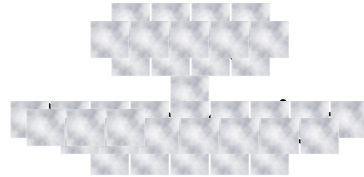


Work and Economy

Introduction to Sociology



Module outline

- No Collar: The Humane Workplace and its Hidden Costs
 - Concept overview: humane workplace vs corporate democracy
 - Defining the humane workplace
 - Hidden costs of the humane workplace
 - Humane workplace vs corporate democracy

Concept overview: humane workplace vs democratic workplace



Humane workplace: a
candyland environment that is
often alienating



Democratic workplace:
employees have a say in
management decisions

Alienation = “Alienation arises from knowing that what one is doing is not for one's own **purpose** or for what one could respect or appreciate; it is simply done for others, at their behest.” -Guy Standing, *The Precariat*

Ross, Andrew. 2004. *No-Collar: The Humane Workplace and Its Hidden Costs*. Temple University Press.

Read pages: 1-3, 15-20 (Chapter 1: “Jobs in Candyland”)

No-Collar is about a segment of the “profician” class
(many of you will join the profician class)

What is meant by “no collar”?

Social class determined by labor security



Left side = social classes with most labor security

Right side = social classes with least labor security

Elite

Salariat

Proficians

Working Class

Precariat

Underclass



Proficians

medium to high-skill and high-value white collar or no-collar occupations

Proficians derive their labor security from specialized skills and knowledge

Examples: most STEM occupations (science, technology, engineering, mathematics); doctors and lawyers; professionals in finance, insurance, accounting; marketing professionals; enterprise sales

Salariat occupations =
management

Profician occupations =
sciences; business and
financial operations;
computer & mathematical;
architecture & engineering;
sales and related; arts,
design, entertainment, etc

Working-class jobs =
production; office and
administrative support;
transportation and material
moving

What makes a “good job” for a profician?

- A. Salary
- B. Benefits (eg healthcare, childcare, paid vacation, retirement)
- C. Autonomy (eg self-management)
- D. Work-life balance (eg limits to hours worked per week)

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Andrew Ross finds that the absence of alienation is what makes a good job for a profician (although he does not say this explicitly)

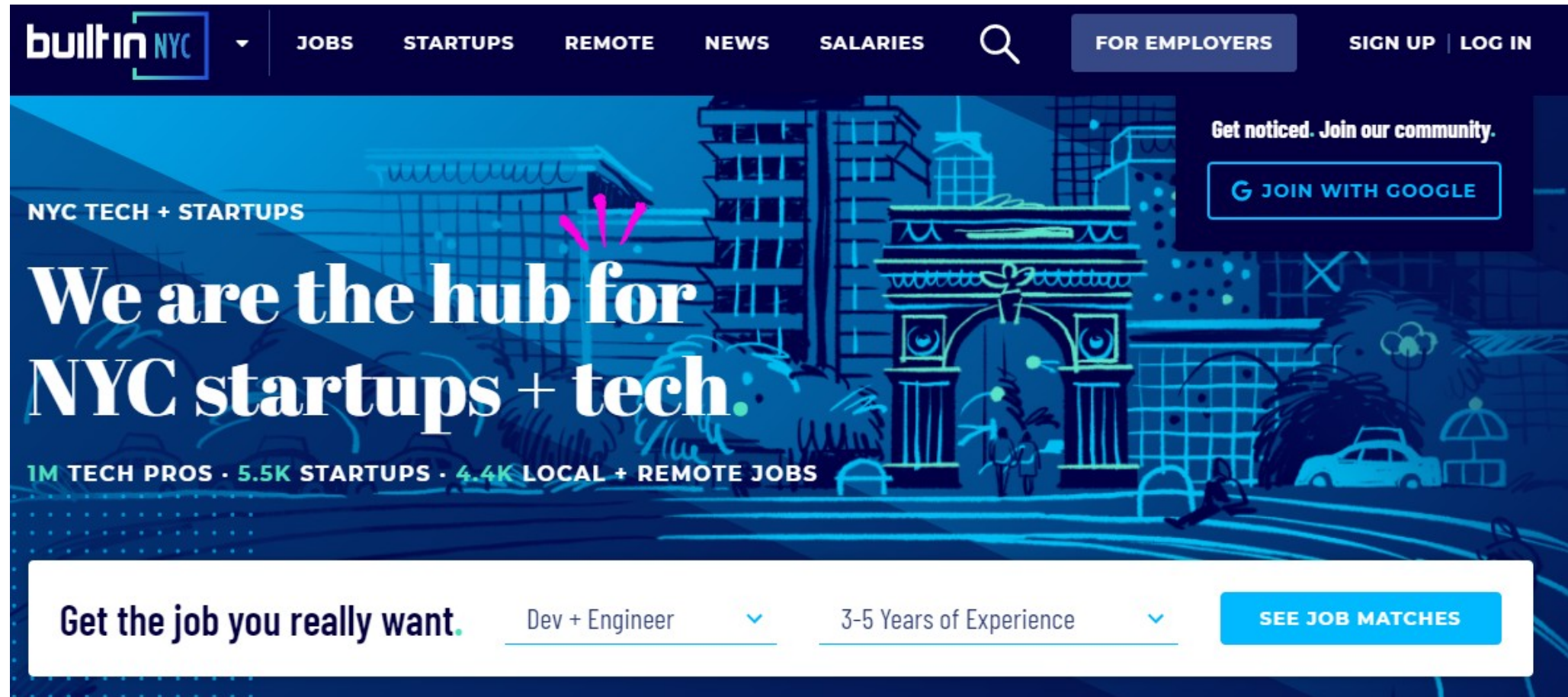
Methods: Andrew Ross interviewed hundreds of employees and did participant observation in NYC's "Silicon Alley" at two digital media companies - Razorfish.com and 360Hiphop.com, focusing on the business changes that ensued after the Internet bubble burst

The tech industry is top ten largest employers

Case study: the technology sector in NYC (i.e. “the new economy”)?

Old economy = majority of employment in manufacturing

New economy = high tech services sectors and jobs in those fields



The image is a screenshot of the 'built in NYC' website homepage. The header is dark blue with the 'built in NYC' logo on the left, followed by navigation links: JOBS, STARTUPS, REMOTE, NEWS, SALARIES, a search icon, a 'FOR EMPLOYERS' button, and 'SIGN UP | LOG IN' links. The main banner features a stylized illustration of a city street with buildings, trees, and a car. The text on the banner reads: 'NYC TECH + STARTUPS', 'We are the hub for NYC startups + tech.', and '1M TECH PROS · 5.5K STARTUPS · 4.4K LOCAL + REMOTE JOBS'. On the right side of the banner, there is a call to action: 'Get noticed. Join our community.' with a 'JOIN WITH GOOGLE' button. At the bottom, there is a white search bar with the text 'Get the job you really want.' followed by two dropdown menus: 'Dev + Engineer' and '3-5 Years of Experience', and a blue 'SEE JOB MATCHES' button.

built in NYC ▾ JOBS STARTUPS REMOTE NEWS SALARIES 🔍 [FOR EMPLOYERS](#) [SIGN UP](#) | [LOG IN](#)

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The Humane Workplace

Chapter 1: “Jobs in Candyland”

Characteristics of the “humane workplace”:

Companies in the study “...offered oodles of autonomy along with warm collegiality, much of the personal independence of the self-employed, plus all the benefits and monthly paychecks that come with a regular job, and so their employees often spoke of having the best of both worlds. Many were stunned to find out that a workplace could accommodate freedom and humanity...”



The Humane Workplace

Note: The “humane workplace” is **NOT** a democratic or just workplace...

The “humane workplace” **IS** Candyland

The Humane Workplace

Example of 'humane workplace'

Google: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ANgEo40VSE&t>

How does google promote productivity and creative thinking?

Do you think any of these methods might have "hidden costs"?

The hidden costs of the humane workplace

“The testimony collected in this book shows how and when employees bumped up against the limits of a humane workplace. Features that appeared to be healthy advances in a corporate democracy could turn into trapdoors that opened on to a bottomless seventy-hour-plus workweek. Employee self-management could result in the abdication of accountability on the part of real managers and an unfair shouldering of risk and responsibilities on the part of individuals. Flattened organizations could mean that the opportunities for promotion have dried up...”



Employee Tears
@EmployeeTears

My job has this cool thing, where if you do your job very well you get to do other peoples jobs too.

6:00 PM · 1/26/22 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

The hidden costs of the humane workplace

“Perhaps the most insidious occupational hazard of no-collar work is that **it can enlist employees’ freest thoughts and impulses in the service of salaried time...** When elements of play in the office or at home/offsite are factored into creative output, then the work tempo is being recalibrated to incorporate activities, feelings, and ideas that are normally pursued during employees’ free time. For employees who consolidate office and home, who work and play in the same clothes, and whose social life draws heavily on their immediate colleagues, there are **no longer any boundaries between work and leisure...**”



Humane workplace vs democratic workplace

“...If the effort and the product of that effort make us more human, if we feel like the owners psychologically, if not materially, of the product, and if enough of our coworkers feel the same way, then we are onto something quite rare...”

What is that “something”?

Humane workplace vs democratic workplace

- That “something” is the opposite of alienation
- Alienation = “Alienation arises from knowing that what one is doing is not for one's own **purpose** or for what one could respect or appreciate; it is simply done for others, at their behest.” -Guy Standing, *The Precariat*
- How would a democratic workplace reduce alienation?

Humane workplace vs democratic workplace

Why are there hidden costs of a humane workplace?

“In an exclusively market civilization, the **humane workplace** (with its feel-good stimulation and its tests of mettle) has taken precedence over the **just workplace** (with protection for all, **democratic control over the enterprise**, and assurances of security beyond the job).”

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