ENTREPRENEURIAL DESIRE IN HYBRID ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL EXPLORATION OF THE GAP BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT OF DESIRE (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATIONS

INTERACTIVE PAPER

ENTREPRENEURIAL DESIRE IN HYBRID ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL EXPLORATION OF THE GAP BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT OF DESIRE

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Principal Topics

There has been a significant body of research that has explored how discourses of enterprise enable organizations to constitute subjects as enterprising individuals who are motivated to meet organizational ends (DuGay, 1996; Rose, 1998, McCabe, 2008; Fenwick, 2002). The focus of much of this research is on how individuals become subjects of organizational control (McCabe, 2009; Storey et al., 2005). There has, however, recently been a new line of enquiry that points to how discourses of enterprise create desire (Jones and Spicer, 2005; Johnsen and Sørensen, 2017). We follow this line of enquiry to explore how desire gives rise to more enterprising forms of work as organizations allow workers to aspire to “be your own boss” or “live the life you choose”.

Method

We employ psychoanalytic approaches which explore the power of the imaginary (Roberts, 2005; Hoedemaekers, 2010) to focus our attention on the relationship between discourses of enterprise and a psychology of desire. We take franchising as a particular case of this mode of organizing, as its success has been attributed to its ability to attract workers through its promises of autonomy and independence (Kaufmann and Stanworth, 1995). This paper turns attention to understand how being a franchisee is psychically experienced and how assuming the character of the entrepreneur relates to deeply rooted psychological needs.

Results and Implications

We extend understanding of the entrepreneur as a sublime object of desire (Jones and Spicer, 2005) and show how the flexibility of discourse enables our participants to secure identity in an ambivalent context by supplementing a failed narrative of being with one of becoming to maintain an ideological fantasy. We also provide insight into creative struggles in the production of identities by uncovering participants’ relationship to the organization (Antonacopoulou and Gabriel, 2001; Gabriel and Carr, 2002) and how it both unsettles participants experience of being yet at the same time enables a narrative of becoming. Finally, we argue for an extension of existing work that focuses on understanding of the role of psychological desire in different forms of organization (Anteby, 2008).

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