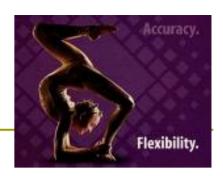
The social construction of a "flexible workforce": an ethnographic perspective



The trope of flexibility



- New ideals new utopias, aspirations
- Mobilizing metaphor
- Normative implications
- Provides directionality
- Inclusionary and exclusionary
- Travels and translates differently into different contexts...



The mobility imperative

- Translocal movements
 - Between organizations
 - Between projects
 - Between workplaces
- Between social communities
 - "The stranger" in the place but not of it
- Contemporary nomads or workplace vagabonds
- Blended workforce, transient ties
- Readiness to move



Temping temporalities



- □ Flexible time, fragmented time
- Focus on the "here and now", "just-intime" – expanding present
- Kairotic time punctuated, rythmic, accelerates, stops
- Short planning horizons
- Scripting
- Mobility and temporality as stratifying factors

Culture of preparedness

- "Be a gumby"
 - Preparedness for change, learning and risk
 - Strategies to handle change and uncertainty
 - Flexibility and adaptability as solutions
 - Evaluation as a normality



Actorhood

- Presupposes the agency of individuals
- The individual as locus for risk, responsibility and reward
- Emphasis on individual performance, recognition and reward
- Self-disciplining implications



The reflexive individual

- Continuous evaluation
- "The evaluative gaze"
- Self-monitoring
- Self-discipline, impression management, emotion work
- Construction of narratives of self and career



The cultural organization of discontinuity

- □ Dreams and aspirations ...
- Orientation towards the needs of the market
- Culture of preparedness
- Re-allocation of risk and responsibility
- Layered regulation
- Frictions... as well as possibilities

