

## Labor Games: Youth, Work, and Politics in East Asia

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In Fukusaku Kinji's film *Battle Royale*, Kitano, the schoolteacher turned boot camp supervisor, begins his speech to welcome a group of middle-school graduates to the BR Camp by stating, "It is because of you that this country is going down the drain." The BR Act, he reasons, was passed to combat the mounting disorder and lack of discipline in schools. It was designed to make young people realize that their irresponsible behavior will bear consequences. We learn that *Battle Royale* is a three-day program in which the participants will hunt and kill each other until only one of them remains alive. The rules are strict; if the participants disobey them, their electronic neck collars will detonate. Further, if no one dies within any twenty-four-hour period, every collar will detonate simultaneously. Each student receives a backpack with food, water, a map, a compass, and a randomly selected object to use as a weapon. The fortunate ones receive a

firearm, a knife, or a toxic chemical agent. The less fortunate ones, however, only go to the battlefield with binoculars, coat hangers, and paper fans.

*Battle Royale* (2000) has received critical acclaim worldwide. In Japan, it has become one of the ten highest-grossing films. The film's engagement with youth bashing touched a raw nerve in recessionary Japan, where pundits relentlessly called young people spoiled and lazy, blaming them for Japan's economic woes. The film resonated with young people's experiences of the shifting expectations toward them. Certainly, young viewers did not see the film as science fiction disconnected from their everyday lives. Rather, they felt that the film bluntly spelled out what they were increasingly expected to do: to "battle it out" in conditions in which they were not equipped to win or even to survive.<sup>1</sup> The film relies on military imagery to describe the cruelty of a neoliberal labor market that allows individuals only two options: win or lose. Ann Anagnost observes that the military imagery *Battle Royale* evokes is not unique to Japan. In this imagery, Anagnost argues, personal futures are intimately intertwined with national ones. It is not only individuals who fight for survival. "These military metaphors," she writes, "resonate with the resurgence of hypernationalism in which the nation is seen as engaged in a Darwinian struggle for survival."<sup>2</sup>

The economic recession (1990–98) and financial crisis (1997–98) have led to broad-scale market liberalization in East Asia. One effect of the economic deregulation that has unfolded with striking similarity across the region is the disenfranchisement of youth in the realm of labor. This issue investigates the labor crisis of youth and its predominant manifestations—youth unemployment and underemployment. The essays collected for this issue examine these phenomena not as social anomalies but as the new faces of labor for youth. This collection of essays conceptualizes the labor crisis of youth as emblematic of a global crisis in capitalism. We examine how the politics of youth unemployment and underemployment emerge in China, Japan, and South Korea in ways that are connected to each other. A key point of connection is that these three countries have mobilized (and disenfranchised) their young demographics in their transitions from a developmental state model of economic growth toward a neoliberal model of economic management and governance. The essays collected for this issue highlight that China, Japan, and South Korea gamble with the future of

their younger population in order to secure their country's place in neoliberal globalization.<sup>3</sup> Put differently, neoliberal states in East Asia disconnect national futures from personal ones. They are struggling to maintain their economic competitiveness while closing off paths for their young to secure their own futures.<sup>4</sup>

### **Developmental States in East Asia**

A key point of connection among these countries is that they all adopted developmental state models in the early postwar period. Chalmers Johnson argues that while most states regulate their economies by protecting their citizens from the failures and excesses of the market, the developmental state more directly intervenes in the economy by designing and implementing industrial policies to secure long-term economic growth.<sup>5</sup> Johnson claims that a form of economic nationalism underwrites the operation of the developmental state. In this context, economic nationalism justifies state intervention in the economy as a necessary means to combat Western imperialism.<sup>6</sup> Johnson's theory does not juxtapose industrial policy to market forces. By analyzing the development and operation of a capitalist planned economy, Johnson aims to problematize an all too common contrast between capitalist and socialist economies. He writes, "Industrial policy is not an alternative to the market but what the state does when it intentionally alters incentives within markets in order to influence the behavior of civilian producers, consumers, and investors."<sup>7</sup> Japan, South Korea, and China are all successful examples of the developmental state. Japan established itself as the second-largest economy of the world by 1978; it held this position until 2010 when China eclipsed it. Presently, China is the second, Japan is the third, and South Korea is the fifteenth largest economy in the world.<sup>8</sup>

Between the early 1950s and the late 1970s, Japan's gross national product (GNP) grew significantly faster than the GNPs of other OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, prompting Chalmers Johnson to call Japan a "miracle modernizer."<sup>9</sup> Johnson described Japan's developmental state as an apparatus led by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). MITI governed the Japanese economy by designing economic plans, coordinating the private sector via tax breaks and

government loans, controlling resistance from consumers and workers, and protecting the national economy from transnational capital.<sup>10</sup> MITI secured spectacular growth rates until the mid-1970s, when the oil shock and the rigidity of long-term and large-scale capital investments started slowing down economic growth in Japan. This slowdown was part of a broader crisis in capital accumulation that swept through the globe in the same period. David Harvey theorized the response to the unfolding global crisis as a shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist mode of production.<sup>11</sup> Fordism—the mass production of standardized commodities to satisfy predictable mass demands—was unable to maintain economic growth. Post-Fordism, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of communication between supply and demand.<sup>12</sup>

In Japan, MITI responded to the economic slowdown by introducing post-Fordist (Toyotist) flexibility into the economy. Policy makers called these structural adjustments “informatization.”<sup>13</sup> Informatization provided a new vocabulary of rationality for MITI to embark on the project of privatizing uncompetitive public corporations. Informatization, however, was only a temporary fix. By the late 1980s, economic growth had faltered, and the burst of a speculative asset bubble between 1986 and 1991 pushed the country into a long recession.<sup>14</sup> The institutions that safeguarded the high-speed economic growth (high growth) period—the developmental state, large corporations (*keiretsu*),<sup>15</sup> and the system of lifetime employment—started to crumble. The government was under growing pressure to further the deregulation of the national economy, including the domestic labor market. Steven Vogel argues that although Japanese corporations were under mounting pressure to slim down their workforce and replace their system of lifetime employment with a system of merit-based pay, they did not abandon the postwar labor contract.<sup>16</sup> This is true. While corporations tried to preserve the system of lifetime employment for their older employees, the prolonged recession forced them to hire new employees on flexible contracts if they were not forced to freeze hiring altogether. The situation in South Korea was very similar to that of Japan.

The South Korean developmental state evolved in the context of a military dictatorship between 1960 and 1987. The succeeding civilian regimes preserved the country’s capitalist planned economy until the Asian financial cri-

sis in 1997.<sup>17</sup> During the postwar period, the South Korean state secured prosperity by drawing on an export-oriented growth model, the pillars of which were the large corporations (*chaebol*). Government loans were indispensable to help chaebols develop into corporations able to compete on the global market.<sup>18</sup> The chaebols, similar to the Japanese keiretsu, offered occupational stability. Meredith Woo-Cumings describes the Hyundai Corporation—an epitome of the chaebol—as follows: “A Hyundai employee typically drives a Hyundai car, lives in a Hyundai apartment, gets his mortgage from Hyundai credit, receives health care at a Hyundai hospital, sends his kids to school on Hyundai loans or scholarships, and eats his meals at Hyundai cafeterias.”<sup>19</sup> While the developmental state controlled the chaebols through loans, the sheer size of the chaebols gave them leverage against the state. Since the bankruptcy of a chaebol would have caused severe social turmoil, the state continued to bail out unprofitable chaebols.<sup>20</sup> In turn, it was precisely this form of government backing that allowed the chaebols to offer lifetime employment.

From the late 1980s, the economic growth rate started slowing down; from 1988, the civilian governments began opening the country to foreign capital investment. However, when the Asian financial crisis drove foreign investors to withdraw their financial investments from South Korea, the country had no other option than to sign an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1997. As a condition of receiving the IMF bailout funds, the Kim Dae Jung government agreed to make structural adjustments to the country's industrial and financial systems. The adjustments resulted in a sharp increase in the unemployment rate from 2.5 percent to 7–8 percent in 1998–99; this statistic did not include homemakers and unemployed young people who continued seeking employment. The Kim Dae Jung government adopted a more flexible postdevelopmental state that favored mediation among economic, social, and political forces as opposed to direct intervention in the economy.

In China's postwar history, the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) provided lifetime employment. Mao Zedong adopted the Soviet model of economic development, which was based on the collectivization of agricultural and industrial production. The growth of the Chinese economy was slow during the Maoist period,<sup>21</sup> but it reached 9.5 percent by the end of 1979 after

Deng Xiaoping began reforming the economy in 1978.<sup>22</sup> The growth rate remained around 9 percent until 2010. Deng followed in the footsteps of Japan and South Korea in adopting an export-driven growth model but, unlike the Japanese and South Korean models, Deng's model heavily relied on foreign direct investment (FDI).<sup>23</sup> However, FDI was much more difficult to harness in the interest of long-term and even economic development.<sup>24</sup> Pun Ngai argues that Deng's developmental state model aimed to create a competitive advantage to attract FDI by offering an inexpensive and nonunionized labor force in the production of which the Chinese state participated by maintaining the rural-urban disparity.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the developmental states of Japan and South Korea, Deng's developmental state designed plans to enhance economic growth that capitalized on social inequalities. Although China is the second-largest economy of the world, the Chinese per capita gross national income is ranked 113th in the world.<sup>26</sup>

Japan and South Korea, on the other hand, were able to secure high economic growth rates while maintaining high levels of social equality. The social formation, scholars called "mass middle-class society" in the context of Japan,<sup>27</sup> was a result of the state's heavy investment in human capital development.<sup>28</sup> Japan maintained high levels of social equality until the burst of its asset bubble in 1986, while South Korea secured nearly full employment until the IMF bailout in 1997. Lastly, although the transformation of China into a classless society was a key element in Mao's philosophy of governance, inefficient economic management prevented Mao from translating this ideal into reality. The rural-urban disparity in China survived both Mao's and Deng's developmental states.

In the past two decades the systems of lifetime employment have been breaking down throughout East Asia. During the 2000s, Japan, South Korea, and China all experienced high levels of unemployment, permanent underemployment, and persistent erosion in job security—trends that have affected young people in these countries more harshly than they affected other demographics.

## From Developmental to Neoliberal States and Labor Regimes

In the past decade, all three countries shifted from developmental to neoliberal forms of social and economic management. Unlike the developmental state that, at least initially, was wedded to the provision of employment security in all three countries, the neoliberal state adopts the principles of flexible accumulation and draws on workers who are able to adapt to mobile and precarious work conditions.<sup>29</sup> The neoliberal state incorporates youth in its growth strategies because young people—especially the unmarried and the childless—ideally satisfy the demands for labor flexibility and mobility. As volatile economies increasingly draw on youth to satisfy their ever-growing demand for a flexible workforce, the category of youth expands; determining its meaning becomes increasingly more challenging. Several essays in this issue highlight the difficulties of defining what age demographic corresponds to the category of youth. Pierre Bourdieu has suggested that the essence of neoliberalism is a wholesale dismissal of the past as a repertory of experiences that have lost value.<sup>30</sup> The notion of youth has its own complex historical genealogies in Japan, South Korea, and China. Yet, this issue builds upon the following key assumption: these particular histories are no longer relevant to defining what demographic groups the notion of youth designates, for neoliberal economies capitalize on youth as a blank slate.

As Cho Hae-joang highlights in her essay, the category of youth encompasses several generations in contemporary South Korea. In other words, what makes it difficult to define the concept of youth in South Korea is that people in their thirties and forties perceive themselves as youth because they rebelled against the past rigidities of the developmental social contract from which neoliberal governments promised to liberate them. Yet, people in their thirties and forties also identify as youth because of their inability to attain full adulthood by securing long-term employment in the current condition of perpetual economic crisis. By dismissing the past and canceling the future, neoliberalism traps youth in a state of eternal temporality.

Not only do neoliberal states exploit their young as a source of flexible and inexpensive labor but also they capitalize on their youth as a source of energy, vitality, and inspiration to identify new opportunities for value extraction. A key point to stress is that flexibility, mobility, creativity, inno-

vation, horizontal organization, and appreciation of fast-changing fashions are values that flexible accumulation and youth culture share. The paradigmatic labor subjectivity of the Fordist era was the “organization man” (in Japan, the salaryman), whose status was commensurate with his work experience.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, the driving force of neoliberal economies is youth—a segment of the population uniquely capable of accommodating the demand for organizational flexibility and mobility.<sup>32</sup> In China, for instance, where the state promotes urban development and assigns low priority to developmental projects in rural areas, the countryside remains a place where “youth can no longer find a path to the future.”<sup>33</sup> As such, the Chinese state facilitates the migration of young people from rural areas in pursuit of feasible personhoods, since only the urban centers offer opportunities to young people for self-development and self-determination. In Japan, the ideological struggles fought over the freeter phenomenon played a crucial role in tightening the link between young people and flexible work regimes.<sup>34</sup> Unlike in China, where the demand for mobility required long-distance relocation for individuals in search of employment, the new expectation for youth in Japan and South Korea to embrace mobility meant that the mainstreaming of nonstandard employment forced young workers to move (or to always be ready to move) from one short-term job to another. In the processes of capitalizing on the structural flexibility of youth, East Asian governments are effectively locking young people into a state of perpetual mobility.

While the characteristic Fordist corporations of the developmental era rewarded seniority, neoliberal economies embrace youthfulness and inexperience as key organizational principles. Corporations in neoliberal economies strive to be weightless or, at least, as lean as possible. They operate as ever-expanding *networks* of subcontractors that coordinate a flexible workforce. This workforce is expected to stay youthful in attitude by being adaptable, flexible, and willing to share in the risks volatile markets force their employers to take. Unlike the Fordist system of accumulation in the developmental era that rewarded established qualifications and work experience, network-style work organization rewards the willingness of workers to continue learning new skills throughout their working lives. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello claim that in the context of white-collar work, the project—a predominant means of learning in the context of school—becomes cen-



tral to the world of work. By organizing work as a series of projects, the workplace becomes an extension of school. The natural desire to complete a project not only adds meaning to work but also enables employers to externalize management costs.<sup>35</sup> As the continuity between the school and workplace becomes more seamless, projects become more appealing to workers because they are presented as opportunities for workers to learn new skills. Although network style management does not offer job security, it enables workers to project themselves into the future by allowing them to develop new skills that will improve their employability. This blurring of the line between the experiences of school and work is not limited to white-collar work. As the essay by Pun Ngai and Anita Koo in this issue points out, blue-collar workers employed on temporary contracts are also forced to continuously learn new skills and acquire new qualifications.

Young people are increasingly expected to complete unpaid or underpaid internship programs before they enter the job market. While employers tap these programs as sources of inexpensive labor, these programs are promoted to young people as ways to enhance their employability. At the same time, internship programs are also replacing earlier practices of on-the-job training. Although employers expect their employees to continually develop their skills, they are reluctant to cover the expenses of skill development. Instead, employees are expected to assume responsibility for these expenses as part of their résumé-building projects. Pun Ngai and Anita Koo in “A ‘World-Class’ (Labor) Camp/us” provide insight on the ways in which new vocational schooling in China operates in the guise of training and skill development. This article, which resonates with those by myself (“The Labor of Cute”), Xia Zhang (“One Life for Sale”), and Mark Driscoll (“Hyperneoliberalism”), reveals how neoliberal economies are making the worker’s subjectivity a privileged source of accumulation. All four articles showcase how employability is becoming contingent on the worker’s willingness to pay for his/her own exploitation. They also demonstrate that the very desire to attain meaningful work becomes a highly efficient apparatus of capture.

This collection of essays examines three facets of labor market deregulation and the impact of this deregulation on youth in East Asia. First, it explores the dead-ending of the human capital regime. Pun and Koo (“A

‘World-Class’ [Labor] Camp/us”), Cho (“The Spec Generation Who Can’t Say ‘No’”), and Michael Fisch (“‘Days of Love and Labor’”) investigate why the human capital argument for national development has failed to deliver on its promise. These chapters analyze the current labor crisis of youth as a prominent effect of the failure of the developmental model to secure economic growth and produce affluent societies that would be sustainable. Second, the two articles by Zhang and myself explore how emotional labor and affective labor have become new frontiers of capital accumulation. These articles analyze the rise of affective labor in the hierarchy of laboring forms as a temporary fix to the crisis of the human capital regime and to the labor crisis of youth. Lastly, the issue aims to infuse fresh blood into scholarly discussions of how young people experiment with new forms of political expression and alternative modes of living in response to shifting modes of exploitation. Jennifer Jihye Chun and Ju Hui Judy Han’s “Living and Working as Temporary Sojourners” and Mark Driscoll’s “Hyperneoliberalism: Youth, Labor, and Militant Mice in Japan” tackle the issues.

### **The Dead-Ending of the Human Capital Regime**

Human capital, a theory developed in the 1960s, aims to assess the relationship between education and employability in the context of high economic growth. Gary Becker, a principal proponent of the theory, claims that individuals can increase their human capital through investment in education and training.<sup>36</sup> When heavy industries drove economic growth, the system of human capital development was used to regulate access to the benefits of growth. By contrast, the knowledge- and innovation-driven growth model utilizes human capital to expand and diversify the sources of economic growth. Michel Feher suggests that “the neoliberal art of government is precisely about playing the human capital market, about betting for or against certain behaviors, sentiments, and lifestyles to shape the portfolios of conducts that the governed are taken to be.”<sup>37</sup> Neoliberal states link a reduction in welfare services and security systems to the increasing call for personal responsibility.<sup>38</sup> In the context of this politico-economic rationality, human capital builds on the assumption that education and training are not the only—and not even the primary—

means to increase one's human capital. Rather, every experience contributes to increasing or decreasing the value of an individual's human capital. The neoliberal notion of human capital includes factors that individuals inherit (genetic background), things that happen to them (social background, parents' investment in children), physical capital (diet, sports), and psychological capital (mental health).

Individuals can never be certain what experiences increase and what experiences decrease their human capital. In other words, the relationship between individuals and their human capital becomes speculative. Because human capital is a process, not a project that can be completed, the goal of individuals is not to simply maximize the returns on their investments but rather to continue increasing the stock value of their human capital.<sup>39</sup> In this formulation, human capital has lost its capacity to connect past, present, and future in a linear narrative of development. Although investment in human capital no longer guarantees social upward mobility, neoliberal states promote human capital development as they recognize in it the means through which individuals are able to project themselves into the future in the face of rapidly eroding systems of security.

As a never-ending process of self-development, this new formulation of human capital ideally serves the interests of employers who favor workers willing to learn ever-newer skills, even though both the employers and workers are fully aware that the shelf life of those skills is increasingly shorter. To recapitulate, more investment in human capital may or may not increase the chances of individuals for employability. In the absence of social, political, and economic systems of security, the human capital regime cannot promise any guaranteed returns on any investment. Anne Allison argues for Japan, "Without steady employment, fewer youth are marrying, having children, or leaving parental homes. Moving from job to job and getting stuck in time without the means to become 'adults,' youth are futureless—a state they also get blamed for."<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Ann Anagnost writes the following:

This vision of never-ending self-development would seem to capitalize on the energies and resilience of youth, while refusing to acknowledge the gradual erosion of life and spirit by the stresses of constantly having to remake oneself. Workers become terrorized by the specter of redundancy

when their labor power will no longer be of any “use to society.” Over the course of a lifetime, it becomes harder to maintain a forward-moving life-building project when one’s embodied value is constantly being negated.<sup>41</sup>

Neoliberal economies exclude young people from systems of job security in ever-growing numbers. The question of “use to society” illuminates the contradictions these young people face. Robert Castel notes that the dominant model of socially recognized work still refers to wage employment that comes with a career structure, rights, and benefits.<sup>42</sup> Put differently, recognized position in society—what Castel calls “social citizenship”—is still contingent on one’s ability to obtain wage work. Cho Hae-joang’s “The Spec Generation Who Can’t Say ‘No’” illustrates that when young people cannot attain wage employment, they think of themselves—and believe others perceive them—as “surplus” human beings who are of no use to society. However, these young people are instrumental to ensuring the flexibility of the economy, for they constitute a labor reserve that can flexibly be engaged and disengaged as market demands fluctuate. Yet, as many of these young people postpone having their own families, their contribution to social reproduction and, by extension, their use to society is questioned. As Zhang in “One Life for Sale” and I in “The Labor of Cute” show, it is this particular contradiction that prompts young people to turn to affective labor—a form of labor that produces not only intangible commodities but also life itself.<sup>43</sup> Young people seek in this form of labor an alternative to wage employment that could potentially open access for them to social citizenship.

This issue includes an essay by Pun Ngai and Anita Koo that describes how the school system in China responds to the neoliberal idea of human capital development. The essay highlights that the human capital regime fails its promise of social upward mobility, thereby widening the gap between young people’s desires and their realities. The more qualifications young people attain, the less they are willing to settle for underpaid and exploitative factory work. At the same time, work they would find meaningful is decreasingly available, even to young people with educational credentials beyond the level of compulsory education. For Japan, my essay highlights a pervasive sense of uncertainty among Japanese youth that emerged from the inability of the liberal notion of human capital development to

serve a neoliberal model of social engineering and economic management. In this issue, Cho Hae-joang demonstrates that in South Korea the crisis of the human capital regime, epitomized by the escalating demand for youth to acquire ever-newer skills, has generated a ruthless competition that begins as soon as children enter the school system. She shows how the mobilization of mothers to the cause of managing this competition ends up catalyzing the privatization of education. At the same time, by exploring how South Korean youth go as far as to take on highly precarious forms of employment in North America in order to learn English, Jennifer Jihye Chun and Ju Hui Judy Han provide insight into the excesses of the human capital regime.

The departure point for Pun and Koo's essay is the proposition that the Chinese state attracts foreign direct investment by offering transnational corporations a massive reserve of cheap labor. The Chinese state strives to add value to this labor force by expanding vocational education and encouraging rural youth to earn degrees from these schools. However, Pun and Koo argue that vocational schools do not enable students to enhance their employability. These schools only supply cheap labor, for they require their students to work in factories in the guise of internship programs. The essay argues that Foxconn plays a central role in blurring the line between school and work in the interest of encouraging young people to continuously develop new skills. Foxconn factories, which include cafeterias, hospitals, and sport facilities, are promoted as world-class "campuses." Their design conflates the separation between school and work, but they do not offer opportunities for social mobility. These factories are highly efficient apparatuses of value extraction that only offer youth dead-end and highly exploitative work. The essay highlights that since young people are decreasingly able to project themselves into the future, they experience growing levels of anxiety and despair. This tendency is evidenced by the fact that in 2010 alone, eighteen young workers attempted suicide at Foxconn's production facilities. The essay concludes that China's spectacular economic growth is predicated upon the permanent labor crisis of youth.

For South Korea, Cho Hae-joang examines how the financial crisis of 1997–98 and the concomitant socioeconomic deregulation have turned two generations of youth against each other: the generation that entered college during the 1990s and the generation that followed a decade later. The 1990s

generation, which the media called the “new generation,” played an active role in rebuilding the South Korean economy after the IMF debt crisis. Both the state and the private sector invested in their entrepreneurial initiatives as a way to reboot economic growth. While the new generation strived to harness the creative energies the crisis had unleashed, the unfolding crisis has overpowered the following generation Cho calls the “spec generation.” She argues that the members of the spec generation are preoccupied with acquiring “specs” (specifications) to increase their employability and life chances. While the new generation focused on organizing social movements, the spec generation struggles to articulate possible political positions. This generation is only slowly beginning to realize that their overinvestment in education will neither necessarily help them attain job security nor enhance their chances of social upward mobility. Since they are unable to secure their futures, they rely on their parents to sustain forward-moving life projects. Cho points out that the pervasive sense of indebtedness that binds the members of the spec generation to their parents channels young people to adopt behaviors characterized by docility and reluctance to challenge authority. This generation, for instance, is not critical of the state that asks young people to accept the cutthroat competition on a volatile labor market. If the spec generation ever engages in any kind of activism, Cho concludes, it will be “affective activism”—a form of activism that is based on the values of caring and solidarity.<sup>44</sup>

In this issue, Michael Fisch turns to a *keitai* (smartphone) game, Days of Love and Labor (*Ai to rōdō no hibi*), to examine how young Japanese people reflect on transformations in the realm of labor. He identifies the game’s appeal in the question the game poses: is it possible to achieve happiness by devoting one’s life to work? The game is impossible to beat, suggesting that employment in Japan is structured in a way that it offers nothing but alienation and unmanageable debt. Fisch examines how the decision of the game designers to model the main character after the salaryman of the postwar period intersects with concurrent discourses of youth and employment. He argues that by valorizing information labor, the game designers endorse a neoliberal model of human capital development. His review of the online discussion of the game, however, reveals that players interpret and enjoy the game in ways unintended by the game designers. This response to the game, Fisch argues, sheds light on young

people's refusal to accept work as an alienating experience and highlights a collective desire to reflect on the (im)possibility of happiness in life under capitalism.

### **Emotional and Affective Labor as New Frontiers of Capital Accumulation**

Drawing on Maurizio Lazzarato's work on immaterial labor,<sup>45</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri define immaterial labor as "labor that creates immaterial products, such as knowledge, information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional response."<sup>46</sup> They identify intellectual and affective labor as the principal forms of immaterial labor. According to Hardt and Negri, affective labor—performed typically by flight attendants and fast-food workers—is "labor that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion."<sup>47</sup> Although this issue builds on Hardt and Negri's work, it maintains the distinction between affective labor and emotional labor. Arlie Hochschild defines emotional labor as an unremunerated part of service work that requires service providers to personalize impersonal commercial transactions by giving something personal, such as a smile, to customers with whom they have no personal relationship.<sup>48</sup> In this issue, we use emotional labor to designate the component of service and care work (both in the material mode, as well as in the immaterial mode) that entails the investment of emotions in the interest of amplifying the effects of the labor expended. Emotional labor is a part of the work service workers and care providers pursue that is not compensated with wage and, in many cases, is not acknowledged as productive labor.

By contrast, affective labor designates a productive process in which subjectivity is invested in its entirety to produce affective commodities and relationships. Although affective labor can be performed as part of service and care work, it is most characteristic of work in the culture and creative industries. Michael Hardt identifies the potential in affective labor to function as a source of biopower from below, defining biopower as "the power of the creation of life, . . . the production of collective subjectivities, sociality, and society itself."<sup>49</sup> While we draw inspiration from Hardt's analysis, we highlight that emotional labor also participates in the production and

reproduction of life. In our view, it is not biopolitical production that distinguishes affective labor from emotional labor. Rather, we see the main difference between affective labor and emotional labor in the degree to which these forms of labor generate what Kathi Weeks calls the “subjectification effect.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, we stress that although affective and emotional labor may produce similar effects, they differently draw on subjectivity. In this issue, we use the notion of affective labor to designate a productive process that requires workers “to invest their subjectivity—first, their emotions and then everything else that constitutes them as unique individuals, including their life experiences, memories, intimate beliefs, ethics, affective commitments, and political sensibilities—as the raw material of valorization.”<sup>51</sup>

Affective labor epitomizes an intensification of certain tendencies that emotional labor has pioneered in the realm of work. These tendencies include the destabilization of the separation between work and nonwork, as well as the drawing on constitutive parts of subjectivity once perceived as inalienable as new sources of value extraction. A key point to stress is that affective labor played an instrumental role in adapting the human capital regime to the neoliberal era. As noted earlier, neoliberal states strive to secure economic growth and increase labor productivity not through enforcing external mechanisms of regulating subjectivity but through feeding the workers’ desire for and sense of entitlement to fulfilling work. In neoliberal economies, affective labor becomes a privileged form of labor because it is conducive to the integration of processes of capital accumulation with practices of human capital development. Unlike labor power in the context of factory work, affective labor power is an inalienable part of subjectivity. Its marketization is far more complex than the selling and buying of manual labor.

According to Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, the destruction of forms of life conducive to the fulfillment of human potential and creativity triggered the crisis in capitalism in the early 1970s.<sup>52</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello argue that the crisis has evolved from the growing tensions between two contradictory trends. On the one hand, the relentless rationalization of work has significantly deteriorated the conditions of work. On the other hand, the imperative for workers to continue improving their human capital has significantly raised the educational level of workers. The higher the indi-



viduals' educational credentials are, the less likely the individuals are willing to settle for work they deem unfulfilling. The tensions between worsening work conditions and an increasingly highly educated workforce have sharpened in the last four decades. In this issue, several essays highlight that it is these tensions that drive young people in contemporary China, Japan, and South Korea to affective labor. By tantalizing young people with the possibility of self-growth and self-realization in work, affective labor promises a solution to the crisis of the human capital regime. Essays in this issue demonstrate that this promise has remained largely unfulfilled. Xia Zhang and I trace how Chinese and Japanese youth experiment with emotional and affective labor in the digital economy as they seek work that they see as relevant to their projects of self-realization.

As Zhang shows in her essay, the shadow of exploitative factory work provides an important backdrop for understanding why young Chinese people turn to affective labor. She emphasizes how in China, where the state endorses exploitative work conditions in the interest of national development, many young adults choose to embrace more risk and uncertainty by attempting to earn an income from activities not normally acknowledged as productive work. This issue interprets the recent rise in the value of affective labor as a historically specific expression of young people's resistance to highly precarious labor conditions that are increasingly becoming mainstream. For Japan, I investigate how the digital economy mobilized young women to perform emotional labor during the recession that brought about a soaring care deficit. In our articles, Zhang and I argue that young people turn to affective labor to resist their mobilization to flexible regimes of emotional labor in the service industries. However, these chapters also reveal that both governments and private sectors tap this trend and reevaluate these genres of labor as new sources of value. Put differently, it was a consequence of youth's searching for meaning in work that affective labor and emotional labor were reassessed as productive for the purposes of capital accumulation and national survival.<sup>53</sup>

In "The Labor of Cute," I analyze how the digital economy in contemporary Japan harnesses young women's search for meaningful work to develop new apparatuses of extracting value from activities not typically recognized as work. The digital economy, I claim, has adopted a particular mode of

accumulation—the *social factory*—that has expanded sources of value extraction by further eroding the line between paid/productive and unpaid/reproductive labor. I argue that while women strive to use digital media to improve their chances for social mobility, the digital economy uses them to expand its practices to extract value from unwaged labor. The article demonstrates that, resonant with the ways in which women’s unwaged labor in the home was instrumental to maintaining the socioeconomic order of the high-growth period, women’s unpaid labor remains central to a society in which labor precarity generates a growing demand for emotional labor.

In “One Life for Sale,” Xia Zhang argues that urban youth in China turn to affective labor both to create new income-earning opportunities and to articulate a political response—what she calls “new idealism”—to youth unemployment and underemployment. Zhang centers her article on Chen Xiao, a young unemployed college graduate who put her “remaining lifetime” up for sale online in 2008. Chen offered services ranging from finding the perfect gift for a client to taking pictures of another client’s newborn baby. She blogged about these activities extensively and inspired imitators nationwide. Zhang conceptualizes Chen’s project as a creative experiment in affective labor. She argues that the idea of selling one’s remaining lifetime appealed to young people because it reconciled the contradictions between the state’s endorsement of self-enterprising (and thus depoliticized) citizens and young people’s search for a meaningful life. Zhang concludes her article by claiming that “new idealism” enables Chinese youth to envision a future that aligns with the state’s vision of how young people ought to advance the project of national development.

### **The Production of Alternative Modes of Living**

Several essays in this issue explore how young people experiment with alternative modes of living and new forms of political expression in response to shifting modes of exploitation. A point of convergence across East Asia is that forces of economic deregulation have successfully devalued notions of class, class struggle, and class consciousness.<sup>54</sup> In China, Pun Ngai argues, the departure from the Maoist past was accompanied by the devaluation of the language of class “to clear the way for a neoliberal economic dis-

course that emphasizes individualism, professionalism, and equal opportunities.”<sup>55</sup> To advance the agenda of national development while making China appealing to transnational capital, the Chinese government encouraged rural migration but contained the formation of a new industrial working class. In postwar Japan and South Korea, the integration of populations into distinct social formations, theorized as mass middle-class society, was a strategy to secure consumer-driven growth and national development.<sup>56</sup> This strategy, however, has also functioned to deplete meaning from the concept of class. The trajectory of the Japanese activist Amamiya Karin from right-wing to leftist politics illustrates how young people are struggling to identify a viable political language that helps them express solidarity and articulate new visions of livable lives.<sup>57</sup>

In this issue, Jennifer Jihye Chun and Ju Hui Judy Han’s article “Language Travels and Global Aspirations of Korean Youth” explores how young people strive to create alternative modes of living. J. K. Gibson-Graham’s notion of postcapitalist politics sheds insight into the politics of these youth-led initiatives and movements.<sup>58</sup> Julie Gibson and Katherine Graham criticize contemporary leftist political analyses that conceptualize neoliberalism as “global capitalism’s consolidating regulative regime” and depict the world as “full of cruelty, misery, and loss, a place of domination and systemic oppression.”<sup>59</sup> This political position, they conclude, only reinforces paranoia and melancholia. Instead, they suggest, “If we are to make the shift from victimhood to potency, from judgment to enactment, from protest to positive projects, we also need to work on the moralistic stance that clings to a singular conception of power and blocks experimentation with power in its many forms.”<sup>60</sup> Gibson and Graham stress that the production of positive affects allows for the identification of new spaces of possibility. By generating an affective relationship with the world, postcapitalist politics recognizes that interdependence and incompleteness can be sources of empowerment. This recognition enables postcapitalist politics to point a way beyond the global capitalist system. As opposed to leftist politics that conceives a political community as a group of individuals subjected to the same mechanisms of oppression, postcapitalist politics aims to create “new forms of community energized by pleasure, fun, eroticism, and connection across all sorts of divides and differences.”<sup>61</sup>

What Anne Allison theorizes as affective activism in the context of contemporary Japan exemplifies postcapitalist politics. Allison argues that Aamiya Karin, a political activist who gives public talks to discourage young people from suicide, and nonprofit organizations that provide food, shelter, or advice to young people illustrate the subversive power in affective labor.<sup>62</sup> She states that these initiatives are “stitching a fabric of sociality out of the daily struggles and diverse resources of strangers.”<sup>63</sup> These initiatives epitomize an “ethopolitics” of care she defines as “a new configuration of control developing around, but beyond, the biopolitics of the moment, with its technologies of self that privatize care through, for example, the market in social prosthetics.”<sup>64</sup> Criticizing the state that has abandoned its responsibility to ensure the well-being of its citizens, youth-led affective activism generates new communities and communal bonds. The ethopolitics of affective activism is the pursuit and recreation of life—the production of new forms of sociality to help disenfranchised young people survive. Allison concludes, “Such endeavors exemplify the subversive potential of affective labor. This is a vitalist politics that creates forms of connectedness that, quite literally, sustain people in their everyday lives.”<sup>65</sup>

This issue explores the new political imaginaries that emerge from the labor crisis of youth. A key characteristic of these emerging political positions is that young people no longer bargain mainly for less exploitative employment conditions. Rather, they have begun criticizing capitalism itself. Having witnessed how the developmental state has consumed the lives of their parents and grandparents in the interest of economic growth, young Japanese people strive to imagine futures beyond capitalism. In this issue, Mark Driscoll argues that the emergence of a new brand of postcapitalist politics represents a positive effect of excessive deregulation, which he calls “hyperneoliberalism.” Similarly, Michael Fisch highlights that young Japanese people’s criticism of their parents’ work-oriented lives is a crucial part of this younger population’s struggles to develop a new political imaginary. The question emerging from these struggles is whether young people can envision the pursuit of happiness beyond the binarism of regular and irregular employment. As Fisch reveals in his essay, by insisting that the life of the salaryman in postwar Japan was not a happy life, young people chal-

lunge the assumption that projects of self-fulfillment ought to be pursued in conjunction with work.

The postcapitalist orientation of these new political imaginaries also manifests itself in a revitalized emphasis on the importance of developing new collectivities that are built on individuals' willingness to care for one another. In this issue, several essays spotlight how young people no longer believe that they can expect help and care from the state. Zhang and I agree that the very fact that young women turn to care work in search of employment confirms young people's acceptance of the withdrawal of the state from the provision of care. At the same time, the young women Zhang studied in China derive a sense of pride from their engagement in care work, an indication that they work toward revitalizing social ties and building new collectivities within which market principles do not entirely subsume help and care. What these young women advocate is a politics of engagement that they consider indispensable to the project of reviving a sense of the communal. In China, Zhang posits, young Chinese women seek in affective labor not only an income-earning opportunity but also the possibility of creating a new culture of civic engagement. Zhang calls this emerging politics "new idealism." In Japan, I argue, net idols' performances of cute reestablish practices of care in the absence of a welfare system that serves unemployed and underemployed youth. Both Zhang and I found that the young women we studied were reluctant to see their work as "care work" and thus as a source of exploitation. We suggest that in conditions in which salary, status, or job security does not serve as a source from which workers could cultivate a sense of self-worth, the workers derive a sense of pride from reinstating the value of helping each other that they consider the foundation of a more humane society.

In "Hyperneoliberalism," Mark Driscoll discusses three main figures of the new activist left in Japan—Hirai Gen, Matsumoto Hajime, and Ama-miya Karin. He interprets the works of these activists as projects to sketch out a future beyond capitalism itself. The departure point for Driscoll's essay is the claim that Japan transitioned too rapidly from a developmental model of growth to a neoliberal economic model, thus giving rise to a new configuration of neoliberalism Driscoll conceptualizes as "hyperneoliberal-

ism.” He claims that beginning in the mid-1990s, Japanese industry leaders backed by the Liberal Democratic Party have deregulated the labor market to maintain profitability. As a result, the system of lifetime employment has crumbled, and precarious forms of employment have proliferated. The poverty rate has doubled during the past twenty years, producing huge income disparities. Against this background, Driscoll sheds light on a positive effect of hyperneoliberalism in Japan—the emergence of a new-leftist culture and politics that not only contests neoliberalism but also charts paths to a future beyond capitalism.

Lastly, Jennifer Jihye Chun and Ju Hui Judy Han analyze the salient trend among young Koreans to pursue English-language education in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines to enhance their career prospects in the hypercompetitive job market back home. Chun and Han claim that from the perspective of the Korean youth, the value of these short-term, semistructured “international experiences” extends beyond language training. Based on an in-depth study of temporary Korean residents in Vancouver, Chun and Han explore the everyday experiences and subjective transformations produced by overseas English-language travel. Drawing upon ethnography, surveys, interviews, and focus groups, they find that temporary sojourns to English-speaking destinations such as Vancouver represent more than rational, instrumental strategies to enhance one’s future employability and socioeconomic advancement. Instead, these experiences constitute an evaluative terrain in which Korean youth assess and reassess their mobility strategies, life trajectories, and identities in the context of Korea’s seemingly relentless pursuit of individual and national advancement in an economically and racially stratified world order. In this sense, Chun and Han conclude that overseas language travels operate as spaces that both reinscribe as well as destabilize existing social hierarchies along race, class, and nation.

This issue depicts young people in dismal situations. It speaks of college graduates who sell their remaining lifetime online, claiming that their lives are not worth living; young factory workers who commit suicide to reject the inhumane conditions within which they are forced to labor; overeducated and underemployed professionals who live on their neighbors’ leftover food; white-collar workers who live in Internet cafes;

or young people whose political awakening is rooted in their reflections on how they became “losers,” “individuals who have nothing special to offer,” or “surplus human beings.” Although the examples are numerous, this issue steers away from portraying youth as the collateral damage of economic deregulation. Further, this issue aims to go beyond understanding youth as a segment of the population that is “at risk” and/or that “is forced to embrace risk.” Rather, the essays collected for this issue highlight that young people’s resilience, willingness to productively engage risk, and insistence on maintaining forward-moving life projects reconfirm and reinforce this population’s centrality to the very design and logic of neoliberal labor regimes. While it is in the realm of labor where young people most clearly experience and most fervently negotiate their disenfranchisement in neoliberal economies, the new political imaginaries they are developing point a way beyond the world of labor. Young people demand not only more work or less exploitative labor conditions but also a more equal distribution of livable lives in which one’s embodied value is not contingent on one’s employability.

## Notes

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1. Andrea Arai, “The Neo-liberal Subject of Lack and Potential: Developing ‘the Frontier Within’ and Creating a Reserve Army of Labor in 21st Century Japan,” *rhizomes* 10 (Spring 2005). [www.rhizomes.net/issue10/arai.htm](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue10/arai.htm).

2. Ann Anagnost, "Introduction: Life Making in Neoliberal Times," in *Global Futures in East Asia*, ed. Ann Anagnost, Andrea Arai, and Hai Ren (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 1–27.
3. *Neoliberal globalization* refers to the trend in which neoliberal policies during the 1980s opened up the whole world to transformative market and financial forces. See Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).
4. Using Karl Marx's critique of Georg W. F. Hegel, Bruce Cumings calls this "artificial class making," which he understands as a by-product of full-blown industrialization. See Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1844), in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 247–49.
5. Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982).
6. *Ibid.*; Bruce Cumings adds that the Japanese developmental state was a variant of the European tradition of state building and not a state form sui generis. See Cumings, "Webs with No Spider, Spiders with No Webs: The Genealogy of the Developmental State," in *The Developmental State*, ed. M. Woo-Cumings (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 61–92.
7. Chalmers Johnson, "The Developmental State: Odyssey of a Concept," in *The Developmental State*, ed. M. Woo-Cumings (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 32–60, 48.
8. "GDP Ranking," The World Bank, [data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table) (accessed September 10, 2013).
9. Johnson, "Developmental State," 48.
10. *Ibid.*, 37–39.
11. *Ibid.*
12. On the informatization of the economy, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
13. The adjustments were started by the Tanaka Kakuei administration (1972–74) and reached a peak with the privatization of major state-owned enterprises during the Nakasone Yasuhiro government (1982–87). See Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Beyond Computopia: Information, Automation, and Democracy in Japan* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1988). David Harvey has analyzed this global crisis in terms of a shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, namely, a shift from long-term and large-scale capital investments toward innovation that became the new center of economic gravity. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
14. According to Chalmers Johnson, the Japanese government allowed a speculative asset bubble to develop because it was too confident in the strength of its economy. The spiraling increase in real-estate prices was based on overinvestment in productive capacity and unrestrained bank lending using inflated real-estate prices as collateral. What caused the



- recession was not only the burst of the speculative asset bubble but also the slowness of the government to reform the banking system. See Chalmers Johnson, "Developmental State," 33.
15. The keiretsu developed from the pre–World War II *zaibatsu* (large business conglomerates) system, an example of which is Mitsui. Mitsui was involved in coal mining, aluminum production, ship and aircraft building, the manufacturing of small electrical appliances, banking, insurance services, and trade. There are two types of keiretsu. The horizontal keiretsu is a mutual insurance system characterized by minority cross-shareholding, regular communication of top executives, and general cooperation for mutual benefit. Examples of horizontal keiretsu are Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Mitsui, Sanwa, Fuyo, and Dai Ichi Kangyo. The vertical keiretsu is a lead firm that organizes its own supplier network. Examples are large auto and electronics firms that have their own suppliers, sub-suppliers, sales, and distribution companies.
  16. Steven Vogel, *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
  17. The financial crisis was triggered by the burst of a speculative bubble in Thailand. The crisis led to an unexpected and massive withdrawal of foreign short-term investments not only from Thailand but also from Indonesia and South Korea, leaving these countries unable to continue paying their foreign debts. See Jesook Song, *South Koreans in the Debt Crisis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009). See also Paul Krugman, "What Happened to Asia," January 1998, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, [web.mit.edu/krugman/www/DISINTER.html](http://web.mit.edu/krugman/www/DISINTER.html).
  18. Meredith Woo-Cumings, introduction to *The Developmental State*, ed. M. Woo-Cumings (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1–31.
  19. *Ibid.*, 18.
  20. *Ibid.*; see also Eun Mee Kim, *Big Business, Strong State: Collusion and Conflict in South Korean Development, 1960–1990* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997).
  21. Per capita growth was 2.3 percent a year compared with a world average of 2.6 percent. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run: The Maoist Transformation and Its Impact," [www.oecd.org/dev/chineseeconomicperformanceinthelongrunthemaolisttransformationanditsimpact.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dev/chineseeconomicperformanceinthelongrunthemaolisttransformationanditsimpact.htm) (accessed May 10, 2015).
  22. See "Chinese Economic Reform," Wikipedia, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_economic\\_reform](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_economic_reform) (accessed May 10, 2015).
  23. In the early postwar years, Japan and South Korea adopted an export-driven model of development and economic growth. Japan and South Korea were aided in their developmental projects by the United States. The United States opened its markets to exports from Japan and South Korea while not requiring these nations to open their own markets or to give up control over their domestic financial systems. What explains this generosity that the

- United States maintained until the mid-1980s is the place of Japan and South Korea in US defense planning in the geopolitical context of the Cold War. Equally relevant, economic prosperity and political stability in these countries served the interests of the United States in that they were less likely to convert to socialist forms of governance and economic management. See T. J. Pempel, “Revisiting the Japanese Economic Model,” in *Japan and China in the World Political Economy*, ed. Saadia M. Pekkanen and Kellee S. Tsai (New York: Routledge, 2005), 29–44.
24. Mark Beeson notes that as a result of its heavy reliance on FDI, China’s industrialization is uneven, technology transfer has been limited, and the competitive sectors of the economy have not significantly helped develop other less competitive sectors of the economy. See Beeson, “Developmental States in East Asia: A Comparison of the Japanese and Chinese Experiences,” *Asian Perspective* 33, no. 2 (2009): 5–39. See also Kellee S. Tsai and Sarah Cook, “Developmental Dilemmas in China: Socialist Transition and Late Liberalization,” in *Japan and China in the World Political Economy*, ed. Saadia M. Pekkanen and Kellee S. Tsai (London: Routledge, 2005), 130–50.
  25. Pun Ngai, *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
  26. See Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html> (accessed May 10, 2015).
  27. Ezra Vogel, *Japan’s New Middle Class: The Salary Man and His Family in a Tokyo Suburb* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).
  28. The developmental states in Japan and South Korea conceived human capital development as a crucial prerequisite for economic growth. The presumption was that an educated labor force was quicker to master technologies imported from abroad and to translate their experiences with imported technologies into domestic technological innovation. See Paul Romer, “Endogenous Technological Change,” *Journal of Political Economy* 98, no. 5, pt. 2 (1990): 71–102.
  29. Neoliberal state forms started proliferating throughout the world from the late 1970s onward. In the United States, Ronald Reagan, while in the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher, adopted market liberalization to boost economic growth. In China, in 1978, Deng Xiaoping began constructing a particular form of market economy that incorporates neoliberal elements while preserving the role of the state in coordinating economic development.
  30. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Essence of Neoliberalism,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, [mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu](http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu) (accessed May 10, 2015).
  31. See William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956). Whyte has argued that US citizens working for large corporations tended to subordinate their individualism to a collectivist ethos. As they enjoyed lifetime employment, company executives—whom he interviewed for his book—adopted risk-averse behaviors. The Japa-

- nese version of the organization man is the so-called salaryman. (See the essays by Michael Fisch and Mark Driscoll in this issue.)
32. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); David Harvey, "Flexibility: Threat or Opportunity?," *Socialist Review* 21, no. 1 (1991): 65–78.
  33. Yan Hairong, *New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development, and Women Workers in China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 44.
  34. *Freeter*—a hybrid of the English word *free* and the German word *arbeiter* (worker)—refers to young people in their twenties and thirties who drift from one short-term job to another. In 2009, approximately 35 percent of young workers between the ages of 15 and 34 were employed in temporary positions. See *Kōseirōdōshō: Heisei 21–nen jakunensha koyo jittai chōsa kekka no gaijyo* (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare: Summary of the Survey Results of the Employment Condition for Young People in 2009), Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, [www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/itiran/roudou/koyou/young/h21/jigy.html](http://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/itiran/roudou/koyou/young/h21/jigy.html) (accessed May 10, 2015). See also Mark Driscoll, "Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan," *Cultural Critique* 65 (Fall 2007): 164–87; Yoshitaka Mōri, "Culture = Politics: The Emergence of New Cultural Forms of Protest in the Age of Freeter," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (2005): 17–29; Glenn Hook and Hiroko Takeda, "Self Responsibility and the Nature of the Postwar Japanese State: Risk through the Looking Glass," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 93–123. Mary C. Brinton, *Lost in Transition: Youth, Work, and Instability in Postindustrial Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
  35. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2007).
  36. Gary S. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).
  37. Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital," *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009): 33.
  38. Thomas Lemke, "'The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College de France on Neo-liberal Governmentality," *Economy and Society* 30, no. 2 (2001): 190–207.
  39. Feher, "Self-Appreciation."
  40. Anne Allison, "The Cool Brand, Affective Activism, and Japanese Youth," *Theory, Culture and Society* 26, nos. 2–3 (2009): 89–111, 90.
  41. Anagnost, "Introduction," 14–15.
  42. Robert Castel, "Work and Usefulness to the World," *International Labour Review* 135, no. 6 (1996): 615–22.
  43. Michael Hardt, "Affective Labor," *Boundary 2* 26, no. 2 (1999): 89–100.
  44. Allison, "Cool Brand."
  45. Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*,

- ed. Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133–51.
46. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 108. See also Hardt, “Affective Labor.”
  47. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 108.
  48. Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
  49. Hardt, “Affective Labor,” 98.
  50. Weeks writes, “To the extent that the category of affect traverses the division of mind and body, reason, and emotion, and confounds the ontological containment these dichotomies enable, it can better register the power of the subjectification effect that Hochschild’s analysis reveals. Moreover, as a category that highlights the produced and productive qualities of the phenomenon it can better resist the kind of naturalization of emotion that Hochschild wants to contest” (Kathi Weeks, “Life within and against Work,” *ephemera* 7, no. 1 [2007]: 233–49, 241). On the difference between affect and emotion, see also Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 23–45. For Massumi, affect is nonconscious, presubjective, and nonsignifying. On the other hand, he characterizes emotion as something that is conscious and can be attributed to an already constituted subject. Emotion is affect captured by a subject. Subjects possess their own emotions, but they cannot possess affect. He writes, “Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is” (35).
  51. Gabriella Lukacs, “Dreamwork: Cell Phone Novelists, Labor, and Politics in Contemporary Japan,” *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 1 (2013): 48.
  52. Boltanski and Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism*.
  53. In Japan, this trend culminated in the 1990s in the “cool Japan” phenomenon. See Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
  54. Another point of connection among East Asian countries was the co-optation of leftist labor movements that followed different trajectories in different national contexts. See Andrew Gordon, *The Wages of Affluence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Hagen Koo, *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2001); Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). On work and unionism, see also Jennifer Jihje Chun, “Contesting Legal Liminality: The Gendered Labor Politics of Irregular Workers in South Korea,” in *New Millennium South Korea: Neoliberal Capitalism and Transnational Movements*, ed. Jesook Song (New York: Routledge, 2011), 63–83.
  55. Pun Ngai, *Made in China*, 47. For scholarship on how discourses of national development

- branded the labor mobility of migrants as a form of *suzhi* accumulation, see Ann Anagnost, "The Corporeal Politics of Quality (*Suzhi*)," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 189–208; Yan, *New Masters, New Servants*. Similarly, Lisa Hoffman coins the term *patriotic professionalism* to claim that young Chinese professionals choose to work for local companies, arguing that these jobs better position them to serve their country. See Lisa Hoffmann, *Patriotic Professionalism in Urban China: Fostering Talent* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010). By contrast, this issue illustrates how young people in contemporary China, Japan, and South Korea negotiate the idea that each individual is an enterprise in him or herself.
56. Vogel, *Japan's New Middle Class*; Nancy Abelmann, *The Melodrama of Mobility: Women, Talk, and Class in Contemporary South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); Hagen Koo, "Middle Classes, Democratization, and Class Formation: The Case of South Korea," *Theory and Society* 20, no. 4 (1991): 485–509. For growing class disparities in Japan, see Tachibanaki Toshiaki, "Introduction: From Difference to Poverty," in *Kakusa to hinkon: 20 kō (Difference and Poverty: 20 Cases)*, ed. Makino Tomio and Murakami Eigo (Tōkyō: Akashi Shoten, 2008), 8–18; Yuasa Makoto, *Hanhinkon: "Suberidaishakai" kara no dasshutsu (Reverse Poverty: Escape from a "Sliding Down Society")* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shinsho, 2008).
  57. Amamiya Karin, *Ikisasero! Nanminkasuru waqamonotachi (Survive! The Refugeeization of Young People)* (Tōkyō: Ōta Shuppan, 2007); Amamiya Karin and Kayano Toshihiko, "Ikizurasa" nitsuite: *Hinkon, aidentiti, nashyonarizumu (Concerning "Hardship of Life": Poverty, Identity, Nationalism)* (Tōkyō: Kobunshashinsho, 2007).
  58. J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
  59. *Ibid.*, 4 and 7, respectively.
  60. *Ibid.*, 6.
  61. *Ibid.*, 18.
  62. Allison, "Cool Brand." Allison's essay sheds light on the thin line between emotional labor and affective labor.
  63. *Ibid.*, 105.
  64. *Ibid.*, 103.
  65. *Ibid.*, 106.

