from 1950-2000
- Much of the growth has been in underdeveloped and developing nations (Indonesia, Bangladesh, China)
- Only small portion requires skilled labour
- Sweatshops ☹



Global Competition

Strategies

- Exporting jobs overseas in search of cheaper labour
- Attempting to drive down wages here
- Manipulating balance sheets and profit margins
(a.k.a. paper entrepreneurialism)



Summary

- Declining share of work in manufacturing due to rising productivity, renewed global competition and movement of corporations overseas in search of cheaper labour and more lenient safety, health and environmental regulations
- Some jobs are highly skilled, but most are repetitive and lack autonomy