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Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Study of Startups

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Research Question

How are start-up companies a facet of a larger system that calls for individuals to market, be responsible for themselves, and find alternative ways to secure a stable and reliable position in the labour market?

Thesis Statement

When entrepreneurs actively attempt to escape the grasps of neoliberalism by becoming self-employed, they are unaware of how deeply entrenched within it they are and unknowingly reproduce its values

Methodology

Several interviews over the span of the past few months were conducted with an individual who is in the process of creating a digital app-based start-up company. By virtue of being present during the initial creation of the company, it has allowed me to see the nuanced processes and happenings within the company. Observations were conducted at a marketing meeting focused on the branding of the company.

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Both in and out of entrepreneurial based jobs, workers must possess this in order to maneuver within our neoliberal society. This includes the possession of the entrepreneurial mindset and the ability to market oneself. Both are vital aspects to increasing one's market value. Founders of startups are in a position where people "invest in the founders", thereby personifying the company and taking marketing to a new level

Gender Divide

CEOs who happen to be women are treated differently in terms of investment. Minimizing risk is emphasized with female founders while profit making is emphasized for male founders. This will be looked at through Sarah Banet-Weisner's theory of 'economies of visibility'.



Contractual Workers

Entrepreneurs often reproduce the same neoliberal values which they try to escape from. The idea avoiding contractual and unstable work is contradicted by their use of this system. This emphasizes the role of entrepreneurs as the perfect neoliberal subjects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has added to the notion that entrepreneurs represent the perfect neoliberal subjects. While trying to avoid contract-based short term work and trying to find alternative ways to find stable work, they inhabit and reproduce neoliberal values.

References

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