

## Employee Resourcing

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## Outline

This session will introduce and analyse a definition of human resource planning (HRP), going on to examine the meaning of the term 'resource' in the context of people at work. Definitional complexities and tensions in the term 'human resources' will be seen as an explicit instance of wider tensions inherent in the employment relationship. A series of oppositions (e.g. 'human-resource', 'social-economic') will be introduced and discussed to develop themes of tension and opposition. This provides the theoretical context for an analysis of one influential model for HRP, Atkinson's 'flexible firm'.

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## Session Objectives

- By the end of this session you should be able to:
- Identify the shortcomings of a widely accepted definition of HRP
- Distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' HRP
- Outline problems with the term 'human resource'
- Describe three types of flexibility at work
- Critically evaluate Atkinson's model of the 'flexible firm'

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## Time and Motion Study

- Ways it could help:

RSI (posture, eye strain etc.)  
enforce breaks  
role of pre-preparation

spot process improvements  
learn from best practice

- Ways it could not help:

expertise may not be transferable  
measurement is difficult  
can't see the transformation process

observation is difficult  
more than 'effort' or 'compliance'

Taken from [www.kevinmorrell.org.uk](http://www.kevinmorrell.org.uk)

## One Definition

The process of matching future organizational requirements with the supply of properly qualified, committed and experienced staff in the right place at the right time. These staff can be drawn from the internal and external labour market.

(M&W 2000: 90)

Taken from [http://www.management-people.com](#)

## Some Questions

- How do you determine future requirements?
- How do you assess 'properly qualified'?
- How do you assess 'committed'?
- If you can't get people from inside, how do you attract others?
- What if you can't find 'the right people'?
- What if you start with 'the wrong people'?

Taken from [http://www.management-people.com](#)

## Some Less Obvious Questions

- Is this a normative, prescriptive definition?
- Who does following such a model benefit?
- Can we really match 'organisational requirements' and people ('staff')?
- Does this relate to the supply of a resource, or the employment of people?

Taken from [http://www.management-people.com](#)

## 'Hard' and 'Soft' HRP

- 'Hard' - Quantitative, concerned with numbers and modelling the supply & demand of labour.
- 'Soft' - More vague, concerned with creating and shaping culture, development, employee values and behaviours.

(M&W: 2000: 89)

Taken from [http://www.management-people.com](#)

## Resources or Humans

Organisations “need to achieve both control *and* consent of employees, in order to secure not just the extraction, but the realisation of their surplus value.” (Legge 1995: 175).

In HR speak: not just *compliance* (which you can get from a resource), but *commitment* (which you need people for).

Taken from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/management/people/legge/legge.htm>



Mediated / disguised by: Rhetoric, Culture, Language

Taken from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/management/people/legge/legge.htm>

## Rhetoric, Culture and Language - 'Flexibility'

To define certain social realities as rigidities (rather than points of stability) and others as flexibilities (rather than areas of uncertainty) is to impose a particular evaluation...and hence to propose a particular structure of social power

(Hyman 1991: 281) in Legge (1995: 149)

Taken from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/management/people/legge/legge.htm>

## Examples - some casualties of 'flexibility'

- 'job'
- 'career'
- 'hierarchy'
- 'bureaucracy'
- 'loyalty' (Sennett)
- even: 'family', 'society' (Hutton)

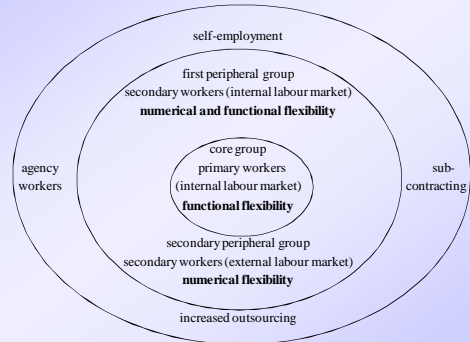
Taken from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/management/people/legge/legge.htm>

## One Way of Looking at Flexibility

- **Numerical** - ability to vary numbers of workers at short notice in response to demand
- **Functional** - workers' ability to do different tasks
- **Financial** - ability to change reward systems to match business strategy
- Also: *Distancing* ('outsourcing'), *Temporal* ('flexitime'), *Locational* ('teleworking')

Taken from

## The Flexible Firm (Atkinson)



Taken from

## Problems for the model of 'The Flexible Firm'

- Does it describe, predict or proscribe?
- Is it flexibility or more insecurity?
- Is there a gap between 'core' and 'periphery'?
- Can you have 'core' part-time workers?
- Is it really more efficient?
- Is there evidence of organizations following this?
- Is strategy planned or emergent?

Taken from

## Summary

- Tension implicit in the term 'human resource' can be seen as an example of fundamental inequality in the employment relationship.
- The manipulation of language and culture can disguise this inequality and tension as well as disguise structures of power.

Taken from