

The disrupted workplace: time and the moral order of flexible capitalism

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Abstrak

The 21st century workplace compels Americans to be more flexible. To embrace change, work with unpredictable schedules, be available 24/7, and take charge of ones own career. What are the wider implications of these pressures for workers moral lives? How do they construct conceptions of good work and a good life amid such incessant change? In *The Disrupted Workplace*, Benjamin Snyder examines how three groups of American workers-financial professionals, truck drivers, and unemployed job seekers-construct moral order in a capitalist system that demands flexibility. Based on 70 in-depth interviews and three years of participant observation, he argues that the flexible economy transforms how workers experience time. New scheduling techniques, employment strategies, and technologies disrupt the rhythms and trajectories of working life, which makes time feel chaotic, accelerated, desynchronized, and unpredictable. Amidst a welter of fragmented temporalities, the workplace becomes a site of perplexing moral dilemmas. Work can feel both liberating and terrorizing, engrossing in the short term but unsustainable in the long term. Through a vivid portrait of real workers struggles to adapt their moral lives to constant disruption, Snyder mounts a compelling critique of the cultural costs of the flexible economy.