

Neoliberal Self-realisation in Vietnam and the Case of WeChoice Award

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ABSTRACT

This is a humanity-oriented research carried out with an aim to explore the neoliberal self and self-realisation in context of Vietnam, and how they are constructed in the popular annual award *WeChoice Award* (WCA) presented by VCCorp, a Vietnamese media, and communication company. Adopting the Foucauldian's theories of discourse analysis, this thesis reconstructs the historical conditions that have given rise to the neoliberal self in Vietnamese society. This is achieved through a process analysing a series of historically situated practices, with an emphasis on the economic reformation (Doi moi) launched in 1986 with the introduction of the market economy, marking the entrance of neoliberalism in Vietnam. Central to the study is the attempt to identify technologies that the award-winning individuals, called the "Inspiring persons", of WCA, use to constitute themselves through transformative narratives. It also tries to explain what self-realisation means in this specific context. The findings of the study reveal that the wave of Westernisation and cultural enlightenment in the early twentieth century, the *Economic reformation* (*Đổi mới*), followed by the wave of globalisation have given rise to the preference to the new kind of self that is the combination of neoliberal theories and socialist theories about the self. It also reveals that WCA awards have constituted the self based on four technologies, which are (1) rationality, (2) autonomy and responsibility, (3) entrepreneurship, and (4) self-esteem and positivity. As for self-realisation, the program almost equals this to dream-realisation, with an emphasis on authenticity and a kind of fullness that reconciles personal and collective interests. However, how WCA presents these discourses is rather too idealistic, lacking senses of specificity and practicality.

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