The Social Life of Human Capital:
The Rise of Social Economy, Entrepreneurial Subject, 
and Neosocial Government in South Korea

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This dissertation explores the rise of social economy in South Korea, in order to understand the transformations of sociality, ethicality, and subjectivity in the contemporary capitalism. In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, we have witnessed “the return of the social” through introduction of various socio-economic projects—such as social economy, social innovation, and social entrepreneurship—that aim to graft morality and sociality onto the market. In the last decade, South Korea’s social economy sector has also grown quickly with the active support and promotion by the government, representing a new model of development as well as a feasible solution to reproduction crisis. This rapid growth has generated public and academic debates over whether the returned “socials” are the seeds of post-neoliberalism or just an ideological cloak for the expansion of market rationality. Based on ethnographic research on the social economy sector in Seoul, this dissertation focuses on an often-neglected question in these debates: what forms of the social imaginary, knowledge, subjectivity, and ethicality have emerged in the new “socials” as a result of the imbrication of moral aspirations with the neoliberal human condition?
To address the question, I first demonstrate how contemporary neoliberalism presupposes a new form of *homo economicus*, human capital, who is expected to manage all the aspects of life within a single value frame, acting as a “portfolio manager.” As the new subjectivity incorporates non-economic elements—including social logics and moral orientations—as assets that can be translated into economic value, the responsibilities for society and the construction of social bonds are directly devolved on the new economic subjects. This dissertation goes on to show how the financial logic of human capital has conditioned and created a new sociality and ethicality. In examining the various fields from community development through the social care market to fair trade activism, I trace how community, care, affective labor, and ethical practices have been intermingled and articulated with the new form of economic rationality and have contributed to the economization of sociality and ethicality. Notions such as “enterprization of community,” “projective ethicality,” “affective labor (*hwaldong*),” and “marketized gift-exchange” are discussed to flesh out the transformation and articulation more clearly. Finally, this thesis conceptualizes the dynamics of the new subjectivity, ethicality, and social imaginary in terms of “neosocial government,” in which the crisis of the neoliberal human capital regime is managed and addressed through social ties based on care, affective labor, and gift. In unveiling how the new governing rationality prioritizes and reifies intimate social bonds over political engagement and structural transformation, this dissertation not only illuminates the depoliticized aspects of the newly returned socials but also highlights the necessity of reinventing a universal vision of politics upon which the broken link between social solidarity and politics can be restored.
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For my parents, who gave me a name
PROLOGUE

“LET THEM TASTE A FISH”

“Today, global capitalism is faced with a crisis again. Growing fiscal deficits and increasing unemployment rates in the developed countries are weakening our trust in the market system and cast doubt over market fundamentalism.... Against this backdrop, South Korea finds the alternative in “inclusive development” [p’oyongjŏk sŏngjang] that attempts to share the benefits of growth with all members of society by reconciling economic development and social welfare. Although, in the past, economic growth by itself could guarantee people a “good life,” this is not the case anymore. For the new inclusive development, the role of society thus needs to be emphasized to undergird the market and the state. In addition, individual citizens need to embody “social entrepreneurship” that discovers problems in every corner of society and solve them through an empathetic attitude and innovative ideas…. Post-crisis capitalism has to be “warm capitalism” [Ttattūtan chabonjuŭi] which can be achieved through mutual care, creative innovation, and social responsibility.”

– Lee Myung-Bak, President of South Korea, “The Welcoming Address to the 2012 Global Korea Conference”

On a February evening in 2014, the Seoul Youth Hub’s co-working space was filled with more than one hundred youths attending the spring orientation meeting of the 2014 Youth School. The semester-long free training program—which is operated by the Youth Hub and the Seoul Metropolitan Government—aims to educate “young social innovators” who are interested in “social activities [hwaldong] and problem-solving projects that respond to new social changes.”1

The spring semester consisted of various introductory and advanced courses that were relevant to social economy and social entrepreneurship—to name a few, courses for social space design, global innovators networking, alternative urban regeneration, community building, and social marketing. After introducing each class’s instructors, Lee Joo-Won, the vice principal of the

Youth School, began his welcome speech by suggesting a new school motto:

You all perhaps have heard about the saying, “Teach people how to fish, instead of just giving them a fish.” It has been the **zeitgeist** of our society for a long time…. I believe, however, teaching and learning a manual about how to fish would kill your creativity and innovative ideas by setting one guideline that everyone has to follow. In fact, this outmoded way of thinking has excluded those who tried off-the-beaten-track and made our society monotonous and authoritarian…. In my opinion, our new slogan should rather be “Let people taste a fish.” If people once come to know the taste of fish, they will then develop their desire for fish and eventually invent or find their own diverse, innovative ways to fish. We, the instructors, are here not to teach how to fish but to help you taste a fish….

As James Ferguson points out in his inspiring book *Give a Man a Fish* (2015), the famous mantra, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a life time,” has been extensively circulated as a “development cliché” for the last half of the 20th century (35). In South Korea, whose development model has served as an exemplar for many other developing countries, the old refrain has been considered a “national catchphrase” that well encapsulates its “developmental ethos.” The military junta wielded the slogan to criticize the civil government’s foreign aid-dependent economy in the 1950s and provide a rationale for its economic growth plans during the 1960s-80s that mainly focused on technology, infrastructure, and labor-intensive industrialization. The slogan and its implied values such as autonomy, diligence, and self-restraint were emphasized to defend the lack of the

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2 At odds with Ferguson’s observation that the slogan is often “dubiously attributed as a Chinese proverb” in Africa (2015: 35), it is believed in South Korea that the refrain comes from the Jewish Talmud. Whether this is true or not, the prevalent belief is interesting in itself, considering the local contexts in which the Jewish people’s tragic history has often been analogized with Korea’s national experiences of colonialism and civil war, and their zeal for education and economic prosperity have been seen as a promising path for South Korea’s development. As it has been believed that Jews have thrived because of certain “cultural” and “moral” values, the abbreviated version of the Talmud has even become arguably “the second bestseller in South Korea behind the Bible” since the 1970s. See “How the Talmud Became a Bestseller in South Korea,” *The New Yorker* (June 23, 2015).

3 For a general introduction to the history of South Korea’s economic growth and its crisis, see Chang and Shin (2003) and Jeong (1997).
state’s social welfare policies and to justify the regime’s disciplinary, militaristic control over the fields of education and labor as “the engine of economic growth” (Moon, 2005; Nam, 2009). Although there is no general agreement about the extent to which the government’s development policies actually contributed to the economic growth, the South Korean economy recorded an unprecedented high rate of growth during the same period.\(^4\)

It is since the 1990s that the old paradigm represented by the slogan “Teach a man to fish” has increasingly become the target of criticism.\(^5\) With democratization in the 1990s, the state-centered, top-down model of development began to be seen as a negative remnant of authoritarian militarism. Furthermore, the 1997 Asian financial crisis—widely accepted as the death bell of the “East Asian development model”\(^6\)—intensified the governmental effort to find an alternative development model beyond the previous labor-driven industrial model. As the “progressive” voices that criticized the authoritarian state have confusingly intermingled with post-developmental and neoliberal agendas that aimed to reduce the state’s roles (to be discussed in Chapter 1), “(civil) society” and social organizations have emerged not only as a political bulwark against the state but also as a new locus and agency for economic development (Jun

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\(^4\) According to Chang Ha Joon (2008), between the 1960s and 1980s South Korea’s per capita income grew more than 14 times in terms of purchasing power. It took the U.K. over two centuries and the U.S. around one and half centuries to achieve the same result.

\(^5\) This is not unrelated to the general collapse of confidence in development. As pointed out by development researchers, economic development as a “modernization” project has increasingly lost its persuasiveness since the turn of the century (Escobar 2012; Ferguson 1999; Hart 2001; Rudnyckyj 2010; cf. Latham 2011). Ferguson states, “Something has happened in recent years to the taken-for-granted faith in development as a universal prescription for poverty and inequality. For Africa, at least, as for some other parts of the world, there is a real break with the certainties and expectations that made a development era possible” (1999: 247). Of course, it seems to be risky to simply equate the increasing doubts with “the end of development” (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997; Sachs, 1992). By exploring a new model for development projects in South Korea, this thesis will show that the suspicion only signifies the end or crisis of a certain type of development program.

\(^6\) For discussions about the “East Asian development model” that features the strong developmental state, labor-intensive heavy industrialization, high dependence on the export market, and massive investment in technology and education, see Chang and Grabel (2004), Johnson (1982), and Wade (1996). For an argument that the prevalent discourse about “the end of the East Asian development model” is generally over-exaggerated, see Chang (2006).
Youth School’s new motto “Let people taste a fish” (with President Lee’s advocacy of “inclusive growth” and “warm capitalism”) reflects the latest version of the recent civil and governmental efforts to formulate more democratic, participatory, and society-based visions for development. In its compact form, the refrain shows how the new developmental ethos diverges from the old “materialistic,” “labor-intensive,” and “authoritarian” paradigm of “teaching a man to fish.” A brief comparison of these slogans and their different developmental imaginaries, therefore, seems to be a good entry point for this dissertation—which explores new forms of subjectivity, sociality, and ethicality in the new governmental-development program.

What stands out first and foremost in the comparison is the changing role of the state as the primary agent of development. No matter if the slogan is to “give a fish” or “teach to fish,” the sayings imply that it is the state (or equivalent governmental organizations) that should provide temporary aid or long-term education. The new motto “Let people taste a fish,” in contrast, limits the role of the state to “let”: the state is no longer the central director that oversees the whole process and exclusively shoulders the responsibility for economic development. As seen in Chapter 2, instead of seeking centralized regulation and planning, the state now acts more as an “incubator of development” that facilitates inclusive and flexible governance with non-state entities—NGOs, voluntary organizations, and private corporations—and promotes their self-governing activities (Rudnyckyj and Schwittay 2014: 3). The direct responsibility for development is thus transferred from the state to “people who once come to

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7 Besides local contexts, these efforts can also be understood as a variation of the “social” or “Post-Washington consensus” shift in international development discourse since the late 1990s (Fine, 2004; Harriss, 2002; Hart, 2001). A World Bank’s official report defines “social development” as follows: “With the goal of empowering poor and marginalized women and men, social development is a process of transforming institutions for greater inclusion, cohesion and accountability.” World Bank Groups, “Empowering People by Transforming Institutions: Social Development in World Bank Operations,” 2005, p. vi.
know the taste of fish,” that is, active and participatory citizens who are *empowered* to pursue their inner desires and aspirations (Elyachar, 2005; Li, 2007; O’Neill, 2010; Ong, 2006; Rudnyckyj, 2010).

The recast of the state’s role is accompanied by a sea-change in citizen-subjectivity. Citizens are not imagined either as dependent subjects who passively receive a fish or as malleable, disciplinable subjects who can be taught how to harness the skill of fishing. The ideal citizen-subject will rather actively commit to his or her aspirations and make social innovations in the process of seeking them. In fact, it has been repeatedly pointed out that contemporary neoliberalism is contingent upon the production of self-responsible and self-entrepreneurial subjects rather than dependent and docile citizens (Bröckling, 2016; Foucault, 2008; Lessenich, 2011; Read, 2009): as Michel Foucault famously remarks, “The stake in all neoliberal analyses is the replacement of *homo œconomicus* as partner of exchange with a *homo œconomicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings” (2010: 226). Two points in the manifestation of the active, self-entrepreneurial citizen-subject, however, need to be more highlighted in relation to our discussion: the importance of non-rational, affective elements and the establishment of a new relation between subject, knowledge, and experts in the subject’s formation.

First, as seen in the emphasis on “taste” and “desire” in the new development slogan and in President Lee’s advocacy of “empathetic attitude,” “creativity,” and “warm” capitalism, the formation of active, participatory citizen-subjects often depends on their non-rational, affective, and even spiritual motivations (O’Neill, 2010; Rudnyckyj, 2010).⁸ If the prior development

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⁸ In fact, emotion, passion, and non-rational qualities have been considered important elements to explain economic phenomena since the beginning of capitalism (Haskell 1985; Hirschman 1977; cf. Smith 1966; Weber 2002). Contemporary capitalism, however, is characterized by actively mobilizing and utilizing the non-rational elements
scheme has focused on basic, material needs and the production of self-interested, calculating subjects (who can temporarily sacrifice immediate pleasure for the sake of delayed but greater satisfaction, from learning how to fish), the new development subjects are not necessarily identified as rational, profit-maximizing beings (Feher, 2009; Feiner, 1999; McDonough, 2015). These entrepreneurial human capitals are rather assumed to have irrational preferences, emotional predilections, moral orientations, and even “animal spirits” that willingly take risks and undergo uncertainties to turn them into opportunities (Dardot and Laval, 2013; Davies, 2014, 2015). As Joo-Won emphasizes, they invent their own “innovative” ways, resisting the fear of failure rather than following a manual’s instructions. As a result, “self-esteem” and “resilience” become more important attributes rather than self-restraint and work discipline (Cruikshank, 1999; Evans and Reid, 2014).

Moreover, the formation of innovative, entrepreneurial citizen-subjects involves a specific relation between subject, knowledge, and expert. As repeatedly pointed out by critical development studies, the modern development project has prioritized standard, technical

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9 Amartya Sen would be the most relevant theorist who prioritizes the non-calculative, social, and moral dimensions in the recent development discourse. Sen re-defines development as “a process of expanding the real freedoms” and “human capabilities” that cannot be reduced to material prosperity (2000:3). It seems obvious that Sen’s redefinition is contingent upon entrepreneurial subjects who continuously seek to improve their various capabilities beyond economic income. Sen admits the direct relevance between the theory of human capital and his notion of “human capability.” In arguing that human capability should incorporate the perspective of human capital, he notes, “The broadening that is needed is additional and inclusive, rather than, in any sense, an alternative to the ‘human capital’ perspective” (Sen, 2000: 296, Sen’s italics). Although this dissertation does not directly engage with Sen’s notion of development, the implications of his statement that the development of human capability should incorporate the logic of human capital will be critically examined throughout the thesis. For a general critique of Sen’s idea of development, see Chandler (2013). Chandler argues that Sen’s ideas of “development as freedom” contributes to de-politicizing and absolutizing development by transforming its measure from external focus to internal, individual choice-making.

10 “Animal spirits” is a Keynesian term to indicate the influence of “spontaneous optimism rather than mathematical expectations” in making economic choices (Keynes 1936: 161). Behavioral economists Akerlof and Schiller link the animal spirits to “entrepreneurship” that fearlessly takes “ambiguity or uncertainty” (2009: 32) and expand the notion to describe all the “non-rational” motivations such as preference, emotion, and belief.
knowledge (for example, “how to fish”) over local context and indigenous practices, thus relying on external expert knowledge to “enlighten” and empower locals (e.g., Scott 1998). The slogan “Let people taste a fish,” in contrast, exhibits a firm belief in individuals’ local knowledge and practical skills to pursue their own aspirations without immediate help from external experts. The subjects are rather called on to become “the experts” in their specific situations and deploy their know-how to recreate and navigate the circumstances. In addition, this emphasis on immanent, specific, and contextual knowledge over a transcendent and homogenous prescription, brings about what Tania Li (2007, 2010) calls an “ethnographic turn” in the production of development knowledge. As I discuss in detail in Chapter 2, in counterpoint to the top-down application of expert knowledge, the new paradigm requires the bottom-up construction of knowledge that involves ethnographic, detailed investigations of various subjective experiences and contexts; the universal “liberal presumption of common calculative capacity,” as William Davies points out, is now complemented or even “replaced with a cultural anthropology” of diverse habits, propensities, and tastes (2014: 161). As a result, the active citizens (and their local communities) are given the primary authority to investigate their various inner “resources” and seek desired improvements. The only thing that governments need to do, as incubators and facilitators of development, is to “nudge” citizens to use their knowledge to diagnose and ameliorate the obstructive predicaments. It becomes clear at this point what Joo-Won means by saying “We are here not to teach how to fish but help you taste a fish”: the expert’s role is limited to stimulating the innovative, entrepreneurial spirits who are empowered as the new

11 The notion of “nudge” became famous through Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein’s mega-bestselling book Nudge (2008). Based on behavioral economics, they present various ways to utilize our non-rational motivations for better individual decision-making. In a subsequent book Why Nudge? (2014), Sunstein goes further to suggest “the politics of libertarian paternalism” that aims to completely transform all the government policies by considering people’s irrational elements so that the government can “nudge” them effectively. For a discussion of nudge as a neoliberal governmental technique, see Davies (2015: Ch. 3) and McMahon (2015).
agents of development.

The new development paradigm driven by entrepreneurial subjects, however, seems to raise difficult predicaments from the governmental perspective. Primarily, how can this centrifugal and “effervescent citizen” be properly governed and channeled for a collective development project (Ong, 2006)? If labor and education have worked in the old developmentalism for harmonizing individual self-interest pursuits with national development, how can entrepreneurial aspirations for self-improvement be aligned with the shared purpose of development? Moreover, if, as seen in Joo-Won’s remarks, unilateral education and discipline only “kill” the creativity of the new entrepreneurial subjects, what kinds of tactics and strategies are deployable to govern them? Once again, in discussing the theory of entrepreneurial human capital, Foucault argues that the new figure of homo œconomicus can only be governed by “intervening on an environment in which he is able to play” (2008: 216). The question then would be: How can a governmental space be constructed in which citizens’ free pursuit of aspirations is guaranteed but coordinated so that the entrepreneurial spirit is not harmed? These related questions reveal the lingering necessity of a collective, social plane in governing human capital where the game of “omnes et singluatum (all and each)” can be played to synchronize individual desires with a general will (cf. Foucault 2001; Procacci 1987). As I will show throughout this thesis, it is here that the problematic of “the social” has returned and intermingled with the new scheme of government and development—in the forms of social

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12 This question is consonant with Akerlof and Schiller’s argument that “the world of animal spirits gives the government an opportunity to step in. Its role is to set the conditions in which our animal spirits can be harnessed creatively to serve the greater good. Government must set the rules of the game.” (2009: 214). In fact, the necessity of an “environment” through which to promote and govern human capital’s non-calculative aspirations and creativity is also found Joo-Won’s welcome speech. He ended the speech with the importance of a favorable “ecosystem” [saeng‘aegye] for social innovation that enables various experiments without fear of failure: “Innovative ideas hit you when you are playing and experimenting. We will try our best to provide you the best ‘ecosystem’ in which you can play and experiment free from all anxiety.” The emphasis on favorable “ecosystem” is commonly found in social economy discourses. I touch upon this issue in Chapter 4.
development, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and the social economy.

In this sense, it is crucial not to confuse the new paradigm with a simple revision or return of the old “give a fish” aid-dependent or gift-oriented model. For example, in contrasting the refrains of “Give a man a fish” and “Teach a man to fish,” Ferguson (2015) relates each motto respectively to the politics of distribution and the paradigm of production: whereas the “teach to fish” slogan reflects the old “productionist premise” that development is fundamentally a problem of production and can be solved by “bringing more people into productive labor” (36), “give a fish” represents a distributive radical politics whose principle can be encapsulated in the premise that “before a man can produce, he must be nursed—that is, the receipt of unconditional and unlearned distribution and care must always precede any productive labor” (45). In contemporary capitalism in which “wage labor no longer has any real prospect of being universalized”, Ferguson argues that the “Give a man a fish” refrain should be re-considered as an emerging alternative social paradigm that is replacing the labor-productionist development paradigm (2015: 51). By prioritizing care, sharing, and social reproduction, the non-labor-based distributive model offers a foundation for a new sort of “social” that differs from the old welfarist/developmental societies that had relied upon “the male wage laborer, the nuclear family, and the interventionist, social-engineering state” (Ibid.: 82). Although his trenchant critiques of productionism and its premises are valid and persuasive, his advocacy of distributive politics over production sounds unexpectedly consonant with President Lee’s and Joo-Won’s voices—ones that problematize the past developmentalism as materialist and productionist and

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13 For a useful theoretical discussion of the crisis of work, see Weeks (2011). As Weeks and Ferguson commonly point out, the significant share of the recent “work crisis” discourses consist of the crisis of male industrial employment and its breadwinner model. Women’s reproductive and caring labor that was ignored by the productionist standpoint, instead, is being increasingly commoditized and drawn into the labor market. See Chapter 3 in this volume.
locate the antidote in inclusive development and warm capitalism, which also accentuates “mutual care,” “sharing,” and “social responsibility.” As I will show in the later chapters, such convergence, either directly or inadvertently, is not exceptional: the recent expansion of “the socials” has been often described and interpreted in terms of the return of a gift-oriented, human-centered, caring distribution economy—not only in popular and governmental discourses but also in many scholarly works (e.g., Hart, Laville, and Cattani 2010; Karatani 2003; Standing 2011).

The problem lies in that the attempts to frame the new socials in light of the return to “give a fish” and its distributionist paradigm spotlight only half the story. On the surface, the “Let them taste a fish” refrain appears to be similar to “Give them a fish”—at the very least, you should give a fish to let them taste it. The similarity ends there, however. As will be discussed later, in the new social paradigm, the returned socials and their spirits of care and gift are strongly articulated and imbricated with the production of entrepreneurial subjects and a new form of economic rationality. It can even be said that the passionate belief in entrepreneurialism and innovative subjects constitutes the condition of possibility for the return of gift-spirit and distribution politics. In other words, people would be given or shared a fish only on condition that they can and will invent their “innovative” ways to obtain more fish. Thus, the politics of inclusion and exclusion, as discussed throughout this thesis, still operate only with different boundaries and dynamics from the labor-based production politics. What needs more attention, therefore, is an examination of how the rise of care, sharing, and distribution create hybrid

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14 The basic income grant and cash transfer (to which Ferguson’s discussion is directly targeted) could be a representative example. They can be viewed as an innovative program of sharing and a “creative and progressive form of redistribution” (Bangstad, Erikse, Comaroff, and Comaroff 2012: 131-2). At the same time, however, the experiments not only rely on the belief in people’s self-managerial capabilities but also can play as a platform for the expansion and intensification of entrepreneurship and market rationality. For research that illuminates such ambivalence through an ethnography of cash transfer policies in the Philippines, see Seki (2015).
practices and spaces where “the socials” become instrumental to the production and expansion of entrepreneurial human capital and *vice versa*.

This thesis is an attempt to investigate the new forms of subjectivity, ethicality, and sociality found in the hybrid practices and spaces, by exploring the recent formation of South Korea’s social economy. The social economy sector in Korea has emerged rapidly since the late 2000s, when the government introduced a series of legal acts for social enterprise, cooperative, and community organizations and stipulated the promotion of the social economy as the state’s responsibility. At first glance, the sector—which comprises social enterprises, social ventures, co-ops, and social care organizations—appears to be a salient deviation from the standard narrative that explains contemporary Korean society’s transition from state-centered developmentalism to unbridled market fundamentalism. This study, instead, views the social economy sector as an exemplary space where anti-neoliberal solidaristic dreams meet with the governmental necessity to manage the perennial crisis of capitalism in the face of the various socio-economic conditions such as democratization, neoliberal financialization, and the decline of industrial development and its laborism. This hybrid space, which is enjoying widespread and enthusiastic support across the political spectrum, serves as a window through which to examine the ideological frontline where the new governmental-developmental *dispositifs* are being effectively formulated in the contemporary South Korean society that has swiftly undergone—but still been haunted by—developmentalism and neoliberalization. Let us move onto that vibrant field, then.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: NEW HUMAN CONDITION, NEW SOCIALS

“I suggest that our new Constitution’s First Article should be ‘everyone has to be micro-entrepreneur.’” –Park Won-Soon, Mayor of Seoul

“This belief was what lay behind my remarks… about there being ‘no such thing as society.’ They never quoted the rest. I went on to say: There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It’s our duty to look after ourselves and then to look after our neighbour. My meaning, clear at the time but subsequently distorted beyond recognition, was that society was not an abstraction, separate from the men and women who composed it, but a living structure of individuals, families, neighbours and voluntary associations.” –Margaret Thatcher (1993: 626)

“There is only desire and the social, and nothing else.” –Deleuze and Guattari (2004: 31)

INTO THE FIELD

An Invitation

One day in the fall of 2013, I was wandering lost in Seoul Innovation Park, holding a printed invitation and a rough map meant to guide me to a social entrepreneurship training program offered by the Seoul Social Economy Center and the Seoul Metropolitan Government. The letter sent me via email began with a quotation that was attributed to a Zapatista militant: “If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation

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1 “‘Everyone has to be a micro-entrepreneur!’” [국민 모두를 소기업 사장으로], Weekly Sisain no. 70 (Jan. 12, 2009).
is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” The letter then disclosed the purpose of the training: “It is not only you who have discontents and frustrations about this society, and our problems are all connected to each other. So let’s gather and discuss how to change this society!” After providing basic information about the program, the short invitation ended with the phrase “Possibility of the Impossible” from the leftist philosopher Slavoj Žižek—who had visited Seoul a couple of weeks prior for “The Idea of Communism Conference.” The invitation went on to explain the phrase’s meaning: “Even though society appears to be unchangeable, we should push the limit and pursue the impossible!”

Encountering a Zapatista militant’s and a leftist philosopher’s words in an invitation for a municipal government-sponsored social entrepreneurship training indeed stunned and bewildered me. It reminded me of another experience that I had just before starting my fieldwork research. When I visited a local university to meet my friends, I found a poster inside the student center, which read “Transform the World!” [Segye-rŭl pyŏnhyŏk-hara!] in big red letters. Because the slogan was popular among South Korean labor and student activists in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I initially thought it was a rather anachronistic agitprop poster put up by surviving Marxist groups in the university. As I approached the poster, however, smaller black letters under the red ones caught my eye: “With Business!” It turned out that the poster was made by the university’s social start-up club to recruit members and potential business partners. In fact, it

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2 In fact, the quote is often attributed to an Australian indigenous artist and activist, Lila Watson, from her speech at the 1985 United Nations Decade for Women Conference. Since then, numerous activist groups across the world have adopted the quote as their slogan. The invitation that I received attributed the words to a female Zapatista militant in Mexico.

3 Žižek describes his experience in Seoul in the book *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* (2014). He says, “When I accepted an invitation, my first reaction was: Is it not outright crazy to talk about the Idea of Communism in South Korea?” (5) The conference, which was held in a small “alternative space” in the affluent Gangnam area in Seoul, attracted more than 1,500 attendants for three days. The number is surprising, considering that the academic conference was conducted in English. It was also reported that approximately 10,000 people attended Žižek’s public lecture series given before the conference.
is well known that contemporary managerial and entrepreneurial discourses often appropriate social activism’s counter-cultural and anti-capitalist rhetoric for promoting entrepreneurship and innovative projects (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Gershon 2016; Guilhot 2006; Heath and Potter 2005; Seo 2011). Furthermore, given the fact that a number of former social activists had become social entrepreneurs or enthusiastic advocates of social economy, such encounters might not be as surprising as they first appeared to be. Considering the local context, however, added perplexity to my bewilderment: when I received the invitation via email, the country’s political scene was in turmoil, as an incumbent leftist lawmaker, Lee Seok-Ki, was arrested and imprisoned for his pro-North Korea and pro-communist stance. The Ministry of Justice and the National Intelligence Service accused him of “benefitting the enemy” and threatening national security by “instigating a pro-North Korean rebellion.” How could I reconcile this stark contrast between the radical rhetoric of the government’s entrepreneurship training invitation and the news that documents the ongoing brutal legacies of the Cold War and anti-communism? How can we understand the blatant juxtaposition of the old socialist slogan “transform the world” and its new descriptor “with business”? I could not help but feel lost just as I was physically lost in the large and labyrinthine Seoul Innovation Park on my way to the first session of the training program.

Seoul Innovation Park

The Seoul Innovation Park, which consists of 32 buildings, occupies an area of approximately 27 acres (109,727 square meters) in the Northwestern outskirts of Seoul. The area had served since

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4 “South Korean politician accused of plotting pro-North rebellion” The Guardian (Sep. 2, 2013). Lee was sentenced to 12 years of prison in February 2014 and his party, the Unified Progressive Party, was disbanded by the Constitutional Court in December 2014. The party’s five lawmakers were stripped of their National Assembly seats.
1962 as headquarter of The National Center for Public Health and Disease Control, which included a variety of disease laboratories, public health research centers, and family planning organizations. When the Center relocated to a rural province in 2010, various renovation plans for the empty space were suggested, including master plans for a commercial business complex or a high-rise apartment compound. When Park Won-Soon, a pioneering social economy advocate, was elected Mayor of Seoul in 2011, these plans were dropped, and it was decided to redevelop the area into a space for social economy and innovation. Since then, in addition to housing headquarters for the Seoul Social Economy Center and the Youth Hub, the monotonous and rectangular buildings—which reflect the “developmentalist taste” of the 1960s and 70s—have been gradually occupied by various social enterprises, social ventures, community organizations, and social economy research institutes such as the Social Innovation Research Lab and the Karl Polanyi Institute.5

Figure 1. The Appearance of the Headquarters of Social Innovation Park (photo by author)

5 It is reported that 220 social economy organizations and more than 1,200 “social innovators” are nested in Social Innovation Park (as of June 2017).
The fact that the National Center for Public Health and Disease Control, one of the emblematic institutions of the past biopolitical-developmental regime, was replaced with a space dedicated to social economy and innovation seems an interesting and symbolic confirmation of the recent paradigm shift in South Korea’s developmentalism. A mildly contentious encounter that occurred when Mayor Park Won-Sun spoke at the official opening ceremony of Seoul Innovation Park in 2015 more dramatically illustrates the shift (and the lurking discontents).

When Park Won-Sun delivered a congratulatory speech before cutting the ribbon, a group of hecklers interrupted his talk, shouting, “If you want to make creative social innovation, do it in Gangnam, not in this poor district!”6 Because development of the neighborhood around the Park had lagged far behind the other districts in the city, some of the residents wanted redevelopment efforts such as the introduction of a high-rise apartment complex or an international convention center. The confrontation uncovered a frustrated dissatisfaction among some of the district’s residents. Without losing his usual calmness, however, the mayor responded: “The development so far has only focused on infrastructure and material wealth. It has just kept to construct massive and towering buildings and thus destroyed our affectionate neighborhoods. New development must be immaterial and spiritual. It can only be achieved through creative, innovative ideas and cooperation. I bet this park will bring new development to this region.”

This statement’s stark portrait of contrast between the old and new development models represents the symbolic coordinate where the concrete meanings and practices of “social

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6 As described in singer Psy’s global mega-hit song “Gangnam Style,” the Gangnam area (south of the Han River) is famous as the most affluent and developed neighborhood in Seoul. In particular, the district is symbolically regarded as representing the consumer culture and life style of the relatively young and rich middle class who have accumulated their wealth through finance, start-ups, and real estate. Seoul Innovation Park and the Seongbuk district, where I mainly conducted my fieldwork research, are geographically located in the Gangbuk area (north of the Han River) of Seoul and in contrast to Gangnam, represent a relatively poor and older population.
“economy” and “social innovation” are located and articulated in contemporary South Korea. As noted in the Prologue, the new development scheme problematizes past development as materialistic, economic, and asocial, in sharp contrast to its current emphasis on moral, social, and even spiritual development. In the same way, social economy and social innovation as development strategies have achieved their identities and hegemony by constituting prior developmentalism as the negative mirror image. What should not be missed, however, is that this binary opposition is neither self-evident nor naturally established. As the aforementioned event shows, the contrast has been established by schematically opposing two value chains and thus erasing other lingering desires, voices, and discontent. In order to understand how the dichotomy has been formed, it is necessary to look into the historical background of the recent rise of social economy and innovation in South Korea.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Headquarters
The spatial arrangement of Social Innovation Park and its headquarters building seems to confirm Pierre Bourdieu’s argument that “the spatial structures structure not only the group’s representation of the world but the group itself, which orders itself in accordance with this representation” (1977: 163). In other words, the alignment and the structure of the space, either coincidentally or intentionally, exhibit the multi-layered historical trajectories surrounding the contemporary landscape of the social economy in South Korea. For example, before you enter the main part of the Park through the nearest gate from the subway station, you are met by two buildings facing each other, which the government rented out for civil society organizations. The
left one houses the office of the Korean Intelligence Veteran Association that has gained notoriety for its violent, right-wing terrorist attacks on leftist groups. On the opposite side, you will see the building for the Seoul chapter of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions [Minju nochong] that is considered symbolic of South Korea’s radical, militant labor movement. As you walk along the narrow road between two buildings, which a social economy activist once humorously described to me as “the Third Way,” you encounter a sizeable urban vegetable farm that is cultivated by organizations residing in the Park and small office buildings occupied by various social economy organizations. Passing through the farm and smaller buildings, you finally arrive at the headquarters of the Park: the Seoul Social Economy Center (SSEC, hereafter) and Youth Hub.

Welcoming you at the entrance to the main building is a “Community Map” [maul chido] that represents the spatial configuration of this administrative edifice as a small, cozy village in a fairytale world (see feature 2). This type of map—which is also commonly found in other local social/community economy centers—seems to demonstrate what Davoudi and Madanipour (2013) call “romanticized localism,” i.e., imagining a social space not as abstract, monolithic, and homogeneous but as an intimate and affective bonding locale (see also Chapters 2 and 5).  

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7 Davoudi and Madanipour argue that romantic localism can be understood as “the continuation and intensification of neo-liberalism and its post-welfarist reconfiguration of ‘the social’” (559). According to them, the new social imaginary abandons the conceptualization of society as a space for collective and national politics. Instead, it reflects the operation of individualized and local identity politics based on consumerism and markets. In a new social imaginary, “not only society is seen as the collection of individuals, but also the national is considered as the aggregation of the locales” (558).
A closer look at the fairy-tale village on the map, however, shows that the community is not represented as a unified space but rather is divided into two large sections. On the right side of the long entrance hallway is the government-commissioned intermediary organization, SSEC, which mainly serves to provide governmental subvention, administrative support, and business consulting for “government-certified” social enterprises. The other side of the building is occupied by Youth Hub—an organization seeking to promote social innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among youth. The two areas are not only divided by the hallway and a cobbled shallow gutter but also designed and decorated in distinctively different ways. Whereas SSEC consists of a group of bureaucratic but newly renovated square-shaped offices and meeting rooms, the space of Youth Hub appears to be a kind of indoor playground with spacious co-working places, a number of sleeping dens, and colorful teepee tents used for congregating and playing.
The marked contrast between the two spaces is noteworthy, because it seems to signify two historically distinct tendencies that have converged in South Korea’s social economy sector in its search for a new development model.

**Prehistory: Developmental (Non-)Welfarism**

In this dissertation, I understand “developmentalism” not simply as a specific set of macro-economic policies or particular political-economic structures, but also as a “project of government” that works to produce and channel the aspirations and actions of its subjects (Li 2007; Pandian 2009; Rudnyckyj 2010; Yeh 2013). As I will show throughout this thesis, developmentalism has relied on various technologies, strategies, and dispositifs of power that organize individual and social life and has created its hegemony by aligning and synchronizing individual improvement with collective and national development in a linear temporality.

The hegemony of South Korea’s old developmentalism, as noted in various studies, was
mainly undergirded by two pillars: *family* and *labor* (Abelmann 2003; Chang 1999; Kwon 2005; Lee 2012; Ochiai 2009; Peng 2012). First of all, South Korea’s (and East Asia’s) developmental state, as Esping-Anderson notes, was characterized by its “unusually accentuated familialism” that devolved and offloaded a maximum of welfare responsibilities to households (1999: 92).\(^8\) Although it is true that family has played a key role in welfare and care—to greater or lesser degrees—in every society, during the rapid growth period from the 1960s to the 1980s, the Korean developmental regime offered almost no social welfare programs to individual households. Even though health insurance and pension systems were introduced, they were selectively offered only to regular employees of large business conglomerates [*chaebŏl*] and the public sector (Kwon 2005).\(^9\) In this system that enabled the government to minimize social reproduction costs and divert resources to investment in infrastructure and economic growth (Chang 2011), individual households were organized as essential *dispositifs* that provided care and reproductive labor through women’s unpaid work; family had been assigned the role of the primary unit of development and the subject of the “development narrative” (Abelmann 2003). Such delegation of the social reproduction burden to families, furthermore, was accompanied and complemented with an intensive, disciplinary, labor regime based on the developmentalist version of the male breadwinner model. In its period of rapid development, the

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8 “Familialism” refers to “the policy tendency to assign a maximum of welfare responsibilities to the family, particularly in its caring function.” (Peng 2010: 465). Esping-Anderson locates the reason for the strong familialism in the countries of Korea, Taiwan, and Japan in Confucianism: “The Confucian tradition of familial piety and loyalty has, like the Catholic subsidiarity principle in Europe, been the overpowering force” (91-92). See also Han and Ling (1998). Although this explanation might have partial validity, it could fall prey to an easy “cultural” explanation, unless the familialism is analyzed with various socio-political factors such as insufficient public welfare services, relatively weak labor movement traditions, and the oppressive states in the region (Lee 2012; cf. Dirlak 1995).

9 This should not be understood, however, to mean that the state did not play any effective role in governing the realm of care; rather, it actively organized “family” as the first and primary care provider. For example, the government provided tax exemptions and public housing priorities for co-residency households amongst the elderly and their adult children.
South Korean developmental state sought to ensure the economic security of households by providing stable, almost full-time employment selectively for male workers, especially in the heavy-industry sector (Koo 2001; Moon 2005; Nam 2009; Woo 2007).\(^{10}\) In a society without official public welfare and universal social insurance systems, the rapid economic growth and the plethora of employment opportunities served as the primary *dispositifs* for social security (Chang 1999, 2007). Although low-wages and long work hours prevented the regime from fully offering leisure and consumption as the flip side of alienated labor like in Western Fordist societies, the dearth of compensation was supplemented with the imposition of a militaristic work ethic, the brutal oppression of trade unions, and the aggressive promotion of nationalism—which all contributed to aligning individual aspirations with national prosperity (Kim and Park 2003; Kwon 2015). Such division and articulation between the family’s role in private care and the labor regime’s responsibility for economic growth formulated the core structure of South Korea’s “developmental (non-)welfare state” that could only be effective and sustainable with continuous, rapid economic growth (Kwon 2005). No doubt, it is inaccurate and misleading to say that this model operated perfectly in reality. Yet South Korea’s version of Western Fordism—based on the nexus of strong familialism and a harsh but stable labor regime—has long served as a *normative* and *effective* developmental model in governmental and popular imaginaries and, as discussed in Chapter 4, still haunts neoliberal Korea as a ghostly reminder to some extent (cf. Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012).

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\(^{10}\) As the industrial focus shifted from light industry to heavy industry since the late 1970s, many female workers in the light industry sector lost their jobs and were gradually subsumed into the male-centered breadwinner model (Barraclough 2012; Koo 2001; Moon 2005; Nam 2009).
The Birth of Neoliberal Welfarism

It is generally agreed that this old development model finally came to an end with the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the neoliberal reforms that followed (Chang and Shin 2003; Cumings 1998; Jeong and Shin 1999; Song 2009). Given the central roles of family and employment opportunities in the old developmentalism, it is not surprising that the 1997 Asian financial crisis was primarily understood as a double crisis of family and stable employment: “the nation’s worst economic plummet since the Korean War,” which brought about the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout, was popularly conveyed through stories of “family breakdowns” and epitomized by figures of “unemployed IMF homeless” (Song 2009: ix). The old developmental model exposed its weakness when economic growth hit the wall and the virtuous circle comprising family care and full employment came to be dysfunctional and broken. As the unemployment rate soared, the household could not sustain its function as the primary care space: once the male breadwinner model became unsustainable, former housewives were pushed to participate in the low-wage, precarious labor market to make a living—which was expected to produce more lacunas in the reproductive and care realm (Chon 2014; Jeong 2016; Peng 2010, 2012). The post-crisis transformation in South Korea that Song (2009) describes as the emergence of the “neoliberal welfare state” reveals how family and labor—the two axes of the old developmentalism—have been radically reorganized and rearticulated.

First, the responsibilities of care and welfare—which had been exclusively placed upon family—began to be delegated to “society” through the “de-familiarization of care” and the

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11 About the regional and global contexts of the crisis, see Chang (2006: Ch. 5 and 6). For debates over the causes of the crisis, see Chang and Shin (2003).

12 Women’s economic participation rate has gradually increased from 50.3% in 1998 to 57% in 2014. The rate of irregular workers in total female employment is 40.3% which is much higher than men (25.5%). In addition, more than 65% of female temporary workers are over age 40. The Korean Statistical Information Service, The 2016 Women’s Life in Statistics [2016 통계로 보는 여성의 삶], 2017.
expansion of public welfare (Crompton 2006; cf. Fraser 2016). The government not only expanded social insurances—Employment Insurance, the National Pension, and Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance were respectively universalized in 1998, 1999, and 2000; it also introduced “The National Basic Living Security Act” in 2000 that guarantees the minimum standard of living for those under the poverty line. In addition, the various “social care programs” for the ailing elderly, children, and the disabled were implemented throughout the 2000s (see Chapter 3). Although they were the first universal social welfare and care systems in South Korea’s history, the newly introduced welfare system, as noted by various studies, has been operating under the neoliberal and neo-developmental imperatives that seek to improve work productivity and minimize welfare costs (Kwon 2005; Peng 2012; Song 2009). Not only did the government frame that the expanded social welfare and care service sector serve as “the new ‘growth engine’ for future economic development” (Lee 2007), but public welfare programs were mainly carried out by providing temporary, irregular employment to the beneficiaries. In the midst of the economic crisis in 1998, for example, the government launched “public work programs” [konggong gŭllo] that offered the unemployed and the underprivileged community welfare jobs such as community beautification, social worker assistance, and patient/elderly care in community health centers. Despite its low wages and poor working conditions, the typical “workfare” program (i.e., the Third Way-ish coordination of work and welfare) has continued and expanded into various programs of “self-supporting work” [jahwal gŭllo], “social contribution work” [sahoe gonghŏn il-chari] and “social innovation work” throughout the 2000s, serving to supply cheap labor forces such as unskilled female workers and unemployed youths for the social care sectors (see Chapter 3 and 4).

On the other hand, the realm of stable employment has been rapidly dismantled with the
increase of flexible, irregular employment and the rise of entrepreneurial culture (Seo 2011; Shin 2013). First of all, irregular temporary workers have dramatically increased in number in South Korea since the late 1990s. The intensive but stable labor regime—which had been perceived as the locomotive of South Korea’s economic miracle—suddenly began to be viewed as the culprit in the crisis. Flexibility in the labor market was presented as the principal solution to overcome economic collapse; the law that allowed conglomerates’ massive lay-offs had passed, with the partial consent of the national trade unions. Labor flexibility was ideologically justified and encouraged with an “entrepreneurial culture” that urged everyone to become an innovative “entrepreneur of the self” (Seo, 2011). In 1998, the government initiated the “New Intellectual Campaign” that forged a creative, responsible, and self-governing entrepreneur as an ideal subject in the post-work and knowledge-based economy. Innovative creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and risk-taking activities were eulogized as essential virtues for competing in globalized financial capitalism. In governmental discourses, venture companies and micro start-ups emerged as an alternative not only to the bureaucratic, industrial conglomerates but also to the shrinking job market and the soaring unemployment rate (Seo 2005; Ryu 2014). Throughout the 2000s, the government established nationwide incubation centers for start-ups, proclaiming that venture business would be the essential source for “new development” in the knowledge-based, high-technology economy. The stable, long-term employment that was a normative ideal under the old developmental regime has been gradually replaced with the neoliberal myth of innovative entrepreneurship that “everyone has to be micro-entrepreneurs.”

In a nutshell, two pillars of the old developmentalism—family care and stable labor—

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have undergone radical transformations as the country sought a new developmental model after the 1997 financial crisis. While the responsibility of care has been partially shifted from family to society, the labor market has rapidly become flexible and insecure, which has been justified in the name of a knowledge-based creative economy. Such entangled processes of socialization of care and precarization of labor may explain why South Korea’s neoliberal reform has been described in the seemingly oxymoronic terms “neoliberal welfare state” (Song 2009), “social neoliberalism” (Jun 2011) and the more popular term, “left neoliberalism.” What is particularly interesting in relation to our discussion is that these apparently independent transformations were, in fact, a process of convergence: socialized (and commodified) care has transformed into a type of labor such as caring labor, immaterial labor, and affective labor (see Chapter 3), while post-industrial precarious labor has come close to what Foucault (1986) calls “the care of self” under the initiatives of self-development and entrepreneurial spirit (see Chapter 4). It was under the signifier and the common ground of “social economy” that these two heterogeneous but related transformations in the realms of care and labor came to finally merge in the late 2000s.

The Rise of Social Economy

In 2007, the South Korean government passed “The Act of the Promotion of Social Enterprise,” which aims to promote “social enterprises” that offer jobs for the disadvantaged (e.g., the homeless, single mothers, and the disabled) and grant them governmental certification and

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14 Despite the reform, family clearly remains as a primary care institution. For example, the National Basic Living Security Act includes “the Obligation of Family Support” [kajok puyangjumuje], according to which minors or elders who have a family member with income are not eligible for various social benefits. This obligation shows that the primary responsibility for social welfare is still on the family and that the government provides social security as a complement to family care.

15 The term “left neoliberalism” was first used by President Roh Moo-Hyun (2003-2008) to self-mockingly describe his policy orientation. The term became popular and ironically remains as the appropriate label that encapsulates his political merits and demerits.
subventions. Although the then-conservative government’s enactment of the law has often been described as unexpected and surprising, the policy had been under consideration for a long time. In fact, the government’s previous workfare programs had been criticized for only providing welfare recipients with temporary, interim jobs and thus failing to effectively empower them. Subsidizing private enterprises to hire the disadvantaged emerged as the alternative: the policy was expected not only to give the recipients stable jobs and opportunities to learn necessary skills, but also to lessen small-scale entrepreneurs’ financial burden. This policy can be viewed, on the other hand, as an attempt to reduce the government’s public welfare cost. For example, the span of governmental support has been limited to five years. After five years, the social enterprises are expected to survive in the market on their own feet and the recipients to become skillful enough to maintain their jobs or find new ones so that the government no longer needs to directly hire them for workfare programs. That is to say, the certification and support system of social enterprise has been initially introduced as an extension or intensification of the workfare program for welfare recipients.

The government-certified social enterprises, however, comprise only a part of the boom of social economy. Implementing “The Basic Plan for Social Enterprise Promotion (2008-2012),” the government diverted the prior support and investment for for-profit start-ups toward “social” start-ups and “community” ventures and also started to provide numerous social entrepreneurship and innovation trainings (especially for youth). All the local governments

16 The law defines “social enterprise” as “an organization which is engaged in business activities of producing and selling goods and services while pursuing a social purpose of enhancing the quality of local residents’ life by means of providing social services and creating jobs for the disadvantaged” (Article 2).


18 For a general history of the development of social enterprise in South Korea, see Hwang et al. (2017) and Lee (2015).
were encouraged to establish local community/social economy centers for incubating social start-ups and promote residents’ entrepreneurship. Since “The Framework Act on Cooperative” was passed in 2012, the government’s financial supports have expanded to community enterprises and cooperatives. Along with the promotion of various social economy organizations—social enterprise, community enterprise, and local cooperatives—“the social care market” has been created and fostered as the central testbed and platform for social start-ups’ innovations and social/community enterprises’ ethical business (which I detail in Chapter 3). A number of local governments have also actively promoted governance with local social economy organizations to build “community care networks” and a “social economy ecosystem.”

As a result, notions such as “social economy,” “social innovation,” and “the sharing economy” began to be circulated in the public sphere as buzz words. Local mass media were quick to join and celebrate the idea of social economy as a new zeitgeist.19 Karl Polanyi’s The Great Transformation was re-published in 2009 and became a national bestseller; textbooks about social economy have been published and taught in middle and high schools. Park Won-soon, a pioneering social economy activist and an advocate of social innovation, was elected as Mayor of Seoul in 2011. Another enthusiastic social economy advocate, Moon Jae-in introduced “Human-centered, Cooperative Social Economy” as a slogan for his economic policies and was elected as President in 2017. The government’s “Basic Plan for Social Enterprise Promotion” seems to summarize well what has been at stake in the tempestuous excitement and expectation surrounding social economy: it says that the social economy will contribute to overcoming the “prolonged low-growth crisis” after the 1997 financial crisis and bring about “new social

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19 For a meticulous analysis of South Korean newspapers’ discourses on social economy, see Kim (2016).
development and integration” by “innovating social services and creating sustainable jobs.”

As noted earlier, the spatial arrangement of the headquarters building reveals that South Korea’s social economy has emerged at the juncture of two major governing reforms—the neoliberal socialization of care and the enterprization of labor—that responded to the collapse of the old developmental government. First, the cramped, bureaucratic administration offices in SSEC seem to divulge that social economy is the continuation of the governmental effort to expand public welfare or workfare at minimum cost since the 1997 financial crisis. The main roles of SSEC are to distribute government’s subventions to certified social enterprises, cooperatives, and community enterprises and to promote their participation in the social care market by offering various forms of business consulting (see Chapter 3). Their mission also includes facilitating the governance between local governments and social care and economy organizations to reduce the government’s welfare burden.

By contrast, Youth Hub’s open playground-like space appears to flesh out what “innovation” and “entrepreneurial spirit” mean. Its social start-up offices and pastel-toned co-working places are open and airy with movable walls and furniture. A group tour guide of Youth Hub explained that the space was designed to serve as “a platform” for promoting “the richer sense of cooperation and free-flow of ideas,” both of which are vital for “social innovation.” In these spaces, Youth Hub holds Youth School and various programs for “Social Innovation Youth Activists” (see Chapter 4). At a corner of the co-working spaces, Youth Hub has a “Room for Carpentry and Manual Craft” for young innovators who are “tired of sharing ideas” and want to experience “the joy of manual labor.” Manual labor—which has long served as an engine of development—is now regarded as a beneficial past time and a source of joy in the “knowledge-

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based, innovation economy.” In addition, the space is designed to support the enthusiastic, adventurous habits of the young: The nooks and crannies are filled with beanbag chairs and Indian Tepee tents for those who work all night long and want to take a short rest or sleep. In this way, the spatial arrangement of the Youth Hub not only represents “the labor experience in immaterial capitalism” in which the boundaries of work, play, and rest are blurred and work is directly equated with communication, networking, and innovation (Lazzarato 1996, 2014), but also it faithfully reflects the definition of social innovator: “a passionate young leader who seeks creative solutions for social problems through sharing ideas and cooperation.” These two heterogeneous spaces compatibly co-exist in the massive red-block headquarters building of the Seoul Innovation Park for social economy organizations.

... and Smaller Buildings

It would be unfair and misleading, however, to argue that the recent rise of social economy in South Korea can be attributed exclusively to the governmental efforts to manage the crisis and promote new development. As noted above, Seoul Innovation Park consists of more than 30 buildings that surround the headquarters, in which 220 social economy organizations are nested. Who are actually occupying the buildings, then? Who are these people or organizations that identify themselves as social innovators or ethical citizens and actively participate in the space of “governance” opened by the government? In fact, SSEC and Youth Hub themselves are not directly managed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. The government has commissioned and authorized “civil society organizations” to take part in the operation of the headquarters—the radical rhetoric of the invitation letter that I received might have reflected a political position of

one of the commissioned groups. Who are these groups that operate various programs on the government’s behalf? These questions may be answered by briefly sketching the history of “civil society movements” in South Korea—the last strand that formed the social economy sector.

It can be traced back to the late 1980s and the early 1990s that “society” first emerged as a political space in South Korea. When the almost 30-year-long military junta was finally toppled in the late 1980s, the “civil society discourse” [shimin sahoe-ron]—that introduced society as a “political” space consisting of democratic citizens as opposed to the authoritarian state—began to be widely circulated in the media, academia, and social movement groups (Cho 1993; Yoo and Kim 1995). Despite then-strong critiques from Marxist groups of its “bourgeois” nature (Kim 1995), there had been a general consensus that civil society activism could serve as an effective bulwark against the overgrown developmental state, and numerous civil society organizations were actively formed and founded throughout the 1990s.

The imaginary of this political civil society underwent a modification with the 1997 crisis. As the economic crisis invalidated the developmental state model and brought about a series of neoliberal reforms, the relationship of society to the market gradually came to the focus: society began to be discussed as a space for care, welfare, and social reproduction that could alleviate the vices of the market (Cho and Lee 2017). Civil society groups increasingly centered more upon “real-life” issues such as care, welfare, education, and environment, rather than macro-political or mass labor contentions. What is noteworthy is that such a new orientation of civil society groups was congruent with the government’s intention to de-familiarize and expand care and welfare across social planes. As the government increasingly incorporated civil society organizations into its policy-making processes, incipient forms of “governance” began to emerge between the state and civil society.
Throughout the 2000s, a number of civil society groups have sought their identities in developing a local, life-politics agenda and suggesting concrete policy reforms to the government. To increase their influence, the groups have adopted professionalism and localism in devising and implementing policies. In the process, they have not only distanced themselves from so-called old-leftist groups—radical labor activism or the pro-North Korean nationalist movement—but have also sought to organize their movements following the civic activism models of more “advanced countries.” Park Won-Soon is the epitomizing figure of this promotion of civil society movements. As a former human rights lawyer who fought against the military dictatorship, Park became a civil society activist after democratization. In the early 2000s, he organized a research tour group, the “New Courtiers Observation Mission” [Shin shinsayuramdan],22 to examine the models of social activism and governance in “advanced countries” including the US, Japan, and the Western European countries. Based on his findings, he established in 2002 the first self-proclaimed “social enterprise,” Beautiful Store and Beautiful Coffee, following the example of Oxfam in the UK; in 2006, he instituted Hope Maker as a think tank for civil society groups (I will detail my experience in Beautiful Coffee in Chapter 5). These organizations have proposed numerous social policies and have actively set a new agenda for civil society including social economy, social innovation, social impact bonds, and the sharing economy. Although other smaller civil society groups were still hesitant to fully accept the new language, the ethical and moral models of “advanced countries’ civil activism” [sŏnjin'guk'yŏng

22 “Courtiers Observation Mission” was an official group dispatched to Japan by King Kojong in 1881 to learn about the “Westernized modernization process” of the Meiji Japan. Based on their experience in Japan for four months, the group produced more than 80 reports about politics, education, and economic systems of Japan, which served as the blueprint to advance Korea’s westernizing modernization process in the late 19th century. For the roles of Courtier Observation Mission, see Huh and Tikhonov (2005). Park’s audacious naming of the research group as “New Courtiers Observation Mission” seems to divulge the undercurrent “developmental ethos” of the project that aims to “learn, imitate, and catch up” with Western “advanced” countries not only economically but also morally and socially, and even in the fields of social movements.
shiminundong] have extensively influenced the groups who were seeking effective, feasible ways to oppose neoliberal marketization.

It is these civil society groups that have most actively participated in the social economy sector when it emerged as a new governance space between the state and civil society. “The Act of the Promotion of Social Enterprise” defined the scope of the adjective “social” as covering “education, health, social welfare, environment, culture, child care, arts, and… tourism services.” These fields strongly overlap with the long-standing agenda of civil society groups. Through legislation, the government opened up the possibility of converting formal/informal care groups, small civil society organizations, and local communities into government-certified social enterprises, community enterprises, and cooperatives to participate in the governance process. Governmental support for social economy and innovation has thus dramatically expanded the remit of the participation in the care and welfare governance of civil society organizations (cf. Peck, Theodore and Brenner 2009; Larner and Craig 2005). It is notable that the process has drawn civil society organizations into the more incorporated, depoliticized governmental process. First, the more universal and political initiatives in the civil society movement, such as labor, human rights, and feminist groups are tacitly excluded from the newly opened governance space, or their agenda is incorporated only in specific avenues such as job creation, poverty alleviation, or child care. Second, in social economy governance, the roles of civil society organizations are seen to reflect an “equal partnership” in governance with the state, cooperating in order to provide more efficient and diverse local welfare benefits, rather than raising criticism or monitoring the government. As the political imagination of “civil society discourse” has gradually become obsolete, “social economy” has thus become a place where

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23 The Act of the Promotion of Social Enterprise, Article II, section 3.
civil society organizations’ humanistic, ethical anti-market agendas find their depoliticized and even neoliberal home in collaboration with the government.

What is now clear is that underneath the mayor’s superficial dichotomy between old developmentalism and social economy/innovation, are hidden the multi-layered and complex historical contexts: the government’s attempt to re-organize the care realm to manage the crisis of reproduction has gradually converged with the rise of entrepreneurial, innovative culture in search of a new engine of development. Such governmental exigencies have also been entangled with civil society groups’ aspirations to expand public welfare and advance alternatives to marketization in working with the government. South Korea’s social economy sector has emerged at the confluence of these heterogeneous streams.

Of particular interest is that local community/social economy centers, such as Seoul Innovation Park, have been structured to reflect these complex historical contexts. Another fieldwork site of mine, the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center, provides a good example. The center was established in 2011 by the Seoungbuk district government, one of 25 district governments in Seoul. The self-proclaimed Polanyian district mayor, Kim Young-Bae, renovated a five-story, gray-squared former administration building into a space for social economy organizations—the first floor is occupied by a government-sponsored day care center; the second floor is a fancy co-working space and a coffee shop that sells fair trade coffee and local social enterprise products; the third is the office of an intermediary support organization that aims to provide subvention for local social/community enterprises and organize local care and welfare networks; the fourth and fifth floors are used as an incubation center for social start-ups and classrooms for social economy/innovation training and business consulting for social economy organizations. The operation of the building and the programs are commissioned by the
government to “Live Together, Seongbuk” a network association of more than 50 local grassroots civil society activist groups. The field sites, in a nutshell, have served as rich archaeological sites in which to excavate the complicated historical contexts and the heterogeneous forces and desires that have been sedimented and congealed in South Korea’s social economy sector. While conducting my fieldwork research into these institutions, I focused on navigating, and analyzing these multi-layered strata.

FIELDWORK RESEARCH

During the period between the fall of 2013 and the winter of 2014, with three additional summers in 2012, 2015, and 2016, I conducted my fieldwork research at the aforementioned sites: Seoul Social Economy Center, Youth Hub, and Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center. As a volunteer and an intern, I made extensive participant observation. First of all, I attended a series of social economy, innovation, and community development trainings; observed formal and informal meetings of social economy activists and social entrepreneurs; and participated in business consulting sessions for social start-ups and cooperatives. In addition, I attended various events held in the organizations such as international/domestic conferences, workshops, and expositions. In 2014, Mayor of Seoul, Park Won-Soon, announced that he would make Seoul “the capital of the world social economy.”24 No matter what he exactly meant by the statement, Seoul suddenly became the favorite destination for global social entrepreneurs and social economy organizations. The municipal government hosted various international and

interregional social economy events such as the 2014 and 2015 Global Social Economy Forum and the 2015 Asia Network for Young Social Entrepreneurs Conference. Almost every month, I had multiple events to attend as an audience member, a volunteer, a translator, or sometimes even as a panelist. In addition, throughout the fieldwork period, I was able to communicate with a number of social entrepreneurs, young social innovators, and social economy activists on a daily basis and conduct in-depth interviews. Finally, in order to look into how social enterprises and community cooperatives are actually working, I worked as a volunteer in a fair trade social enterprise nested in Seoul Innovation Park and an elderly care cooperative in the Seongbuk district at the early and the final stages in my fieldwork research. I will detail the experiences in Chapter 3 and 5, respectively. Drawing upon the investigations and findings, this dissertation aims at making theoretical and practical contributions to the following discussion.

THEORETICAL ENGAGEMENTS

In this dissertation, I aim to situate the recent rise of the social economy in South Korea not only in the local context of searching for a new development model, but also as part of the global resurgence of “the social.” As explained above, South Korea’s social economy boom can be primarily seen as an attempt to seek a new engine of development and manage the crisis of social reproduction after the collapse of the old state-centered, industrial development model. What can be called “the return of the social,” however, has also emerged as a global phenomenon over the past decades, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis. Not only have new types of media, business, and knowledge popped up with the adjective “social”—social media, social network, social commerce, social marketing, social design, and social neuroscience; but
various socio-economic projects that aim to graft morality and sociality onto the market have also been presented as the most feasible and promising alternative to unfettered market fundamentalism: social economy, community development, and social entrepreneurship are just a few of the representative examples. While the governments of advanced capitalist countries have rushed to join the trend by putting “social” in the center of their policy visions—from David Cameron’s “big society” to Angela Merkel’s “new social market economy,” other “developing” countries have competitively set forth “social development” or “post-neoliberal development” as goals for their future. This rather abrupt upsurge of the “socials” seems to raise the challenging but important question of how to locate and understand the place of “the social” in the ongoing hegemony of financial neoliberalism, not only historically but also theoretically.

Neoliberalism and the Social

Since Margaret Thatcher’s famous dictum, “There is no such thing as society,” neoliberalism has been predominantly equated with amoral and asocial market fundamentalism that dissolves all forms of sociality in favor of privatization and individualism (Bauman 1998; Bourdieu 1998; Harvey 2005, 2006; Wallerstein 2005). Exclusively based on the experience of Western states,


26 For heated debates over “big society,” see Kisby (2010), Tam (2011); for Merkel’s “new social market economy,” see Vogelmann (2012). Perhaps, then-French President Nikolas Sarkozy’s speech at the 2010 Davos Forum perfectly summarizes the essential spirit of this “social” or “moral” turn in governing the crisis of capitalism: “We will save capitalism and the market economy, by rebuilding it, by, if I dare to use this word, restoring its moral dimension.... What do we need, in the end, if it is not rules, principles, a governance that reflects shared values, a common morality?”

27 For the rise of social development or post-neoliberal agendas in Latin America, see Goodale and Postero (2013), Silva (2009), and Veltmeyer and Petras (2014). For development through social economy in China and other regions see Pun, Ky, Yan, and Koo (2016).
“the death of society” through neoliberalism has been widely declared, mourned, or disavowed via a type of melancholic attachment.28 Such a homogenous and monolithic understanding of neoliberalism—which often relies on the sensational, popular imagery of “an economic tsunami” that immediately sweeps away all the social, moral, national bonds (Ong 2006: 4), however, seems to serve as an obstacle to clearly grasp the meanings of the returned socials in the heartlands of neoliberalism. As William Davies aptly points out, the conventional understanding of neoliberalism has only produced “either sceptical or teleological” responses to the socials in circulation (2015b: 432). If the sceptical response denounces the return of the social as simply an “ideological cloak” or a rhetorical sham that covers the overwhelming dominance of neoliberal rationality (e.g., Aschoff 2015; Cremin 2011), the teleological response positively views it as society’s “self-defense” against unbridled marketism, locating the return of the socials in a teleological, linear temporality from neoliberalism to a post-neoliberal society (cf. Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009).

Instead of dwelling upon whether the returned socials can be regarded as neoliberal or post-neoliberal, I would like to illuminate two major problems shared by these seemingly opposite responses. First, both positions are, as already noted, not only based on the homogenous imaginary of neoliberalism but also share the assumption that market and society are assumed natural realities that stand in antithesis in a kind of “zero-sum” game. In this perspective, economic market and social/moral domains can be interlinked only as externally so that one side

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28 An apocalyptic postmodernist, Jean Baudrillard was the quickest to declare “the end of the social”: “Networks of symbolic ties were precisely neither ‘relational’ nor ‘social.’ At the other extreme, our ‘society’ is perhaps in the process of putting an end to the social, of burying the social beneath a simulation of the social…. Perhaps the social will have had only an ephemeral existence, in the narrow gap between the symbolic formations and our ‘society’ where it is dying” (1983: 67). Nikolas Rose (1996) also illuminates the death of the social in the different context of the transition from the “social government” to “governing through communities.” See also Chapter 2 in this dissertation. For melancholic attachment to the “lost” social and its political predicaments, see Brown (2003).
can be “swept” by or “defended” against the other side. These drawbacks make both not only fail to illuminate the polymorphoric, hybrid natures of “actually existing” neoliberalization (Larner 2006; Ong 2007; Peck 2010) but also ignore the fact that “the phenomenon of neoliberalism itself changes” in different social settings (Collier 2011; Hoffman, Dehart, and Collier 2006). Furthermore, these rather hasty responses pay no heed to new forms of sociality and social imaginary that have emerged with neoliberalization or in neoliberal conditions. Considering that a modern conception of society is a historical product that materialized out of the liberal human condition and its contradictions (Arendt 1958; Elliott and Turner 2012; Foucault 2008; Taylor 2003), it is legitimate and necessary to ask how neoliberalism and its new human condition have transformed the established social imaginary and produced new forms of sociality and ethicality. That is to say, what if the “society” that was lamented and mourned for its death and the “returned socials” that are either distrusted or acclaimed are not identical? In order to navigate between melancholic skepticism and teleological optimism surrounding the returned socials, what should be addressed first is thus the following question: What kinds of new features of sociality and social imaginary are found in the return of the social?

In this dissertation, I understand society and economy neither as given natural realities nor as conceptual a priori, but rather as “transactional realities” that are constructed from “the interplay of relations of power” and correlative to “the form of governmental technology” (Foucault 2008: 297; see also Mitchell 2002). In other words, society and economy should not be thought of as the starting point of analysis but rather as composites of the “little lines of various techniques and discourses” which emerge as an intelligible field in the end of analysis (Deleuze 1979: x). Instead of reproducing the dichotomy of society and market, therefore, I will ask how society or the social has been modified and reshaped in accordance with new assemblages of
power and how neoliberalism itself has been transformed in different contexts.

This approach is consonant with various ethnographic studies that explore the entanglement of moral and social logics with neoliberal rationality and a “Janus-faced neoliberalism” that relies on relational, social virtues as well as economic calculation (Muehlebach 2012; see also Karim 2011, Rajak 2011, and Roy 2010). These studies show that neoliberal reforms have often been concomitant with attempts to empower subjects and encourage their participation in social and public programs to complement the retreat of the state from social welfare. Furthermore, a series of historical analyses of neoliberalism shows that neoliberal government has gradually incorporated and integrated social logics in the forms of “roll-out,” “post-Washington,” or “communitarian” neoliberalism to resist critiques and manage the crisis of social reproduction (Davies 2012, 2014; Hendrikse and Sidaway 2010; Peck 2010; Peck et al. 2009; Vogelmann 2012).

While agreeing with these analyses, this dissertation goes further to argue that the neoliberal condition can be characterized as producing the hybrid spaces and practices where social and, moral virtues, and economic rationality are closely intertwined and implicated. In other words, the social and the economic become more intimately infiltrated and entangled under a neoliberal human capital regime than under any other form of government; as I will show later, ethical aspirations and the social good are now subjectified as assets of individual agents and managed by a new form of economic rationality. Foucault’s pioneering analysis of neoliberalism as an enterprisation of society and Michel Feher’s recent conceptualization of human capital seem to provide good starting points to elaborate this seemingly counterintuitive argument.
**Neoliberal Human Capital**

In comparing German ordo-liberalism and American neoliberalism, Foucault points out that the common essence of their projects can be summarized as the economization of entire social fields or “the multiplication of the enterprise form within the social body” (2008: 248). As pointed out by post-Foucauldian scholars (W. Brown 2015; Dardot and Laval 2013), such economization or enterprization are not necessarily equated with actual marketization and privatization; the point is rather to re-arrange heretofore noneconomic domains with the identical framework of enterprise. The same rearrangement is applied to the dimension of subjectivity; Foucault argues that neoliberal *homo economicus* is different from liberal economic man in its enterprise form: “the stake in all neoliberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo economicus* as partner of exchange with a *homo economicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings” (2008: 226). Foucault’s point—that today’s neoliberal subject differs from classical liberal *homo economicus* who has the propensity of “truck, barter, exchange” to maximize their utilitarian pleasure, however, has not been sufficiently pondered and developed. Except for several notable studies (W. Brown 2015; Dardot and Laval 2013; Feher 2009; Read 2009), Foucault’s argument has often been interpreted through the lens of a conventional understanding of neoliberalism, i.e., that neoliberal entrepreneurs are more crass and selfish economic men who are deprived of a safety net and are only concerned with personal survival and the maximization of private interests.

Michel Feher’s conceptualization of “human capital” provides a promising path to advance Foucault’s idea and grasp the new features of the neoliberal human condition (2009). In arguing that the radical novelty of neoliberal subjectivity has been underestimated, Feher draws a
clear distinction between “free laborer” as the partner of exchange in liberal capitalism and
“human capital” as self-entrepreneur in neoliberalism. A free laborer, Feher argues, is a social
being split between an intimate, existential private realm and a labor power sold and exchanged
in the market: whereas the private sphere is dominated by mutual care and moral obligation for
“biological, social, cultural, and moral reproduction,” the commodity realm is organized by the
principle of material interests (2009: 29). In counterpoint, neoliberal human capital is generated
and maintained by seamlessly incorporating all the aspects of life into a single value frame and
managing them as a “portfolio manager.”

Human capital, by contrast, does not presuppose a separation of the spheres of production
and reproduction. The various things I do, in any existential domain (dietary, erotic, religious, etc.), all contribute to either appreciating or depreciating the human capital… As investors in their own human capital, the subjects that are presupposed and targeted by neoliberalism can thus be conceived as the managers of a portfolio of conducts pertaining to all the aspects of their lives (30).

As all the resources, features, and actions of the subject are positioned and managed on the
“same plane of immanence” without any outside and transcendence (Read 2009: 34), neoliberal
human capital is situated within a series of dissolving borders—between the private and the
public, between reproduction and production, between work and play, between wages and

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29 This separation between the private and the public is also relevant to the formation of modern society. As Hannah
Arendt argues, modern “society” has emerged in merging the private and the public spheres: “The emergence of
the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose
origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state… In
our understanding, the dividing line is entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political
communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide
administration of housekeeping” (1958: 28-9). This hybrid, paradoxical nature inherent to modern society is what
Feher’s discussion has omitted. As Foucault points out, liberal civil society is considered to operate on the
paradoxical virtue of “disinterested interests” (2008: 301). See also Chapter 5.

30 In this sense, neoliberal human capital (and its correlatives, social entrepreneur and social economy) seem to be
capitalist parodies of the Italian autonomist ideas of “social worker” and “social factory.” See Negri and Hardt
(1994).
capital. While liberal free laborers pursue their interests by exchanging their alienable labor power as the inalienable possessor, neoliberal human capitals “invest (themselves) in their capital” and leverage “its (monetary and nonmonetary) portfolio value across all of its endeavors and venues” (W. Brown 2015: 10).

In fact, Feher’s argument that neoliberalism transforms human beings into human capital heuristically stimulates various questions and further discussions (e.g., Ascher 2016; W. Brown 2015; Mcdonough 2015). I here focus only on two points relevant to my analysis. First, human capital subjectivity establishes a new relationship with economic reason. The resources of human capital are arranged and optimized to enhance their portfolios and attract more investment rather than to maximize their utilitarian pleasure in exchange. The dynamics of appreciation of the asset value—what can be comparable to financial logics working in the stock market—are far more complex and composite than calculating profit in the market exchange. As noted in the Prologue, various elements—such as irrational desires, creative enthusiasm, moral orientations, or extensive private networks—all can be the assets of human capital. In their portfolios, social, moral values and blatant economic utility can be registered on the same plane and co-exist in a mutually translatable form to appreciate and increase the entire asset value and investability.

It is very important not to misunderstand this point as a conventional argument that moral and social values are directly subordinate to or monetized by economic rationality, because the point here is that the nature of economic rationality itself has changed. As Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) point out, in the new network capitalism the point of entrepreneurial activity is less to gain immediate economic profit through exchange than to “enhance their values” and become an influential element in the network. As I will show in chapters 2 and 3, such enterprise or human capital forms are configuring and refiguring the imaginaries surrounding community,
the state, and subjects’ ethical practices. For example, various elements in a community—including beautiful views, kind neighborhoods, or even the landscape of poverty—are regarded as assets that should be arranged to enhance the community’s entire value; the state assumes the role of a central investor who finances citizens’ caring practices and expects substantial social impacts as “the return on investment”; citizens’ ethical aspirations and practices are organized as projects to raise their investability and attract more fund from the state and the market.

Second, as the production of human capital blurs the boundary of the private and the public, care and work have mutually transformed and homologized. In liberal capitalism, care and work belonged to different realms and were organized according to different principles. While work has been abstracted to serve as the foundation of social recognition and rights (Balibar 2004), care has remained concrete in the private sphere. As Robert Castel maintains, “Work is truly a social act when it can no longer be confused with private activity, such as work in the home” (1996: 619). In the human capital regime, abstract work and private care gradually come to have no qualitative differences: as noted above in discussing the rise of “entrepreneurial culture” in South Korea, while private care can take the form of work such as affective and caring labors, abstract work comes to convey the intimate nature of care, such as through social services or community activities (I will touch upon this transformation in Chapter 4). As a result, in the immanent plane of human capital, there exists no breaking point between care of self and care for others, or more exactly, care for others is considered “as a constitutive part” of self-care. Feher argues, “Far from disregarding social concerns to merely focus on personal ones, they no longer recognized the pertinence of allocating the care of others and the care of the self to two distinct realms” (37).31

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31 “Innovation” emerges as a strong principle to conduct the continuum of care of self and care for others. As Schumpeter famously defines, entrepreneurs are not those who are motivated by money but rather who seek the
The “enterprisation of social fields” or the rise of neoliberal human capital has thus undermined “the constitutive oppositions” upon which the modern liberal societies have been constructed—the distinctions between production and reproduction, private and public, care and labor (Feher 2009: 38). What would the form of a society be like that consists of human capitals, then? How have sociality and ethicality been transformed, as the subjectivity of the free laborer has gradually been replaced with a new form of subjectivity, human capital? These are some of the main questions that I want to address in this dissertation by exploring South Korea’s social economy sector.

**Neosocial Government/Development**

As noted above, I understand development as a form of liberal government that seeks to align the individual with the collective and resolve the conundrum between the empowerment and the control of free, self-interested subjects (Cruikshank 1999; Lessenich 2011; Rudnyckyj 2010). In this dissertation, I heuristically attempt to understand the recent rise of social economy and social innovation in South Korea as part of the formation of “neosocial government/development” that pursues the construction of society under neoliberal conditions.32 This new governmental or developmental program is not only directly associated with neoliberal human capital subjects and the new social imaginary, but it also relies on governing dispositifs distinct from other forms of governing rationalities—developmental, liberal, neoliberal, and social governmentality.

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32 I borrow the term “neosocial” from Lessenich (2011), Maasen et al. (2007), and Vogelmann (2012). In arguing that the ongoing transitions toward an “active society” or “neosocial market economy” should not be understood as the unilateral subordination of the social to economic rationality but as the renewal of social logics within neoliberalism, the authors commonly attempt to conceptualize the current development with the adjective, “neosocial.”
Above all, neosocial government is predicated upon the production of human capital subjectivity that incorporates social, ethical dimensions into their immanent portfolios. The emergence of the new *homo economicus* has radically displaced and outmoded the essential governmental conundrum of liberalism: how individual pursuits of interest can create or be converted into the social good. As commonly pointed out by Foucault and Arendt, in liberal imagination society has served as an answer to the mystery: as the intermediary sphere between the private and the public, society is not only where individual pursuit of self-interest enigmatically benefits others through the working of the “individual hand” (Foucault 2008: 277-280) but also where private needs and necessities of citizens are taken care of as collective concerns (Arendt 1958: 41-43). In contrast, under neoliberal conditions, the social as the intermediary space—in which self-interest is connected with care for others—are gradually folded into the practice of self-care. Lessenich (2011) describes the process as “the subjectivization of the social” that hands over “social responsibility from public (collective) institutions to private (individual) actors” (315). The social good is now imagined not as the result of aligning individual interest with collective gain but as being directly achieved through the production of “a ‘socialized self’ who, in relying on and taking care of him/herself, is actually acting in the name and for the sake of society” (306). This change explains why social entrepreneurs, social innovators and ethical enterprises—to whom care of self is indistinguishable from social responsibility and vice versa—have emerged as a new ideal subject.

The form of society that consists of human capitals, therefore, significantly differs from the social universe of liberal and social governments. It is well-known that the modern social imaginary has been based on the conceptualization of society “as an objective order with its own
regulated dynamics” (Poovey 2002: 129). That is to say, society has been imagined as the autonomous and abstract plane that exists separate from individual human actors and their particular perspectives (Taylor 2003). A famous Durkheimian axiom—“as a totality, society is bigger than the sum of its parts” (Lukes 1973: 57)—lay in fact at the heart of this conceptualization of society as an object sui generis. As I show in Chapters 2 and 5, such an abstract, objective, and universal imaginary of society has been gradually replaced with the new image of fragmented, temporary, and multiple networks of participatory, ethical citizens. Society is increasingly imagined as the congregation of intimate and affective bonds “produced, step by step, by participatory citizens rather than an a priori domain into which the state interjects” (Muehlebach 2012: 43). As the objectivity of social structure has been foreclosed, therefore, the individual’s social responsibilities and ethical practices have been more emphasized and considered a way of directly “transforming the world” and contributing to the social good. For this reason, as discussed in Chapter 5, the recent plethora of “the social” can be understood as symptomatic of the vanishing of “society” as a universal and abstract plane.

What should be noted is that the new social imaginary is not unrelated to neoliberal post-work conditions in which labor has lost its status as the foundation of society. As Ferguson (2015: Ch. 2) points out, the key dispostisifs of the welfare state’s social government—family care, social insurance, education, and trade unions—were primarily organized around labor and its collective rights. Labor has served not only as the concrete means to survival but also as an abstract entry to claim social rights and obtain social recognition (Balibar 2004; Castel 2003; Poovey (2002) points out that statistics have served as the most appropriate knowledge form for this abstract and objective imaginary of society. See also Hacking (1990) and Mitchell (2002). As I will discuss in Chapter 2, the ethnographic turn in developmental knowledge is relevant to the transformation of the modern social imaginary. In addition, various new forms of social scientific knowledge including “big data” recently begin to challenge the hegemony of statistics. See Davies (2015a) and also his newspaper article “How statistics lost their power – and why we should fear what comes next” The Guardian (Jan. 19, 2017).
Rosanvallon 2000). The decline of labor and the replacement of free laborer with human capital in the neoliberal human condition thus raises the important question: What can replace the status of labor as the foundation of society and solidarity? The recent upsurge of discourses surrounding caring labor, affective labor, and gift-exchange in relation to the resurgence of the social reflects not simply a transformation in the nature of work but also the emergence of various experiments in search of a new societal foundation on the condition of human capital regime. In this dissertation, I examine potential candidates for cementing “the social”—ethical care, affective labor, and gift-exchange—and show that, due the inability to reflect political antagonism and objective structures, these moral and economic practices remain within the threshold of fragmented intimate and ethical sociality.

The heuristic conceptualization of neosocial government seeks neither to complete the prevalent Western-centered teleological genealogy of governmental rationalities, i.e, liberal government-social government-neoliberal government (and subsequently neosocial government), nor to argue that old developmental government has been completely replaced with the new form of governing rationality. The conceptualization rather aims to illuminate how a post-developmental state’s endeavors to manage the crisis of reproduction and to find new development through the construction of society are conditioned by and entangled with neoliberal conditions that produce human capital. Just as the social government of welfare states did not replace liberalism, but rather was constructed upon the liberal human condition that presupposes free laborer who possesses and exchanges his or her property or labor forces in the market (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991; Donzelot 1994), the “neosocial” governing rationality also operates upon the neoliberal human condition and the figure of new homo æconomicus who constructs themselves as investable subjects who appreciate all the aspects of
their lives as assets in a manageable portfolio. In addition, as Mitchell Dean argues, concrete forms of government “must be considered in their combination and recombination with other diverse, power relations” including different governing rationalities (2015: 363). As an ethnographic investigation of the social economy sector in South Korea, this dissertation will concentrate on the modus operandi of what can be called “neosocial government” and the gray zone where the incipient governing rationality is articulated with neoliberal rationality and old developmentalism.

OBJECTS AND METHOD

In concluding this chapter, the objects and the method of analysis employed in this dissertation need to be clarified. Although my research has an affinity with the studies of “neoliberal governmentality,” it also aims to engage with and overcome their analytical limitations. It is undeniable that governmentality studies have provided a useful means to critically examine contemporary governing rationalities and technologies. They open the possibility to approach neoliberalism not simply as macroeconomic doctrines or policies but as an assemblage of

34 Foucault goes even further to argue that the competition among different governing rationality can be thought as a place of politics. In concluding analysis of neoliberalism, he remarks: “...art of government according to truth, art of government according to the rationality of the sovereign state, and art of government according to the rationality of economic agents, and more generally, according to the rationality of the governed themselves. And it is all these different arts of government, all these different types of ways of calculating, rationalizing, and regulating the art of government which, overlapping each other, broadly speaking constitute the object of political debate from the nineteenth century. What is politics, in the end, if not both the interplay of these different arts of government with their different reference points and the debate to which these different arts of government give rise? It seems to me that it is here that politics is born.” (2008: 313)

35 For general introductions to governmentality studies and their concrete analysis of neoliberalism, see Dean (2009); Lemke et al. (2011); Rose (1999); Rose and Miller (2008); Walters, (2000).
rationalities, practices, and strategies. Furthermore, the studies also help illuminate how the various programs and strategies transact in reality and how the neoliberal rationalities have been metamorphosed and advanced (Dardot and Laval 2013; Larner and Craig 2005; Lemke 2002).

As James Ferguson (2010) aptly criticizes, however, the studies have often limited their inquiry to the question of whether particular governing programs are neoliberal or not and thus have resulted in reasserting an already familiar conclusion that heterogeneous rationalities and technologies ultimately contribute to the working of neoliberalism.

This reflection leads to a more general critique of governmentality studies—that they tend to overemphasize the stability and efficacy of governing programs and technologies. Although they continue to emphasize the heterogeneous or even contradictory natures of governing rationalities, their actual descriptions seem to be often totalizing and even functionalist (Brenner 1994; Donzelot and Gordon 2008; Flew 2012; Hilgers 2010; Lemke, Krasman, and Bröckling 2011; Stäheli 2011). Such a tendency is most manifest in the ways that they account for the inherent failures or ambiguities of governing programs. Although they ostensibly and frequently acknowledge that governing programs do not necessarily produce the desired effect and “reality always escapes the theories that inform programmes” (Rose and Miller 2008: 35), the unintended results and conflicts are often described simply as “productive obstructions” to advance the programs. As Stäheli points out, even when the failures of programs are seriously examined in the studies, they tend to be regarded as the “empirical shortcomings” of programs rather than as “the ontological aportia of governmental technologies” (2011: 279).

The burgeoning governmentality studies on social economy and social entrepreneurship

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36 For different perspectives on neoliberalism focusing on its nature in terms of economic ideology, policies, and governmental rationality, see Larner (2000).
share the same drawback. In mostly focusing on how social economy and social entrepreneurship contribute to neoliberal or “advanced liberal” government, they usually reach the conclusion that “the socials” are instrumental and functional managing the crisis of contemporary neoliberalism (Carmel and Harlock 2008; Dey 2014; Kim 2015; Kim 2016; Pathak 2014). To overcome this rather unidimensional approach, this thesis purports to illuminate competing desires and conflicting perspectives found in South Korea’s social economy sector, rather than asking whether social economy and social innovation are inherently neoliberal or not. Evidently, “social economy” in South Korea serves as an encompassing signifier containing divergent and heterogeneous desires: not only governmental desire to manage social risks at a minimal cost and find a new engine of development, but also mixed desires from the below. These include: individual will to self-improvement and economic survival; an impulse to refuse work and its disciplinary regime; anti-neoliberal aspirations to (re)build a society and community; social activists’ longstanding anti-statism; feminists’ intervention to de-familiarize and expand care; and even nationalistic passion for “catching up” to the moral development of advanced countries. Various longings are invested in the field of social economy and thus create a variegated field. As noted earlier, one of the objectives of this dissertation is to excavate the multi-layered strata of the congealed desires.37

Paying attention to various, ambiguous desires, however, cannot be simply equated with phenomenologically describing the heterogeneity inherent in the field or unveiling intricate multiplicities of reality (Brady 2014; Li 2007). What this dissertation takes as the focal point of analysis is the working of dispositifs that serve to “translate” the varied desires into the

37 As a caveat, this does not mean that all the participants in social economy well recognize their own impulses and choose the social economy sector to pursue them. While some of the aspirations are self-reflective, many desires remain obscure and ambiguous even to the participants themselves and only become visible in retrospect as a result of the “(mis)translation” (cf. Callon and Latour 1981 and Latour 2007. See also Rose and Miller (1990)).
governable forms. In an interview that was conducted in 1977—when he was developing the
notion of governmentality, Foucault defines dispositif (apparatus) as follows:

What I’m trying to single out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous
ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions,
laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and
philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the
elements of dispositif (apparatus). Dispositif itself is the network that can be established
between these elements… I understand by the term dispositif a sort of formation that has
its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need… I
said that dispositif is essentially of a strategic nature, which means assuming that it is a
matter of a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a
particular direction, blocking them, stabilizing them, utilizing them, etc. Dispositif is thus
always inscribed in a play of forces… (Foucault 1977, 194ff; emphasis added)

In this quotation, Foucault provides a comprehensive definition of dispositif in three distinct but
related senses: a diverse number of strategic/tactical elements, a specific set of relations between
the elements, and the governing effects produced by these relations (Agamben 2006; Hardy
2015). What should be noted in this quotation in relation to our discussion, however, is rather
that, although a dispositif appears to be dominant, totalizing, and even omnipotent, it is primarily
“responsive” and “manipulative.” The strategic and technical dispositifs respond to and

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38 Dispositif has been translated into English as “system,” “deployment,” or more commonly as “apparatus.” The
latter translation of “apparatus” has often been criticized, not only because it emphasizes the notion’s mechanical
connotation over its neutral meaning of specific disposition (Kessler 2007) but also because Foucault himself
distinguishes appareil and dispositif (Bussolini 2010). At the risk of “non-translation” that keeps its semantic field
empty, I rather use the original term “dispositif” here rather than apparatus to shed light on its function of
configuring heterogeneous elements. For the debate over the translation of dispositif, see Bussolini (2010) who
suggests “dispositive” as an alternative translation.
39 Foucault has developed the concept of dispositif in analyzing the historical dispositif of sexuality in The History of
Sexuality: An Introduction (1978) and the dispositif of security in the first lecture of Security, Territory,
Population (2009). Dispositif has repeatedly been pointed out as the key concept to understand Foucault’s later
works (Deleuze 1987; Lazzarato 2006). For the development of the concept in Foucault’s works, see Agamben
40 In commenting on Foucault’s concept of dispositif, Deleuze also points out the inherently open and disjointed
characters of dispositif: “What is dispositif? In the first instance it is a tangle, a multi-linear ensemble. It is
composed of lines, each having a different nature. And the lines in the dispositif do not outline or surround systems
which are each homogenous in their own right, object, subject, language, and so on, but follow directions…
intervene into existing urgent needs and ongoing “plays of forces” in order to conduct and “develop them in a particular direction.” In this way, dispositifs as a set of discursive and non-discursive technologies, programs, and practices creates multiple loci where the above enumerated miscellaneous desires are connected to and organized by governmental programs.41

In illuminating various conflicting desires that are invested in the fields of social economy and social innovation, I approach the fields in terms of dispositifs that respond to the minuscule desires and translate them into governable formulations. It is only in this sense that I argue that “social economy” and “social innovation” are constitutive to what Étienne Balibar (1992) calls “dominant ideology.”42 In elaborating Althusser’s pioneering analysis of ideological state apparatus, Balibar problematizes conventional sociological theories of hegemony as well as the orthodox Marxist notion of ideology that often view dominant ideologies as reflecting the dominant class’s interests and foisting them onto the dominated. He maintains that, if a particular

[However] Each line is broken and subject to changes in direction, bifurcating and forked, and subject to drifting.” (Deleuze 1991: 159).

41 In this regard, topologically speaking, dispositif corresponds to the dimension of “techniques of government” in Foucault’s later explanation about the tri-layered structure of his analysis. In one of his last interviews, Foucault distinguishes strategic relations, techniques of government, and states of domination:

It seems to me that we must distinguish between power relations understood as strategic games between liberties and the states of domination that people ordinarily call “power”… And between the two, between games of power and states of domination, you have technologies of government—understood, of course, in a very broad sense that includes not only the way institutions are governed but also the way one governs one’s wife and children. The analysis of these techniques is necessary because it is very often through such techniques that states of domination are established and maintained. There are three levels to my analysis of power: strategic relations, techniques of government, and states of domination. (1997: 299; emphasis added)

In other words, the state of domination would be “established” and “maintained,” as the techniques of government intervene into the strategic games of power and “immobilize them and prevent any reversibility of movement” (Foucault 1997: 293).

42 Although Foucault remained skeptical of the Marxist conceptualization of ideology (Foucault 1991), Althusser (1971)’s redefinition of ideology opens a possibility to explore the affinities between Foucauldian analyses of discourse and government and Althusserian investigation of material apparatuses of ideology. Their analyses rely on and use the same concepts such as appareil and dispositif. See Hardy (2015) and Montag (1995).
dominant ideology works, it should primarily depend upon “the lived experience of the dominated masses” which involves not only an acceptance or recognition but also “a protest or revolt against the existing world”: “Just as the accumulation of capital is made of living labor,” he continues, dominant apparatuses work by using “the popular religious, moral, legal and aesthetic imaginary of the masses as their specific fuel” (Balibar 1992: 12-13). In this sense, “the dominant ideology in a given society” is nothing but “a specific universalization of the imaginary of the dominated” (Balibar 1992: 12-13).

To follow his point, this dissertation views “social economy” as neither a unilaterally constituted reality through governing programs nor an “ideological cloak” imposed by the neoliberal dominant class (Cremin 2011); I rather understand it as a particular attempt of translating and organizing the lived desires and experiences of the governed including their anti-neoliberal aspirations. In a sense, this necessitates turning the conventional governmentality approach inside out. That is to say, instead of inquiring how power constitutes its objects and makes them intelligible and docile, our methodological orientation should be to navigate dispositifs as a site of translation and ask how it functions with the conflicting desires and dreams as its source of power.

This “bottom-up governmentality” approach, to borrow Clive Barnett (2005)’s words, not only helps to achieve one of the theoretical purposes of this thesis that deconstructs the homogenous and totalizing imagery of neoliberalism; it also opens a possibility for a productive conversation between ethnography and governmentality studies or what Brady (2014) calls “ethnographies of governmentalities.” Again, this is not simply saying that ethnography can draw “a more finely grained picture” of the everyday working of a dispositifs that is often ignored by more formulaic governmentality studies that “bracket out the multiplicity and
complexity” (Brady 2014: 28). The contribution of ethnography to governmentality studies is rather related to the inquiries about how to disclose undercurrent desires that are invested and congealed within dispositifs and how to elucidate subjects’ ethical and practical predicaments caused by the gap between their ambiguous desires and their (mis)translation. In other words, the ethnographies of governmentalities should be a sort of construction of a double-layered map—the map of desire and the map of translating dispositifs—and reckoning how the two maps are overlaid and detuned (cf. Marcus 1995). If, as Foucault famously remarks, a new governmentality or an alternative way of governing “cannot be deduced from texts” but rather “must be invented” (2010: 94), such invention would only become possible by attending to and grappling with the latent desires and their mistranslations in order to conduct and channel them in a different direction. The objective of the mapping would thus be not a critique in itself but to identify and describe the thin void between two overlaid maps and hence to help imagine the conditions of possibility for politics and “the invention of new government.” This work thus aims to contribute to drawing and navigating the double-layered map of “the potential” and “the present” in contemporary South Korean society.

43 For a trenchant critique of Brady’s rather simplistic argument, see Dean (2015). He argues that Brady exaggerates the totalizing tendency in governmentality studies and also privileges ethnography as the only method to illuminate the “actual” reality and its heterogeneity. My point is that ethnography is less related to heterogeneity itself than to explore the working of dispositifs and subjective predicaments caused by the translating work.

44 It should be noted that my analysis is not an “ethnography” in its strict sense of “writing about a particular other culture, people, or ethnos.” For the problems of this conventional definition of ethnography, see Clifford (1988); Forsey (2010); Gupta and Ferguson (1992); and Ingold (2014). I rather understand ethnography in a broader sense of an attempt to describe and understand in-depth social settings and cultural contexts within which subjects’ rather mundane practices and tactics are made and unfold (cf. Rabinow et al. 2008).

45 Here, James Ferguson’s point—that the question of “what do we want?” is more important and more difficult than the question of “what are we against?”—becomes more valid than ever (2010: 167).
Chapter 2, “Seeing Like a Social Entrepreneur,” traces how the notions of poverty, development, and community have been remolded in South Korea’s search of a new development paradigm. By illuminating how poverty is redefined in relational and affective terms in the community regeneration project of a small shanty town in Seoul and how the solution is found in the promotion of entrepreneurialism among the residents, I particularly focus on how various dispositifs and ethnographical methods are adopted and deployed to translate local knowledge and communal bonds into business resources. As neoliberal rationality or what I call “the logic of human capital” is extended to the level of the collective, a community is now re-imagined as a hybrid space in which mutual, affective association and neoliberal enterprise sociality are intermingled and become indistinguishable. What is remarkable is that, surrounding this new governing space of “enterprise community” or “community enterprise,” the traditional roles of the state, the market, and the ethical subjects come to be rearticulated. While the state recedes to the role of incubator or facilitator of development rather than the central planner, the “empowered” ethical citizens and entrepreneurial residents come to assume the responsibilities not only for creating communities or “social bonds” but also for appreciating the asset value of the collectivity.

Chapter 3, “Ethical Citizenship in Practice,” illuminates the changing relations of the state, the market, and entrepreneurial citizens in the broader context of the transition from developmental (non-)citizenship to ethical citizenship. For the last decade, the South Korean government has actively introduced and promoted the social care market not only in response to the crisis of care and reproduction, but also as a new source of job opportunities for an
underemployed population. The social care market thus serves as a good window through which to investigate how ethical citizenship incorporates marginalized populations into a cheap, precarious labor market under the name of care and how new lines of exclusion are drawn in the blossoming, seemingly inclusive citizenship. In following the vicissitude of an elderly care cooperative from its creation to its closure, this chapter demonstrates how the ethical citizens are encouraged to constitute themselves as *investable* subjects and how the nature of their ethical caring practices has changed into appreciable *projects* that are expected to generate measurable social impacts within a limited time span. In the process, the relation between the state and ethical citizens becomes similar to the one of investor and investee. As a result, in opposition to the general belief that the rise of ethical citizenship signals a rupture from ruthless developmental (non-)citizenship, I shed light on the continuities between them and argue that the difference between the two citizenships should be found rather in the financial logic and “projective ethicality” based on which ethical citizenship measures citizens’ contributions and qualifications.

After examining the transformation in the realm of care, in Chapter 4, “The Affective Life of Post-Development,” I move on to the alteration of the other pillar that had undergirded the old developmental regime, i.e. work and labor. I begin with the pervasive despair and hopelessness among underemployed South Korean youth. The end of rapid economic growth has created a growing rift between youth’s lingering desire for a “good ordinary life” and their deteriorating, precarious socioeconomic conditions. The social innovation and affective labor (*hwaldong*) have emerged as a stopgap to fill the chasm, by encouraging youth to translate their precarity into an opportunity and manage that situation with their own hands. In opposition to various works that attend to the political or social potentials of affective labor and affective activism, I illuminate instead how the discourses of social innovation and affective labor have
been used not only to conceal and justify the precarious working conditions but also to create and reinforce hierarchical divisions and disparities among youth. In oscillating between the oppressive labor regime in old developmentalism and the precarious promise of neoliberal freedom, youth in the social economy have only committed to adapt, negotiate, and manage the precarious future rather than successfully formulating their political agenda.

In continuation of the discussion, Chapter 5, “The Moral Economy of Face” returns to the question of the new social imaginary to address the political possibility of social economy activism. I begin with the metaphors of “face” that are often found in fair trade and social economy activism: fair trade and social economic transactions are frequently described as “trade with persons whose faces you know” and their ultimate goal is presented as building “capitalism or market economy with a human face.” To understand how and why the activists rely on the metaphor of face to problematize market economy, I first examine the intimate connection between gift-exchange and face based on Marcel Mauss’ analyses of gift and present face as a junction of recognition and disciplinary empowerment. Next, drawing on research in a fair trade social enterprise, I illuminate fair trade as a hybrid practice of “marketized gift-exchange” in which the multiple faces of “entrepreneurial producers” and “responsible consumers” are produced and circulated. In analyzing the essentially marketized features of social solidarity pursued by fair trade and the social economy, I maintain that the widespread metaphors of “face” in the activism betray the contradictory nature of the market-based solidarity that seeks to redefine the economic structure without political challenges to it.

I conclude this dissertation with “Innovation, Care, Gift, and Gary Becker” in which I explore possibilities for a new universal foundation of solidarity in the financialized, “post-work” society. In recapitulating how the potential candidates—community, care, affective labor,
and gift-exchange—are intersected and articulated with a human capital regime to constitute the neosocial government, I argue the necessity of re-inventing the universal vision of politics upon which the current dispositifs can be rearranged to restore a broken link between social solidarity and politics and to challenge the neoliberal human condition.

In this dissertation, I have tried to make each chapter as independent as possible, despite shared themes, questions, and numerous cross-references. The relations between chapters can be read in various ways. Each chapter can be understood as a critical investigation of the conceptual and practical foundations of the “returned socials”—community, care, affective labor, and the spirit of gift. Additionally, each chapter focuses, respectively, on the transformations of knowledge production, ethicality, affects, and social solidarity on the neoliberal human condition and in the neosocial government. In so doing, each chapter describes some of the representative subjects and groups that comprise South Korea’s social economy sector—community/social entrepreneurs, intermediary organizations, care workers, government officials, youth innovators, NGOs, and ethical consumers. I hope that structuring the dissertation in this manner provides readers multiple useful entrances to understand this fast-emerging, highly hybrid, and multi-faceted field.
CHAPTER 2

SEEING LIKE A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR:
A NEW EPISTEMOLOGY OF POVERTY AND COMMUNITY

“What I like to say is: Human capital puts people at the center of an economy… when we think about economies, when we think about development, that’s a liberating point of view. People are the center of the economy.” – Gary Becker (2012: 11)

INTRODUCTION

On a chilly evening in March 2014 in Seongbuk, a northeastern city of Seoul, I was sitting in a meeting room of the borough hall with a number of local residents and social entrepreneurs for the first convening of the “Workshop for Social Economy and Community Development.” The promotional leaflet that I received described the aim of the 10-week long workshop as follows: “By mentoring and networking future community leaders and social entrepreneurs, the workshop helps the participants discover new community business opportunities and seek an alternative community development based on social economy.” At the podium, a local administrator, the organizer of the workshop, was expressing his frustration over the region’s deteriorated socio-economic conditions. Despite the district government’s longstanding efforts, the peri-urban area was notably suffering from a high poverty rate, substantial income inequality, and community
degenerations. After the long, depressing speech, he added: “so it is time that local residents and innovative entrepreneurs like you have to become the subjects of problem-solving in place of the bureaucratic and ineffective state. You are those who best know about your community so you can find the best solutions.” He concluded that the poor conditions could provide various business opportunities for social enterprises, and even half-jokingly added that Seongbuk thus would be “the best district for community business and investment.”

Some of the attendees chuckled, because obviously it sounded like an ironic parody of the notorious slogan “Korea, the best country for business and investment” that repeatedly has been used by the government since the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. On the surface, the contexts surrounding the two phrases seem to be quite opposite: whereas the central government’s old slogan reflects a prevailing neoliberal condition in which the states have to compete to create a “business-friendly environment” through tax reduction, deregulation, and flexible labor (Duménil and Lévy 2012; Harvey 2005; Ong 2006), social economy and community development have been considered largely as solutions for social problems created by the very same neoliberal policies, and furthermore, as the antidote to neoliberal marketization—this might explain why the administrator’s words were interpreted as a joke. This local administrator’s statement, however, intrigued me for somewhat different reasons: above all, it was a candid acknowledgement of the government’s failure in directly managing social problems, which have been prevalent recently in Korean administrations; furthermore, in so doing, the statement seemed to tacitly repeat the neoliberal gesture that exempts the government from its old responsibility for social welfare and limits its role in supporting and facilitating

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1 As noted in Chapter 1, in contrast to the Gangnam area that is considered the most affluent and developed in Seoul, the Gangbuk area where the Seongbuk district is located has been relatively poor and underdeveloped. In 2014, Seongbuk ranked third in the number of beneficiaries of national basic livelihood and second in the number of impoverished elders among 25 districts in Seoul.
voluntary activities of business and communities; and finally and most importantly, in the statement, social problems such as poverty were framed as “business opportunities” and thus were recast as issues that can and should be resolved by social/community economy and entrepreneurship.

In this chapter, I will attempt to illuminate and contextualize the very undercurrent of the logic of this statement. In tracing how the aforementioned workshop drew up and devised a concrete community development plan for Bukjeong Maul, a small shanty town in the Seongbuk district, I focus on how the new conceptions of poverty, development, and community have surfaced in the discourses and practices of social economy and community business. To begin with, I explore the social contexts in which a new strategy of community development has emerged and how this latest strategy has problematized previous state-led developmental tactics. Next, I move to trace the concrete techniques and dispositifs that function in the workshop and illuminate how they produce and translate local knowledge into resources for profit-making. In particular, I center on what can be called the “ethnographic turn” in the community development discourse and how it contributes to the reification and commodification of locality. Lastly, I maintain that in this scheme of new community development, we witness a new social imaginary in which a community as the embodiment of communal values and a community as an enterprise are indistinguishably overlapped and interconnected. The chapter’s conclusion will be devoted to briefly sketching what the “new epistemology of community” teaches us about the transforming relations of market, community, and the state, in critically engaging with James Scott (1998)’s

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2 According to Harvey (1989), this transition can be described as from the “managerialism” to the “entrepreneurism” of urban governance, in which state-centered regulation is subsequently replaced by more fragmented and flexible governance based on non-state entities including voluntary organizations, communities, NGOs, and private firms. With the transition, the state focuses on facilitating and inciting the self-governing activities of various organizations rather than seeking centralized planning. See also Hall and Hubbard (1998) and Jessop (1997).
opposition between the unitary, homogeneous, transcendent state and diverse, heterogeneous, immanent communities.

**IN SEARCH OF NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Bukjeong-Maul, the so-called “last shanty town [moon town, *tal-tongne*] in Seoul,” is located around the Seoul City Wall, a national heritage site.\(^3\) The town was illegally formed into its current shape with a massive migration from rural areas to peri-urban Seoul during the rapid industrialization period of the 1960s, and more than half of the residents who have lived in the village since then are now over 65 years old. In contrast to Seongbuk’s other neighborhoods that have been redeveloped primarily as apartment residential areas, the redevelopment of the village has been highly restricted and arrested because of its illegality as well as the existence of the Seoul City Wall. As a result, the town has become renowned for its authentic, nostalgic outlook of the Seoul of the 1960s and has recently attracted urban tourists who are looking for exotic experiences and photo opportunities.

A viewer’s guide for the documentary film “Connect to Bukjeong Maul” [*Chŏpsok! Bukjeong Maul*] which was broadcast nationwide on a public TV network in 2014, describes the town as follows:

\(^3\) South Korea’s rapid economic growth in the development period was accompanied by overnight urbanization and the formation of shanty towns in big cities. Because the shanty towns were usually located on the top of hills, they were commonly called (often affectionately) “moon towns” [*tal-tongne*], meaning close to the Moon. As many other shanty towns in Seoul have been redeveloped into high rise apartment compounds for the last two decades, Bukjeong Maul has become a famous one of “the last moon towns in Seoul.”
Bukjeong Maul, where about 500 households are warmly huddled together, is located just at the foot of the Seoul City Wall. By taking the community bus no. 3 through the only traffic between bustling downtown Seoul and this rustic village, we are gradually entering into a wholly different Seoul with cuckoos’ songs heard. Getting to know the untainted residents who enjoy happiness and human affection [人情, injŏng] brought by poverty and wandering deeper into the cozy narrow alleys, we also begin to become enchanted with the fantastic feeling of traveling backwards in time... [emphasis added]

As the above make clear, viewers of “Connect to Bukjeong” are invited to imagine a visit to Bukjeong Maul as a form of time travel in which the geographical distance between “developed” downtown Seoul and the “underdeveloped” peri-urban area is replaced by an imaginary temporal gulf (cf. Creighton 1997). In this time travel, we would locate what is presumably “lost” in contemporary metropolitan life: not only material conditions of poor communities such as “narrow alleys” but also pre-existing values such as “happiness” and “human affection.” Such a nostalgic, romanticized imagery surrounding the slum appears to be overtly deployed by the government to boost tourist visits. For example, a tourism leaflet issued by the district government introduces Bukjeong Maul as “our Ancient Future” (to borrow the title of Helena Noberg-Hodge (1991)’s famous book on the communal and self-sufficient lifestyle of a Tibetan community), which has managed to escape “the massive destructive waves of modernization and development” for the past several decades; thus this village is where “people still live like a big family within an unmarred environment.” That is to say, Bukjeong Maul is often imagined as in a kind of “pristine” state of pre-development that has been relatively unaffected by the rapid, destructive industrial urbanization and has maintained traditional communality and familial values.

During my fieldwork research in 2013-15, the Seoul Metropolitan and the Seongbuk district governments were seeking to render Bukjeong Maul as an experimental field for alternative community development. In 2013, the municipal government nominated the village
as “Seoul’s best community (maul)” and launched the “Seoul Wall Neighborhoods Development Plan” that sought an “alternative, community-based development” by “reinvigorating and reusing the existing community resources” rather than the whole removal type of redevelopment.\(^4\) Although some residents mounted opposition to the alternative development plan and the general agreement over the type of redevelopment was never officially reached among the residents,\(^5\) local community enterprises and NGOs formed a planning team in 2014 and embarked upon their own community regeneration activities in Bukjeong Maul with the support of the municipal government. Choi Bong-Mun, a local activist who participated in the planning team, related to me in an interview: “Bukjeong Maul is a kind of perfect place for experimenting with a new community development. It has a lot of potential resources and capitals that cannot be found in already developed neighborhoods. If the plan goes well, perhaps we could re-experience in Bukjeong Maul how our past development could have been [emphasis added].” In order to grasp this rather strange phrase, “re-experience how our past development could have been” and why Bukjeong Maul has become a test bed for this experiment, it would be necessary to first understand how the current government, activists, and development experts assess the former development strategy and what they are proposing with the term “alternative community development.”

According to “Seoul’s Basic Plan for Community Development” issued in 2012 by the municipal government, the new community development primarily aims at “restoring human values, social trust, and communal networks that have been destroyed for the last 40 years by

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\(^5\) Although the existence of the Seoul City Wall has prevented Bukjeong Maul from being redeveloped into a high-rise apartment area, some residents have still preferred the whole removal type of redevelopment because of its high profitability. Since the alternative development plan was announced, they have attempted to put pressure on the government to annul the plan, which has caused occasional conflicts among the residents.
The document offers highly critical reflections on the preceding development policies. “Albeit successful in some aspects,” it says, “the policies have focused only on material improvement and economic growth, and disregarded social values and identities of places and communities.” As a result, “traditional communities and social networks have been totally destroyed and the quality of life has deteriorated.”6 This tsunami-like image of economic development, which has destroyed all sociality and communality, finds its more sophisticated (or at least more pseudo-theoretical) version in the works of Cho HaeJeong, the head of the “Seoul Community Committee” as well as one of the leading anthropologists in South Korea. In maintaining that the main aim of community development should be to create “caring postmodern communities” and overcome “the past condensed modernization process,” she argues:

So far Korean society has been obsessed with state-led development and quantitative economic growth. In the process, the social problems have been diagnosed and prescribed from the perspective of “construction state” [t'ogŏn gukka] with a focus on infrastructure and material condition,... In the present postmodern society, highways and high rises are not important anymore. What is more significant is to create communities [maul] in which self-sufficient population/residents are produced and trained to feel happiness and human affection with small relations and affairs. (2007: 153-4)

In these standard assessments of the past development strategy, two repeated phrases of “state-led” and “material infrastructure-focused” are worth noting in the sense that they reveal the focal points of the prevalent critical reflections. Past development strategy is characterized formally as a top-down decision-making by the state so that the planning mechanism has been non-responsive to the “concrete” needs of local communities. Also, in its contents, the state-led

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6 The Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul’s Basic Plan for Community Development [서울특별시 마을 공동체 기본계획], 2012, pp. 3-6.
strategy has invested only in the improvement of material conditions and infrastructures so that the result is a lamentable loss of traditional communality and spiritual values. Needless to say, such problematization always-already includes particular prescriptions for the noted problems. The main features of the alternative community development plan, therefore, should be found in its “residents-initiated” and “social” development rather than in state-controlled economic improvement. “Seoul’s Basic Plan for Community Development” clearly explicates its principles as the following phrases: “Community Development with residents’ own hands! 1. Target: Relational communities not administrative or material units; 2. Aim: the promotion of communality not the improvement of infrastructure; 3. Method: Residents-led bottom-up process not the state-led top-down intervention.”

With shifts of focus in development policies, comes a new conceptualization of poverty as the main target of development. Above all, as the social and communal dimensions of development are emphasized, poverty begins to be explained social and relational issues rather than material and economical predicaments (and vice versa). For example, “Seongbuk’s Basic Plan for Community Development” identified the causes and effects of the lingering poverty in its rental housing areas as follows: “1. High unemployment rate; 2. High suicide rate of neglected, lonely elders; 3. The prevalent sense of deprivation caused by discrimination and inequality; 4. The lack of communal activities and interactions among residents; 5. The shortage of community welfare facilities.”

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7 The Seoul Metropolitan Government, *Ibid.*, p. 4. The new resident-led development plan works on the assumption that the active, participatory citizens become dissatisfied with the state-led social policies and want to deal with their situations with their own hands. In this sense, the new development strategy is consonant with what Klein and Millar (1995) calls “Do-It-Yourself welfare” as a post-welfare social policy. For DIY trend in poverty management, development policy, and the construction of citizenship, see also Huang (2016), Hyatt (1997), Ratto and Boler (2014), and Wolch and DeVerteuil (2001).

8 The Seongbuk District Government, *Seongbuk’s Basic Plan for Community Development*, [성북구 마을만들기 기본계획], 2012, p. 246. In contrast to high-rise apartment residential areas, rental housing areas mainly consist of
be displaced continuously onto emotional-affective problems such as “loneliness,” “the sense of deprivation,” and the lacks of relationality/communality. For that reason, the report faithfully reflects the current tendency that aligns poverty with emotional and moral languages rather than with the structural analytics of politics and economics (Fine 2001; Harriss 2002; Hyatt 2000; Muehlebach 2012). Clearly, such a diagnosis of poverty at the level of individual emotion and isolation elicits a series of depoliticized, morally-infused prescriptions such as “building an affectionate, caring community,” “promoting volunteer activities,” and “mobilizing poor elders to participate in community programs.”

These transformations in community development discourse may explain why Bukjeong Maul has drawn attention as an experimental field for the new community development plan. As seen above, the village has been imagined in a pre-developmental state that preserves social trust and networks intact in its incipient state. The new community development will be centered not on material, infrastructural improvement but on optimizing ‘social’ relations and ‘social’ capital that already exist in the village as resources. As Tania Li aptly points out, community-based development has a paradox at its heart: although community is assumed to exist naturally and to provide the good life unless destroyed by economic development, “experts must intervene to secure that goodness and enhance it” (2007: 232). Bukjeong Maul, which presumably has

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working-class households including poor elders or underemployed young single adults. For a discussion of single women’s experience in rental housing, see Song (2014a).


10 “Social capital” would be the best word to describe such social trust and networks. Since the mid-2000s, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has issued irregular reports on the measurement of Seoul’s social capital and has attempted to reflect the results in its development plan. The introduction of the notion of “social capital” in development discourse in South Korea is particularly interesting, given that the rise of the notion in global development agencies including the World Bank was related to the critical reflections on the “East-Asian development model” that was considered successful and then collapsed with the 1997 Asian financial crisis. For the debate surrounding the East Asian development model and its relation to the notion of social capital, see Hart (2001), Harriss (2002), and Fine (2004).
precious social, cultural assets and affectionate relations despite its economic poverty, serves as a laboratory where poverty alleviation can be attempted by intervening and optimizing the relational resources and existing social capital through social/community economy instead of the removal and reconstruction of the entire town. This is perhaps what Bong-Mun means by “re-experience how our past development could have been.”

In fact, the novelty of this type of approach to poverty becomes more obvious in the history of Bukjeong Maul itself. In the 1970s and the early 1980s, the issue of poverty used to be addressed in relation to national industrialization and modernization. For example, many of the residents in the town have the memory and experience of participating in the “New Village Movement” [Saemaul undong], the state-initiated nationwide “community modernization” campaign in the 1970s. The developmental state found that the main reason for urban and rural poverty was a lack of “infrastructure”, in particular the absence of “wide roads” [shijnak-ro] that could directly connect isolated villages to urban centers and the “market” (Kim 2009).

To tackle the problem, the government provided sacks of cement and construction equipment for each village, and mobilized residents to build roads under the guidance and control of external experts. Although located in the urban area, Bukjeong Maul is not an exception: as many aged residents proudly recollect, a number of inhabitants at that time actively took part in the constructions of a new road and buildings including the community center and finally managed to get the extension of a public bus route to the village in 1983 as the indirect result of the “community modernization” movement.

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11 For the unfolding of “New Village Movement” in the 1970s-80s, see Han S. (2004). The community development model has been exported to other Third World countries with the support of the South Korean government. See Han J. (2011).

12 The emphasis on infrastructure that enables impoverished areas an access to the “market” is generally found in “development” discourses (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995). As pointed out by Ferguson (1994: 195-206), such technocratic and depoliticized solutions usually end up only expanding and reinforcing the state bureaucracy.
The still-prevailing poverty in the town, however, now has begun to be addressed in terms of the necessity of an affectionate, autonomous community. Whereas the “New Village Movement” aimed at “extending the state power to the capillary level of small villages” and mobilizing the population for the state’s modernization project (Kim 2009: 335), community residents are now, in stark contrast but interesting parallel, deployed for building a self-governing, intimate community to supplement the self-proclaimed failure and retreat of the state.

The essential question, then, is: what could serve as a “voluntary” motivating force, instead of the state, for this new community-based development? The promotion of “entrepreneurship” and the creation of “markets” among the poor emerge as the answer. Of course, these two answers are not novel at all. If not to mention C. K. Prahalad’s famous argument that we should “stop thinking of the poor as victims or as a burden and start recognizing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers” (2005: 1), the belief in the entrepreneurial and market-savvy faculty of the poor and the conversion of the communal social relations into market resources have formed the core imaginary of the new poverty alleviation strategy in the global development discourse (Elyachar 2005, 2012; Roy 2010; Schwittay 2011). In contrast to the past state’s intervention that purported to link and incorporate impoverished communities to the “national” market, what is at issue in the present plan is, therefore, to establish an internal and co-constitutive relationship between market and community that—even without any external intervention—can advance entrepreneurship and development. In this context, “social economy” and “community business” can be understood to signify such attempts to organize (pseudo-) markets from within communities.

What should be noted here is that, as Elyachar (2012) aptly points out, the creation and dissemination of market rationality becomes possible only through the spread of new social
practices and technologies. As modular tools that can be applied to various contexts, such techniques and practices contribute “to turn community resources of the poor into a source of profit” (6). In what follows, I trace how the residents and social entrepreneurs of Bukjeong Maul have formulated tangible community business plans via diverse techniques and practices in the aforementioned workshop. In doing so, I will flesh out how community is radically reframed not only as a storehouse of business resources but also as a laboratory in which new business models can be tested.

ENTERPRISING COMMUNITY

Throughout the workshop, I was teamed up with a few community residents, three community/social enterprises who were interested in embarking on community businesses in Bukjeong Maul, and two community business “incubators” who were trained by the municipal government and assigned to the workshop to “mentor” the participants. Because the successful completion of the workshop can be a benefit in applying for government funding for community businesses, all these “players” [sŏnsu] actively participated in the workshop, although the number of participants per session varied.

13 In fact, the workshop consisted of two main parts. While the first part included a series of general introductions of social entrepreneurship and community development, the second part comprised of the intensive activities and consulting described here. Many residents, local activists, and social entrepreneurs participated only in the first part. The second part of the workshop targeted more “serious” participants.

14 Since the Seoul Metropolitan Government officially adopted community-based social economy as its “new development and poverty alleviation strategy” and began to deploy a comprehensive plan to support social economy in 2012, the 25 district governments in Seoul have been required to regularly offer social entrepreneurship training that target local residents and potential entrepreneurs in the region. With the completion of the training, the participants are entitled or encouraged to apply for government funding for social enterprise and community business. Being organized by the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center and sponsored by the district government, the workshop I attended was one of numerous such training sessions.
Community (Asset) Mapping

The whole group activity began with “community mapping.” From May 2014 on, my team occasionally explored the area on foot to catalog important attributes of the village. Every expedition was followed by two or three life history interviews with old inhabitants. The whole mapping procedure was coordinated by Hee-Jin, a local anthropology graduate student, who introduced herself as an “urban ethnologist.” According to her, community mapping practices aim at helping the participants to see their surroundings as places with various potential and resources. “A village,” she stressed, “is like a treasure box. Everything is in there. The only thing you need to do is to excavate and use them properly.” Although Bukjeong Maul is a small town and it usually takes less than one hour to travel it on foot, Hee-Jin kept emphasizing the importance of microscopic approaches: “Everything can be the object of community mapping. I might be exaggerating, but even trash in a street can be a treasure if you can find a meaning there. So please don’t overlook anything.” All the excavated “treasures,” “community resources,” or “village assets” were next listed on an online interactive community asset map: in addition to the Seoul City Wall, a now-abandoned water well, an “authentic” wooden utility pole, weather-worn wreckage conveying a “nostalgic” mood, a place with a nice view of Seoul’s skyscrapers were flagged on the map; some households were marked with the residents’ names and a short blurb from their life stories; the best walking route to travel around the town was redlined.
According to Bridget Love, who examines the practice of community mapping in rural areas of Japan, the activity primarily purports to promote self-recognition and self-stewardship of the residents in declining regions: through this pursuit, the participants are expected to “reenvision their places not as depleted margins but instead as durable and sustainable localities of which they are stewards” (2013: 114). Sletto (2009) goes further to argue that community mapping can be understood as a “counter-hegemonic” place-making practice in which the dominant meanings and memories of places are challenged and negotiated by the participation of residents. It should be noted, however, that in certain contexts the promotion of self-stewardship and place-making could serve to exclude the structural sources of poverty and inequality from the purview. As aptly pointed out by Love, these practices could contribute to displacing “the responsibility of community deterioration from entrenched economic disparities to inhabitants’
misperception of their homes” (2013: 115). Such twofold effects also were found in the afterthoughts of a resident workshop participant: in the wrap-up meeting, he thanked the workshop organizer and said that although he had lived in the village for 40 years he had never thought that the old, dilapidated outlook of the town could be “the object of people’s curiosity and attraction.” In the end, he shyly mumbled, “maybe it’s time to stop shaming and complaining about our town [uri dongne].”

**Business Analytical Tools**

What needs to be underscored more here, however, is that community mapping is not just for the development of community esteem; it is rather a prerequisite for discovering new business opportunities. In fact, the remaining part of the workshop was dedicated primarily to conceiving and developing business plans using the “unearthed” resources. For this purpose, the community business incubators among the team helped the participants to translate their ordinary knowledge of the town into business language through various business analytic tools such as Social Business Model Canvas (SBMC), SWOT, and PEST.15

One of the incubators, So-Yun, was a charismatic and energetic senior woman who had been a well-respected local activist in the region and now had become a community business consultant after being trained at the KAIST Co-operative Mini MBA course.16 She began her

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15 Social Business Model Canvas (SBMC) is a slightly modified tool from Business Model Canvas that is popularly used to analyze the state of a business. It consists of the following columns: partners, activities, resources, economic value proposition, social value proposition, strength, customer relationship, customer segments, cost structure, and revenue stream. SWAT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological factors) are tools for visualizing an enterprise’s strategy and the market environment.

16 KAIST Social Entrepreneurship MBA program was established in 2013 through the collaboration of SK Group, one of the biggest conglomerates in South Korea, and KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) College of Business. Its homepage says that it is one of the first social entrepreneurship MBA programs in the world. The school also provides “mini MBA” courses that abbreviate the two-year course into 3
workshop session on how to make and read SBMC, saying, “Local activists like me and some of you tended to be hostile to this type of business language and tools. But I think they are simply tools that are useful to make your abstract thoughts more concrete and communicable. You and I know well this kind of people (activists) whose words are usually very abstract and ideal [laugh]. I wish we had learned these tools earlier.” In the practice sessions, she helped the participants to correctly “translate” what they found from the community mapping into business resources: in guiding the participants in filling out their business model canvas, she pushed them to find more useful resources and partners for business in the region.

For example, a community enterprise in our team was planning to open a guest house in Bukjeong Maul for youth and foreign tourists. In their SBMC, the dilapidated outlook of the town, abandoned empty houses, aforementioned attractions, the community festival, and old residents’ life histories were classified as key “resources”; the local government, the inhabitants’ organizations in the town, and the volunteer clubs in the neighborhood universities would serve as key “partners”, and are simultaneously catalogued as “resource” and “marketing channels.” Through community mapping, they found an elderly resident who remembered some traditional games played in the town and a retired traditional-foods cook. To strengthen their tour programs, the team was encouraged by So-Yun to utilize them as “resident docents” who would run cultural experience programs for youth.¹⁷ These two residents were later classified as potential “partners” and “resources.”

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¹⁷ For the rise of cultural experience programs and its relation to the new “moral and social development” paradigm in South Korea, see Jun (2011: 118-124).
Storytelling

The workshop booklet indeed enumerates what can be considered “potential community resources”: natural environments such as clean air, cultural heritages like community festivals, and human resources including residents’ talents or their life stories. According to So-Yun, however, what turns such “potential” resources into “actual” community assets is the act of “storytelling” that imbues certain meanings and values to ordinary objects. In her study of self-esteem movements in the U.S., Barbara Cruikshank examines how the practices of writing and telling personal narratives serve as important techniques for producing self-empowering subjects: through such practices, individuals constitute their selves as an object that has to be reflexively managed and cultivated (1999: 92-96). The same technique is applied here for empowering not only residents, but also the community itself.

For example, in the winter of 2014 Bukjeong Maul held a storytelling competition as part of its community festival, in which older residents were encouraged to voluntarily share their life stories in the town with visitors. Given their abiding poverty, their stories had been expected to be, and really were, about experiencing and surviving hardships while living in the town. In fact, the attempt drew rather mixed responses from the festival participants. While many of them approved of the attempt as a “lived education” for tourists—especially, the younger generation who presumably does not know much about poverty—some discreetly raised the concern that this shared storytelling could make the residents’ personal misfortunes appear as a spectacle.18 In

18 A similar critique has been raised in other community regeneration sites which depend on urban tourism. The controversy over Gwaengi-Buri Maul in Incheon could be an exemplar case. The village has been renowned as a Jjokbang-town. Jjokbang means rooms that have been divided into smaller spaces (less than 30 square ft.) to accommodate more people. Approximately half of the village residents have been living in such sliced rooms. As the local government attempted to develop a Jjokbang experience tour program in 2015, some residents opposed the plan, maintaining that “we are not a sightseeing product or spectacle.” “‘Poverty is not a spectacle!’” [폭발촌 거주도서리움에도 가난을 구경거리 만드냐’], Kyunghyang Daily (July 12, 2015). The “commodification of
a later conversation, Hee-Jin, who participated in designing the competition, sheepishly conceded to me, “Well, I was afraid that it might be seen like a terrible ‘native show’”; but she was quick to emphatically add, “You know, the poor are described only as victims of the social structure in mainstream discourses. I believe that in small narratives about themselves, they can, on the contrary, become the true masters of their lives and community. That was the point (of the event).”

Here again, however, storytelling is not just for the sense of community belonging and stewardship; it also serves as a resource for community business. The district government and the guest house community enterprise are now planning to implement QR code images on the doors of ten houses whose residents turned out to have impressive life stories so that, by scanning the codes with their smart phones, external visitors and tourists can read about the elderly residents’ hardship and survival stories and view their old photos. According to a local administrator, it would help the community attract more tourists who want to feel “nostalgia and authenticity” through the town’s impoverished look. Such equipment already has been implemented in the neighboring shanty town called Jangsu Maul and favorably received by tourists.

poverty” or “marketization of poverty” can be a keyword to describe these pervasive phenomena; see Schwittay (2011) and Scarse (2010).
Figure 6. A QR Code Image Implemented in *Jangsu Maul*: “The House of Mr. ‘Wild Flower”’ (photo by author)

*Maul Branding as Locality Making Practice*

These micro-practices and procedures can be understood as knowledge-production techniques to make a community “legible” and thus more “governable” by investigating, mapping, documenting, and interpreting its potential material/immaterial resources (Rose 1996, Rose and Miller 2008; Scott 1998). Of particular interest, in relation to our discussion, are the methodological and theoretical presuppositions that undergird this process of knowledge production. In tracing a community development program of the World Bank in Indonesia, Tania Li (2007, 2011) witnesses what can be called an “ethnographic turn” in the discourse and practice of development planning. Since the mid-1990s when the World Bank started to focus on more intimate features of targeted villages—such as social capital, local power relation, and informal economy—the development team increasingly has adopted ethnographical methods such as in-depth focus group interviews, and participant observation to probe the everyday
dynamics of community and has relied on ethnographic data to justify their prescriptions. If the success of development depends not upon imposing a homogenous plan from the outside but rather on “excavating” and “optimizing” the potential resources inherent in a community, the best method to discover the capacities would be ethnographical, detailed investigations (Li 2007: 243-247).

Such a so-called “ethnographic turn” is notably found throughout the social economy and community development workshop. Not only were the substantial parts of the workshop instructed and guided by anthropologists like Hee-Jin, but other non-anthropologist “mentors” also joined in to emphasize the significance and merits of the anthropological or ethnographical approach in formulating concrete social business and community development plans. One of the mentors was Dong-Hun who had earned a doctorate degree for his study on how to use oral history materials for business purposes in the Department of Cultural Contents at a local university. Straddling academic and social economy sectors, Dong-hun often has worked as a community business consultant and gained popularity for his skill in explaining academic jargon with everyday terminology and examples. He dedicated his two-hour long lecture titled “Social Place and Storytelling” to cataloguing such cardinal virtues of successful social/community entrepreneurs for finding potential business opportunities in a locale as follows: “observation, empathy, hearing, participation, experiment, and sharing.” At some point during the lecture, he even went further to say that “a social and community entrepreneur should become an anthropologist in a sense.”

According to him, the quintessential feature of social/community business lies in “its situatedness and rootedness” in the concrete demands of the targeted

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19 This is not because I was there. I first introduced myself as a volunteer in the class. In a follow-up conversation after the lecture, I confessed to Dong-Hun that I was an anthropologist doing my fieldwork research, and he suggested that I give a presentation about how to make an efficient interview at a social start-up entrepreneurs’ meeting, which I declined.
community. Therefore, the entrepreneur should be able to catch “floating” desires within the locale and be innovatively responsive to them. “An anthropological approach would be helpful for that.” Dong-Hun added, “The strength of the anthropological thinking is that it creates uncopiable, unique knowledge about a community.”

Whether or not we agree with his rather romanticized view of the anthropological method and thinking, his statement reveals how the nature of community development knowledge is imagined among the practitioners. The development knowledge sought and produced in the workshop is not a homogenous prescription that can be universally applied. It is rather specific, contextual, and even “singular” knowledge about a locale. Throughout the workshop, the mentors and incubators kept asking the participants to seize residents’ concrete desires and build their business plan based on them. Also, each business plan was required to be supported by qualitative data. For instance, a social enterprise that wanted to embark on a child care café for “multicultural” families was required to complement their SMBC with data acquired through focus group interviews of potential customers in the region. The life history interviews that used to be conducted after community mapping also partially purported to uncover the peculiar needs of the community.

In this sense, the series of micro-techniques are not only governmental techniques but also what Appadurai calls “social techniques for the production of locality” (1996: 182). In distinguishing locality as “a complex phenomenological quality” constituted by relational and contextual practices from a neighborhood as the actually existing social forms (178), Appadurai illuminates the performative role and governing function of ethnography in the production of

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20 In South Korea, “multicultural” family mainly signifies a couple in which the man is a Korean peasant or urban poor and the woman is a migrant bride mostly from China or Southeast Asia. The marriages are arranged via commercial brokers. For a discussion of the experience of migrant brides, see Choo (2013, 2016) and Freeman (2011). For the governing effect of “multicultural” discourse in South Korea, see Jun (2011, 2016).
locality: “The ethnographic project is in a peculiar way isomorphic with the very knowledge it seeks to discover and document, as both the ethnographic project and the social projects it seeks to describe have the production of locality as their governing telos” (182). Although he highlights the increasing fragility of locality under the double threat of the reinforcement of nation-state and the expansion of the global market and media, the production of locality is in a sense encouraged and promoted more than ever with the ethnographic turn in community development practices. Social/community entrepreneurs who are now required to be quasi-anthropologists actively participate in locality-making practices; they not only simply excavate treasures in the neighborhood, but also construct the meanings and contexts, again in order to meet their business needs.

Dong-Hun devoted the last part of the workshop to “Maul branding (Place branding).” His hand-out explains “Maul branding” as “an act of organizing and increasing social and economic value by symbolizing the cultural meaning of a community.” “What is culture?” he commenced his session with this question; he went onto explain: “Culture includes not only hereditary resources such as tradition, custom, life style, and artwork in a certain community, but also the valuable assets that are now being produced and the potential benefits that will be produced in the future.” “Branding,” according to him, “aims to tie these various resources and give them a coherent identity and thus to raise their overall value.” All the local culture and knowledge that have been “excavated” throughout the workshop could be most effectively

21 In discussing “personal branding” as a technology of neoliberal self, Ilana Gershon points out that the branding practice helps neoliberal subjects, who are often easily reduced to the various and flexible set of “skills, experiences, assets, and alliances,” to maintains his or her own authentic self: “Personal branding allows people to represent themselves as both flexible and coherent” (2016: 237). In the same way, the practice of place branding imposes an “authentic” identity on a certain community and its various resources. It should be emphasized, however, that the branding practice and its identity production also aim to improve the profitability and investibility of the object, whether it is a self or a community.
deployed with appropriate branding. Dong-Hun gave each team time to discuss how they could describe the community’s “culture” in a word. “It can be a phrase, a word, an image, or even a color,” Dong-Hun added. In citing Gilles Deleuze and his concept of “singularity,” Dong-hun stressed, “It should express the ‘singularity’ [t’ŭkisŏng] of the community that cannot be found elsewhere!” Without having much debate, our team agreed on a social entrepreneur’s suggestion that modified the title of a popular poem about Bukjeong Maul: “Bukjeong Maul, where time slowly flows.”

Even though it was dubious whether the workshop participants understood Deleuze and his concept of singularity, it seemed that they well comprehended what branding and locality production is for. At the wrap-up party after the last workshop, I sat with one of the Bukjeong Maul resident leaders, Hyun-Do and asked his thoughts on the workshop. The 67 year-old man muttered several general impressions and at the end added the following statement without any cynicism:

> I am recently enjoying the TV show, *The Law of Jungle* [a then-popular local reality TV show in which celebrities live for a while with “native tribes” in the jungles of the Amazon, Indonesia, and the Pacific Islands]. Whenever I watch the show, I feel like that is what we should do. We are making Bukjeong Maul into a *native tribe* with its own culture so that people like foreigners and youths come for sightseeing [kwan-kwang]. [emphasis added]

While I was struck speechless by the striking analogy, an incubator on another team, who was sitting next to me, interrupted, “We are recently trying to avoid using terms like sightseeing, because they are *corrupt* words that objectify [taesang-hwa] the residents. We instead call it

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22 The original title of the poem is “Bukjeong Maul, Flow” which was written by a local poet, Choi Sung-Su. The entire poem is imprinted on the bus stop at the entrance of Bukjeong Maul. This rather long poem begins with the following: “If you want to flow slowly, come to Bukjeong Maul, where its narrow alleys and small houses stop your footsteps. Your wounds and pains caused by the lightning speed of life will find solace from the scenery.”
‘value sharing’ [kach’i gongyu].” She continued to explicate, “The residents create the cultural values of a community as masters and others come and share them as guests.”

**Translation / Mistranslation**

In his groundbreaking work, Harvey (1989) points out that, in the face of the central government’s austerity policies, the commitment to “flagship projects” and “place marketing” has become increasingly imperative for many local governments to regenerate their declining neighborhoods and promote urban entrepreneurialism. All the practices described above could be identified and explained as micro-level operations for building an “entrepreneurial city” that often seek to create “a new combination” of economic and non-economic elements and to reinvigorate “tribal” identities for enhancing the dynamic competitiveness and consumerist appeal of a region (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 1989; Jessop 1997; cf. MacLeod 2002).

What I want to highlight here, however, is not the general contexts and effects of these practices, but rather the fact that the new imaginaries of urban space and community emerge only as a result of translating and organizing ambiguous, various aspirations in a certain way through diverse micro-techniques (Callon and Latour 1981; Miller and Rose 2008: 61-65). The business consulting language and techniques, pace the incubator So-Yun, are not “simply tools”; rather, they performatively construct reality by problematizing urban settings in a certain way and rendering them “technically manageable” (Li 2007). The various techniques deployed throughout the workshop contribute to interpreting the problems of a community in light of “business opportunities” and to constructing the issues as something that can be dealt with by social/community businesses. A closer look, however, would reveal that the translation is not always successful and often leaves ambiguous discrepancies.
Throughout the workshop, social entrepreneurs and village residents showed a
differential intensity of participation. Unlike the social entrepreneurs who could raise their
chance of obtaining government support by completion of the course, the residents seemed to get
tired, as the workshop proceeded, of having to sit for long hours without any tangible benefits. In
Bukjeong Maul, only two residents completed the entire workshop: first Hyun-Do, the village
headman and second Kyung-Su, the community leader of the New Village Association.23
Although they were interpellated as “community entrepreneurs” and encouraged to submit their
own community business plan, all the practices of the sessions—such as community mapping,
business model making, storytelling, and branding—apparently did not draw great attention from
these almost 70-year old seniors. Rather, they preferred to take a back seat and provide advices
to other community entrepreneurs who wanted to launch a business in Bukjeong Maul.

In one session, however, Kyung-Su came up with a community business idea which
aimed to produce and sell fermented soybean blocks for visiting tourists.24 Seo-In, another
incubator of our team, wanted to develop the idea into a concrete business plan because she
thought that it could be an additional source of income for poor elders in the village. Seo-In
helped Kyung-Su to make a Social Business Model Canvas (SMBC) for applying for district

23 The New Village Association was organized nationwide by the government in the 1970s during the New Village
Movement. Even after the end of the movement, the association had survived as a capillary organization of the
state power. The association is still active especially in rural and peri-urban areas in organizing charity or
volunteer activities. The alternative community development strategy, which contrasts itself with the old state-led
New Village Movement, is also sometimes dependent upon this old para-governmental organization to mobilize
residents. I will touch upon the history of the New Village Women’s Association in discussing Fortune Care’s case
in the next chapter.

24 Making soybean blocks is a kind of “invented tradition” of Bukjeong Maul (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). Until
recently, the town has been usually called “Sŏng Madang” simply following a place name of the town. As the
village needed to be constructed and identified as “a community (maul)” for the regeneration process since the
2010s, the resident leaders including Kyung-Su traced back the origin of the village with the help of the district
government and found its historical name “Bukjeong” that originated from the sound of making soybean malt.
Since then, the making of soybean blocks has been performed at the annual community festival and considered the
symbol of the town.
government funds. The following dialogue was made in the process:

Kyung-Su: …But to start the business, it should be generally agreed among the residents. Some of the residents still want to redevelop the village as an apartment complex. The municipal and district governments should ban their attempts…
Seo-In: If this community business succeeds, it could be easier to persuade the residents to adopt the alternative community development plan. So let’s put the issue aside for the time being.

…..
Kyung-Su: Well, there is an old resident who is really expert at making soybean blocks.
Seo-In: Good! [Writing it down on SBMC] It can belong to key resources or key partners. Also, I’ve heard that the name “Bukjeong Maul” originated from the food.
Kyung-Su: Yes. It came from the sound of making soybean malt.
Seo-In: Great! It can be used for storytelling marketing.

…..
Seo-In: I saw a lot of abandoned houses in Bukjeong Maul. We call them “idle resources” [yuhyu-jawŏn] that can be re-used. I guess they can be renovated and used for business shops or guest houses. It could also help to regenerate the village.
Kyung-Su: They are usually very flimsy and dangerous. Some owners of the houses purposely abandon them, putting pressure on the government to adopt a removal and redevelopment plan instead of community regeneration. The abandoned houses are deteriorating our neighborhood. I think the government should persuade or force them to fix the houses...
Seo-In: [Interrupting] But we can’t manage the problem now. Let’s move on. If we find a safe vacant house, we could bring our costs down and it could also serve as a community center to gather residents and help regeneration.

…..
Seo-In: Overall, your plan seems to have a weak profit structure. We need to find a way to earn more profit, like raising participation fees.
Kyung-Su: [Rather curtly] I don’t care about profit.
Seo-In: What do you mean? It’s a business. You need some profit. It’s not volunteer work.
Kyung-Su: I don’t know… I just want to do it as a pastime.

First of all, the dialogue shows how local knowledge is framed and interpreted as business resources. Vacant houses and a resident are immediately translated by Seo-In into elements that fill the columns of a Social Business Model Canvas. Furthermore, in the process, the act of translation screens out more structural and political contexts. While Kyung-Su points
out that consensus over the type of development among the residents is the presupposition for the business and continues to raise the government’s responsibility for producing or forcing the agreement, Seo-In solely repeatedly suggests that the success of the business would contribute to the solution for the issue. Although the workshop itself is organized by the district government, the political issues are considered as what “we cannot manage now” and thus something that should be “put aside.” Therefore, the focus of the discussion centers only on the technical issues of the business such as how to bring costs down and profit margins up.

Lastly and most importantly, the dialogue between Kyung-Su and Seo-In, nevertheless, reveals a particular relationship between experts and residents in community development. As Rose (1999) notes, similar to the state-led development which has relied heavily on bureaucratic experts, community government also requires a number of professionals and experts who render a community intelligible and legible by investigating, mapping, and documenting it. The relation between residents and external experts, however, has transformed here: because the community residents are interpellated as a subject of knowledge rather than as an object of knowledge, the “consultants,” “mentors,” and “facilitators” do not assume the authoritative roles of making a plan and applying it to a community as did state bureaucrats. As Li points out, the new experts are “no longer to plan but to enable, animate, and facilitate” (2011: 101); they instead take the position of “midwives” who assist in “the birth-to-presence of natural communities rather than as ethnocentric outsiders imposing their views” (Li 2007: 246). In this sense, their primary task has become to uncover and identify the residents’ existing desires and to translate or organize them for development purposes.

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25 This transformation in the role of experts was prefigured in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis when the government mobilized intellectuals and activists from civil society in order to re-arrange the field of government; see Song (2009). It marks the moment that the traditional power of bureaucrat in the developmental state began to decline and various specific intellectuals filled the void.
As felt in the last conversation, however, the translation is not always felicitous. Kyung-Su’s last remarks that he does not need profits and he wants to do it as a pastime might be true; but they also could be expressing his dissatisfaction with Seo-In’s technical and business approach. During a break between the sessions, in smoking together outside the building, Kyung-Su discreetly told me, “Indeed, I don’t know exactly what they are saying. The words are too difficult for me and they use too much English... I just want to do somewhat meaningful work with lonely elders in the village. That’s all. I don’t need this complex scheme...” It seems that the translation tools that So-Yun and Seo-In adopted are not always working.

NEW EPISTEMOLOGY OF POVERTY AND COMMUNITY

The market-oriented, entrepreneurial language and practices in community development may correspond to a discussion on the increasing role of community in neoliberal governmentality (Joseph 2002; Craig and Larner 2005; Rose and Miller 2008) or contribute to an ongoing debate of whether social or community economy is simply a variation of neoliberalism or an alternative to it (Davies 2012, 2015a; Graefe 2013; Gibson-Graham 2006a; Vogelmann 2012). What should be noted here, however, is rather how community itself is re-imagined and re-conceptualized in the discourse and practice of this new community development strategy. Admittedly, nostalgia bemoaning the loss of community is as old as modern capitalism itself and has regularly emerged along with critiques of capitalism’s alienating effects. As noted by Rose, however, the form of communities that is appealing to people has been various in different periods and cases (1999: 172).

In analyzing the rise of the political significance of community in the Western societies in
the late 20th century, Rose situates the emergence of what he calls “government through community” in the contexts of the demise of society as a universal public sphere and the decline of “social government.” According to him, what we are observing is “a reshaping of the very territory of government” (1999: 136). Community has come to the focus of a new governmental space, as “the continuous thought-space of the social” has been increasingly fragmented and the concerns in “multi-culturalism” and identity politics have been significantly voiced (Rose 1999: 135-137). That is to say, community and its communal values have begun to serve as a source for different identities replacing the universal politics and the totality of society. Despite its validity, such “sociological” explanation that focuses on the connection between identity politics and community government sheds light on only half of the story.26 In the post-authoritarian and post-developmental states such as South Korea, the rise of “government through community” should be examined rather in the context of the search for a new development or poverty alleviation strategy through an articulation of market and community.

A re-conceptualization of poverty that we already explored is symptomatic of the emergence of the novel development strategy based on the grafting of market and society. As noted by various scholars (Castel 2003; Dean 1990; Donzelot 1994; Himmelfarb 1983; Procacci 1987, 1991, 2007), in modern societies, the issue of poverty or pauperism has served as a central locus for devising and sharpening a new form of government as well as a laboratory where the various concrete governing techniques have been tested. For example, social government in the Western society has taken pauperism as its primary target and thereby has aimed at constructing and intervening the realm of society to alleviate the vice of market (Dean 1990; Donzelot 1994;

26 This argument is consonant with the increasing critique of the limit of governmentality studies that it has relatively neglected the workings of market and economy by simply reducing them into governmental constructions of power; see Lemke (2013) and Tellmann (2011).
Procacci 1991, 2007). The changed conceptualization of poverty, therefore, could be a privileged window to trace the genealogical transformations in governmental strategies (Dean 1990; Walters 2000).

The recent effort to find a new development strategy in South Korea, as noted above, resonates and reflects two heterogeneous, but often convergent, perspectives on poverty in global development discourse since the late 1990s. The first one is to illuminate poverty less in light of the structural inequality and the deprivation of material wealth than in terms of social and communal relations. Such a perspective—comprising a relational approach—finds the solution for poverty mainly in fostering affective relations and re-generating communities, which mirrors the emphasis of social capital in “post-Washington consensus” neoliberalism (Fine 2001; Harriss 2002). The other perspective strives to alleviate poverty through business and entrepreneurship that unearths and reuses the existing community resources including poverty itself. In a global context, this latter trend is close to the “Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP)” strategy or what Roy calls “poverty capital” that draws upon a firm belief in the innovative entrepreneurial faculty among the poor (Elyachar 2012; Prahalad 2005; Roy 2010). What is interesting is that community and its romanticized notion of “the local” serve as the key points in both perspectives: If potential social capital in a community provides an objective space through which experts intervene and optimize, various resources in a community would serve as a test bed upon which micro- and social entrepreneurship are experimented with.

Such heterogeneous perspectives have conjoined together to form a new conception of poverty in South Korea’s local contexts. The strategy of community-based poverty alleviation and pro-poor initiative in Korea can be traced back to the strong tradition of the grassroots poor people’s movements since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Influenced by the works of the
American community organizer Saul Alinski, the grassroots activists viewed a community as “the ultimate objective” of their movements as well as a site for autonomous, voluntary associations of the underprivileged against the brutal military regime (Kim 2015). That is to say, the sprouting of recent alternative community development with its focus on “communal mutuality” and “autonomy” was deployed as part of radical activism against a developmental, authoritarian state (Kim 2017: 97-104). The communality and resident-initiative in the community organization activism, however, began to converge or to be overwritten with more technical and presumably neoliberal language in the rise of “entrepreneurial culture” after Korea’s neoliberal turn in the late 1990s (Seo 2011; Song 2009, 2011). While communality and mutuality began to be reinterpreted as “social capital” and networking, the voluntariness and autonomy of residents now overlap with the language of entrepreneurship and empowerment. The heterogenic trends of radical activism and neoliberal language, as already seen in the previous chapter, have come to be smoothly articulated and intersected under the names of “social economy” and “community business” in the mediation of key notions such as “social capital” and “entrepreneurship.”

It is in this process that we find a new conception of community in which its “affectionate” residents are required to concurrently become “entrepreneurs” in their moral practices, and their humanist sentiments are imbricated with the logic of human capital. This is more than simply saying that in neoliberalism “all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of market rationality” (Brown 2003: 9) or moral virtues are mobilized to supplement the retreat of the state and the expansion of market rationality. What should be highlighted would rather be the birth of a hybrid space in which humanist morality and the logic of human capital are intermingled to the point that they become difficult to tell apart. Through various techniques and
dispositifs that we have explored, a community is now imagined as a voluntary and affectionate social bond where every resident has become a self-empowering entrepreneur; moreover, a community is encouraged to elicit and develop its own communal values, potentials, and stories, but these are simultaneously recast as business resources for social/community enterprises. As aptly pointed out by Song (2014b), the newly emerging form of community involves the “indeterminacy” between the association of gift (communitas or com+munus) and the neoliberal enterprise sociality.

An excellent example to demonstrate this new hybrid imaginary of community is Seongbuk district’s official slogan “Human City Seongbuk: Investing Human Capital, Seeking Human Value.” In an interview with me, Kim Young-Bae, the district’s mayor as well as a self-proclaimed Polanyian, explained the meaning of the motto: “I believe that the appreciation of human capital [injŏk-chabon, 人的資本] and the promotion of more humane and communal life are not at odds; they rather should be sought together in the name of humanism [inbon-juŭi, 人本主義].” He was quick to add, “I think that it is what Polanyi meant when he talked about the mutual embeddedness of market and society.” His explanation, however, is interestingly reminiscent of Gray Becker’s recent defense of his theory of human capital rather than Karl Polanyi. In responding to the prevalent criticism that his human capital theory is inhumane and purely utilitarian, Becker maintains that this theory “puts people at the center of an economy” and thus contains very humanistic and even liberating discourse: “I think whatever theory you approach economic development with, you have to make some judgments of that type… Do you want to ignore people? Human capital says you can’t ignore people…. When we think about economies, when we think about development, that’s a liberating point of view. People are the center of the economy” (Becker, Ewald, and Harcourt 2012: 11).
As discussed in Chapter 1, the new neoliberal form of subjectivity of human capital is not a split subject between moral virtue in the private realm and profit-seeking rationality in the public sphere; it rather becomes a kind of transcendent “portfolio manager” who considers everything as potential resources to improve their stock value: “In short, the things that I inherit, the things that happen to me, and the things I do all contribute to the maintenance or the deterioration of my human capital” (Feher 2009: 26). By the same token, the moral or affective values such as ethical practices, affective relations, and communal network, which were viewed as irrelevant to market economy, can now serve as potential resources for appreciating human and community capital. In this light, what is notable in the new imaginary of community is an extension or expansion of human capital subjectivity as a portfolio manager to collectivities, here, to a community. As seen so far in this chapter, the new community development pursues the cataloguing of every resource of the community, not only its physical environment and infrastructure but also its immaterial and affective assets such as individuals, cultural resources, and informal associations (see figure 7). The role of community experts and the government focuses on “optimizing” and utilizing the resources through the participation of entrepreneurial residents to increase the total value of community (Li 2007). In this sense, it can be said that a community itself is ordained to be a sort of “human capital” which owns the communal assets and aspires to competitively raise the total value of the assets (Coombe 2011).
Of course, as hinted in the conversation between Kyung-Su and Seo-In, the construction of an affectionate-entrepreneurial community is not always smoothly achieved; the tension between community as a mutual association and community as an enterprise becomes palpable at times. In the Community Business Conference organized by the Seoul Metropolitan Government in January 2014, Kim Sung-Sup, the head of the Association of Seoul Community Enterprises, was the star of the day. As an invited panel discussant, he cast aspersions on the municipal government in his high-pitched voice. According to him, social/community businesses have two different, even conflicting identities: a community identity that pursues the communal good and an enterprise identity that seeks business success. The point of his criticism of the government lay with its policies that have exclusively focused on community business as a profit-making
enterprise: “As a result, community business become like venture enterprises that consider a
community only as customers of their business.”27 “If this trend continues,” he added,
“community business would serve only as a cheaper care/social service subcontractor of the
government rather than contributing to an alternative economic system and reinforcing
communal values within the community.” His stirring and zealous statement that “community
entrepreneurs should be prepared for the showdown against neoliberal market economy by
reinvigorating the spirit of gift and ‘reciprocity’ [hohye-sŏng]” drew large acclamation from the
audiences along with apparently subtle embarrassment of the other panel discussants and public
officials attending the conference.

Sung-Sup’s discussion betrays the fact that the grafting of humanist value and human
capital in new community development discourse and practice is not entirely non-contradictory
and seamless. Rather, the palpable friction between them opens a seemingly political space for
social/community economy activists. As is repeatedly pointed out throughout this text, the
dichotomy between caring gift-spirit and entrepreneurial market rationality is still found in the
social economy discourse and many of social economy activists attempt to find the significance
of their activities in reestablishing communal values rather than in promoting entrepreneurship.
For them, the language of business, entrepreneurship, and human capital is simply an
“appearance” or even “necessary evil” for pursuing their moral and communal initiatives, as So-
Yun disregards business analytic techniques simply as useful “tools.”

The cacophony, however, should not be exaggerated: the conflicts between the spirit of
gift and market rationality often end up as a modest request for more “accurate” and

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27 His discussion script can be found in The Community Business Conference Packet titled as Community
“transparent” translation between them. In wrapping up his long lambaste, Sung-sup enumerated a series of demands to the municipal government for strengthening the “community identity” of social/community enterprises: offering a community-building experts’ consulting service; strengthening the community-oriented education program; and reflecting “community values” in the government’s selection of funding recipients, all of which have been habitually raised at this kind of conference and indeed supported and considered favorably by the government (see Chapter 3). From his rather tepid voice reading the list of demands, the attendees, who had acclaimed his eager critique of the government, might have begun to feel that he too has no tangible plan for preparing for “the showdown against the neoliberal market economy.”

CONCLUSION: SEEING LIKE A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

In his famous book Seeing Like a State, James Scott analyzes the reason why state-centered development plans have consistently failed. According to him, state-initiated social engineering has a tendency to rely exclusively on a homogenous, simplified master plan and dismiss “the necessary role of local knowledge and know-how” (1998: 6). As a result, such a “utopian project” has often led to the destruction of autonomous communal capacities that are indispensible for the successful execution of the social plan. Thus Scott suggests that alternative development should be based on “mētis”, a practical and vernacular knowledge that can be applied to a concrete situation: “Even in huge organizations, diversity pays dividends in stability and resilience... An institution, social form, or enterprise that takes much of its shape from the evolving mētis of the people engaged in it will thereby enhance their range of experience and skills” (1998: 355-6).
Although his critique could be still valid in criticizing authoritarian bureaucracy and institution-driven standardization, Scott’s binary oppositions between abstraction and concreteness, universal plan and particular know-how, centralized homogeneity and localized diversity seems to become more and more fragile and problematic. Above all, it is the state that actively takes advantage of the oppositions for exempting itself from its old responsibilities for social welfare. Whereas the past developmental state embodied “the subject supposed to know” as the central planner, the neoliberal government pretends skillful *humility* and *ignorance*, as seen in the local administrator’s speech in the introduction of this chapter. In this way, the government devolves its traditional roles to “voluntary” communities which are assumed to best know about their own situations, and limits its job as an “incubator of development” for making a “friendly environment” for (community) businesses (Rudnyckyj and Schwittay 2014: 3). Furthermore, the romanticized preference for local community knowledge found in the oppositions makes it difficult to problematize and criticize the newly emerging community development that efficiently transforms and exploits local community knowledge and capacities. In fact, the expansion of the mutually embedded areas of community and market seems to practically erode and outdate Scott’s series of oppositions that focus on criticizing state- or market-initiated homogenization against autonomous and diverse communities.

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the new community development that relies on social/community economy redefines the substance of development in relation to affective, communal concerns and how it mobilizes and exploits community resources and practical knowledge for business purposes through various techniques and *dispositifs*. In particular, I have identified two heterogeneous perspectives on poverty and have illuminated how their convergence has contributed to producing what can be called “a new epistemology of
community” in which community as a mutual association and community as an enterprise are indistinguishable. Again, this is not simply saying that traditional communities are marketized or colonized by neoliberal rationality. The point is rather that the hybrid space of social logic and market rationality is not only created in a community with neoliberalization but also the sociality and collectivity of the community are reorganized and managed by a new form of economic rationality—which can be described as an expansion of human capital logic of portfolio management to the level of collectivities.

The emergence of such hybrid affectionate-entrepreneurial communities urges us to rethink the transforming relationships of market, community, and the state. The following questions arise from these observations: as enterprise communities surface as the main space of government, how have the roles of the state changed and how has the articulation of society and market been transformed? If the state identifies itself as an incubator of social entrepreneurship or socialized human capital subjects—either individual or community—how is the state governing and conducting the citizens’ ethical aspirations and entrepreneurial spirit to pursue a new development? To address these questions, we need to examine them in a wider context of the transformation of the public, social spaces in South Korea, which I will pursue in the next chapter by exploring the emergences of the social care market and the ethical citizenship project in South Korea.
CHAPTER 3

ETHICAL CITIZENSHIP IN PRACTICE:
MAKING THE SOCIAL CARE MARKET,
PRODUCING PROJECTIVE ETHICALITY

“The machinery giving access to the institutions on which the rights of citizenship depended had to be shaped afresh… All this apparatus combined to decide, not merely what rights were recognised in principle, but also to what extent rights recognised in principle could be enjoyed in practice.” – T.H. Marshall (1992: 10)

“The cornerstone of orthodox economics, dating back to Adam Smith, is that self-interest in the market place is ultimately beneficial for society. The era of social optimization looks set to stand this claim upside down: being social in your everyday life is worth it, because it will ultimately deliver benefits back to you.” – William Davies

YUNA’S STREET

In October 2014, when the popular television drama series Yuna’s Street was approaching its final episode, online fan bulletin boards were seething with worries and expectations about the ending. The 50-episode long drama drew massive public attention from its beginning as the second sequel of The Moon of Seoul that had recorded 50% ratings in 1994 and had been called “the national drama.” Being written by the same scriptwriter, Kim Woon-Kyung, Yuna’s Street was expected to depict the stories of poor people, as did The Moon of Seoul 20 years before.

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2 “Yuna’s Street: 20 Years After The Moon of Seoul” [‘서울의 달’ 20년 후, ‘유나의 거리’는 여전히 질펀하다]. Ohmynews (May 20, 2014).
In the last golden days of South Korea’s developmentalism prior to the 1997 Asian financial crisis, *The Moon of Seoul* received much adoration for its rare feat of exploring the dark side of South Korea’s rapid economic growth by depicting the everyday lives of “losers” including frauds, gigolos, and day workers in a realistic but comical way. With a Seoul shanty town as the backdrop, the drama focuses on two young male yokels, Hong-Sik and Chun-Sik, who have come to Seoul to find a job.³ Throughout the 82 episodes, the drama humorously shows their struggles to adapt to the metropolitan city, procure a job, find love, and climb up the class ladder: While Hong-Sik becomes frustrated with a draconian reality and decides to become a gigolo looking for a wealthy woman, Chun-Sik hopelessly bounces around various jobs as a day laborer.

What made the show memorable as a national drama in people’s memory for twenty years, however, may be its shockingly tragic ending in which two stories unfolded in parallel. In the last installment, Chun-Sik attends a party to celebrate his neighbor Chil-Sung’s purchase of a high-rise apartment. As an industrious daily worker, Chil-Sung and his family have managed to save enough money to escape from the shanty town and move into a modern apartment compound, a symbol of South Korean middle class family. During the party, a neighbor suggests a toast with an overly didactic tone: “Let’s give applause to Chil-Sung’s family. If we also work diligently and continue to save, we too could buy an apartment someday like them.” In the meantime, Hong-Sik, who has successfully married a wealthy widow but soon becomes disappointed by the snobby lifestyle, returns to the shanty town to meet up with an old love. But he is attacked and stabbed by hit men hired by a call girl, his ex-business partner who loved him.

³ As noted in Chapter 2, shanty towns in South Korea were euphemistically called “moon towns.” The drama’s title “The Moon of Seoul” reflects the idiom.
and felt betrayed by his marriage. Bleeding and crawling up the hill of the moon town, he moans and murmurs his life-long watchword as he dies: “Boys, be ambitious!”

According to the trailer, Yuna’s Street begins with the question of “What would Hong-Sik and his love live like today if he were not killed twenty years before?” Again, the drama sheds light on a multiplex house in Seoul’s poor district and its rag-tag residents including pickpockets, ex-gangsters, and daily workers. Their lives do not look much different from those in the shanty town twenty years ago, except for the fact that they do not seem to have the strong aspirations toward upward class mobility that haunted Hong-Sik, Chun-Sik, and Chil-Sung. The main plot proceeds as the heroine Yuna, a master pickpocket who just has been released from prison, reunites with her mother, who abandoned her a long time ago and ended up remarrying the CEO of a big conglomerate. After some hesitation, Yuna decides to forgive and live with her mother, but, like Hong-Sik, soon becomes dismayed with the high class lifestyle.

For the last several installments, two stories again are developed in a parallel format. One episode is about an old ex-mobster, Mr. Jang, who lives alone in the multiplex house. As he starts to suffer from senile dementia, the neighbors help him be hospitalized in a nursing home with financial support from the state. The other storyline is Yuna’s decision to come back to the poor neighborhood and meet up with her old love, Hee-Jun. The aforementioned viewers’ concerns over the show’s ending were focused mainly on whether the same tragedy as Hong-

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4 The saying, “Boys, be ambitious,” is known to have come from a speech by William Clarkes; he was an American chemist and botanist who was invited by the Japanese government to teach at the University of Hokkaido and “modernize” its higher education system in the late 19th century. The words were immediately understood as encapsulating modernist-developmental spirit and became a maxim among Japanese “enlightened” youth throughout the Meiji period [1868-1912]. During its colonial period under Japan, the phrase became popular among Koreans as one of the developmentalist slogans and still appears in many South Korea’s English textbooks. The history of the phrase shows that it is not coincidental that Hong-Sik, an epitome of developmental aspirations, takes the phrase as his watchword and dying words. In addition, given that the saying interpellates young males (boys) as the subject of development, the phrase divulges the deep-rooted “gendered” imaginary surrounding developmentalism. See also Chapter 4.
Sik’s would happen to Yuna: will Yuna be betrayed and killed by the fellow pickpockets who feel jealousy about her good fortune? In fact, the worries turned out to be for naught, with an unexpectedly happy ending. Moved by the caring actions of Mr. Jang’s neighbors, Yuna decides to found a “social enterprise” that delivers meal boxes to the elderly who live alone. She hires her fellow ex-pickpockets to carry out this work\(^5\) and her rich step-father finances the business. Hee-Jun becomes the co-founder of this enterprise; the last scene implies that he and Yuna will get happily married.

The finale indeed fueled heated debates once again in the online fan forums. Although many fans were relieved with Yuna’s happy ending and glimpsed “social progress” in the different endings of the two dramas, some fans who tacitly had expected a more stunning and tragic conclusion began to ask what made the scriptwriter compromise his critical reputation; one viewer even lamented that Kim might be getting too old to directly face up to the harsh reality of the poor and thus he fell into “the trap of a naïve moral fantasy.” Instead of excavating the writer’s intention, however, I want to illuminate the differences in these two endings in light of the transformation and expansion of “social care” in South Korea during the last decade. Above all, Yuna’s happy ending simply would have been impossible in 1994: it was not until 2007 that the establishment of social enterprise was legally acknowledged. Moreover, the national Elderly Long-term Care Insurance [chænggi yoyang bohŏm], in which the state provides financial support for the ailing elderly like Mr. Jang, was introduced as recently as 2008. Although the *Moon of Seoul* also described mutual care among poor neighbors, the care remained private, given that the state and the market were completely absent in the practices. On the contrary, in

\(^5\) In the drama, Yuna’s step-father kindly explains that the new social enterprise can be modeled after a famous U.S. social enterprise, *Pioneer Human Services*, that aims to “provide individuals with criminal histories the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives.” See the homepage http://pioneerhumanservices.org/.
the ending of *Yuna’s Street*, social care emerges as a central theme both in a nationalized form (as in Mr. Jang’s case) and in a marketized way (as in Yuna’s foundation of social enterprise). In this sense, it can be said that Yuna’s happy ending not only becomes feasible as a result of the rapid development of social care in South Korea, but also is reflective of this growth.

In this chapter, I will examine the development of social care in South Korea within the context of the transformation from “developmental citizenship” to “ethical citizenship.” Although a critic once argued that Kim’s dramas touch upon the lives of “contemporary homo sacer,” that is, people without citizenship (Lee 2014: 51), I think that his work could be better understood to describe and question the boundaries of citizenship. For example, the tragic ending of *The Moon of Seoul* shows what can be called “developmental citizenship” and its natures. As Chang points out, “developmental citizenship” is a peculiar form of (non-)citizenship based on “the sacrifice of basic social rights” for national economic growth (2012: 184): while “the mercantilist developmental state” exclusively concentrates on economic development instead of enfranchising and protecting people’s political, social, and cultural rights, individuals can benefit from contributing to the national economic growth only as “private economic players in the market” (2012: 183). As discussed in Chapter 1, under the developmental state social welfare and care thus remained the responsibilities of families, while various social insurance programs of the Western welfare state were never on the agenda (Chang 2011; Kwon 2005). Although very limited social security was offered to the economically unproductive populations, it was not considered as the right of the citizens but rather as a paternalistic supplement to dysfunctional families and failing quasi-citizens. The juxtaposition of Hong-Sik’s pathetic death and Chil-

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6 This view still remained in South Korea’s social welfare system as “the Obligation of Family Support.” See footnote 14 in Chapter 1.
Sung family’s success dramatically shows who are the winners and who are the losers of the game of developmental citizenship. Every character in the drama demonstrates strong “will to improve,” but the legitimate way to benefit from national development and rise up the class ladder appears to be pre-determined: industrious labor and a thrifty household. Whoever follows this path could buy a modern apartment and obtain the membership of “model citizens,” whereas those who challenge family values and cannot conduce to the national economic growth would be abandoned and excluded as was Hong-Sik.

By contrast, Yuna’s ending exhibits a seemingly more inclusive, sympathetic form of citizenship. The focus shifts from the exclusion of “outcasts” to the incorporation and care of them. No one would be abandoned or killed: the ex-gangster is taken care of by neighbors and the state, while the ex-pickpockets who repented their past misdeeds find new jobs in a social enterprise. Although some may criticize that this is a “naïve moral fantasy,” the shift seems to reflect the rise of a new form of citizenship and social imaginary that can be termed “ethical citizenship.” In tracing the rise of “ethopolitics” in the post-welfare societies, Nikolas Rose (2000) argues that the new forms of ethical citizenship and social collectivity have surfaced to replace or rival the old notions of social citizenship and solidarity. In the project of ethical citizenship, according to him, a citizen-subject is considered to be ethical and caring at root, and social problems “are increasingly made intelligible as ethical problems” that can be solved by voluntary, moral practices of the empathetic subjects (Rose 2000: 1398). Conversely speaking, the subjects’ ethical practices serve as the basis and evidence to demonstrate their readiness for contributing to communities as citizens. Furthermore, the new ideal subjectivity is coupled with a new imaginary of the public sphere as being “emotional bonds of affinity” or “moral, responsible communities” that should be created and constructed through citizens’ caring
commitments (Rose 1996; Muehlebach 2012; Kim 2016). Put otherwise, ethical subjects become “ethical citizens” when their membership in a community is dependent upon their moral practices and when society itself is considered to be directly built upon such caring practices. For this reason, the project of ethical citizenship is very much anchored in the civil practices of care and is often presented as “a replacement for state-mediated modes of care” (Muehlebach 2012: 46). 7

This chapter thus examines the “the social care market” in South Korea as a useful entry by which to explore the concrete workings of ethical citizenship. In the process, I focus on “citizenship” not so much as a formal provision of right and legal status but as a socially recognized position and belonging that can be achieved, threatened, and negotiated (Choo 2016; Cruikshank 1999; Fikes 2009; Muehlebach 2012). This view might need more explanations. First, the notion of citizenship includes moral, social norms that are generally considered to be more appropriate to being a citizen and obtaining “a membership in a community” (Marshall 1992: 6). For example, if developmental citizenship is based on the nexus of work-family and its economic contribution to national development, the new ethical citizenship also presupposes particular social norms, based on which some ethicality would be favored over others and serve as rationale for the new form of inclusion. Second, if citizenship exceeds a bestowed set of rights and obligations and thereby involves “a modality of belonging” (Muehlebach 2012: 18), its boundaries of membership should be repeatedly recognized and confirmed through one’s everyday practices and performances. In this sense, as Cloke et al. (2007) points out, ethical

7 The fact that care becomes an experimental field is also significant, considering that citizenship is gendered and male citizenship in the public sphere has been “predicated on the exclusion of women who sustained that participation by their labour in the ‘private’ domestic sphere” (Lister 2003: 70). In this sense, the project of ethical citizenship—which is based on the public recognition of private care—includes the re-articulation of the public and the private as does the human capital regime.
citizenship includes the continuous practices of *converting* and *translating* “ordinary ethics” into practices in “service spaces” that are socially recognized. What fails to obtain the recognition as appropriate ethical practices would be excluded from the remit of the citizenship. That is to say, although the utopia of ethical citizenship seems to be inclusive and universal, it, like other forms of citizenship, relies on the division of “the deserved” and “the undeserved” and the containment of the latter. What I attempt to examine in this chapter is where the boundaries are drawn in the contemporary project of ethical citizenship in South Korea.

The responses to the *Yuna’s Street* ending may provide a clue to address this question. The day after the final episode, I asked members of Fortune Care, a local elderly care cooperative, about what they thought of the happy ending. In fact, I anticipated favorable responses because the conclusion seemed to show at least a growing attention to the social economy and social enterprises. Sun-Bok, the head of the cooperative, however, cynically responded: “It’s not a happy ending! How can it be a happy ending to launch a social enterprise? Their hardship just begins. You cannot earn money with the elderly living alone!” Similar responses were also found among staff members at the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center. So-Yun, a community business consultant, also half-smirkingly said, “I think no one would invest in the company because they lack a profit model. Were I their consultant, I would have prevented them from launching the business!” Although their reactions were close to self-mocking jokes, I will show where the cynicism originates by looking into the question of how subjects’ ethical practices are intermingled with and restrained by market rationality and how a particular ethicality—what I call “projective ethicality”—is constituted and recognized as the

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8 This exclusion inherent in citizenship as a membership of community is relevant to the exclusionary nature of social contract. As pointed out by various studies, the modern myth of social contract is deeply gendered and racialized, and thus it has faced continuing challenges (Pateman 1988; Mills 1997).
substance of ethical citizenship.

This chapter is organized as follows. The first part sketches the development of “the social care market” in South Korea and explains how it came to serve as an experimental field of ethical citizenship. It then goes on to detail the *modus operandi* of the social care market and ethical citizenship, dwelling upon an ethnographic case study of Fortune Care. In tracing the vicissitude of the organization from its establishment in 2014 to its shutdown in 2015, I focus on the question of how its aspirations were *converted* into a form of “projective ethicality” through competition in the quasi-market of social care. The conclusion recapitulates the main arguments and the complicated relations of various forms of citizenships: developmental, social, and ethical citizenship.

THE CRISIS OF REPRODUCTION
AND CREATING THE SOCIAL CARE MARKET

A standard narrative that explains the recent expansion of social care in South Korea is frequently shared in government-sponsored social economy and cooperative workshops. Since social enterprises and cooperatives were legalized in 2007 and 2012 respectively, those who wanted to establish such organizations were encouraged to take prerequisite trainings from intermediary support organizations such as the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center. The three- to four week-long curriculum usually involves the history of social economy and the cooperative movement, the present condition of the social care market, and the success stories of cooperatives. In spring 2014, I attended one of the classes accompanied by a community enterprise consultant, Ji-Young—who had been a district leader of a leftist party and became a
consultant following So-Yun (introduced in the previous chapter). In a small room in the Seongbuk Center, more than ten local residents were gathered for the first class, Introduction to the Social Economy and Cooperative. Ji-Young began her lecture by showing a graph of South Korea’s declining fertility rate. She asked, “We have the lowest birth rate in the world. Why do you think young people give up having babies?” Without waiting for the answers, Ji-Young continued her lecture: “In fact, we had a long, strong tradition of mutual care. As you know, our parents and grandparents used to raise babies together with their neighbors.” Such tradition, according to Ji-Young, has been destroyed by rapid development and neoliberal individualization: “the economic growth that only concerned materialistic values had recklessly destroyed the caring communities…. The succeeding neoliberalism has exacerbated the problem by making us see each other only as competitors.” According to her, the low fertility rate should be understood as “evidence” that our society is “on an unsustainable path.”

There is an African proverb that “it takes a whole village to raise a child.” We have lost that kind of village. Caring for a child alone is too demanding in this competitive society. I think this is why young people increasingly give up having babies…. But the situation

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9 Ji-Young and So-Yun had been long-time regional leaders of the leftist party that was disbanded in 2014 by the government for the party’s pro-North Korea position (I mentioned the political accident in Chapter 1). They both had left the party long before the dissolution due to a political disagreement with the party leadership.

10 As of 2013, South Korea’s fertility rate is 1.19 births per women. As Ji-Young said, this is one of the lowest in the world leading only Taiwan and Singapore. In 2014, the Korean National Assembly Research Institute announced that if this birthrate continues Korea’s population of 50 million will become extinct by 2750. The news drew much attention in Korea. “Could South Korea’s Low Birth Rate Really Mean Extinction?” NBC News (Aug. 27, 2014).

11 This is a very popular cliché in South Korea’s social and community economy sector, along with “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”—which is also often dubiously attributed as an “African proverb.” During my fieldwork research, I encountered these sayings in many promotional booklets, posters, training sessions, personal interviews, and even academic theses on the community/social economy. Whenever I heard these lines, I used to ask about the origin if I got the chance. No one gave me a clear answer, however. The use of these doubtful “African” proverbs produces an effect that romanticizes presumably “undeveloped” Africa as an “unmarred” space of mutual care and communal life—which is often described as what “we” have “lost” as a result of rapid economic growth. See also the representation of Bukjeong Maul in Chapter 2 and the episode of Mount Kilimanjaro in Chapter 5. After coming back to the U.S., I came to realize that these proverbs are also being used in the U.S. media with the same dubious attribution as African proverbs. See Joel Goldberg, “It Takes a Village to Determine the Origins of an African Proverb.” NPR News (Jul. 30, 2016).
is changing. People start to voluntarily gather and make a caring community. Like us! The government comes to recognize the seriousness of the problem and starts to support the social economy and offer social care programs.

Ji-Young’s typical narrative—which in fact faithfully followed an instruction manual from the Seoul Maul Community Center\textsuperscript{12}—seems to be problematic in a number of ways: it not only echoes the “lost paradise” picture that romanticizes past communities, similar to the representation of Bukjeong Maul in Chapter 2; but it also relies on the dubious dichotomy between materialistic development and caring communities, as already noted in the Prologue and Chapter 1. The schematic narrative, nevertheless, contains a grain of truth. Above all, it is generally agreed that contemporary South Korean society has faced a serious “crisis of reproduction” as indicated by grim statistics: the country has the highest suicide rate and lowest birth rate in the world.\textsuperscript{13} It is not a novel argument that capitalism’s propensity for unlimited accumulation has generated a constant tension with the process of social reproduction and care upon which the system inevitably depends (Bezanson 2006; Federici 2012; Fraser 2016).\textsuperscript{14} It is also well-known that the neoliberal human capital regime exacerbates the perennial contradiction between capital accumulation and care by replacing the state’s public welfare with individual

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\textsuperscript{12} The Seoul Maul Community Center, \textit{A Manual for Maul Community Instructors} [마을공동체교육 매뉴얼], 2013.

\textsuperscript{13} Of course, social reproduction is not limited to the biological dimension. To follow Razavi (2012), I understand the concept as “the social processes and human relations associated with the production and maintenance of people and communities on a daily and generational basis, upon which all production and exchange rest” (1). This definition of social reproduction comprehends the three different dimensions of “reproduction” that Edholm, Harris, and Young (1977)’s pioneering work tried to differentiate: social reproduction, reproduction of the labor force, and biological reproduction. As Edholm, Harris, and Young also admit, in reality, these forms of reproduction are functionally entangled with one another.

\textsuperscript{14} Although capitalism necessitates the incessant reproductions of a labor force and social bonds on biological, ideological, and societal levels, it has no room for the long-term, sustainable reproduction in its competitive pursuit of maximum profits in the market. For that reason, throughout the history of capitalism, the reproductive activities, especially care, have been primarily assigned to the “modernized family” and women’s unpaid labor (Donzelot, 1979; Federici, 2012; Weeks, 2011); the state has also guaranteed social reproduction through deploying various security \textit{dispositifs} including social welfare (Donzelot 1994; Foucault 2010).
responsibility and applying the financial logic of return on investment to household and care activities.\textsuperscript{15} To borrow Nancy Fraser’s words, in destroying “its own conditions of possibility,” neoliberal capitalism “effectively eats its own tail” (2016: 103).

In South Korea where universal social insurance and care systems were absent before the late 1990s, the contradiction between capital accumulation and social reproduction had been suppressed and controlled by the rapid economic growth and the strong familialism in which married women shoulder the care responsibility without substantial social help (Chang 2011; Han and Ling 1998; Lee 2012; Moon 2005; Truong 1999). As noted in Chapter 1, during its rapid growth in the 1960s-1980s, continuous development and low unemployment rates served as the primary social security dispositifs to maintain “the tight interlock between familialism, the male breadwinner household model, and women’s unpaid care” (Peng 2012: 31). As a result, as the 1997 financial crisis and the accompanying neoliberal reforms undermined the foundations of the old family-centered social reproduction system, the crisis of development has been directly extended to the crises of family, care, and social reproduction.

Against this backdrop, the South Korean government has actively expanded not only universal social insurance—that I already noted in Chapter 1—but also various social care programs to manage “the crisis of care” throughout the 2000s. For example, the government universalized the “The Early Childhood Education and Care Support” in 2004 for all children under age six. “The Long-term Care Insurance”—which offers in-home or institutional care services for the ailing elderly—was introduced in 2008. In 2011, “The Personal Assistant

\textsuperscript{15} In this sense, it is symptomatic that Gary Becker’s theory of human capital originated from his interests in household economy such as marriage, nurture, and education (Becker 1978, 1993). In framing and interpreting all the human activities in a single frame of investment and return, he blurs the boundary between the private and the public and undermines the legitimacy of social care.
Services for People with Disabilities” was launched for all seriously handicapped persons.\textsuperscript{16} Along with the implementation of these official care services, central and local governments have attempted to promote and organize informal care activities of local residents. For example, they have promoted volunteering activities nationwide and funded co-parenting and mutual care groups initiated by residents. Local governments have endeavored to organize these formal and informal care activities into a “Local Care Network” \([\text{chiyŏk tol} \text{bom net}’wŏk’u}]\) bringing together governments, volunteer organizations, social care institutions, and grass-roots co-parenting and care groups.

The introduction of these various care programs was expected to reduce the responsibility borne by women for family care and promote their economic participation to complement the loss of family income (Ryu 2012). The government argued that the provision of social care would not only “liberate” women from domestic work but also “foster the social well-being of the entire population” by offering more job opportunities and additional income.\textsuperscript{17} Although a number of critical scholars raised concern about the policies’ market-friendly orientation, the expansion of social care itself has been welcomed not only as the first step for the “de-familiarization” of care (Ryu 2012; Peng 2010; cf. Crompton 2006; Esping-Anderson 1999) but also as an accomplishment of the feminist movement that pursued the social recognition of women’s unpaid reproductive labor and of “the welfare movement” that aimed to expand public social welfare (Chon 2014; Kwon 2005). A scholar even describes the expansion of care as a paradigm shift from the “cold modern” to “the caring state” \([\text{tol} \text{bom g} \text{uk}k\text{a}]\) and the “warm

\textsuperscript{16} Besides these “universal” care programs, various small care service programs with more specific targets have been implemented in the same period: for example, the rehabilitation development care service for children with disabilities and the in-school care service for elementary and middle school students in urban poor neighborhoods were launched in the late 2000s and early 2010.

modern” (Cho 2006; cf. Vrasti 2011).

What should not be forgotten, however, is that the socialization of care has proceeded under governmental exigencies to manage the crises of unemployment and economic growth. The care expansion was thus also framed, from the beginning, “as a way to improve the development potential to create jobs for youth and housewives” and “to relieve economic hardship by providing new business opportunities to struggling small-scale entrepreneurs.” In other words, women’s “liberation” from care responsibility has remained linked with the economic necessities to find “the new growth engine for future economic development” (Peng 2012: 37). A government document issued in 2008 demonstrates this ambivalence:

Creating social service jobs has boosted our economy’s growth potential as it has helped the economically inactive population, including housewives and the aged, to be integrated into the economically active population. In particular, the provision of social services, such as childcare, housekeeping and patient care, has liberated women from domestic work, which in turn, has increased employment levels. The project of creating social service jobs has created jobs for vulnerable groups of workers.... The project has great significance in that it has opened up new horizons by creating jobs in the social service sector, which is often called “the third sector,” beyond the private and public sectors and needs to expand its share of employment, through cooperation between NGOs and the government.19

Given the above quote, through the expansion of social care the government has attempted to catch three birds with one stone: filling the lacunae of care caused by declining familialism; creating a job market for “inactive,” “vulnerable” groups; and advancing the cooperative governance between NGOs and the government in “the third sector.” Notably, these goals have


been pursued by meticulously applying the market principle of “competition” to the whole process of designing and implementing social care services. First of all, the government has deregulated the restrictions that prevented private for-profit enterprises from participating in the social care market, in order to “increase and diversify the supply of care services through competition.”

Furthermore, instead of directly offering public care services, the government has adopted voucher systems for most care programs, in which voucher beneficiaries can freely choose private care providers in the market. Finally, as the government outsourced the processes of recruiting, training, and certifying care workers, care worker certificates have been over-issued and the workers are often exposed to precarious job security and fierce competition to entice their own beneficiaries. Therefore, the role of the government in the social care market, in general, has been limited to setting the price of the care service voucher, deciding the number of beneficiaries, auditing care workers and providers, and “facilitating the competition among the providers.”

As a result, the bizarre quasi-markets have been artificially created, in which the supply and price of the commodities are unilaterally determined by the government, but the participants in the market are still expected to compete with limited resources. In this “economization” process, the government could organize the social care domain according to the model of the competitive market and simultaneously remain the auditory manager of the system at minimal social welfare cost.

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22 As discussed in Chapter 1, neoliberal rationality can be characterized as “the economization of heretofore noneconomic sphere” including society and politics (W. Brown 2015: 30-31; see also Çalışkan and Callon (2009)). Such economization is not necessarily equivalent with marketization or privatization. It is rather the issue of organizing the entire social field according to the model of the market and homo œconomicus. Also, it should be noted that, as Foucault trenchantly points out, neoliberalism is based on the different logics of the market and the model of homo œconomicus from classical liberalism: it emphasizes “competition” over exchange and lasssez-faire and renders its subjects as self-entrepreneurs rather than as subjects having irreducible economic interests. In this sense, South Korea’s social care market is a representative example of neoliberal reform, in which the logic of
On the surface, the government’s strategies of economization seem to have been successful. For the last decade, the growth of the “social care market” has been dazzlingly faster than any other economic sectors: the number of workers in the care service sector has exploded from 590,000 in 2004 to 1,851,000 in 2016, recording the biggest and the only continuous increase among all the sub-categories of service sector employments (Song, 2015). If examined closely, however, it turns out that the growth of the market has only been maintained and undergirded by the vulnerable working conditions of the care workers. From the beginning, the government blatantly declared that the social care market would be “appropriate” for vulnerable, unskilled, low-wage, female workers as well as petty, small-scale entrepreneurs. Despite the government’s empty promise for “decent jobs,” the minimum cost and the low-price voucher policy has never been changed and thus a substantial portion of the aforementioned dramatic increase in social service employment consists of older female workers in their 50s and 60s who were pushed into the labor market because of their precarious economic condition and an insufficient national pension system (Park 2014). In this sense, the expansion of social care and the “liberation” of women can be viewed in a completely different perspective: as a process of relocating and outsourcing care work to low-waged, precarious, and marginal female labor forces. In a word, the de-familialization and socialization of care in South Korea has been deeply entangled with its economization and commodification to the point of undecidability.

In relation to our discussion, several points should be noted concerning the formation of competition is imposed and the players in the field are assumed as homo oeconomicus in the neoliberal sense, as discussed in detail later.

the social care market. Above all, the creation of the care market has been concomitant with the governmental promotion of social enterprises and cooperatives. As seen in the emphasis of “the third sector” in the above quotation, social enterprises and cooperatives were assumed by the government to be the main care providers for the future from the beginning: “It is desirable that the social care services are provided by social enterprises in the tertiary sector” says a government’s policy report; “The private corporations are restrained by profit-seeking and the government cannot offer good quality services because of its bureaucratic inefficiency and the limit of financial budget.”

According to the report, because the practices of care include moral and ethical values beyond “the pursuit of economic profit,” the government should “foster social enterprises” and cooperatives as the primary care providers—for the long-term, “It is ideal that the social care market is operated by them.” This is not only because social enterprises and cooperatives “embody the social and moral values” but also because “they can provide care at affordable prices since making profit is not their priority.”

That is to say, the ethical dedication of social enterprises and cooperatives not only helps to provide more hearty and committed services, but also helps to maintain the precarious and low-wage market conditions at the government’s minimum cost. Whether either one is closer to the government’s real intention, it is true that the government has provided various supports including subvention, business consulting, and trainings for cooperatives that want to participate in the social care market. In addition, to foster potential cooperatives and community enterprises that provide social care, the government has located informal, private care groups and actively encouraged them to shift their

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26 The Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Ibid., p. 192

27 The Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Ibid., p. 194
organizational forms into cooperatives so that they can apply for various governmental subventions and get official recognition as a “governance partner” in the care market.

Figure 8. The Seoul Municipal Government’s Cooperative Promotion Advertisement: “Do you have five people having the same idea? Make a cooperative. Seoul will help.”

The newly created social care market is unusual and deviates from the perspective of the old developmental model of government and its citizenry: it is neither the conventional market where individuals’ economic contributions are measured and determined, nor the private realm where unpaid free care works are provided. As a hybrid space where the formerly marginalized populations under developmentalism—for example, unskilled workers, housewives, ailing elders, and the handicapped—are incorporated into the system either as care providers or care
recipients, the social care market has been formed into and operates from new social norms and new dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In particular, the caring, ethical subjects in the market are forced to adapt to and survive the peculiar market conditions; and in the process, they embody a new ethicality as the basis of social recognition and ethical citizenship. In the rest of this chapter, I trace the process through the case of Fortune Care.

THE CASE OF FORTUNE CARE

Establishment

Fortune Care is an elderly care worker cooperative [yoyang bohosa hyŏptongjohap] established in April 2014 by five local workers in the Seongbuk district. The prehistory of the cooperative is worth exploring because the founding process itself encapsulates how the formation of the care market interestingly overlaps with the old developmentalism and furthermore how the old remaining institutional resources are mobilized for the current programs of ethical citizenship.

The founders of Fortune Care came to know each other in volunteer programs for the low income elderly that were operated by the New Village Women’s Association. As already noted in the previous chapters, “New Village Movement” [Saemaul undong] was initiated by the military government in 1971 to “improve material conditions” and “reform people’s consciousness” in impoverished rural communities; the military junta had expanded the movement into poor urban areas like Bukjeong Maul in the late 1970s.28 The New Village

28 The Ministry of Home Affairs, “The Ten Year History of New Village Movement” [새마을운동 10 년사], 1980. Despite its overt objectives, many scholars point out that the ulterior motive of the movement could be found in the political necessity that prevented the then-prevalent distress among the rural population as a result of the rapid urbanization from developing into the mass resistance against the military junta (Kim 2009; Sonn & Gimm 2013; Yoon 2016).
Women’s Association is a parastatal organization established in 1977 by the administrative order that integrates various women groups including the Family Planning Motherhood and Life-Style Reform Women’s Group. With financial aid from such government and international organizations as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this nationwide organization had run various moral programs to promote “family values and work ethics” that included birth control, anti-gambling, thrift, and temperance campaigns until the organization and movement drifted away from people’s attention with democratization in the late 1980s (Han 2004; Yoon 2016).

It was again in the wake of the IMF crisis that the New Village movement and organization had a new turning point and rebirth: in the midst of the unprecedented economic turmoil, the organization redefined its role as “a volunteer organization” and launched a new “Nationwide Campaign for Private-led Social Safety Net” [min'gan sahoe anjŏnmang pŏmgungmin undong] that sought to “provide mutual charity and care for the underprivileged who are not covered by the dysfunctional social insurance programs.” What should be noted is that the turnaround was well matched with the government’s then-policy orientation to promote volunteerism to complement its scant social welfare system. The government established 250

29 For a general history of the New Village Women’s Association and its activities particularly in family planning during the 1970s and 1980s, see Moon (2005: 78-89).

30 The dynamics of this ideological mass movement, which aimed to “modernize” and “enlighten” backward communities, were highly gendered. While male “leaders” were expected to commit to advancing economic infrastructure and local income, women were primarily committed to various moral and mutual care campaigns (Kim 2009; Moon, 2005).


32 As pointed out by numerous studies, the governmental promotion of volunteerism has been commonly found in various countries of the world since the turn of the 21st century: From the US (Hyatt 2000) to Japan (Ogawa 2009), Italy (Muehlebach 2012), Greece (Rozakou 2016), Chile (Paley 2001) and China (Fleischer 2011). These researches commonly point out that voluntarism serves to supplement neoliberal welfare reform and produce moral, active, and self-governing citizens. See also Vrasti and Montsion (2014) for the development of transnational volunteerism.
Volunteer Centers in all city and country administrative districts in 2002, and furthermore enacted in 2005 “the Framework Act on Volunteer Service Activities” which stipulated that the promotion of volunteer activities is the “responsibility of the state and local governments.” As one of the leading and largest volunteer organizations, the New Village Women’s Association has been actively involved with various community activities and thus has grown to the extent that it has more than 1,500,000 female members. Given that volunteering serves as one of the main human and material resource pools for the social economy and its ethical projects, the short history of the organization—which can be summarized as a shift from a parastatal moral campaign organization to a grassroots volunteer institution—creates a portrait of this current project of ethical citizenship that shows that it is not a simple replacement of the old moral campaigns under the developmental state. This endeavor rather marks both a continuation and transition from it.

As noted above, to create “the social care market” the Korean government has relied on the already existing “informal” care and volunteer organization infrastructures that had rapidly increased in the late 1990s. Since the mid-2000s, the government has put a lot of effort into incorporating informal care activities into a sort of “local care network” among the local governments, NGOs, and welfare/care organizations. These informal groups have been encouraged to shift their organizations into publicly recognized forms such as social enterprises,

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33 With this effort, the number of the registered volunteers for the Korea Volunteer Center has dramatically increased from 2,083,704 in 2005 to 11,383,726 in 2015. The number of those who participate in voluntary activities at least once in the year has also skyrocketed from 995,870 in 2007 to 3,746,577 in 2017. Korea Volunteer Center, The 2016 Statistics for Volunteer Center [2016 자원봉사센터 현황: 통계편], 2017.

34 In 1977 when the organization was established, the number of members was estimated to be 420,000. The Ministry of Health and Welfare, New Village Movement and Women [새마을운동과 여성], 1981, p. 47. It should be noted that this type of parastatal organization often exaggerates the number of members. It is also true, nevertheless, that the New Village Women’s Association has the most extensive and well-organized nationwide network among volunteer organizations due to its grassroots chapters in almost all administrative districts and cooperative relationship with local governments.
community enterprises, and cooperatives; moreover, the vast network of volunteering and care also has served as a human resource pool for social care workers and social economy activists. For instance, it was in the middle of such volunteer activities that Woo-Sun came to know about elderly care work. A private broker, commissioned by the government to recruit, train, and certify care workers, came to her and asked: “Don’t you want to do a good job and simultaneously earn some money? You may do what you are doing now, but with some compensation.”

Struggling economically due to her husband Ki-Sung’s long-term unemployment, Woo-Sun decided to start work as an elderly in-home care worker in 2010 as did other members of Fortune Care.

The Elderly Long-Term Care, which was introduced in 2008 to reduce family members’ (especially housewives’) burden to care for the elderly with geriatric diseases, has been considered as “the most notable achievements of the Korean government’s expansion of welfare service” (Chon 2014: 705). The program is designed as follows: if any ailing elderly people submit applications to the National Health Insurance Corporation along with a doctor’s report, staff members will visit and assess these elders’ mental and physical condition. If the applicants meet the eligibility criteria, they are given a service voucher with which they find and draw up contracts with in-home or institutional care service providers. Because the service market is completely open to private organizations and their financial gains are determined by

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35 Interview with Woo-Sun and Ki-Sung (June 15, 2016).

36 “The Act on Long-Term Care Insurance for Aged” states that its purpose is “to relieve family members from the burden of supporting elderly citizens and to enhance the quality of life of citizens by providing for matters concerning long-term care benefits” (Article 1).

37 The staff members consist of a nurse and/or a social worker. In their assessment, the applicant’s physical and mental limitations are evaluated into five different levels and the service benefits depend on the assigned level. In an episode of Yuna’s Street, Mr. Jang pretends to have impaired hearing to raise his limitation level and benefits. Such practices are reportedly very common in the process of assessment, which is also confirmed by my fieldwork experience.
how many patients they have, the care providers and workers are expected to compete with each other to attract more “patient customers.”³⁸

Since its establishment, this quasi-market system has been criticized on many counts. Above all, as noted above, to encourage the participation of more private care agents in the market, the government has minimized regulations over the certification process of care providers and workers. Consequentially, the market has become over-crowded with petty private institutions and temporary care workers with over-issued state certificates.³⁹ Furthermore, to minimize expenditures, the government has been very conservative in assessing applicants’ disabilities, which in turn has intensified competition in this already saturated market. As of 2014, the number of older beneficiaries had remained approximately 460,000, while the number of state-certified care workers had reached 1.23 million.⁴⁰ A community enterprise consultant once described to me this competitive market condition as “a small pond where anglers are much more than fish.” As expected, such conditions have exacerbated care workers’ job insecurity. Since certified care workers far outnumber beneficiaries, they can be replaced easily and, once becoming unemployed, it is hard to find a new patient-customer. Furthermore, since the government has set benefit levels very low and private agencies attempt to maximize their profits

³⁸ As of 2014, only 228 institutions are public, government-owned (this is 1.3% among 16,525 elderly care providers). The other providers consist of for-profit organizations, private social welfare organizations, social enterprises, and cooperatives. In fact, South Korea’s elderly care was basically designed with reference to Japan’s model. South Korea’s system, however, is highly marketized in comparison with Japan’s in which the provision of care service is not open to for-profit organizations (Chon 2014; Ochiai 2009).

³⁹ To obtain a care worker certificate, one is required to take 240 hours training and the qualification exam. Since the government out-sourced the process to private institutions, the training programs have been repeatedly criticized for their low-quality and expensive price. Also, the high passing rate of the exam, which reached around 80~90%, has exacerbated the over-supply of care workers.

⁴⁰ National Health Insurance Corporation, 2015 Long Term Care Statistical Year Book [2015 장기요양보험통계연보], 2015. As of 2014, the number of beneficiaries is only 6.6% of the people aged over 65 (6,462,740 in total). The coverage rate is very low compared to 14.5% in Germany and 18.5% in Japan. Among 1.23 million certified care workers, only 264,085 are currently employed and matched with beneficiaries.
in the middle, the salary and working conditions of care workers have remained consistently poor: they receive barely above the minimum wage, with excessive workloads and without proper labor rights. As a result, the system often has been blamed for producing only “cheap unstable jobs led by the government” and fostering the worst, distorted form of “marketization of care” (Jegal 2009).

What directly led the Fortune Care members to form their own cooperative was their experience of vulnerability as care workers for the elderly. For example, Woo-Sun, who got chronic knee pain while caring for a handicapped elder, lost her job after she took a three-day break for getting treated for the pain since her beneficiary simply decided to call another care worker on the long waitlist. Sharing each other’s negative experiences, the care workers decided to build an elderly care cooperative in the spring of 2014 with the expectations that their basic labor rights and working condition could be improved. It should be noted, however, that what led them to build a cooperative was also the mingled effect of governmental efforts to officialize informal, volunteering care work along with participants’ inclination for social good and recognition. Woo-Sun and Sun-Bok once recollected to me their excitement when they met with a member of the first government-certificated elderly care social cooperative, Dounuri, in a government-organized cooperative expo; “I got goose-bumps when I first heard their

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41 Although the wages of care workers vary depending on organizations, in-home care workers usually receives 6,500 ~ 7,000 won (approximately $ 6) per hour as of 2014. The hourly rate is slightly above the minimum wage (5,210 won). They are required to work for 4 hours a day, 5 days a week per patient. In sum, their monthly income is about 500,000 Won ($450) if they care for only one patient-customer. If they work 8 hours a day for two patients, their monthly salary would be about 1,000,000 Won ($900). (As of 2014, South Korea’s average annual income per capita is $28,180). In addition, given that they visit and work in patients’ home, they are easily exposed to the risk of emotional, physical abuse or even sexual harassment from the patients. Furthermore, some for-profit care providers used to deny providing mandatory social benefits such as health insurance and national pension for care workers, arguing that they are “freelancers” rather than “laborers.” The low wages and the poor working conditions lead to the high turnover rate of the care workers. It is reported that the half of newly certified care workers leave the market within less than six months (Park 2014).
catchphrase: ‘Provide care from cradle to grave with our own hands.’42 Woo-Sun, a social welfare beneficiary herself, and Sun-Bok, a long-time housewife and temporary worker, related in chorus that the slogan “enlightened” them about the significance of care cooperatives and convinced them to establish their own. In exploring the rise of ethical citizenship in the volunteer sector in Italy, Muehlebach (2011) notes the “magic” of ethical citizenship that incorporates marginalized labor populations as the subjects of voluntary care work by instilling their actions with moral meanings and social recognition. The same magic seems to be found in the social care market in South Korea: those who had been considered marginal and dispensable in the developmental labor regime are now summoned to voluntarily shoulder the responsibility of social welfare and become armed with the ethics of care. Just as the New Village Movement provided opportunities for national belonging and recognition for residents in dilapidated, abandoned rural areas on the condition that they contribute to “economic development” (Kim 2009; Yoon 2016), the experiment of ethical citizenship also offers marginal groups the experiences of “empowerment” and incorporation. Of course, once again, such inclusion does not come without a cost.

*Becoming a Pro with Moral Authenticity*

It was at the abovementioned cooperative workshop that I first met Fortune Care members. They stood out in the class because they were seemingly perplexed at Ji-Young’s 90-minute condensed summary of the global economy and of the cooperative movement, which had bounced around roughly from Margaret Thatcher to Thomas Picketty. When Ji-Young wrapped

42 The cooperative’s slogan is obviously a parody of the famous Beveridge Report’s proposal. Given that it tacitly changes the subject of welfare provision from the state to citizens themselves, the parodied slogan reflects what I have called “do-it-yourself welfare aspirations” in the previous chapters.
up her lecture by re-emphasizing the significance of care and cooperation as the antidote to growing global inequality and turned to the audience for a Q & A, a member of Fortune Care Ki-Sung raised his hand from a backseat and asked: “How can we receive a government subsidy?” Looking slightly disgruntled—perhaps because her enthusiastic moral talk drew only a question about subvention, Ji-Young shrugged and answered: “If you show real ‘passion and commitment’ for solving social problems, the government would support you no matter what.”

This answer, however, is neither satisfactory nor accurate. Although it is true that there are various governmental subsidies for social care organizations, to obtain them, applicants have to go through a complicated and competitive application and selection process. That is to say, the candidates are required to demonstrate and provide evidence in a particular way that their “passion and commitment” deserve financial support and investment. In fact, the second time that I met Fortune Care members was at one of the screening interviews for the district government’s social care subvention. On a late spring day of 2014, the basement auditorium of the Seongbuk district government was filled with local care groups who needed financial support. Due to the high volume of applicants, each organization was given only five minutes to present their business plan and explain the necessity for support in front of the selection committee that consisted of local public officials, professors, and social economy activists. The assessment was made based on four sub-categories: economic value in the grades of profitability and sustainability and social value in the grades of moral commitment and community adaptability; 25 points were assigned to each category, for a total of 100 possible points. While

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43 It is noteworthy that sustainability is classified as an “economic value.” In South Korea’s social economy, “sustainability” has been used mainly in two meanings. First, it means the principles of “sustainable” development that include reflections on the environment and future generations, in contrast to former development policies that have focused exclusively on material and economic growth. Second, it often indicates certain organizations’ economic performances to sustain their business and survive in the market. Although sustainability clearly means the latter in this case, the everyday usage of the term in the social economy sector often includes a slippage between these two meanings. To illustrate, it is often said that the sustainable survival of social enterprises would
explaining the Fortune Care’s business plan for the elderly care market, the presenter Sun-Bok looked highly nervous, unlike some of the other teams who seemed accustomed to this type of presentation. When she was asked about what makes Fortune Care competitive in the market, Sun-Bok failed to give a convincing answer as she repeated: “we all have actively participated in volunteer programs for a long time and know how to care for the elderly… So please help us.” Fortune Care ended up getting high points in the “social value” categories, while scoring the lowest in the columns of profitability and sustainability. During a break, one of the selection committee members related to me that the elderly care market was already so saturated that he did not really believe that the Fortune Care cooperative could survive. Looking slightly guilty for what he just said, he quickly added justification to his view: “Indeed, they look like very committed and good people. But, as you know, our subventions come from taxes. So we need to be meticulous so it is not heard that we waste taxes. What if they go bankrupt after getting the funding?” As a result, instead of financial support, the committee decided to support Fortune Care with business consulting by the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center in order to help them to build a stronger and more profitable business plan.

This episode demonstrates what kinds of virtues are concretely expected for social care organizations to obtain the government’s recognition and support. A series of anthropological studies about the rise of volunteerism and the formation of ethical citizenship have commonly pointed out a prevalent distinction in the field between spiritual, relational “values” and material, economic “interests” (Hyatt 2000; Muehlebach 2012; Rozakou 2016; Vrasti and Montsion 2014). Volunteers position themselves as sacrificial, ethical citizens who contribute to the
construction of social bonds vis-à-vis others who pursue only material and private interests. This distinction—which can be traced back to the old anthropological binary between gift exchange and market transaction—often works as a dividing line of inclusion and exclusion in the project of ethical citizenship. In South Korea’s care market, where the government purposefully has introduced market doctrines through the institutionalization and professionalization of volunteer activities, this dichotomy has still remained effective, as seen in the aforementioned evaluation categories that differentiate “social” and “economic” values. The Fortune Care’s episode, however, shows that the expected virtues for ethical citizens have become more hybrid and composite in the marketized care sector. That is to say, the ethical citizens’ moral aspirations and commitments are now required to be convertible into market rationality, or at least become compatible and consonant with it.

The ambivalent parlance of the term “pro” [sŏnsu], which is prevalent among social economy activists and care workers, seems to show the complicated nature of this task. On the one hand, the term is often used to depict a habitual “subsidy hunter” who joins the social economy to pursue the government’s “easy money.” In the field, rumors are always circulating about one or two social economy organizations that received multiple massive funding from the government and conglomerates; social economy activists and public officials whom I interviewed commonly expressed a concern that these “pros” who lack enduring community commitment and moral responsibility tend to monopolize the limited opportunities for investments from the government and corporations. In responding to my question about how to identify “pros,” a public officer on the selection committee explained that “You can easily pick

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44 For example, as Muehlebach (2012: Ch. 7) shows, the hierarchical division of relational labor and material labor serves to devalue immigrant care workers’ labor as motivated by economic gains and to render their labor private and invisible.
out the pros. Their words are too glib and lack ‘authenticity’ [chinjŏng-sŏng]. You can feel it.”

He added that he always prioritized “authenticity” in selecting the recipient of subvention.

Regardless of what he means by authenticity, however, those who have only moral enthusiasm and lack a profitable business plan like Fortune Care did, conversely, are required to be “pros.”

In their first consulting session, Min-Suk, another community enterprise consultant, emphasized to Fortune Care members: “You need to be pros. You cannot survive only with good will… It is also naïve to believe the state will help you only if your intentions are good. No. The government does only monitoring and auditing.”

The term of “pro” here represents professional, empowered subjects who embody market rationality enough to survive in the market. Thus, it is not the point that ethical citizens’ moral enthusiasm should be distinguished from market value and rationality; what is significant, rather, is to strike a balance between their moral enthusiasm and market expertise.

In a nutshell, the ethical citizenship project interpellates its subjects to become seemingly contradictory figures, “pros with moral authenticity”—another variation of what I described in Chapter 1 as “aspiring human capital” or “socially responsible entrepreneurs.” Exemplary ethical citizens are required to retain moral value and simultaneously acquire market knowledge and competence; more precisely, their moral aspirations are required to be translated and converted into resources for exhibiting and raising their “investability” in the market. In fact, all the processes—from the cooperative prerequisite courses through a series of applications and screenings to repetitive business consulting—aim to facilitate the translation and produce this peculiar subjectivity. What needs to be highlighted more clearly is that the nature of their ethical

45 For the expansion of “auditing” practices in neoliberal reform, see Anand (2015), Power (1997), and Strathern (2000).
practices has been redefined and transformed in this process as well, which I turn to now.

“Projective Ethicality” and the “Investable Subject”

Throughout the business consulting that continued from July to October in 2014, Min-Suk and Ji-Young put pressure on the Fortune Care members to build a three-year development plan. The whole plan included ways of not only increasing the number of customers and cooperative members, but also developing market competitiveness, internal democracy, and social value. The anticipated growth was visualized with several business analysis tools.

![Figure 9. A Visualization of Fortune Care's Three-year Plan](image)

46 This is one of the analytical tools, which was called “Wagon Wheel” by the community enterprise consultants. Each angle of the octagon signifies social or economic values, such as community adaptability, democratic participation, marketability, and financial capability. The substantial parts of the consulting sessions were devoted to explaining how to define the values and how to measure them. The three lines inside the octagon show Fortune Care’s plan to continuously improve the entire values throughout three years. The practice of visualization was not simply for self-inspection. In fact, the government required that all the applications for the government-certified community enterprise should include at least two or three forms of visualized plans.
Although the consulting sessions often digressed to explain the meaning of unfamiliar and vague terms such as internal democracy, community adaptability, and social value, the most urgent agenda involved how to attract more patient-clients. At every meeting, the consultants asked the members: “What makes you more competitive and attractive than other organizations in the market?” In response, Fortune Care drew up two business strategies. The first was to actively publicize their good will and moral motivation to local elders who are their “potential customers.” In the quasi-market where the price is controlled, the appeal of moral commitment could be a good strategy to “snatch” customers from other for-profit competitors. The second strategy was to utilize “social capital” that had been obtained by their long-term volunteer work. Min-Suk particularly emphasized the importance of social capital: “For social economic organizations, the relationship is money. That is why we call it social capital [sahoejŏk chabon].” For these purposes, the members decided not only to participate in more local volunteer programs but also to run various projects for the local elderly under the banner of Fortune Care. They re-organized their ordinary volunteer efforts—such as irregular visits to local senior citizen centers—into a series of “projects” with concrete schemes, objectives, funding, and timetables.

What should be noted is that turning ordinary volunteer works into government-funded and market-related projects also transforms the manner and nature of their ethical practices into what can be termed as “projective ethicality.” In exploring the “new spirit of capitalism” in the post-industrial network society, Boltanski and Chiapello maintain that the logic of “project” has

47 A government report provides a guideline of how to define and calculate these values. For example, “internal democracy” means whether the organization has “a democratic decision-making process” and can be measured by the number of internal decision-making meetings and the number and range of participants; The Ministry of Labor and Employment and the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency, Manual for Performance Report Writing [사업보고서 작성 매뉴얼], 2014.

48 For the usage of social capital in the social economy sector, see also Chapter 2.
emerged as a new formula through which people understand and justify reality: it restricts “the possibilities of action… whose logic they embrace and also legitimate” (2005: 107).^{49} As a technology of organizing the world, the logic of project dissects social phenomena and rearranges them into a “problem-solving cycle.” The rationale defines clear and achievable objectives in a limited time span and deploys a series of practices in a successive process of planning-performance-evaluation: “Projects need planning. Aims need to be defined, a road map drawn up, a time frame, costs and means determined, participants need selecting, motivating and their collaboration organized… and at the end the results must be evaluated” (Bröckling 2016: 181). This project rationality seems to have a homology—or at least is well-tuned—with the workings of ethical citizenship, in the sense that the latter also reduces socio-economic structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, and income inequality into manageable and solvable objects through individual ethical practices. Whereas the language of social activism mainly diagnoses social problems as the result of social contradictions or limits of existing (capitalist) structures, the newly emerging language of ethical citizenship renders these structural dimensions invisible and instead represents social problems as targeted objectives of citizen-subjects’ moral projects. In fact, the government’s mentoring, consulting, and auditing practices have contributed to such framing of citizens’ ethical aspirations and practices in terms of project rationality and thus to the effective promotion of “projective ethicality.”

To illustrate, Fortune Care’s first project was a short-term singing class for the elderly who live alone. Although they had offered occasional dancing and singing classes for these

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^{49} In developing Boltanski and Chiapello’s idea in Foucauldian perspective, Bröckling (2016) also points out that “project” has become historical a priori in our times, “an inescapable, fundamental category within which we understand ourselves and shape ourselves” (191). He goes further to maintain that contemporary governmentality can be defined as “the governing of projects and governing by projects” (172). It is notable that Bröckling tries to illustrate various dispositifs to undergird “the governing of/by project,” while Boltanski and Chiapello’s Weberian approach ends up extracting an ideal type of “project rationality” out of the numerous management works.
seniors as part of their New Village volunteer activities, this time Fortune Care members decided to apply for a government’s subvention partially because they wanted to become accustomed to the process. In the application document, they clarified the aim of the class: “The poor elders living alone are suffering from isolation and loneliness. This project aims to lessen their emotional pain and prevent suicides by building sympathetic bonds among participants”; to this end, they planned to host bi-weekly singing classes for 10-15 local elders who are over 65 and under the poverty line; results would be reported to the government with a participant satisfaction survey. It is remarkable that the plan attempts to problematize elderly poverty in terms of individuals’ emotional-affective predicaments so that the issue becomes manageable through such ethical projects as a singing class with clear targets and a limited timetable (see also Chapters 2 and 4). The performance of the project, furthermore, would be measured and be used to attract more participants and investment. In fact, the singing class project did not go well, since not enough elderly registered for it. Fortune Care could not cancel the class, however, because they already had received the government’s subvention; instead, they had to bring their own patients to the class, despite the fact that some of them suffered from senile dementia and thus could not follow the class well. This “hodgepodge” reality was surely erased in their final report; the number of attendants and their satisfaction grades measured in a 5-point scale were used as “data” to show their credibility and effectiveness for their next project which was an online crowd-funding campaign for the seniors who could not afford the medical report fees for their elderly care applications. Among Fortune Care members, there was a strong expectation that the performance of these serial projects would render them more favorable and investable not only in the market but also in the eyes of the government.

In fact, besides mentoring and consulting, the quantitative measurement of social
economy organizations’ “performances” and the objective assessment of their investability are where the government’s efforts are most focused in the social economy and social care market.

For example, the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency have developed a social value assessment index and have annually evaluated the amount of “social impact” produced by government-certified social enterprises. A government’s report states the main purposes of the development and application of the evaluation tools as follows:

The development of the Basic Index of Social Value (BISV) seeks to stimulate capital investment in the social economy by providing an objective criterion for evaluating the performances of social economy organizations… [Such assessment] enables the government to identify excellent social enterprises and judge the efficiencies of its subventions. It also provides various investors with the necessary information for their investments and furthermore helps social economy organizations to review their actual achievement of social impact and enhance the transparency and accountability.50

That is to say, the social value measurement not only serves as social economy organizations’ “technology of self-examination” (Kim 2016: 192); but it also aims to provide objective and comparable information about the agents’ ethical performances and social value for potential investors, including the government itself.51

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51 The development of the evaluation tools is also regarded as significant for implementing “fair and transparent competition” among social economy organizations. The South Korea’s government has recently attempted to enact “The Framework Act on Social Value” that enforces the state and local governments to consider bidding organizations’ estimated production of social value when they make public procurement and contracts. The law was prepared and proposed in 2014 by Moon Jae-In, then-Assemblyman and now the President. The enactment of the law has been suspended because of political conflicts with the then-ruling party. With the transfer of power, however, the enactment is considered as one of the new President’s main policy goals. Moon argues that, in opposition to the custom that the government purchases services or goods from an organization that bids the lowest price, the new act will advance “the ‘ethical economy’ [ch’ak’an gyŏngje] that prioritizes community, cooperation, and mutual care over profit by promoting the social economy and social value.” “President Moon Promises the Introduction of Social Value Assessment in Government-Related Organizations” [공공기관에 ‘사회적가치’ 평가 도입], *E-Daily* (May 28, 2017). See also Moon Jae-In, How do we make ethical economy? The
What is interesting in regard to our discussion is that the assessment process involves specific interpretations of what can and should be considered as “ethical” and “social” impact. For example, a government-certificated social enterprise Dasomi Foundation—which hires social welfare recipients to provide patient care service—was assessed to generate the social value worth of over 5.2 billion won (approx. 4.5 million dollar) in 2012.52 To describe a few of the calculations: as they hire social welfare recipients, the reduced amount of the government subsidies for the former recipients is calculated as “social value” produced by the enterprise; since Dasomi Foundation provides a relatively low-priced service, the total amount of the difference between the organization’s price and the average market price is also counted as social impact; if their care service enables a former caregiver in the family to get a new job, this income too would be included as created social value. In this assessment, therefore, the reduction of the state’s social welfare expenditures and the provision of low-priced services are unconditionally considered “social good” and their ethical practices and the accompanying intangible moral, social values are measured in a tangible, monetary form.53 In the consulting process, Fortune Care was also once advised to calculate the “social impact” of their various projects in a similar way and include the figures in their portfolio or future applications. For example, their volunteer


53 This social value estimation method in a monetary form is called “Social Return on Investment (SROI),” developed by the Robert Enterprise Development Fund in the Silicon Valley in 1996. Although SROI is one of the most popular methods in calculating social value, there are other ways of quantifying qualitative values; to name a few, Global Input Investing Rating System (GIIRS) and Shujog’s Impact Assessment, both of which use rating scales instead of monetary forms. For interesting analyses of the meanings and predicaments in quantifying intangible objects, see Espeland and Sauder (2007), Espeland and Stevens (2008), and Fourcade (2011). The Ministry of Employment and Labor has changed its assessment method from SROI to a rating system in 2013, in part because of social enterprises’ antipathy to the monetary calculation. Further research should be directed at exploring how such changes in assessment knowledge and tools have performatively constructed and demarcated the plane of “the social” in different ways, which will be my next “project.”
visits to elderly living alone were calculated into the monetary value by multiplying the number of visits and the average price of in-home care service; likewise, the social value of the singing classes was estimated based on the number of participants and the elderly counseling service fee in the social care market. The data never appeared on their promotional leaflets or funding applications, however, because the amount of the impact was less than they expected and the members obviously had moral qualms about using these simply calculated figures. Nonetheless, the experience pressured them to compare their “impact” with other organizations and to weigh their value and investability in the social market, as noted in the above government’s report.

The quantitative measurement of social impact and ethical value not only adjusts the imaginary of what is social and ethical; but it also further rearticulates the relationship among the state, the market, and ethical citizens (cf. Callon 1998; Latour and Lepinay 2009; Mitchell 2002). The ethical subjects who committed to a series of projects do not directly follow the utilitarian axiom, that is, “the maximization of profit.” As Fortune Care’s case shows, these projects instead aim to build connections, social capital, and potential opportunities (cf. Botanski and Chiapello 2005: Ch. 2). This does not mean, however, that their ethical practices are free from or are even an antidote to market rationality; rather, the “ethical” citizens are required to follow the financial or human capital logic and construct themselves as investable subjects before the eyes of the market and the state. Their ethical practices are not only molded into appreciable projects that are expected to generate measurable social impacts, but they are also required to organize and utilize the social capital, trust, and networks to enhance their portfolio and investability.

In this sense, the government is both absent and present simultaneously in the social care market. On the one hand, the government is absent as the principal and ultimate care provider, given that the market is completely open to private organizations and government-owned public
care providers comprise only about one percent of the market. On the other hand, the
government is strongly present nevertheless, as the manager of the care market that acts to
maintain this market as competitive, low-priced, and low-waged, as “a mentor or consultant”
who promotes projective ethicality, and ultimately as an investor concerned about their returns in
the form of social impact.\(^{54}\) Just as the selection committee member who asked “what if they go
bankrupt?” the government subvention is now considered not so much as support to the
underprivileged subjects but rather as an investment for promising projects that are expected to
produce sufficient social and moral impact. As a result, the imaginary relationship between the
state and its ethical subjects in the social care market becomes more analogous with the relation
between investor and investee in the stock market.\(^{55}\)

In completing a series of projects with the government’s subventions, Fortune Care’s
portfolio was markedly improved: Although the small grants could not dramatically improve
their financial situation, these projects enabled them to build a vast network in the local social
economy sector. Ji-Young and Min-Suk even recommended that they apply for one of the largest
social economy subventions: the government-certified community enterprise. The Fortune Care
members wanted to secure an office space with the funds and lessen their rent burden. Their
application this time looked more slick and businesslike with the inclusion of visualized three-

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\(^{54}\) Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller suggest “government at distance” as a key characteristic of “(advanced) liberal
government.” (Rose 1999; Rose and Miller 2008). The South Korean government’s positioning itself not as a
direct caregiver but as an auditor and investor can be viewed as a typical way of “governing at a distance.” The
point is, however, that “at a distance” should not be understood to indicate the intensity of the state’s intervention
but to describe the hegemonic form of the state’s interacting with society. As discussed so far, the government’s
role in the social care market has increased, even while devolving its care responsibilities to the ethical citizens.

\(^{55}\) The transformation is not parochial to the social care market. In fact, what can be called “the financialization of
social policy” has occurred across all the government’s policies since the mid-2000s when the government
declared the state should be reformed into “Social Investment State” \([\text{sahoe t'ija gukka}]\) promoting human and
social capital (Lim 2006; Yang 2007). For example, the Social Impact Bond (SIB), in which the government or a
commissioned private organization raises investment and repays to investors based on the policy’s return, is being
actively experimented with in South Korea. For the basic notion and operation principles of SIB, see The Young

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year plan and various business analysis tools that explained their current and future financial and organizational circumstances. They even used such terms as “Creating Shared Value (CSV),” coined by the Harvard Business School Professor, Michael Porter, to describe their social mission. Although no one in the cooperative seemed to have read the article nor understood the exact meaning of the term, Sun-Bok joked with me that she had seen every other organization use the same term and she thought it would give their application a “professional impression.” By practicing projective ethicality, this organization seemed to have become accustomed to rendering themselves “investable subjects.”

Closedown

Despite much effort, Fortune Care’s strategies turned out to be insufficient to attract the major investment and survive in the market. Although the organization excavated potential beneficiaries and helped them to apply for care vouchers, many of the elders failed to receive the benefit, because the government conservatively selected the beneficiaries as part of its austerity policy. As a result, the number of Fortune Care’s patients never exceeded five (it is usually considered that at least 20-30 customers are needed for an elderly care organization to stay in the black). The cooperative’s increasing debt exacerbated the economic situation of its members; in particular, Ki-Sung and Woo-Sun, who were themselves social welfare beneficiaries, suffered the most. Fortune Care’s hope—which was to be certified as a “community enterprise” by the

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56 The notion of “Creating Shared Value (CSV)” was introduced and has become famous by Porter’s article in *The Harvard Business Review* (Porter 2011). In the article, Porter argues a corporation’ productivity and competitiveness are deeply and mutually related to the development of the broader communities around it. He urges companies to go beyond the practices of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and more directly engage with the communities in the process of value production. His argument and the notion of CSV have been accepted as a golden rule among South Korea’s social economy activists and social entrepreneurs. I hope that further research is conducted to trace the circulation of such “imported” knowledge in South Korea’s social economy sector (cf. Collier 2011).
government—was also crumbled, when they managed to advance to the final round but failed to be selected.57 According to Ji-Young who attended the selection process, the committee members again were satisfied with Fortune Care’s moral commitment and community adaptability, yet concerned that the cooperative would produce very little “social impact” in the community because of their small number of customers. In a word, the selection committee was not confident that their “investment” would produce enough “return.”

In the end, Fortune Care was officially closed down in April of 2015, exactly one year after its establishment. This case is not exceptional at all. Since its legalization in 2012, cooperatives have mushroomed across South Korea with active promotion by the state and local governments: more than 6,235 cooperatives have been newly established in only 2 years (as of 2016, the number reached to 10,637); it is reported, however, that more than half of these have ceased their activities.58 Fortune Care was just one of those unfortunate. Still, the results were dire to the individual members of Fortune Care. They all were trapped into an incurred debt cycle while Woo-Sun and Ki-Sung’s marriage began to be threatened by this economic hardship.

When I revisited my field again in the summer of 2016, Woo-Sun was working at a nursing home and Ki-Sung was participating in the Seoungbuk district government’s short-term Public Work Program, while Sun-Bok had returned to being a regular volunteer and full-time housewife. They all still wandered around the social care market which might be the only available labor market niche for undereducated and underskilled workers like them. When I met with Ki-Sung, who had begun to live alone at that time, I asked him why he thought in retrospect

57 Another local cooperative, Happy Seongbuk was selected as a community enterprise and managed to turn red into black, whose case I will deal with in the next chapter.

Fortune Care had failed. In fact, I anticipated that he would express feelings of betrayal by the government and its consultants: at the very least, their promises of generous support had turned out to be an empty pledge. Instead, I received a rather surprising answer: Ki-Sung attributed Fortune Care’s failure to their lack of decent computer skills. He observed that it not only held them back in the efficient operation of the organization but also made it hard to design a fancy, professional-looking proposal or presentation document and thus it let them down in the competition with other organizations. Consequentially, he was now learning for himself how to use computer software such as Photoshop while doing public work. His statement might be an apologetic testimony that he finally, albeit late, becomes a “pro,” who is equipped with competent capabilities and continues to increase his/her own employability or investability. Throughout the government’s education, consulting, and selection processes, these former volunteers had been urged to take advantage of their human and social capital, to get accustomed to projective ethical practices, and to transform themselves into “professionals with authenticity.” In this discursive scheme, even their failure is attributed to their “underperformance” in translating their good-will into a profitable business plan and in producing sufficient social impact. Just as with Sun-Bok’s quip about Yuna’s Street, the ending could not be a happy one.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to address two interconnected questions: first, how can we understand and contextualize the rapid de-familiarization and expansion of social care in “neoliberal” South Korea? Second, what does this transformation inform us about the rise of ethical citizenship and
its inclusive and exclusive dynamics? These questions seem to resonate with Wendy Brown’s inquiry in her recent work *Undoing the Demos* (2015). Influenced by Michel Feher, she argues that modern *homo economicus* as a subject of exchange is now replaced with a new economic figure: a “bit of human capital tasked… with enhancing its (monetary and nonmonetary) portfolio value” (10). With this observation, she raises an interesting and significant question: what is then the “gender” of such human capital? In other words, if a modern liberal “economic man” was assumed to be a male in the market sustained by women’s “shadow work” in the private sphere (Illich 1981), how does the truth-regime of human capital—that blurs the boundary of public/private and turns every aspect of life into manageable assets—transform and reposition the gendered, shadowy nature of care work? Brown suggests two possibilities: “Either women align their own conduct with this truth, becoming *homo economicus*, in which case the world becomes uninhabitable, or women’s activities and bearing as *femina domestica* remain the unavowed glue for a world…in which case women occupy their old place as unacknowledged props and supplements to masculinist liberal subjects” (2015: 104-5). South Korea’s “marketized socialization” of care seems to proclaim that these two possibilities are both viable and not mutually exclusive. As women’s care work in the private realm has been drawn into the social service market with the pretext of “emancipation,” the mostly female care workers have been incorporated as precarious and marginal labor forces into a sort of “governmentally embedded market”—that is carefully organized by the government as a space for fierce competition and low wage labor. At the same time, they are required to follow the norms of human capital that turns their caring attitudes and moral aspirations into manageable assets so that they can survive the competition and attract more investment. In this way, women and their care work could be integrated as “unacknowledged props and supplements” into the masculinist human capital
Such dynamics of inclusion and subordination are also applied to the workings of ethical citizenship. Although ethical citizenship appears to be more inclusive and embracing—in comparison with developmental citizenship that brutally disenfranchises the subjects without “productive” economic capabilities, the new form of citizenship is still based on setting the boundaries of recognition as well as on privileging some forms of ethical practices over others. What needs further attention is thus the question of what kind of ethical practices are encouraged and stipulated as conditions of the inclusion. If citizenship, as I noted above, involves the embodiment of appropriate moral, social norms for being a citizen, what I call “projective ethicality” serves as the very basis of the enfranchisement for ethical citizenship. Moral citizens, who are “considered to be, at root, ethical creatures” (Rose 2000: 1398), are, nevertheless, required to convert their inherent, ordinary ethics into socially acknowledged projective forms to attract investment and survive in the care market; conversely speaking, in the process of competing in the market, their ethical practices come to be organized mainly in the form of “projects” that can be planned, performed, and measured to increase their investability. In this respect, understanding the expansion of care and the production of ethical citizens as the antidote to unbridled market rationality—the binary often found in the scholarly works about care as well as Ji-Young’s standard narrative in the workshop—seems to be misleading. What this simplistic narrative is missing is that the nature and characteristics of the “ethical” themselves in ethical citizenship have changed, as care ethics and market rationality become intermingled and overlapped. In this chapter, I have strived to trace such conversion of ethicality through the case

59 In this sense, as Nancy Fraser aptly points out, it is a mistake to understand the entrepreneurial spirit of neoliberalism capitalism simply as “a masculinist romance of the free, unencumbered, self-fashioning individual” (2009: 110). Rather, it is necessary to explore the articulation and mutual transformation of care and entrepreneurial spirit in more detail.
of Fortune Care.

I would like to close the discussion by briefly discussing the relations that the newly emerging ethical citizenship has with other forms of citizenship such as social citizenship and developmental citizenship. These heterogeneous forms of citizenship—which consist of different ideal subjects, social norms, and social imaginaries—are neither mutually exclusive nor completely replaceable with each other. As seen in the government’s attempts to find a “new engine of economic growth” in the social care sector and as witnessed in social economy activists’ hope to advance “society’s self-defense” based on citizens’ ethical practices, they rather co-exist in combined or competitive forms. As we have already discussed, ethical citizenship and projective ethicality are contingent on the translation of social problems in the language of ethics and the discovery of the solutions less in material and structural transformations than in individual ethical and caring practices. In this sense, it stands in parallel with the languages of social activism and of social citizenship that respectively appeal to universal social rights and to the state’s active intervention (Muehlebach 2012; Rose 2000). On the other hand, ethical citizenship seems to share a peculiar affinity with developmental citizenship that has long superseded social citizenship in South Korea. Despite their different languages, both commonly work to empower and mobilize subjects to contribute to either national economic industrialization or to managing the reproduction crisis of the neoliberal human capital regime; furthermore, market rationality and government control, either explicitly or implicitly, preside over the processes of measuring the contributions and constraining the membership. If there is a major difference, however, it can be found in the transformation of market rationality by which to measure citizens’ contributions: the shift from the maximization of individual contribution to national economic growth to the production and enhancement of
investable human and social capital.

Of course, this should not be understood to mean that ethical citizenship is simply a mutated prolongation of developmental citizenship (cf. Chang 2007; 2012). Above all, in contrast to developmental citizenship that finds its foundation in the social and economic nexus of work-family, ethical citizenship emerges on the brink of the shared crisis of work and family. As represented in *Yuna’s Street*, the populations that would have been marginalized or excluded from developmental citizenship—such as unskilled housewives, unemployed youth, vagabond day laborers, and criminals—are summoned up and interpelled as active moral citizens who can contribute to the caring community in the project of ethical citizenship, although it is also true that they would be still bestowed subordinate positions. At the same time, when ethical citizenship incorporates these marginal populations within the labor market, it not only alters the qualitative nature of ethical practices and care work—which I have termed “projective ethicality,” but the understandings of work and the identities of the laborers are also modified in the names of “affective labor” and “social innovator.” In the next chapter, I will turn to these modifications.
CHAPTER 4

THE AFFECTIVE LIFE OF POST-DEVELOPMENT:
YOUTH, PRECARITY, AND AFFECTIVE LABOR

“In the end, it is always society that pays itself with the counterfeit money of its dreams.”
– Marcel Mauss (1950: 119)

“We cannot give them a good salary. Instead, we give them a dream, a vision, and love.”
– Park Won-Soon¹

BLUE SPRING (YOUTH)

It was on a cold winter day of 2014 at the office of a local cooperative called Happy Seongbuk. There, Jong-Min, a co-founder of the organization, rather abruptly confessed to me his feelings of “being screwed” that have always loomed over him: “It’s not just me. Our generation has got this sense of hopelessness and entrapment. Whatever we do, it will turn out to be a failure and has no bright future, just like this country. I made this cooperative, but my aim isn’t success but a better defeat or simply survival.” Since Jong-Min, who had just turned twenty-seven, had been well-known for his easygoing, humorous personality among local social economy activists, I could not help but be wide-eyed at his negative response and ask him why he thought his and his generation’s future was so dark and gloomy. He replied as follows:

Objectively speaking, today’s society might be more affluent than ever. But I think that in the past people could build a plan for an ordinary life [p'yŏngbŏm-han sam, 평범한 삶], when to buy a home, get married, and have a baby. For our generation, it’s simply impossible to think out our future because having a stable job is just out of reach for most of us. So we feel like we’re doomed from the starting line. We are the most educated generation ever and still making a lot of effort, but society does not reciprocate our efforts any more. It’s like, (pause) if you were to continue running fast on a treadmill while it slows down and stops, you would lose control and eventually fall off the treadmill, right? I think that’s our generation’s situation. That kind of sense of unease and instability keeps haunting me and us. [emphasis added]

Jong-Min used to describe himself as “destined to be a social economy activist.” Having grown up with parents who were devoted to socialist movements in the 1980s, he attended an alternative secondary school instead of “swirling into” South Korea’s notoriously competitive education system. In studying sociology at a local progressive university, Jong-Min started to participate in student activism, but soon quit the university because he felt that he “has already learned everything he could learn in university.” After spending two years as an unemployed “deadbeat” [ing-yeo], he began to work as a “social innovation youth activist” [sahoe-hyŏkshin ch'ŏngnyŏn hwaldong-ga] (whose role I will explain later in detail) and established the “youth cooperative” called Happy Seongbuk in 2013 with his fellow social innovation activists. Along with his telling metaphor of running on a treadmill, Jong-Min was quick to add: “I’ve talked

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2 This statement can be supported by various statistics. For example, in 2014 approximately 80% of secondary school graduates attended university in South Korea, which is an exceptionally high rate in comparison with approximately 40% in Europe, 50% in Japan, and 65% in the United States. By contrast, the real youth unemployment rate exceeded 30% in 2014, which is more than twice the general unemployment rate; “Youth Getting Trapped in Poverty” [청년, 빈곤의 미로에 갇히다], Hankerye 21 (Aug. 24, 2015).

3 “Ing-yeo” literally means “surplus” or “excess” in Korean. The word, which contains the implications of “valueless” and “disposable,” has become commonly used by unemployed youth to self-deprecatingly refer to themselves. The commonly used word “ing-yeo” is reminiscent of Zygmunt Bauman’s provocative argument that in neoliberal society the unemployed become the surplus and the disposable, that is, “wasted lives.” Bauman argues that, whereas unemployment was considered an exceptional and temporal status in the past social welfare state, it has become a permanent condition and has begun to be considered “disposable surplus” that cannot be incorporated into the system anymore (Bauman 2004: Ch. 2). For the historical context and cultural politics surrounding the subjectivity of “ing-yeo,” see Yang (2015).
about this feeling with my friends at Happy Seongbuk and they all agreed. Maybe it’s our generation’s common despair, the feeling of futurelessness."

Jong-Min might be overgeneralizing his personal feelings to extend to his whole generation by interchangeably using “me” and “us.” Nonetheless, his analogy of a treadmill runner appears to palpably encapsulate the pervasive anxiety, hopelessness, and precarity among contemporary South Korean youth. After the unprecedented rapid economic growth and “compressed modernization” led by the “developmental state” during the second half of the 20th century (Chang 2008; Chang 2010; Woo-Cummings 1999), South Korea, like many other “developed” capitalist countries, recently has begun to suffer from low economic growth and a high unemployment rate. As explicated in Chapter 1, such an “end of development” has caused not only political and economic distress but also individual, subjective, and even affective troubles. As implied by Jong-min’s remarks, developmentalism as a project of government has derived its cogency and ideological-affective power from providing the mobilized mass with a specific vision of the good ordinary life and its particular “temporality.” Under developmentalism, an individual’s thriving and national development has been imaginarily aligned and harmonized through the temporality of a linear, progressive future in which individual aspirations for the good life could be achievable through continuing national development (Chang 2014; Hage 2003; Nam 2009; Rudnyckyj 2010). Based on the projection of a continuous sense of time or what can be called a “developmentalist chronotope”—a

4 During my fieldwork, I happened to encounter this metaphor of a treadmill runner twice more: in a public lecture by Je Hyun-Ju, a cooperative activist as well as the bestseller writer of A Guide for Nomads Who Work in the Declining World (2014), and in an interview with a young basic income activist. Although I could not check from where the metaphor originated, the experiences seem to testify to the persuasive appeal of this lucid analogy.

5 As Sam Binkley points out, disciplinary power and biopower have commonly constituted “time” as their governmental objective. If discipline aims to organize everyday use of time, biopower concerns people’s life course such as birth, marriage, and death. According to Binkley, “temporality, in this sense, is an irreducible function of government” (2014: 58).
modification of Muelebach’s term “Fordist-Keynesian welfarist chronotope” (2012: 149)—
individual life cycles, which mainly consist of the promise of a secure job, a patriarchal middle-
class family, and social recognition via work and family, have been organized and promised to
the masses so that they could move along the time-line on the condition that the national
economy continues to grow and advance.6 It is true that the promise has been fulfilled only for a
limited number of people, as seen in the previous chapter.7 No matter that the hopeful dream was
actually achievable or not, however, the particular, homogenous notion about “ordinary life” or
even “good life” based on labor has been imagined, outlined, and promoted under
developmentalism (cf. Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2007).8

In this sense, the imagery of a collapsed treadmill runner reflects the troubling anxiety
and distress that young individuals may feel when such developmental temporality has been
fragmented and their projected “good ordinary life” has become increasingly unimaginable. The
economic, social, and institutional basis of the “developmentalist chronotope” has been eroded in
South Korea since the 1997 Asian financial crisis. First of all, as noted in Chapter 1, with the
capital-friendly labor laws passed in 1998 that legalize the layoff system and the massive use of

6 It should be noted that the old “developmental dream” or “developmental chronotope” is highly gendered (Bae
2015; cf. Muehlebach 2012). Given that the life cycle has been organized and imagined based on the male bread-
winner model (Nam 2009), it is not surprising that the crisis of developmentalism has often been represented and
understood as “the crisis of masculinity” or “the collapse of (patriarchal) family” in South Korea (Chang 1999;
Kim 2004; Song 2009). The differential subject positions along gender lead to different reactions to the crisis of
developmental model of “ordinary life”: while male subjects tend to accept it as the crisis of masculinity and
develop nostalgia for the old way of life, women’s position entails ambivalent reactions (Kim 2014). This
significant issue, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a noteworthy attempt to introduce a discussion
of gender difference into youth discourse in South Korea, see Bae (2015).

7 In this sense, the promise of “the good ordinary life” was a myth and remains in the present, as what Žižek (2000)
calls a “melancholic” object that is considered something “lost” without ever having it (cf. Brown 2003;
Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012). Despite of or because of it, the myth still has effectual power on the present.

8 In tracing the trajectory of the notions of happiness and “good life,” Sara Ahmed points out the conventional
relationship between a good life and temporality: “for a life to count as a good life, it must take on the direction
promised as a social good, which means imagining one’s futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life
course” (2010: 71).
irregular labor, the ratios of unemployment and temporary workers have soared. Furthermore, the problem of weak domestic spending caused by the rise of unemployment and low-paid jobs has been addressed through the deregulation of consumer credit and a boost in the real estate market (Jang 2011). As the exponential upsurge of housing prices and the rise of living costs have far surpassed stagnant wages, South Korea has moved quickly from a nation of high savers to a country with one of the highest ratios of household debt to disposable income. The 2008 global financial crisis and the following economic downturn have exacerbated these economic situations. Local youth have become the immediate casualty of the ongoing recession. Since they must face this shrinking and precarious labor market, the old dream of a stable job, a steady income, and an affordable house has more and more turned out to be an elusive, impractical fantasy. Conversely, the further that hope has slipped from their hands, the more the youth have become exposed to the pressure and imperative of self-development and market competition.

Although young individuals’ effort and struggle to achieve “the myth of the good ordinary life” are continuously and vigorously undertaken in such an increasingly competitive environment, the high-unemployment and low economic growth society seems to have stopped providing a secure ground upon which individuals’ dreams can be drawn (Berlant 2007). While youth are still

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9 With the crisis the share of irregular workers soared up from 41% in 1997 to 56.6% in 2002 and still remains more than 50% in 2011. The increase in the unemployment rate was more dramatic: from 3.1% (1997) to 10.8% (2000) and still over 10% (2011). For more on the effects on the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis to South Korea’s labor market, see Lee (2011) and Shin (2013).

10 Before the 1997 crisis, South Korea’s rate of saving to GDP was more than 24%, the highest among OECD countries from 1987 to 1999. Since 1997, however, the household debt has rapidly increased in South Korea: the total amount of household debt rose from 184 trillion won (55.6% of GDP) in 1998 to 439 trillion won in 2002 to 1000 trillion won (90.5% of GDP) in 2012. While its saving rate has plummeted from 23.2% (1998) to 2.3% (2007), its ratio of debt to disposable income has soared up to 157.6% (2011), which is higher than that of other countries suffering from the same problem like the U.S. (124.4%), Spain (127.8%), and Italy (65.1%).

11 South Korea’s real unemployment rate of youth has not dropped below 25% since 2008. Furthermore, the quality of employment has also deteriorated as seen in the fact that the ratio of temporary workers among the newly employed youth hit 64% in 2015 (The Korea Labor Institute, “The Report for the Recent Trends in the Temporary Labor Market” [최근 비정규직 노동시장의 변화], 2016. 1.).
running fast or faster than ever, the socioeconomic conditions that reciprocate their hope have been stagnating and slowing down. The time of the developmental treadmill is now out of joint.

Jong-Min’s deep pessimism, however, stands in interesting contrast with the rosy, hopeful “missions” and activities of his cooperative, Happy Seongbuk. Being established by ten “social innovation youth activists” in their late-20s and early-30s, Happy Seongbuk defines its aims as “solving youth’s various problems with our own hands” and “giving hope and joy to the younger generation.” Dong-Su, another co-founder of Happy Seongbuk, once related to me why they established the cooperative: “Today’s youth are all exploited and discarded by the older generation. Our aim is to show that we can make the crisis of youth into an opportunity for

Figure 10. The contrast of Development Ratio between Generations\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} The graphic’s message is that those born in 1988 are experiencing 2.8% growth in 2013, while those who were born in 1958 underwent 12.2% growth ratio in 1983. This graphic was captured from the TV documentary, “There is no country for youth” [靑년을 위한 나라는 없다], that illuminates the economic predicaments of the younger generation. The documentary was featured in November, 2014 and ignited fierce debates on online bulletin boards about “which generation is the most pathetic generation?” Is it “the war generation” that experienced the Korean War or is it “the industrialization generation” who underwent military dictatorship and brutal labor regime? Or is it the contemporary youth who “are deprived of their hopes and dreams”?

\textsuperscript{13} Happy Seongbuk, \textit{The Declaration of Foundation} [창립 선언문], 2014.
youth by thriving both in business and in the local community.” For this purpose, Happy Seongbuk’s activities have focused on building affective and caring networks among precarious local youth: they have been operating a co-working innovation space for youth and have organized a series of art festivals for young poor artists in the district; they have initiated promotion campaigns for youth through the use of traditional markets to bridge generation gaps; and they also have participated in various community development projects including Bukjeong Maul (see Chapter 2). As Happy Seongbuk has successfully completed several community regeneration-related projects, Jong-min and other members have been invited frequently to give speeches to youth who are interested in social/community economy and innovation. At these invited talks, Jong-min would use language imbued with hope and aspiration: “Happy Seongbuk,” he often concluded his speeches, “is all about hoping and dreaming something together.”

Figure 11. The Seoul Metropolitan Government's Youth Policy Advertisement: “Seoul Finds Hope in Youth!”
This rather baffling coexistence of gloomy despair and rosy optimism found in Jong-Min and Happy Seongbuk seems to divulge a paradoxical affective-discursive space that surrounds not exclusively young activists in the social economy, but also contemporary Korean youth in general. For the last decade in South Korea, there has been an “explosion” of youth discourses and representations that have projected conflicting but mutually reinforcing attributes upon the younger generation. On the one hand, a number of discourses and media representations have framed contemporary youth as “helpless victims”: the “gloomy generation” who is suffering from the end of rapid growth and a prolonged economic downturn; the “880,000 won (approximately 800 dollars) generation,” which is cursed to live with only precarious part-time jobs and minimum wages; the “give-up generation,” which abandons the hope of courtship, marriage, childbirth, house-purchasing, and even the future because of economic hardship; and the “minus generation,” which will become the first generation to be poorer than their parents in South Korea’s history, to name a few. In a society that has experienced unprecedented rapid economic growth, the doomed fate of this cohort is accepted as a major betrayal of the “modernist ideal” that each generation is supposed to be better off than its predecessor (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 307).

On the other hand, youth have been actively summoned and regarded as a new subject who will turn the crisis of development and of work into an opportunity for finding a new vision of development. Ever since the President Park Geun-Hye suggested “creative economy” [*ch'angjo gyŏngje*, 創造經濟] as a core philosophy of state affairs, the administration has

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14 For a detailed explanation of the “880,000 won generation,” see the mega-bestseller of the same name (Park and Woo, 2007). The name was borrowed from the “1,000 Euro generation” that was then a prevalent neologism in Europe; for the “give-up generation” [*sampo Saeda*], see the entry of Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sampo_generation; and for the “minus generation,” see “Entrapped Youth” [*인생 저당 잡힌 ’챗바위 청춘’*] Segye Ilbo (Mar. 23, 2016).
repeatedly emphasized that youth be at the heart of the growth engine by embodying “creativity, flexibility, and innovative spirit.”\textsuperscript{15} As part of this initiative, the government has promised to establish the “Youth Hope Fund” and the “Youth Hope Academy” that will help to “empower” youth as “creative innovators and global leaders” and support “young entrepreneurs.”\textsuperscript{16} The Seoul Metropolitan Government has joined in to urge youth to found social ventures and community enterprises by providing subventions to young social entrepreneurs who want to run start-ups. Mayor Park Won-Soon, repeatedly has emphasized at every opportunity that “the prevailing youth unemployment can rather be a chance for them to make new innovations and creations. Youth and their innovative spirits are the only hope in our society.”\textsuperscript{17} Despite slight differences in policy emphasis, both the President and the Mayor frequently encourage youth to translate their current economic hardships into opportunities for innovation and thus foreground youth’s creative ideas, energy, and enthusiasm as solutions for stagnant economic growth and perennial underemployment. In the midst of the recession, youth thus have emerged as a source of energy, entrepreneurship, and inspiration “to identify new opportunities for value extraction” (Lukacs 2015: 388). As a consequence, for the last decade, South Korea’s youth have been represented and interpellated as a peculiar \textit{doublet} who are the immediate victims of “the end of development” but simultaneously active agents who can solve the economic slowdown and its accompanying social problems. An old Korean idiom that calls the youth “blue spring” [ch'ŏng-ch'un, 靑春] has seemed to acquire more vivid reality than ever.

\textsuperscript{15} “Park Geun Hye’s Inauguration Speech” \textit{Yonhap News English} (Feb. 25, 2013).


In this chapter, I take the experiences of the younger generation in the social economy as a window through which to illuminate the discursive-affective heterogeneity surrounding South Korea’s youth within the context of post-development and post-work society. As explicated in Chapter 1, South Korea’s social economy sector has served as a main laboratory for various governmental experiments that aim to tackle the crisis of the old development model and its laborism. In this chapter, I focus on how the government exploits the social care sector in order to turn the current crisis into a post-work “utopia” of affective labor for the purpose of promoting innovative entrepreneurship and expanding the productive network of affective labor. In this way, social innovation and affective labor emerge as a temporary fix to the disjointed “developmentalist chrotonope” by filling the gap between stagnant socioeconomic conditions and youth’s lingering desire for the “good ordinary life” (cf. Lukacs 2015; Zhang 2015).

Among various experiments, I examine in particular the “Social Innovation Youth Activist (SIYA)” program operated by Youth Hub and by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. In exploring SIYA’s experiences, I pay close attention to the following three points. First, in briefly sketching the history of youth subjectivity in South Korea, I show how the crisis of industrial development generates a new interpellation of youth as “social innovators.” The representative figure of youth as “energetic laborers” under the developmental state recently has been replaced with “innovative entrepreneurs” who address with their own hands various social problems, including unemployment. Second, I investigate the concrete activities of SIYA in terms of affective labor. In so doing, I show how underemployed youth are incorporated as a

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18 In using the notion of “post-work” society, I will not address the question of whether it is a real transformation or a repeated ideological hoax (cf. Beck 2000; Rifkin 1996; Weeks 2011). I will consider it as a reality only as far as the idea captures the imaginations of governing discourses and programs. In this sense, the idea has material power and should be examined as part of reality. Also, as in the ambivalent connotation of the prefix “post” in post-development, “post-work” cannot be simply equated with the end of work. It rather means both change and continuation of the past work regime.
marginal, cheap labor pool in the social care sector, and further shed light on the gap between the rhetoric and the harsh reality surrounding their cohort. Third, by illuminating their heterogeneous aspirations and the dividing lines among them, I examine how youth in the social economy manage the gap. To this point, I argue that the conflicting and even contradictory discourses on youth partially reflect this generation’s own ambiguous and ambivalent desires towards both the old laborism and the new human capital regime.

Throughout this chapter, I attempt to address how the interpellation of the ideal subject of “social innovation activist” becomes felicitous, by focusing on the dimension of affects working in the human capital regime. This is not only because contemporary capitalism intervenes in the realm of affect for its accumulation strategy (Clough 2008); it is also because the human capital regime, as noted in Prologue, relies on targeting and refiguring the affective and emotional dimensions of subjectivity (Anderson 2015; Feher 2009; Mcdonough 2015). As Lawrence Grossberg points out, ideological effects are yielded through “the affective investments in particular significations” (2010: 194). This chapter thus purports to show how such affective investments in the new ideal subjectivity of youth are produced and shared.

POST-DEVELOPMENT YOUTH AS “SOCIAL INNOVATORS” 19

Considering the longstanding relation of youth subjects and national development in Korea’s contemporary history, it would not be surprising that the end of rapid economic growth has led directly to the current representational crisis of youth subjectivity. Since having emerged as the

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19 Ryu (2014)’s comprehensive analysis of the contemporary trajectory of “youth discourse” helped to formulate this section.
leading agent of national enlightenment and modernization projects in the early 20th century (Lee 2012), youth, especially male youth, have continued to be represented as a group of avant-garde that will complete the national development (Choi 2011). In particular, during the developmentalist period between the 1960s and the 1980s, the younger generation was described as shouldering the national duties of economic growth and political democratization. While the developmental, authoritarian state idealized male youth with physical strength as “labor-machines” and the primary agents of industrialization (Choi 2004), the oppositional and anti-dictatorship groups often interpellated male youth as “militants” who would accomplish democratization or socialist revolution to rescue the “motherland” from the military junta’s oppression (Kim 2004). In both cases, (male) youth were undoubtedly represented as the subjects of national developments, whether of economic growth or political democratization.20

The democratization of South Korea throughout the 1990s and the economic downturn since the late 1990s thus sparked a crisis and a transformation in the representation of youth: youth began not to be considered anymore as the key group for national development. A short speech made by Lee Eun-Ae, the head of the Seoul Support Center for Social Economy, at a SIYA training session that I attended in 2013 seems to summarize youth’s altered, precarious status in the recent discourses. In her welcoming speech, Lee asked the young trainees, “What are your dreams?” Without waiting for the answer, she continued:

I think your generation is blessed but also cursed. My generation devoted our youth to democratization, and prior generations had achieved the modernization and industrialization of this country. These are the stories of the generations. What is your generation’s story? What is your generation’s dream? It is sad and unfortunate that the younger generation has no story and no cause to devote themselves to.

20 For a more detailed history of youth discourse in modern and contemporary Korea, see Lee (2012).
In counterpoint to former generations who had achieved such historical feats as the modernization, industrialization, and democratization of South Korea, contemporary Korean youth are represented instead as doubly-failed subjects. As seen above, they are not only “problematized” as the victims of the end of rapid economic growth but also represented as a “conformist, conservative, and apolitical” group in sharp contrast with politically and culturally progressive generations who attended university in the 1980s and 1990s (Cho 2015). The younger generation often has been the target of the accusation that they concentrate solely on self-help and self-improvement without socio-political consciousness.21 That is to say, in the post-industrialized and post-democratic South Korea, youth increasingly have lost their former political and economical leading roles and rather have become positioned as “problematic subjects.” For example, the various abovementioned buzzwords indicate that the now failed and despondent young generation is considered as a “social problem” and “social burden” (Choi 2011).

As pointed out by Ryu (2014), however, two new tendencies should be noted in the recent youth discourse to turn the crisis into an opportunity and thereby maintain the agency of youth subjects. First is what could be called “the social turn” of youth discourse. In the abovementioned speech, Lee actually concluded: “Society can be your generation’s territory. We now have developed economy and democratized politics. But we have a very weak society and social solidarity… I hope that building a society will be your generation’s story.” Much like this conclusion, since the early 2010s a number of youth discourses have suggested “society” or “the social” as an alternative field or territory for youth. For example, a book titled We Have a New

21 For example, younger generation’s low voter turnout has been (rather groundlessly) blamed as the main culprit of the births of the conservative governments in the 2007 and 2012 presidential elections (Ryu 2014).
Territory! (Han and Song 2014) that consists of interviews with various “social innovators” suggest social business and the sharing economy as new territories for youth. By providing an exemplary definition of the new territory of the social—“In pursing the new territory, we reject both extremes of a selfish lifestyle that pursues only self-interests and the sublime life that makes self-sacrifice for others” (Han and Song 2014: 5), the book urges the youth to pursue self-development and social responsibility together and become pioneers of the new territory. In addition, when the Seoul Metropolitan Government announced a plan for promoting 10,000 creative youth start-ups in 2013, they also specified “the sector of social economy” as the primary domain for youth innovators (Ryu 2014: 44). In a word, for the doubly-failed subjects in politics and economy, “society” is now given as a new territory to pioneer.

Furthermore, as development is not imagined in relation to labor anymore, youth begin to be interpellated not as an industrious “labor-machine” but rather as post-work subjects of innovation, care, and social responsibility. Although the governmental efforts that put forward youth’s creativity and entrepreneurial spirit as “a new source of neoliberal value production” has a long prehistory in South Korea that can be traced back to the wake of the 1997 financial crisis (Song 2009: Ch. 4), the government now focuses on rendering youth as subjects who tackle their own unemployment problems by establishing start-ups and becoming entrepreneurs. In 2010, the government admitted that government-driven job creation has a limit in the “post-work society”; instead, they began the project of “Youth Creating My Own Job” that aimed to promote one-person start-ups and youth social enterprises for placing youth themselves at the center of the problem-solving. Here again, the area of the social service market and care sector was suggested as a new territory in which youth entrepreneurs confidently could expect profits (refer to Chapters 2 and 3).
The Social Innovation Youth Activist program initiated in 2013 by Youth Hub and by the Seoul Metropolitan Government has faithfully reflected these new tendencies. The program aims to provide unemployed Seoul youth between the ages of 20 and 39 with one-year internships in “social economy organizations,” including “social enterprises, non-profit organizations, co-ops, and community enterprises.”22 Based on the organizations’ demands of internship, Youth Hub receives applications, hires, and sends SIYAs off to the organizations; then the wages during the internship period are paid by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Meanwhile, Youth Hub also provides workshops and seminars for SIYAs about the social economy, entrepreneurship, and general humanities. In an interview, the program manager of Youth Hub stated that “everybody can luck out” with the program: social economy organizations can train and hire young employees without financial burden; the municipal government can lower the youth unemployment rate with a minimal budget; and youth may be able to find employment or business opportunities in the social economy sector. The Happy Seongbuk Cooperative, which was established by a group of SIYAs after completing their one-year internship, serves as a good example.

Besides the interesting irony that the government actively educates and trains young “activists,” the SIYA program deserves special attention in several respects. Above all, the program has been understood to mark a “social turn” in South Korea’s youth unemployment policy from the former government’s “neoliberal” internship program model. In contrast to the previous program that had focused on supplying a cheap and young labor force to big corporations and governmental organizations, it is argued that the SIYA internship aims to

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22 Youth Hub, “2014 Youth Hub Annual Report,” 2015, p. 8. The period of the internship has now been increased to up to two years.
provide “socially meaningful and valuable” experiences for youth.23 Furthermore, as detailed below, the interpellation of the program participants as “social innovation activists” seems to epitomize the ideal subjectivity sought by what I call “neosocial government”: through various activities and training programs, the participants are expected to embody various virtues such as creativity, innovation, and social responsibility. Last, the program itself apparently serves as a microcosm of a contradiction surrounding South Korean youth: although the program offers the participants only a minimum hourly wage and precarious short-term internships, it nonetheless trains and requires the participants not only to accept economic precarity as an opportunity for self-development and dream-chasing but also to become “social innovators” who actively solve various social problems. This gaping chasm provides an effective entrance through which to look into the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding youth in contemporary South Korea.

THE MOBILIZATION OF HWALDONG AS AFFECTIVE LABOR

What are the SIYAs expected to do? The SIYA promotion booklet describes the purposes of the program as follows: “securing one’s place in society not through competition but through job experiences” and “restoring self-esteem and overcoming the fear of business.” To understand this rather obscure explanation, it is necessary to explore the meanings of “activity” [hwaldong] in the term “social innovation youth activist.” Hwaldong (activism or activity) and hwaldong-ga (activist) have carried particular connotations in the history of South Korea’s social movements. Generally speaking, “activism/movement” can be translated into Korean in two ways: undong

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運動] and hwaldong [活動]. In the 1980s and the early 1990s when South Korea’s democratization and labor movements were at their zenith, undong and undong-ga were widely used to label radical political activism and activists. In contrast, hwaldong and hwaldong-ga came to be used frequently, as local or civil society movements started to challenge the hegemony of the traditional (socialist) labor activism after democratization in the mid-1990s (Cho 2005; Song 2012). A social economy activist once related to me the difference between the two terms as follows: “Although the distinction is not always clear-cut, undong has undertones of the old left, oppositional movements against the state, capitalism, or American imperialism. By contrast, hwaldong implies constructive movements for building an alternative model and vision.”

In conversations with other social economy activists, the validity of this distinction has been confirmed repeatedly, and I found that many social economy activists started to identify themselves as hwaldong-ga instead of undong-ga since the mid-1990s. The term undong is now rarely used to describe their activities.

It seems apparent that the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Youth Hub considered the established usage of the term when they adopted the use of hwaldong instead of undong to describe their internship program. Youth Hub’s definition of the spirit of SIYA that “youth’s problems have to be solved with their own hands” is consonant with the aforementioned connotation of hwaldong. Youth Hub, however, also has tried to provide a new conceptual topology for the notion of hwaldong in its relation to work [nodong, 勞動]. The attempt was well detected in the forum, “What do youth do in the social economy sector, work or activity?” held in March 2014. In this forum organized by Youth Hub, panelists from various social economy

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24 Interview with Song Jae-Min (Sep. 15, 2014).
25 This is reminiscent of Happy Seongbuk’s aforementioned slogan. For DIY (do it yourself) spirit as a new form of citizenship, see Ratoo and Boler (2014) and also Fortune Care’s case in Chapter 3.
organizations commonly agreed that hwaldong should be distinguished not only from a movement [undong] but also from work [nodong]. On the one hand, hwaldong is distinct from undong, in that undong has relied on activists’ long-term commitment and sublime sacrifice without economic rewards. On the other hand, hwaldong also should be separated from the notion of work [nodong]: whereas nodong primarily means an economic activity for subsistence, hwaldong is assumed to pursue “social” meanings. The director of Youth Hub who participated in the forum as a panelist emphasized: “Many youths do not simply regard their jobs as economic means to survive. They also hope that their jobs give them the meaning of life and social recognition. That is why we prefer to use the term of ‘job place’[il-jari] instead of ‘job’ [il]… Hwaldong includes the practices and experiences of finding your ‘place’ in society.”

In this sense, hwaldong emerges as a sort of aufhebung of work [nodong] and movement [undong]: it overcomes but preserves the meanings of work as an economic activity and of movement as a committed sacrifice. That is to say, hwaldong signifies a hybrid activity that pursues both financial compensations and social meanings simultaneously; it includes but goes beyond the logic of gift or sacrifice as well as economic calculation. The job-placement list in SIYA’s promotional booklet illustrates what kinds of works can be labeled as such hybrid, in-between activities: to name a few, “community promoters” who build a local community by operating diverse participatory programs for local residents; “space sharing curators” who seek

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26 As half-jokingly stated by a panel from a social enterprise, “You can distinguish hwaldong-ga and undong-ga on the basis of how much they earn. When you are doing undong, you would be paid below subsistence level, while by doing hwaldong you would be paid a little more than the minimum wage.”

27 Such hybridity of hwaldong is interestingly reminiscent of Michel Feher’s description of the human capital regime that we have already discussed. According to Feher (2009), in pre-neoliberal capitalism it was assumed that the private sphere such as family served as a domain of gift and care, while the public sphere including the market was dominated by the principles of interest and economic calculation. Feher argues that under the neoliberal human capital regime, the distinction between the private and the public becomes more and more obscure and thus the logic of gift and interest are mutually infiltrated. See also the discussion of “face” in Chapter 5.
to create a new model for public space with citizen participation and social sharing; “social IT
developers” who develop platforms for social enterprises; and “community culture planners”
who organize community festivals. The list goes on to include: “social housing managers,”
“social dining coordinators,” and “design thinkers for social space.”28 These descriptions of
various activities share common keywords such as: “the social,” “community,” and “network.”
In other words, what SIYAs are expected to do under the name of hwaldong centers around
building up affective communities and social networks.

Woo-Young’s case, which is presented as an exemplar in Youth Hub’s book “Ten Job
Place Stories,” is worth a closer look in that it shows the typical character of hwaldong.29 After
working as a global volunteer in Tanzania for three years, Woo-Young decided to apply for the
SIYA program in 2013, because he wanted to find “meaningful work in his own city as well.”
He and six other SIYAs were sent to a rental apartment complex for poor households in Seoul.
The old project complex of 4,000 residents had become the center of media attention in 2012
when eight residents committed suicides from May to August because of persistent poverty and
increasing debt. The municipal government and local social work agencies adopted various
suicide prevention measures; the deployment of SIYAs to the compound was one of them. Being
appointed as “apartment community promoters,” Woo-Young and other young activists started to
live in the apartment complex and organize such diverse resident participation programs as mural
painting, creating a community newspaper, urban farming, and knitting with elders in their
apartments. These programs were designed to “prevent suicides and alleviate distress” by

building “affectionate communities and networks” among the poverty-stricken residents. The SIYAs also held mourning ceremonies for the past suicides in the compound. Woo-Young describes his hwaldong as a SIYA for a year as follows:

If one asks, ‘What did you do as a SIYA?’ I don’t know how to answer…. We, who had been ‘deadbeats’ [ing-yeo] ourselves, simply spent time with the unemployed, welfare recipients, and elder residents, in eating, chatting, knitting, gardening, and simply playing together. Using the criteria of economic productivity, these might seem to be just useless. But I think what we did can be understood as an activity [hwaldong] to save lives and furthermore save the earth…. Our activities relied on a very different notion of productivity. [emphasis added]

Given our discussion of hwaldong so far, it becomes obvious that hwaldong is comparable in many aspects to what Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt call “affective labor” which “produces and manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion” (2004: 108). As a new hegemonic labor-form in post-Fordist capitalism, affective labor contributes to “the production of collective subjectivities, sociality, and society itself,” that is, “what is created in the networks of affective labor is a form-of-life” (Hardt 1999: 98). Such a definition is obviously consonant with Woo-Young’s experience and SIYA’s aim to “help youth to experience an alternative way of life through the opportunities of social construction and community activities.” Furthermore, it is said that affective labor based on a highly communicational and cooperative labor process disrupts the Habermasian division between instrumental and communicative action as well as blurs the Arendtian distinctions

30 Youth Hub, Ibid., p. 23. These programs involve a particular perspective on poverty-driven suicide that finds its causes not in socio-structural inequality and economic hardship but in the lack of human, affective relations. In these programs, “social” problems are re-written with affective, psychological terms. See also Chapter 2 and 3.
31 Youth Hub, Ibid., p. 28.
among labor, work, and action (Hardt 1999; Virno 2004; cf. Arendt 1958). This hybridity enables affective labor to function both as economic deeds and social or even political actions, just as hwaldong operates as a sublation of work and social movement. Last, Hardt and Negri argue that the global expansion of affective labor is a consequence of “the refusal of work” under the Fordist capitalism: the workers’ struggles to escape from alienated, meaningless labor and to secure their autonomy have produced an immanent plane of affective labor in which they become active, caring, and constituent subjects (Hardt and Negri 1994; 2000; Virno and Hardt 2006).\textsuperscript{33} Much the same can be said of hwaldong: it is said that hwaldong is an alternative territory for youth who do not comply with the past labor regime and pursue social meanings that cannot be achieved by work or nodong.

If hwaldong can be regarded as virtually identical with affective labor, the debate over the political potentialities of affective labor could be applied to hwaldong as well. In fact, Negri and Hardt go further to foreground the radical potentialities embedded in affective labor that create a spontaneous form of communism and set up “autonomous circuits of valorization” in opposition to capitalist valorization (Hardt 1999: 100). That is to say, affective labor produces the sociality and communality that cannot be measured by capitalist value-form; it rather challenges the old value-form and opens up the possibility for the new “communist” or “communitarian” politics. While not necessarily agreeing with the view that affective labor serves as a communist hotbed, a number of anthropological studies, especially those on

\textsuperscript{33} For this particular “autonomist” perspective that labor’s struggle is more primary than capital’s strategy, see Tronti (1979). Tronti argues: “we have to turn the problem on its head… the beginning is the class struggle of the working class. At the level of socially developed capital, capitalist development becomes subordinated to working class struggles; it follows behind them.” In this perspective, the upsurge of affective, immaterial labor is capital’s reaction to labor’s strategy of work refusal in the 1960s and 70s. See also Guattari and Negri (1990). Such simplistic dichotomy between “industrial” and “immaterial/affective” labor, however, has been criticized and challenged by various scholars. For a trenchant criticism that the binary tacitly gives grounds for the global hierarchies of labor, see Yanagisako (2012).
contemporary East Asian youth, have focused on the possibility of affective labor as a remedy to regional youth who are suffering from precarious and competitive lives under neoliberalism. For example, in illuminating such current Japanese youth-initiated social movements as the *freeta* union and precariat movement, Anne Allison (2009, 2012) illustrates affective labor’s active role in reconstructing broken sociality and suggests the notion of “affective activism” that aims to alleviate the “material/psychic/social instability of life for young Japanese” (2009: 92). In a similar vein, Cho HaeJoang (2015), a South Korean anthropologist as well as a member of the advisory board of Youth Hub, maintains that immaterial, affective labor serves as a locus where Korean youth’s precarity and anxiety not only can be reduced but also transformed into positive creativity. Cho Mun-Young (2014) also illuminates Chinese social workers’ attempts to offer a palliative to youth’s “uprootedness and loneliness” through organizing mutual care and affective labor. In these discussions, affective labor is commonly understood as providing “the space of social recognition” for underemployed youths who seek to find an alternative way of life and want to stay away from intensified neoliberal competitions (Lee and Myung 2016; Ryu 2014; Zhang 2015). That is to say, as the narrative of the “old” good ordinary life becomes increasingly improbable for the region’s underemployed youth, affective labor or *hwaldong* has emerged as a new channel that provides dignified works and social meanings.34

Although aforementioned scholars have attended to the emerging possibility that an Arendtian “action” may intermingle with work/labor and thus become affective labor,35 I want to

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34 Such a function of affective labor is not limited to the context of East Asia or to the younger generation. In exploring voluntary affective labor among retired pensioners in Italy, Muehlebach points out that “affect and affective labor are a currency through which they acquired some belonging and social utility” (2012: 74). Muehlebach maintains that, as the Fordist-social welfare system that had provided social recognition based on labor collapsed, voluntarism and unwaged labor have served for marginal labor population including unemployed youth, early retirees, and pensioners as an alternative, but partial and vulnerable path to social recognition.

35 In distinguishing labor, work, and action, Arendt argues that action is an anti-foundational act of freedom that is premised on the co-appearance of fellow citizens. While work and labor serve for their own ends, action is a self-referential act with no particular end but itself (1958: 207). In this sense, action creates an autonomous and
shed light here on the other side of reality that surround affective labor or hwaldong by focusing on how marginal populations (in this case, underemployed youth) are mobilized as a cheap affective labor force in the process of the governmental restructuring of social care that was discussed in Chapter 3. It may seem obvious that the concept of hwaldong includes the refusal of meaningless and alienated labor under industrial developmentalism as well as the existential pursuit of a valuable and meaningful work-life in the post-development and neoliberal system. Hwaldong and its supposed creation of affective networks, however, often contribute to incorporating youth into a marginalized labor market and plugging the gap between their dispirited precarious realities and their desire for social values and responsibilities.

In fact, SIYAs find themselves in the midst of very poor labor conditions. In 2013, the SIYA program paid its participants only 4,860 won (approximately $4) per hour, the minimum hourly wage. Their working hours could not exceed 6 hours per day and 5 days per week because of the budget limit. As a result, the SIYAs were supposed to receive approximately 600,000 won ($500) per month, which barely exceeds the legal minimum cost of living (572,168 won in 2013) and is less than half of the average monthly cost of living per person in Seoul (1,350,000 won in 2014). The job instability is also a significant issue. The contract terms of SIYA cannot be longer than eleven months so as a result the municipal government effectively exploits the legal loophole that severance pay is required by law for employment longer than 12 months. In 2013, only 48% of SIYAs succeeded in extending their contract with social economy organizations

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immanent public sphere where “people gather and act in concert” (244). If autonomists, including Hardt and Negri, find the political feature of Arendtian action in affective labor that is a hybrid of action, work, and labor, its latter features of co-existence and public-ness are taken by the aforementioned anthropologists as a remedial effect of affective labor to neoliberal fragmentation. I would rather like to argue that the Arendtian notion of action becomes increasingly ineffectual as it intermingles with work and labor in a form of affective labor.

where they worked.\textsuperscript{37} Evidently, such precarious conditions are not limited to SIYAs but are prevalent in the social economy sector as well. A number of studies on youth’s labor condition in the social economy frequently show that poor conditions, low wages, and high turnover rates are the norm rather than the exception in this sector: according to this research, the average wage in the non-profit and the third sector stayed at about 50\%-60\% compared with that of the profit sector; moreover, the employees in the social economy consider job security as their primary concern (Lee and Myung 2016).

Although Youth Hub and the Seoul Metropolitan Government have promised that they would increase the related budget to improve SIYA’s low wages and working conditions, the problem of labor circumstances in the social economy should be understood within a wider context that has redefined the meaning of work in the post-development and post-work society. For example, one of the representative social economy institutes, Hope Maker, was caught up in a controversy in 2011 because of its “payless internship program.” The institute had hired long-term interns who were supposed to work eight hours a day without payment. When some of the interns divulged their poor working conditions on social media, Park Won-Soon, the then CEO of Hope Maker and the current Mayor of Seoul, responded to their accusations: “We cannot give them a good salary. Instead, we give them a dream, a vision, and love.”\textsuperscript{38} What I want to note here in the statement—which almost seems to be a twisted parody of Negri’s argument that affective labor is “beyond capitalist measurement”—is not that it is hypocritical but rather that his remark is consonant with a neoliberal project that aims to re-constitute work as a locus for self-realization and self-development (Bröckling 2016; Castel 1996; Muehlebach 2011; Seo

\textsuperscript{37} Youth Hub, “2014 Youth Hub Annual Report,” p. 23.

2011). In contrast to the old conception that views work and its drudgery as an economic means to pursue an ordinary good life and social citizenship, neoliberal laboring subjects are strongly encouraged to view their works as a key part of improving themselves and to seek “pleasure in work” (Donzelot 1991).

As seen above, the SIYA program and its hwaldong as affective labor seem to epitomize such a transformation: in offering jobs to unemployed youth or deadbeats, the program argues that hwaldong should be neither a more committed, political movement [undong] nor more economic, self-interested work [nodong]. Instead, the semantics of hwaldong concentrates on giving the marginalized youth the opportunity of “improving themselves and restoring self-esteem” through socially meaningful work. In this sense, Park’s words indicate the point where the rhetoric of hwaldong is met and intermingled with what Jodi Dean (2009) calls a “neoliberal fantasy,” in which everyone becomes an innovative entrepreneur. Dean argues that in the neoliberal fantasy work becomes an aesthetic, self-promoting, and socially innovative activity to the point that laborers and the bourgeois are non-distinguishable and thus the exploitation itself cannot be represented. That is to say, work serves anymore neither as the foundation of social citizenship nor as a political site that reveals the contradiction of capitalism; it rather begins to function as a locus where human capitals improve their value and portfolio through various experiences.

As a result, such transformation in the notion of work contributes to the subjective acceptance of what Krinsky (2007) calls “free labor” in its ambivalent sense—the public work that is low-waged and precarious but often considered as free and meaningful.39 The semantic of hwaldong is often conducive to rendering the hyper-exploitative conditions invisible by re-

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39 In a similar vein, Song (2017) explores how young women’s emotional, service, and care labors are considered and appropriated as “free labor” in South Korean government-initiated projects.
writing work \textit{nodong} as projective activity \textit{hwaldong} that improve their future investability and also contribute to social good. As Garbriella Lukacs trenchantly criticizes in her exploration of Japanese young care workers’ experiences, affective labor and its rosy rhetoric thus serve as a stopgap to “tantalize young people with the possibility of self-growth and self-realization in work” and thus “promise a solution to the crisis of the human capital regime” that is caused by worsening precarious work conditions (2015: 397).

\textit{Penetration: The Ghostly Presence of \textit{“Ordinary Life”}}

It is important to note that I mean neither that affective labor simply serves to conceal the harsh working circumstances upon which it is built nor that youth in the social economy uncritically accept the semantics of \textit{hwaldong} and implicitly collaborate with the self-exploitative neoliberal regime. Again, if social economy is a field where heterogeneous and various aspirations are invested, compromised, and governed, so is the field of affective labor. That is to say, representing affective labor as a large homogeneous category, as aptly pointed out by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008), often falls into the trap of covering up internal differences and segmentation in the field and disregarding the more significant question of how work and its precariousness “is registered and negotiated in the lives of young workers” (104). In fact, young affective laborers often penetrate the \textit{incompatibility} of such rosy rhetoric with their precarious working habitats and try to negotiate their aspirations with this dissatisfying reality.

At the wrap-up party of 2013 SIYA, a song was played by an activist from the Youth Union \textit{[ch’ŏngnyŏn yunion]}, a labor union for part-time youth workers. The song titled “Happy Me?” was a parody of the old hit song “Happy Me” that is about a hard-working couple who plan marriage but suffer from their economic hardships and a dark future. The original song
became popular in the middle of the 1997 Asian financial crisis when the lyrics provided a particularly vivid sense of reality.\textsuperscript{40} This activist rewrote the lyrics into a story about SIYA and their temporary jobs:

\begin{verbatim}
I had this job after experiencing several layoffs
I wish you were my last and life-time job
Every night when I return home from work
And if I have an overtime bonus
I would hug my bank note
And my stress and pain would melt away
Please hire me just the way you do
If you would never change
You are the only one to have my labor
Sometimes you tell me you are sorry
About your dark, uncertain future
Please don’t forget my love
I will ignore the words of self-development
And competition out there in the world
My heart will always be with you as a SIYA
\end{verbatim}

This parodic song was appointed as the SIYA song of the night and drew a lot of acclaim—for the song’s metaphor of marriage vividly depicted youth’s strong wish for job security. As noted by Molé (2012), in the Fordist (and developmentalist) era, getting a job was often analogized and compared with a life-long committed marriage. Once one had an official job, it was normatively expected to be a lifelong contract that would obligate people. Such an analogy of employment and marriage, however, has become more and more inappropriate and problematic, as the “myth” of job security in the developmental period has collapsed and temporary, irregular jobs have

\textsuperscript{40} The original lyrics are as follows: “I met you after several heartbreaks. That may be the reason why I was hesitant to begin this relationship. But I wish you were my last love and only man I need to know and love…. Every night when I return home and if you are there waiting for me, I would hug you and your stress and pain would melt away. Love me just the way you do. If you would never change, you are the only person to have my all. My heart would never change. Sometimes you tell me you are sorry about your incompetency and dark, uncertain future. But don’t forget I love. If I’m with you I will be forever happy. I’ll ignore people’s expectations and the rule of the world. My heart will always be in the same place with you.”

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increased with neoliberal reforms. According to Molé, the new subjective figure of the neoliberal economy is not the “monogamous and dedicated husband” married to his lifelong job but rather a “young entrepreneur” who continues to flirt with new partners (Molé 2012: 382). The aspiration for a stable relationship with a job and the dream of an “ordinary life” based on it, however, have remained as a “ghostly presence” that still haunts people’s imagination and enables them to penetrate and problematize their current precarious work conditions (Muehlebach and Shosan 2012; cf. Berlant 2007).

This SIYA song that likens having a job to a life-long marriage seems to reveal the lingering attachment to lifetime employment among youth. As seen in Jong-Min’s despair, they partially still wish that they could plan a “good ordinary life” and follow “the developmental chronotope,” although this form of life would be guaranteed only by arduous and intense work discipline (as glimpsed in Jong-Min’s metaphor of the “treadmill” and the terms of “night work” and “overtime bonus” in the song). This lingering aspiration is expressed in the lyrics as forgetting “the words of self-improvement and competition” that are presumably encouraged by the neoliberal work regime. These workers’ desire and attachment, however, would be easily betrayed in reality: while more than half of the SIYAs who attended the final meeting had to face another layoff or break-up, the government would only suggest that such precarity be viewed as a good opportunity for having various “experiences” and exploring their dream and vision. The question is then: how are the penetration and dissatisfaction limited and managed by both the government and youth in the social economy? How do they justify the reality of hwaldong and negotiate the breach between the rosy rhetoric of “hope”, “mission,” “dream,” and “vision” and the harsh reality of their precarious working conditions in the social economy? These questions may be addressed in part by exploring the internal and external divisions among social
innovation activists.

THE SEGMENTED FIELD AND HETEROGENEOUS ASPIRATIONS

As we have seen so far, SIYA cannot be understood simply as a name for a government program; rather it represents an ideal youth subjectivity that embodies the quintessential virtues of an ethical citizen. As “socially responsible entrepreneurs,” these youth are summoned to bear the burdens of not only “neoliberal” innovative entrepreneurship and self-accountability but also the responsibility for society and care for others (Lessenich 2011; Muehlebach 2012; Shamir 2008). As poststructuralist theories of subject formation have taught us, the production of a certain subject always-already necessitates its “constitutive” outside or others (e.g., Butler 1997; Foucault 2001; Laclau and Mouffe 2001). The ideal figure of SIYA also produces internal divisions and external oppositions that signal negative mirror images of the innovative and affective subject. Although the pursuits of innovation and affective labor are often described as the younger generation’s “common intrinsic virtues,” there certainly exist hierarchical divisions among youth in the social economy according to the unequal imaginary distribution of the virtues. In the following section, I will shed light on the tangled differences and internal subdivisions among youth in the social economy sector, exploring how these youth register and manage their contradictory aspirations.

*Internal Division: Saeng-gye and Saeng-tae-gye*

In July 2014, I attended a panel “Asia Network for Young Social Entrepreneurs” at the 2014 Seoul Global Social Economy Forum, with Eun-Jung who is one of the four SIYAs working at
the Seongbuk Community/Social Economy Center. After graduating from a local university as a geography major and going through one year of unemployment, Eun-Jung had joined the SIYA program “with the feeling of clutching at straws.” As a community promoter, her work in Seongbuk centered on interviewing and transcribing the life stories of Bukjeong Maul residents.

The panel was held in the City Hall’s largest auditorium which when we arrived was already packed with more than 500 SIYAs, social entrepreneurs, and social economy activists. On the stage, international young “star” social entrepreneurs from South Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines were casually discussing “the roles of youth in the social economy.” Most of the panel members were well-known role models among SIYAs and young social entrepreneurs, and thus the intense enthusiasm-charged atmosphere of the hall somewhat reminded me of a rock concert. Throughout the discussion, the panelists related their success stories and repeatedly emphasized “creativity” and “resilience” as essential virtues for young social entrepreneurs. One social entrepreneur argued that youth are “naturally” more innovative than any other generations because they do not fear failures and are more “resilient” to precarious conditions: “Youth are so reckless that they easily take risks, but that’s why they can succeed in social start-ups. They might fail, but they would face challenges again.” The 150-minute long panel concluded with the suggestion that the most urgent task is to construct a favorable “ecosystem” [saeng-tae-gye] in which youth freely challenge and fail, and thereby the

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41 The education program of SIYA often includes the introduction of successful foreign social start-ups and entrepreneurs. Sometimes they invite star social entrepreneurs through cooperation with international social entrepreneur networks such as the Ashoka Foundation. Furthermore, the success stories of foreign social start-ups have been actively circulated as exemplars by the Seoul Metropolitan Government through various events and promotional booklets. Since the central and municipal governments vigorously support the social economy sector, a number of Asian social entrepreneurs have chosen Seoul as their second business place and have successfully built a vast network with Korean social economy activists. At the end of the panel discussion, a social entrepreneur who runs a blood donation social enterprise in the Philippines shouted with excitement and received a big applause from the audiences: “Very few people know my business in the Philippines. But here, whenever I meet someone, they say they’ve heard about me and my business. How’s that possible? So amazing! I love South Korea!”
experience of such failures can be a resource for their next challenge. In their stories, the salient aspiration for job security among youth was completely erased, and instead, “resilience”—the capacity to translate precariousness into the opportunity for innovation and development—was presented as the intrinsic nature of youth.42

After the event, Eun-Jung and I talked about the forum’s conclusions over coffee. In response to my question about her thoughts on the wrap-up, Eun-Jung replied with a sheepish but obviously cynical tone: “For me, sustaining ‘minimal livelihood’ [saeng-gye] is more urgent than a favorable ecosystem [saeng-tae-gye].” At that time, Eun-Jung was receiving only about 700,000 won (approximately $600) per month as a SIYA and had a second job as a wedding hall staff on the weekends. She also had a student loan as well as credit card debt that was incurred during her unemployment period. Eun-Jung’s pun of using similar pronunciations between minimal livelihood [saeng-gye] and ecosystem [saeng-tae-gye] reveals a distinctive hierarchy that exists among youth in the social economy. Although it appears that all youth are interpellated as creative innovators, affectionate activists, and resilient entrepreneurs, the hierarchy and the dividing lines are intentionally produced and reproduced by the government through various ways. For example, every year, South Korea’s government awards “Star Social Entrepreneurs” among social start-ups and community/social enterprises for identifying “successful role models” and “promoting a favorable ecosystem for social entrepreneurship.”43

The selected entrepreneurs and enterprises receive various benefits including extra subvention.

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42 In tracing what can be called as “neoliberal temporality,” Sam Binkley (2014) argues that the ideal Fordist subject of a docile and disciplined worker is replaced by a new neoliberal figure of the “resilient entrepreneur” who actively adapts to an uncertain, risky future: “the unpredictability of the future meant one had to go beyond simple planning; one had to foster new capacities within the self for unknown struggles to come” (60). For a critique of resilience as a key virtue of neoliberal subjectivity, see Evans and Reid (2014).

and are invited to various social economy events organized by the government to share their success stories and encourage social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the district governments sometimes even compete to attract the star social start-ups to their incubation or business centers with the promise of more subvention and better support. In the process, the governments’ limited material and immaterial supports are often concentrated on these star social entrepreneurs at the top.

Although not being officially appointed as star social entrepreneurs, Happy Seongbuk and Jong-Min still are considered a “star” community enterprise in the region. They were able to obtain funding for a three-room office space (which Fortune Care failed to obtain; see Chapter 3) and also to receive the municipal and district governments’ commissions to operate a co-working place and organize various events for local youth. Because all their activities have been sponsored by the district or metropolitan government, the cooperative members used to make a self-mocking joke that “the real CEO of our cooperative is Park Won-Soon and our Vice President is the District Mayor.” In return for this support, they were often summoned to serve as an emblem of the government’s youth-friendly policies and to play a missionary role in spreading an innovative and challenging spirit among youth. Despite the internal distress divulged by Jong-Min, Happy Seongbuk’s activities often have been described in the media as an exemplar of “an alternative way of life” that “successfully reconciles the discrepancy between the aspiration for monetary rewards and the desire for a joyful and meaningful life.”

On the other pole from this handful of star social entrepreneurs in the public spotlight, however, there exist most of the SIYAs and other young social economy activists who are

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44 “Youth Who Go to Maul” [마을로 뛰어든 청년들], Seoul Sinmun (Mar. 13, 2015); “Youth, Let’s do Politics” [청춘아, 정치하자], Hankyrey (Jan. 29, 2016).
exploited as a cheap, temporary, and disposable affective labor force. Although they are interpellated with the same rhetoric of creativity, innovation, and social responsibility, this interpellation is also a process of drawing a new dividing line between ideal, active youth subject on the one side and non-deserving, passive youth on the other. As the governments distribute their resources unequally along this dividing line, lay affective laborers are exposed to perennial instability and bounce around from one temporary work situation to another within the social economy sector. Despite or due to this reality, however, they are expected to more actively translate precarity as an opportunity for self-development. After the SIYA contract expired, Eun-Jung managed to participate in a three-month long community regeneration project and then had to go through another period of unemployment. When we met again for a follow-up interview, she had been unemployed for four months but attending the urban regeneration course in Youth School along with a government-sponsored social entrepreneur mini-MBA program. When I asked her about the trainings, she answered with a smile: “I am using this unemployment period as an opportunity to learn more about social entrepreneurship... I joined the social economy because I hated to compete to accumulate ‘specs’ like others. Now, it’s like I am doing a kind of the same thing in this sector.”

Constitutive Outside: Zombie

If a dividing line between star entrepreneurs and lay affective laborers exists among youth in the social economy, another line is drawn between social innovation activists and the other youth. In everyday conversations with SIYAs and other youth in the social economy, I often encountered

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45 The term “spec”, which is an abbreviation of specifications—the feature list of a commodity—is commonly used among youth to describe their employability in the job market. In concrete terms, “good specs” usually include a prestigious education, a high GPA, fluency in multiple languages including an excellent English test score, and various extra-curricular experiences such as volunteering and internships.
the metaphor of “zombie” that constitutes a negative mirror image against which many social innovators construct their identity. When I just began my fieldwork research in 2013, I met Joo-In, a co-founder of the social start-up *Co-Live*, at a network meeting of young social entrepreneurs. This small venture seeks to provide mental health care for unemployed youth while obtaining their funding from the organization of “The Zombie Run,” a real game event in which participants are expected to run away from and survive disguised zombies within a limited prescribed space. With the catchphrase “Survive in South Korea Where Everyone Becomes Zombies!” the event has been held regularly since 2012 and increasingly has attracted popularity and media attention, most of which frames the event as a satirical allegory of youth’s dark present. When I asked Joo-in why her enterprise focused on unemployed youth and zombies, she responded: “Now in South Korea, youth have only a two-pronged path before them: either falling into being a depressed, unemployed loser or accumulating good ‘specs’ to be unhappily exploited by the older generations.” She paused and empathetically added, “They both are living like zombies. We aim to help the first group while providing refreshment to the second.” In addition to her extreme description of youth’s future, what immediately intrigued me about her words was that she intentionally lumped together the “losers” and the “winners” in the job market into the single figure of a zombie.

As I extended my research, I came across other youth in the social economy who were using the metaphor of “zombie” in the same way as Joo-in did: to describe the negative ways of life from their perspective. On the one hand, many of youth who had experienced a short or long-term unemployment period depicted their jobless lives as “zombie-like,” that is, a helpless life

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without any vitality and productivity. On the other hand, social economy activists who used to work in the profit sector also occasionally relied on the figure of “zombie” to describe their past experiences. To illustrate, Ji-Sun, a former big corporation employee and now a social entrepreneur, once related me: “When I worked there, I was like a zombie: I got up in the morning, went to work, and came home late at the exact same time every day. The only thing that excited me was payday. Except for it, I couldn’t feel any sense of life.” She added that she liked people in the social economy, because “their eyes are lively and starry” in contrast to the employees in “normal” corporations who “look listless and dreamless.” Here again, seemingly opposite lives—one as an unemployed deadbeat and the other as a regular, ordinary worker—are condensed into the same figure of a zombie as a way to dismiss them.

In fact, besides the fact that zombies have returned as a representative monstrous figure in the early 21st century mass culture, it does not seem surprising that social economy activists have conjured up the figure of a zombie to depict negative lives. In many aspects, a zombie serves as the perfect negative mirror image of “aspiring human capital” or an “affectionate social innovator.” Above all, the zombie hordes have no consciousness, no internal aspirations, and thus no individuality. They move like automatons, being manipulated by an outside force. For that reason, zombie masses have been used as an easy cliché of alienated workers and consumers in the era of “mass capitalist society” in which capital subsumes their bodies and spirits (Comaroff and Comaroff 2002; Lauro and Embry 2008). This also explains why the neoliberal

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47 In the 21st century, zombie masses have become ubiquitous in pop culture and “zombie studies” has emerged as a new interdisciplinary subfield. See Castillo et al. (2016). In South Korea, The Train to Busan, a zombie apocalyptic film, recorded a mega hit, attracting more than 11 million audiences in 2016. In the film, the zombie pandemic seems to symbolize both ravenous financial capitalism that pursue only profits and greedy masses who become affectless infected by the lust for money. A protagonist fund manager, who used to “suck people’s blood” like a zombie, came to realize his humanity and love for his daughter while going through the catastrophe.

48 The zombies usually appear as a faceless and nameless lumped mass that mindlessly follow the lust for blood and flesh; it is “not an aristocrat like Dracula or a star freak like Frankenstein” (Larson 2010: 8).
advocates of innovation often use the trope of zombie to criticize the welfare state that supposedly produces dependent and helpless economic agents (Dardot and Laval 2013).

Furthermore, zombies are also characterized by their lack of capacity to emote and communicate: they are not only mindless, but also affectless, asocial, always mute, and out of communication. As Larson (2010) points out, in this sense, zombies are the pariahs of creative, affective capitalism: given that emotion, affect, and communication are deeply infiltrated into the labor process and economic behaviors (Hardt and Negri 2000), the image of a zombie has become the symbol of an abortive parasite who cannot contribute to production and reproduction at all. Such futility and importance might explain why the term “zombie” is also summoned to describe the status of unemployed deadbeat [ing-yeo] in youth’s imagination. The zombie mass as alienated, brain-dead, ideology-fed workers and consumers in the Fordist society returns in the post-Fordist regime as hopeless, disposable outcasts.49 In a word, in the condensed symbol of the zombie, its nonhuman monstrosity is associated with a lack of subjective individuality, affect, and communication; these imaginary features of zombie thus render the figure as the perfect alterity of the ideal youth subjectivity of SIYA or of “socially responsible entrepreneurs” who are encouraged to embody affectionate responsibility for others as well as subjective aspiration for creativity and innovation.

What is more interesting, however, would be that the multi-faceted negative representation of zombie seems to symptomatically reveal the young subjects’ ambiguous and even somewhat contradictory desires surrounding work. What is excluded as a “zombie-like life” is not only an unproductive, unemployed life, but also a repetitive and stable work life that

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49 In this sense, as Comaroff and Comaroff (2002) aptly points out, zombies “have arisen of social disruption, periods characterized by sharp shifts in control over the fabrication and circulation of value” (783).
presumably stands for the collective mass labor regime in the past developmentalism. That is to say, the figure of zombie speaks to youth’s anxiety about job precarity and insecurity, but it also divulges their dissatisfactions with the old-fashioned developmental laborism: although many youths in the social economy feel trouble about their abiding precarious conditions, they also tend to depreciate regular, normal work as affectionless, non-individual, and tepid. A narrative that “stability and secureness kill creativity and entrepreneurial spirit” is continuously circulated among SIYAs; they are rather encouraged to be “creative destructors” who upset the status quo, create continuous imbalances, and excoriate stability as a fetter on freedom. Although it is hard to tell to what extent they internalize such neoliberal maxims of innovation and entrepreneurship, in their imagination at least the economic precarity and the enthusiasm for a dream often appear to be juxtaposable as correlated (in the same way as Park Won-Soon’s response): for example, when I asked back Ji-Sun why she thought social economy activists’ eyes were lively and starry, she half-jokingly answered, “That’s because they pursue their own dreams, or because they are on the edge of survival, or maybe both?”

In this sense, what Nancy Fraser calls the ambivalence of the “triple movement” seems to be reiterated at the level of youth subjectivity. According to Fraser, the recent social struggles “do not find any place within the [Polanyian] scheme of the double movement,” that is, between marketization and social protection (2013: 127). The recent movements want to disassociate themselves from the precarity that marketization has brought, but simultaneously challenge the exclusionary, oppressive security of past social welfarism (and developmentalism). In this way, their critique of oppressive protection may inadvertently “converge with the neoliberal critique of protection per se” (130). It appears that the youth in South Korea’s social economy find themselves in the same kind of irony: while they aspire for stable employment and maintain an
affective attachment to a “good ordinary life,” they also distance themselves from the non-innovative and collective mass labor regime. Caught in a sort of double-bind, they cannot find deep relief either in the developmental model of ordinary work-life or the competitive innovation model of human capital regime.

It is in this conflict zone that their genuine desire for not being alienated in work, creating a meaningful life, and contributing social goods are met and intermingled with governmental purposes to promote social entrepreneurship and mobilize a cheap, disposable affective labor force. In the “utopian” fantasy of affective labor, it is said that youth’s current economic precarity could be dissolved in the pursuit of building community and networks through their own affective labor and that hwaldong would provide them with social recognition and meaningful work that are not achievable in traditional forms of work [nodong]. As seen above, however, what this fantasy conceals are competitive hierarchy, unstable, low-wage labor conditions as well as imperatives to translate precarity and instability into the source of innovation. The expulsion of a dream-less and affect-less zombie mass in youth’s imagination thus signals such a conflicting reality as well as their own ambivalent desires. The irony, then, may be found in the fact that with this exclusion not only are the hopeless deadbeats disparaged, but the vision of a “good ordinary life” of which Jong-Min dreams also can be dismissed.

CONCLUSION: HOPE AS COUNTERFEIT MONEY

In commenting on Marcel Mauss’ enigmatic statement that “it is always society that pays itself with the counterfeit money of its dreams,” Ghassan Hage (2003) defines a society as “a mechanism for the distribution of hope”: “If hope is the way we construct a meaningful future
for ourselves... such futures are only possible within society, because society is the distributor of social opportunities for self-realisation. We can call this hope societal hope... society is a distributor of these forms of societal hope, these social routes by which individuals can define a meaning for their lives” (15). According to Hage, what is disappearing in the neoliberal world is “the very idea of society, or commitment to some form of distribution of hope” (18). In South Korea where rapid economic growth has substituted for the role of society, the end of development has brought the same “lack” of the hope distribution system. This might explain why the Korean younger generation recently has started to call South Korea “Hell Joseon,” a moniker that combines the name of Korea’s old kingdom with the hell of youth unemployment, intense competition, and shrinking marriage and family prospects (Cho 2015). As noted by Kim (2016), the popularity of the term “Hell Joseon” reflects the younger generation’s hopeless and futureless despair.

This is, however, not the end of the story but rather only half of it. As Ben Anderson (2016) points out, we should resist the easy temptation to argue that “the affective life today is organized in a single, identifiable way—that we live in an ‘age of fear’ or an ‘age of anxiety’” (2). In fact, a more exact interpretation of Mauss’ words would be that no society can exist and sustain itself without providing its own promises for the future, for dreams, and for hope, even if those promises are only counterfeit. What is necessary, therefore, is less to simply repeat the vanishing of hope in neoliberalism than to explore the specific ways how the neoliberal human capital regime provides its own counterfeit dream. As seen so far, not only despair and desperation but also strong aspirations for hope, dreams, and the future are found in the

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50 What Ghassan is missing here is the fact that societal hope is deeply related to the notion of development from the beginning. That is to say, the modern hope distribution system relies on the implicit hypothesis of continuing development. For the relationship of the birth of the social and development, see Donzelot (1979).
affective-discursive space that surrounds contemporary Korean youth; and the visions of “good, meaningful life” are again appropriated and mobilized in the process of managing the reproduction crisis and of searching for a new engine of development. Innovation and affective labor can thus be understood as the new social dispositifs for distributing hope and creating the future in the neoliberal human capital regime. While (social) innovation helps individuals to *align* their self-development with social transformation, affective labor provides a new utopian domain in which marginal populations including underemployed youth can find their places and existential meanings without being alienated from work as in the old developmental regime: they can gain economic profit and simultaneously contribute to the construction of “the social.” In this way, the developmental hope distribution system based on industrious labor and continuous economic growth, which Jong-Min analogizes with a treadmill, begins to be increasingly superseded by a new system in which individual aspirations are connected with social hope, not through the collective organization of labor, but rather through the innovation and affective labor of socially responsible subjects.

In this chapter, I thus have shown how youth are interpellated and constructed as subjects of the new hope system at the center of a precarious reality: on the one hand, they are encouraged to overcome their precarity by building the social and communities through affective labor; on the other hand, they should become innovators who make the most of their instability and precarity as a source of innovation and development. In illuminating this discursive and affective heterogeneity surrounding contemporary youth in South Korea, I have focused on how youth in the social economy question, manage, and negotiate this paradoxical interpellation. The new hope distribution system, however, seems to be fragile and tenuous, to say the best. As it devolves the traditional role of society onto “socially responsible individuals” and projects
“society” as something to be built by their affective labor, it also erodes the very universal and secure ground of social solidarity upon which individuals’ dreams can be nested. As individuals shoulder the responsibility for the construction of society, the production and distribution of hope also becomes fragmented onto the individuals who are presumably resilient and innovative enough to translate precarity into an opportunity and compete in the market or otherwise secure the government’s resources. (I will explore this shift of the foundation of social solidarity in the next chapter.) As a result, precarity as a neoliberal affect can be neither eliminated nor ameliorated. The coexistence of the plethora of hope and the upsurge of despair would be a symptom of such an impasse.

For youth subjects, their efforts to translate precarity into hope are not always successful. Although innovation and affective labor serve as a stopgap between stagnant reality and individuals’ aspiration for the “good life,” the fundamental insecurities—produced by the collapse of the social plane and the subjectification of social responsibility—are often abruptly divulged. In the conversation with Jong-Min described in this chapter’s introduction, being somewhat embarrassed with his unforeseen confession I tried to perk him up: “But Happy Seongbuk is a ‘star’ community enterprise being subsidized by the government. It could go well…” As soon as these words poured out from me and I saw Jong-Min’s expression in response, however, I came to the realization that I had made a mistake. Jong-Min was quick to emphatically rephrase my words, “It MUST go well,” he continued in an emotional voice, “Otherwise I have no place to belong to. This is the only place where I can find the meanings and senses of my life and work.” Jong-Min attempts to find his existential meaning and vision of “good life” in Joyful Sengbuk’s hwaldong for building youth communities; for this purpose, however, the small cooperative needs to find its way to survive in the market and obtain more
governmental subventions by proving its innovative entrepreneurship and investability. That way, the “blue spring” may last long.
CHAPTER 5

THE MORAL ECONOMY OF FACE:
GIFT-EXCHANGE, RECOGNITION, AND DEPOLITICIZED SOLIDARITY

“Certain assemblages of power require the production of a face.” – Deleuze and Guattari (1987:175)

INTRODUCTION

The first thing that greets you when you enter the office of the fair trade social enterprise Beautiful Coffee is a huge portrait of the Nepalese coffee producers with whom the company has conducted the trade. When I first visited the office for my fieldwork research in the summer of 2012, Soo-Jin, a staff member at the organization, cheerfully informed me of the producers’ names in the photograph and gave me their brief life stories. Their smiling faces and the imprinted phrase of “Our Coffee is a Gift” seem to confirm Soo-Jin’s explanation that “fair trade is not simply an economic, anonymous transaction. Rather, it seeks to develop intimate, social bonds between producers and consumers.” As you pass through a hallway to the main office, this time you encounter the faces of regular consumers covering the entire wall. These photographs include their names along with short blurbs about why they purchase fair trade coffee and how much they like it. Some of them contain images of smiling producers and consumers together, taken when enthusiastic consumers visited the producers’ local farms.

This research began with a simple question that dawned upon me at the first visit to the
organization: What are the implications of these representations of “face” [ŏlgul] that are often found in fair trade activism? Is the common metaphor relevant to the moral and solidary goals that the activism supposedly pursues? In undertaking my fieldwork research, furthermore, I came to realize that the representation and metaphor of face not only are prevalent in fair trade discourse, but also are common and widespread across the social economy sector that basically aims at grafting morality and sociality onto market economy. For example, fair trade and ethical consumption are frequently described as “trade with those whose ‘faces’ you know” [‘ŏlgul’ kajin saramgwa-ŭi kŏrae] or simply as “face-to-face commerce”; the CEO of a “fair tourism” social enterprise related me in an interview that “a fair and sustainable tour is a tour in which you can see the naked ‘faces’ of local people.” Likewise, when a major retailer in South Korea first set up a corner for products from social startups, the booth was titled as “the Goods with a Human Face.” Furthermore, the metaphor of face is also found when social economy activists describe their ultimate goal as building “capitalism or market economy with a human face.” As Park Won-Soon, Seoul’s current mayor as well as Beautiful Coffee’s founder, explains: the social economy can be basically understood as “an attempt to give a human face to the competitive and inhuman market capitalism” (Park 2012).

In these metaphors, “face” seems above all to signify a moral and social dimension embedded in these practices that cannot be reduced to utilitarian economic calculation (as in “trade with persons whose faces you know”). Furthermore, it also seems to designate a privileged place from which to reconfigure the whole meaning and identity of the existing economic system (as in “capitalism with a human face”). In paying attention to the tacit imbrication of these two meanings, i.e., privileging morality and sociality as a remedial locus for a market-based economic system, I attempt here to raise and answer the following questions:
Why and how do fair trade and social economy activists rely on the metaphors of face to problematize market and capitalist economy? What truths do the repetitive metaphors divulge about the ethos of the moral economic practices? What kinds of political and social meanings do the metaphors of face implicate and produce?

To address these questions, this chapter first re-examines the intimate connection between gift-exchange and face based on Marcel Mauss’ and Marcel Hénaff’s analyses of gift. In illuminating what is at stake in gift-exchange in light of symbolic recognition and discipline, I will maintain that face should be understood as social positions and identities that can be achieved by disciplined participants in gift-exchange. Then, drawing upon my fieldwork research in Beautiful Coffee,¹ I define the practice of fair trade as “marketized gift-exchange” in which certain faces of producers and consumers are produced and circulated through the politics of symbolic recognition; next, I demonstrate how such faces reveal the hybrid characteristics of moral economic practices. In so doing, I focus particularly on how the moral economy of face has served as a crucial juncture of recognition and disciplinary empowerment, and thereby produced symbolic violence and (de-)politicized effects. The remaining part and conclusion will be dedicated to presenting fair trade activism as an exemplar of various moral economic practices that pursue a new form of market-based solidarity and to analyzing the implications and limits of the new imaginaries of the social and solidarity based on their metaphor of face.

¹ Beautiful Coffee is not only the largest fair trade organization but also is considered the first “social enterprise” in South Korea. Being established in 2002 by Park Won-Soon, the pioneering social economy advocate and the current Mayor of Seoul, the organization has played a pivotal role in expanding fair trade and social economy activism in Korea. Beautiful Coffee’s office is currently located in Seoul Innovation Park.
Let us begin with briefly re-illuminating the relationship between gift-exchange and face in Mauss’ pioneering discussion on gift. This could serve as a good starting point for exploring the implications of the metaphor of face, because social economy activism, including fair trade, have commonly justified their ideal of “moral economy” and “social solidarity” in terms of Mauss’ gift-exchange and its “reciprocity.” The “return to the spirit of the gift” is often considered as an encapsulation of the key principle of the social economy and its caring and ethical practices. Interestingly, Mauss’ The Gift provides a very clear analysis of the relation between face and gift. In discussing the three obligations of gift-exchange—obligations to give, to receive, and to reciprocate, he maintains that in many cultures one loses “face” if one does not (or cannot) fulfill the obligations. He explains the notion of face at stake as follows:

Each Kwakiutl and Haïda noble has exactly the same idea of “face” as has the Chinese man of letters or officer. It is said of one of the great mythical chiefs who gave no potlatch that he had a “rotten face.” Here the expression is even more exact than in China. For in the American Northwest, to lose one’s prestige is indeed to lose one’s soul. It is in fact the “face,” the dancing mask, the right to incarnate a spirit, to wear a coat of arms, a totem, it is really the persona—that are all called into question in this way, and that are lost at the potlatch, at the game of gifts, just as they can be lost in war, or through a mistake in ritual. (Mauss, 1990: 39)

In relation to our discussion, what should be noted in this quotation are three things. First, it is certain that “face” here does not merely mean a personal or physical countenance; face—“the dancing mask,” “the right to incarnate a spirit,” thus the persona—is rather related, as Mauss says elsewhere, to a certain “forename” in each clan or “a sacred object” given by ancestors that indicates one’s qualification to perform the role of the name (1985: 4-11). Second, Mauss’
argument that one could lose their face in a failed gift-exchange could be conversely stated that an individual can acquire and maintain their face by successfully participating in a gift-exchange. That is to say, face means social positions, status, or identities that are acquired and socially allocated through successful gift-exchange rituals. Finally, as stated by Mauss above, one has to impeccably perform his role (for instance, dances or performances) in the rituals in order to acquire and maintain face; again, if one fails to perform one’s persona adequately, one would lose face. The acquisition and deprivation of face, therefore, includes the others’ judgment on one’s performance and eligibility.

In this light, a potlatch is not only a paradigmatic example for gift-giving but can also be understood as a public ritual for (re)producing a social recognition system in which social identities and status are distributed, conformed, confirmed, and confined. As Mauss points out, “marriages for one’s children and places in the brotherhoods are only won during the potlatch, where exchange and reciprocity rule” (1990: 37). In providing an example of the Tsimshian chief who lost his grandson “Little Otter” to a fellow chieftain who had not been invited to the potlatch celebrating the boy’s birth and thus mistook him as an animal, Mauss directly links gift-exchange in potlatch with the “recognition” of face and name:

And the myth concludes: “This is why peoples mounted a great festival when the son of a chief was born and was given a name, so that no one should not know who he was.” The potlatch, the distribution of goods, is the basic act of “recognition,” military, juridical, economic, and religious in every sense of the word. One “recognizes” the chief or his son and becomes “grateful” to him. (1990: 40)

Simply put, for Mauss, gift-exchange is inseparable from the recognition or entitlement of one’s face/persona, and furthermore, the recognition is deeply related to the issues of bodily discipline and performance. In this light, we can find in his discussion of gift-exchange a conceptual
schema consisting of his abiding scholarly interests such as gift-exchange, face, identity, discipline, and performance.²

In further exploring the recognition substratum of gift-exchange, a French anthropologist and philosopher Marcel Hénaff maintains that gift-exchange should be primarily understood as a matter of symbolic recognition rather than an economic act (2010: 113).³ According to him, one of the most significant implications of Mauss’ discussion of gift is found in the idea that a gift always contains “part of the very being of the giver.”⁴ By giving part of their existence, the givers recognize the recipients and demand mutual recognition. What should be reciprocated in gift-exchange, Hénaff argues, is not thus the given object itself; it is rather “the spirit of the giver,” that is, the giver’s “gesture of recognition”: “Gift-giving is, above all, a gesture to recognize, accept, honor the other through the given object; it not only shows a respect to the other through the gift but also forces the other to respond and participate in a mutual commitment” (Hénaff 2002; 161, my translation).

Of special interest is that Hénaff also connects gift-giving to the matter of face, albeit in a different way from Mauss. Hénaff finds what forces someone to participate in gift-exchange in the “face” of others, which demands recognition through gift-giving. In interpreting Mauss’

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² For his concern with body and discipline, see Mauss (2006). Also, Mauss (1985) deals with the matter of performance and identity. Notably, all these elements are found in his analysis in potlatch and gift-exchange. See Mauss (1990).

³ Hénaff criticizes the “economic” interpretation of gift-exchange, which regards it either as “the ancestor of trade” or as “an alternative to trade.” According to him, the former position is represented by Polanyi and Weber, while the latter is primarily maintained by Alain Caillé and his group M.A.U.S.S. (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales) (Hénaff 2010: 110-116). Hénaff goes further to maintain that the act of gift-exchange as reciprocal recognition does not disallow or replace commercial transaction; it can be added to or overlapped with market economy and serves to create and reinforce social bonds at a symbolic level. In fact, the conflicts between economic and recognition interpretations of gift-exchange can be also found in the early debate between Boas and Curtis over potlatch. For the debate, see High (2012).

⁴ In analyzing the conception of hau in Maori gift-exchange, Mauss states, “...to make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself... to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence, of his soul” (1990: 12).
“obligation to give” in a Levinasian perspective, he argues: “The ethology of encounter found in a ceremonial gift originates from the appearance of “face,” from the being-face of others… What face commands is the absolute requirement to recognize others who exist within our beings but are not reducible to what we are. (Hénaff 2002: 165, my translation) For Hénaff, therefore, what distinguishes gift-giving from commercial transaction are the “face” of the other and the giver’s ethical involvement with it, both of which attach to the circulated object but simultaneously exceed its materiality (Hénaff 2010: 400-404).

In this regard, Hénaff’s discussion seems to provide a useful foundation on which the anthropological discussion of gift-exchange could be connected and aligned with the Frankfurt School’s “theory of recognition” or Levinas’s “ontological ethics.”

What should be noted with respect to our discussion, however, is rather a gap that is found in Hénaff’s and Mauss’ discussion of “face” in gift-exchange: whereas for Hénaff face signifies others’ requests for recognition and gift-giving, Mauss associates face with socially recognized and confirmed identities as a result of successful gift-exchange. Such a gap thus opens a possibility for understanding gift-exchange as a site for symbolic struggle or even a symbolic violence surrounding recognition. In other words, although a gift is said to be an ethical response to the others’ faces as noted by Hénaff, the gift-exchange is a social procedure in which the recognition is selectively offered and only certain faces are finally recognized.

Such selectivity should be more seriously considered, given that recognition itself implicates the construction of the recognized identity. As political philosopher Patchen Markell aptly points out, recognition is more than an act of simply re-cognizing or re-affirming what

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5 For the criticism of Hénaff’s theory from the perspective of Frankfurt School, see Honneth (2012), Quadflieg (2012).
people already are; it is also an act that “transforms the world in some way” by constituting or entitling “the identities of those to whom it is addressed” (2003: 40). To borrow Markell’s example, when a meeting’s chairperson recognizes a speaker, although it may appear to simply cognize a status or a right that already exists, it is not only an act that institutionally provides the privilege of speaking to them but also involves a disciplinary and constructive expectation of their performing properly as an entitled speaker (2003: 40-41). Furthermore, it should be added that the first identity or status that is assumed to already exist and to be recognized (e.g., a speaker) could be indeed performatively constructed by the very effect of the act of recognition.

If we consider this intimate relation of gift-exchange and recognition, and furthermore the constructive effect of recognition on identity, it is possible to question and problematize the socio-political dynamics surrounding the construction and transformation of faces in fair trade. Put otherwise, if gift exchange includes recognition struggles and symbolic violence over the acquisition and maintenance of faces and the act of recognition itself contributes to the formation or even imposition of the faces, gift-exchange always involves a question of power: that is, who recognizes whom as what (or which face)? Based on this problematic, in the following sections I focus on the questions of what kinds of faces are allocated to producers and consumers in fair trade and what kind of assemblage of power can be identified through the faces.

FAIR TRADE AS MARKETIZED GIFT-EXCHANGE

To address these questions, it is crucial to first analyze an interesting and hybrid relationship that fair trade has with gift exchange. Fair trade activism, which was initiated in Europe in the wake
of the Second World War and recently expanded across the globe,\(^6\) often presents its aim as the alleviation of poverty through “Trade Not Aid.” Beautiful Coffee has also adopted as its slogan “To Fight against Poverty, Trade Not Aid!” Its educational booklet explains the difference between aid and trade as follows: “In the old practices of aid, the producers in the Third World were generally regarded as the poor who needed benevolence and charity. Fair trade is different from such one-sided aid. It aims at establishing an equal trade relation with the producers and empowering them through the trade. Fair trade is working not \textit{for} but \textit{with} the producers.”\(^7\) That is to say, the producers in the global South should be understood not as the recipients of paternalistic charity but as the partners of equal exchange and trade. In the booklet, the words from a coffee producer in Uganda are cited under the heading of “Not the Needy but Producers” with her smiling picture: “We are not demanding charity or aid. We want our customers to like our coffee. To hear from them that our product has the best quality, it is our aim and our greatest pleasure.”

As pointed out by Brown (1993), such distinction from charity and the emphasis on “trade” and “market transaction” have constituted the distinctive identity of fair trade movements from the beginning. By distancing themselves from the traditional practices of gift-giving such as aid and charity, fair trade movements challenge and problematize the unequal, dependent relationship between the recipients and the donors that are inherent to the practices (Varul 2008). In fact, it is well known that market economy has accompanied a paradoxically \textit{emancipatory} effect in comparison with traditional gift economy: whereas gift-exchange such as charity could serve to produce and maintain the subordinate position of the donee by generating symbolic

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\(^6\) For a general history of fair trade movement, see Brown (1993) and Jaffee (2014).

\(^7\) Beautiful Coffee, \textit{Understanding Fair Trade} [공정 무역 이해하기]. 2011, p.7.
capital and debt (Bourdieu 1977), market trade presupposes an equal position between each partners as a *homo œconomicus* who individually pursues their own interests. In contrast to gift exchange, the purchase of a commodity with money does not necessarily yield the recognition of social status; rather, it is conceived as fulfilling the ordinary desires of the participants as utilitarian agents. To put it differently, since the partners in a market exchange are mutually recognized only as a formal, empty persona of “economic man,” the transaction does not produce any particular social bonds nor interdependency between the participants (Godelier 1999; Graeber 2001; Gregory 1982). This is what many modern social theories have described as a “paradoxical egalitarianism” or “paradoxical emancipation” inherent in market and monetary economy (e.g., Marx and Engels 1967; Simmel 1990). The fair trade activities based on “trade not aid” seem to pursue such paradoxical egalitarianism, and therefore the participants are primarily represented as economic agents such as “producers” and “consumers” rather than needy recipients and philanthropic donors.

Fair trade, however, also distinguishes itself from the existing commercial trades. Another booklet by Beautiful Coffee states that fair trade does not rely exclusively on market principles and economic rules. Because the current coffee market is practically unequal and unfair with “the tyranny of coyotes (brokers)” and “the systemic manipulations of big coffee companies,” fair trade aims to make the market “more equal and just” by guaranteeing a minimum price and establishing a “transparent and long-term partnership” with the producers; it also adds that fair trade seeks to empower the producers and their community by providing “social premium” for local development projects.\(^8\) Such emphasis on “fairness” and “solidarity” shows that fair trade movements pursue certain “social values” through but beyond market

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\(^8\) Beautiful Coffee, *Understanding Fair trade at a Glance* [한눈에 알아보는 공정무역], 2010, p.1.
trades. For example, the social values are well reflected in one of the often-used catchlines of Beautiful Coffee, “When you buy Beautiful Coffee, you are not just buying coffee.”\(^9\) The statement, which is reminiscent of Mauss’ axiom that “a gift-exchange is more than giving and receiving an object,” naturally prompts the question of what else you can get by purchasing fair trade coffee. A staff member in Beautiful Coffee answered my question that it is “social bonds and solidarity with the producers,” which also resonates with Mauss’ point that a gift is accompanied by the social and moral force of hau.

In fact, the shadow of gift is found more generally in the representations and practices of Beautiful Coffee. Their products are named after their producing areas as “The Gift of Himalayas,” “The Gift of Andes,” and “The Gift of Kilimanjaro.” With such names, the coffee purchases come to have an appearance of a mutual gift-exchange: as the coffees are represented as the producers’ gifts, the customers’ purchase could appear to be a sort of counter-prestation offering an extra premium to the local producers. What makes this process more interesting is that the products of Beautiful Coffee are apparently distinctive with their package having smiling pictures of the producers (see Figure 12). That is to say, when consumers buy Beautiful Coffee, one might argue that they are buying the faces of the producers and participating in the recognition of them, which seems to interestingly reflect Hénaff’s argument that what initiates gift-exchange is the face of others demanding recognition and response to it. Furthermore, the organization’s ordinary practices exhibit its concern for solidarity and social bonds: the company not only shares the producers’ everyday life stories on its homepage and Facebook page; it also continues to hold events in which its enthusiastic supporters and customers visit and interact with

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\(^9\) A similar phrase is also found in fair trade movement in the U.S. For the comprehensive analysis of the meanings of the phrase, see Cole (2011).
local producers for raising “solidary consciousness.”

In this regard, fair trade activism locates its identity in what can be called “marketized gift-exchange,” a hybrid of market and gift-exchange. Although the activism distinguishes itself from traditional charity by foregrounding market-based solutions (as in “Trade not aid”), it simultaneously reintroduces in their practices the “spirit of gift,” the pursuit of social bonds and solidarity to correct the existing market system (as in “You are not just buying coffee”). In this way, fair trade activism, like other examples of social economy activism, seeks to graft and articulate the social and moral logics with economic rationality. What is interesting in relation to our discussion is not so much the ambivalence itself as that, through this dual, even dialectical movement, the recognition dimension of gift-exchange is brought again into the practices of fair trade. In other words, although fair trade seeks to replace the dependency of recipients on donors in gift-exchange with the equal relation between the market subjects of producers and
consumers, it also attempts to represent its participants not as anonymous, faceless economic individuals but rather as recognizable partners with social faces. Furthermore, in the process there has surfaced two discernible faces: an “entrepreneurial producer” who evokes moral, solidary sentiments of pity and sympathy, and a “responsible consumer” who is capable of responding to the demands of recognition and solidarity. In the concrete practices of fair trade, the empty, formal identity of *homo œconomicus* as producer and consumer is continuously overwritten by, and imbricated with, these returned faces, a process I will discuss in detail in the following section.

**THE RETURN OF FACES:**

**ENTREPRENEURIAL PRODUCER AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER**

*Case 1* While I worked at Beautiful Coffee in 2012, I found that one of its bestsellers “The Gift of Kilimanjaro” was in fact produced in Mount Elgon in Uganda. When I asked several staff members about why they did not name it “The Gift of Elgon,” they looked to be slightly embarrassed and answered that, because Mount Elgon was not well known among Korean consumers, they instead adopted Kilimanjaro “as a representative name that signals Africa.”

*Case 2* In 2010, Beautiful Coffee launched fair trade chocolate in addition to their coffee. For the promotion of the product, the organization was effectively using the pictures of child slaves in cacao plantations in West Africa, although its cacaos were indeed imported from Peru. In a staff meeting that I attended in July 2012, the issue resurfaced on the agenda as the publicity department complained that the focus on West Africa made it difficult for them to spread the actual producers’ stories in Peru. After a short discussion, however, it was generally agreed that focusing on child slavery could be “more compelling and effective for marketing the product as well as raising customers’ awareness of the problems in cacao production.”

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10 Since Cho Yong-Phil’s mega-hit song “A Leopard in Killimanjaro” (1985), Mount “Kilimanjaro” has been broadly accepted in South Korea as a symbol of Africa’s nature and primitivism.
What I want to point out with these examples is neither that the organization has provided incorrect information for their consumers nor that their moral initiatives are often compromised by market pressure; what I want to note is rather that these cases reveal an asymmetrical power relation between the producers and the consumers and that producers’ faces are selectively recognized based on the desires of the consumers. It would be needless to say that such asymmetry of the represented and the representing is reflective of the global socio-economic disparities between them. While the first case in which Mount Elgon is replaced by Mount Kilimanjaro seems to testify to the alleged complicity of fair trade with “the consumption of exotic differences,” the second example leads us to contemplate what Littler (2009) calls “the exploitation of victimized others” in the practices of ethical consumption. In this regard, what is remarkable is that the (mis)representations in these cases are not incidental but rather faithfully reflect the longstanding colonial paternalistic representation of “others”—“the exotic” (signified by Kilimanjaro) and “victims” (characterized by child slaves).

In fact, various studies have illuminated and criticized “the reification of difference” and “the commodification of sufferings” found in fair trade activism (Cole 2011; Littler 2009; Lyon 2006; Newhouse 2011; Varul 2008; West 2012). As aptly pointed out by Varul (2008), although fair trade strives to “de-fetishize” market commodity chains by building direct liaisons between producers and consumers, it often seems to fall prey to “re-fetishizing” the fixed imageries and identities of exotic, victimized producers. As in the above cases, in the process of replacing the anonymity of the market with the concrete, vivid representations of producers, fair trade tends to rely on and mobilize the familiar colonialist images of “exotic victims” in the global South. It is needless to say that such representations of producers presuppose the opposite pole, the fair trade.
consumers in the North, who enjoy the exotic as a potential “tourist” and assume the role of “savior” for the suffering victims. It would thus not be irrelevant to smell out the legacy of colonial paternalism in these representations.

This rather common critique, however, does not pay enough attention to a novel and hybrid feature of fair trade as “marketized gift-exchange.”\textsuperscript{11} That is to say, although it is quite legitimate to single out the latent colonial paternalistic desires in fair trade, the faces of producers and consumers circulating in the practice cannot be reduced to such traditional elements. As noted above, fair trade as a market-based practice, above all, necessitates the new identities and relations of producers and consumers as \textit{homo œconomicus}, and thus the face of “exotic victims” only serves as a secondary imagery that is and should be superimposed by the figures of “economic subjects” who are engaging in market trades. In other words, because the moral and solidary values in fair trade should be primarily rooted on economic practices, what is at issue here is more complex: the question is how to represent the producers and consumers as economic subjects who are \textit{nevertheless} responsible for moral obligations and social bonds.

In order to uncover the complex, multi-layered figures of producers and consumers, it seems necessary to pay attention to the “stories” that accompany their images. As seen in the fact that many fair trade organizations include “the spread of producer stories” in their codes of practice, the stories and narratives of people and products have played pivotal roles in fair trade activism (Cole 2011). Not only do they contribute to make fair trade appear to be transactions

\textsuperscript{11} For example, representing producers only as suffering victims is an exception rather than a rule in fair trade. In many cases, the producers are described as “empowered” subjects who challenge the external predicaments. The researches that exclusively focus on the colonial elements in fair trade activism (e.g. Cole 2011; Newhouse 2011; Varul 2008) are missing the hybrid feature of fair trade as “marketized” gift-exchange. This could lead to neglect the new feature of transnational social economy practices such as international corporate social responsibility and global microcredit movement that are largely based on the imbrication of morality with market rationality rather than unilateral colonialism or paternalism.
between “concrete and identifiable individuals” with their own faces and stories; more importantly, it also provides the very foundation of social bonds and solidarity between them by producing and conveying certain moral affects such as pity and sympathy among consumers. Addressing consumers as a “responsible” subject could be first and foremost achieved through making them “respond” to the stories of producers (Derrida 1995; cf. Hénaff, 2002).

It is evident that in fair trade activism producer stories are deliberately arranged and deployed for such purpose. As noted by Black (2009), the most representative way of appealing to sympathetic consumers is to contrast producers’ endeavor with their hardship, because sympathy relies on our assessment that the ill-fated individuals are experiencing undeserved sufferings even though they have fulfilled their own obligation and responsibility. That is to say, the more we may feel the discrepancy between individual responsibility and social difficulties is unfair, the more compassionate we become. In this regard, sympathizing with others’ hardship often includes unstated normative judgments about what are their duties to fulfill and whose suffering is unjust and underserved.13

The question then will be what is taken as individual duties and what kind of suffering is represented as undue in fair trade discourse. In typical stories provided by fair trade organizations, producers are primarily represented as aspiring entrepreneurs who have fulfilled their obligations as economic agents but still suffer from external social and political conditions. What calls for special attention is the fact that, in carving up individual responsibility and

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12 The role of story in gift exchange was already pointed out by Mauss. In analyzing Kula trade, Mauss points out that the luxuries (vaygu a) exchanged in the gift ritual have their own names and stories. These stories not only distinguish the luxuries from other mundane objects exchanged in economic trade (gimwali) but also give prestige and special recognition to the owners (Mauss 1990: 24-6).

13 As noted by Berlant (2004), sympathy or compassion with others not only implies this normative judgment about both subject and object of the affect, but also assumes the “privileged spectator” of suffering who (re-)produces the norms.
external conditions and then highlighting their undeserved hardship, these stories serve to
naturalize and depoliticize the producers’ socioeconomic circumstances. For example, the
“London Fairtrade Guide”—which I had to translate into Korean for the promotion of “London’s
Fairtrade Olympics” in 2012, while I was working as an unpaid intern in Beautiful Coffee for my
fieldwork research—provides the following self-narrated producer stories:

<Producer story I: A Palestinian olive farmer, Mahmoud Issa (42)> “The olive means
everything to us. In the village of Anin I have 15 hectares of olive groves. My father and
my grandfather farmed on this land, and now my children work alongside me
harvesting... Anin borders an illegal Israeli settlement area. Some of the farmers used to
work in a nearby larger village to earn extra income when harvesting ended, but as that
village now lies within the settlement area they can no longer do this... We are hoping
that Fairtrade will help re-establish small farmers’ faith in the sustainability of the
agricultural sector in Palestine. With our Fairtrade premium we would like to buy more
mobile storage containers to retain quality.”

<Producer story II: An Afghan golden raisin farmer, Ali Ahmed (58)> “There have been
many generations of my family farming the same land... Our grapes are dried in kishmish
khanas (mud brick drying houses). These were all destroyed during the Soviet
occupation. I have remained in Chaharikar throughout war excepting for a week during
the most intense fighting during the Taliban occupation in 1997... [The U.S.’s] Bombing
destroyed a lot of the vineyards but many were not damaged at the root and were able to
grow back. Our community would like to rebuild the kishmish khanas. The future of our
business depends on our security. We are not that concerned about Taliban but we worry
our raisins will get stolen at night. I hope that Fairtrade helps boost our economy so that
there is less crime and we can confidently invest in our future.”

In these rather stereotypical narratives of fair trade, the political and historical
circumstances such as the expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestine or Afghanistan’s war-torn
contemporary history are only represented as external backdrop and adversities that contribute to
accentuate the entrepreneurial aspiration of the producers who are exclusively interested in the

“quality” and “security” of their products. It should be also noted that in these stories the solutions for the producers’ difficulties are primarily sought in the promotions of “product quality” and “investment” through a fair trade premium.

The same kind of depoliticized representation is also found in Beautiful Coffee’s description of the producers: in their promotional brochures and booklets, the historical and political conditions in Nepal, Peru, and Uganda are never directly referred to; they instead focus on individual producers’ efforts to sustain and grow their enterprises. To illustrate, the organization’s official blog presents a touching story of a Nepali boy named Subhkar who struggles alone to manage coffee trees after his father and elder brothers have left for other countries (including South Korea) to find jobs. The story, however, zooms in on the boy’s endeavor and hardship without providing any information as to why his father and brothers had to leave the country (not to mention Nepal’s social contradictions such as longstanding political turbulence and civil war, imperialist interventions from neighboring countries, and entrenched caste disparities). By erasing all these socio-economic contexts from the sight, the story titled “A boy having a dream of coffee” deploys familiar sentimental tropes of a virtuous, entrepreneurial poor struggling against external predicaments. It is thus no wonder that the story seems to lead us to a trite moral lesson mentioned in the blog through a neighbor’s words: “Although Nepal is a poor country for now, whoever strives will be able to build their own

15 The story is one of the most popular producer stories in Beautiful Coffee. Due to the popularity, the facial picture of Subhkar has been used in a package of “the Gift of Himalaya.” See <Figure 12>. The producers’ stories including Subhkar’s had also been made as a documentary film and published as a book.

16 A political philosopher, Wendy Brown sheds light on the two meanings of depoliticization: first, it commonly involves a mode of “dispossessing the constitutive histories and powers organizing contemporary problems and contemporary political subjects—that is, depoliticization of sources of political problems”; the second meaning can be found in “substituting emotional and personal vocabularies for political ones in formulating solutions to political problems” (Brown 2008: 16). These two meanings and strategies of depoliticization are deeply connected to each other. If we cannot find the cause of a certain problem in its political and historical contexts, the solution would be reduced and restricted to individual ethical choices and practices.
family, business, and life.”

On the other side of this struggling entrepreneur, there exists the face of “sympathetic and responsible consumer-investors.” If the producers’ hope to overcome external predicaments rests on business development via fair trade, it would be ethical, conscientious consumers in the North who can make the dream come true. What is interesting is that the aforementioned stories—highlighting the entrepreneurial development of producers and various efforts to promote fair trade consumption—contribute to rendering the relationship between producers and consumers in fair trade as a form of investee-investor. For example, as noted above, the information about how the fair trade premium is used to “empower” producers and improve the quality of coffee are continuously updated on Beautiful Coffee’s homepage, so that consumers can trace the individual and entrepreneurial development of producers; enthusiastic regular customers are encouraged to visit producers to witness the impact of their purchases. In this way, fair trade consumers follow the visible influences of their purchases and build up imaginary “social bonds” with producers and their businesses. Their purchases therefore go beyond anonymous economic acquisitions and become a sort of “investment” in producers’ human capital and businesses.

Furthermore, it is argued that participation in fair trade brings meaningful changes into the global market economy beyond producers’ individual and entrepreneurial development: in fair trade, consumers are represented as cosmopolitan, active agents who feel responsible for global poverty and inequality beyond their own narrow interests. “Enlightened Consumer,” a Beautiful Coffee educational booklet, describes the emergence of global, ethical consumers as follows:

With the proliferation of inexpensive products around the globe, conscious consumers have called into question the costs of their over-consumptive lifestyles. People are
increasing their awareness of business practices, labor conditions, environmental issues, and cultural changes that increase the vulnerability of low-income people. Increasingly, consumers in developed nations are applying their buying power to challenge the current system and demand supply-chain accountability. Consumers are seeking alternatives that offer secure and rewarding lives for less fortunate people.\textsuperscript{17}

That is, consumers are now depicted as what Littler calls a “hybrid subject of activist-consumer” who “seeks alternatives” through “their buying power” (2009: 3). Another brochure for youth supporters of Beautiful Coffee suggests more concrete virtues of the activist-consumer-investor: “Empathy: Be empathetic as a human being with those who are suffering in the other side of the earth; Responsibility: Be responsible as a global citizen for building a new solidarity with the suffering others; Challenge: Be voluntary and ambitious as a young innovator for fighting against global poverty.”\textsuperscript{18} As seen in these morally-infused virtues, the fair trade consumers stand for cosmopolitan, ethical citizens who engage with global issues and pursue human values. Whereas the producer is represented as a virtuous entrepreneur who attends only to their enterprises and the quality of the products, the consumer is interpellated as an empathetic, responsible investor embodying affective and ethical agency. The agency of the consumer-investor, however, should not be exaggerated, because such agency is limited and restricted to the market-based transactions of fair trade, which I will turn to now.

Above all, the new symmetrical figures of “entrepreneurial producer” and “responsible consumer/investor” are sharing depoliticized forms of subjectivity in that they both present “individual” activity and participation as a “market agent” as the solution to structural socio-


\textsuperscript{18} Beautiful Coffee, \textit{The Code of Practice for Coffee Commandos} [커피특공대 행동규칙], 2011.
political problems (Maniates 2002; Newhouse 2011). For example, in a “consciousness raising” event for the regular consumers of fair trade chocolate that I attended in April 2014, a staff member of Beautiful Coffee enumerated the causes of poverty in West Arica as follows: “discrimination, exclusion, insecurity, precarity, and the lack of resources, consciousness, institutions, assets, capacities.” These structural problems, however, are soon displaced to the matter of “unfair market competition” on the producer’s side: the staff member was quick to recapitulate that “because of these problems, in a word, the cacao producers in West Africa are not competing in a fair playground.” The solution for the problems would thus be sought in making the uneven playground “flat” via fair trade, so that the empowered producers could fairly compete.

On the consumer side, the keys for resolving the aforementioned problems are limited to the purchase of fair trade products. In another education program for high school students organized by Beautiful Coffee, a staff member described the reality of child slavery in West Africa and asked the audience, “What can we do to help them and change this harsh reality?” It should not be surprising that a simple answer was immediately presented, despite the complexity of an issue in which colonialism, capitalism, and developmentalism are all entangled: “We should buy fair trade chocolates instead of others, because fair trade products are made without child slavery and give the fair and just price to the producers.” The promotional leaflet that the instructor gave to the students even goes further to suggest the four ways of contribution that fair trade customers can make: “1. purchase of fair trade products; 2. participation in fair trade education; 3. donation to fair trade organization; 4. involvement in the fair trade campaign.”

What is remarkable here is a gaping chasm between the diagnosis of the problem and the prescription for it. The presented solutions seem to doubly depoliticize the global poverty issue:
on the one hand, the social and structural causes of poverty are depoliticized as they are simply reduced to a problem of unfair competitions and transactions in the market; on the other hand, when the sociopolitical elements are erased out, the solutions for poverty are also depoliticized as they are sought not in political, structural transformations but in the individualized practices of the responsible consumers and entrepreneurial producers.

Such depoliticizing elements in fair trade discourse and practice seem to reveal the internal contradictions of fair trade as “marketized gift-exchange.” That is to say, although activism advocates social solidarity between producers in the South and consumers in the North, such solidarity is considered to have to be built upon market transactions, and thus the solidarity activities of the participants are also primarily bound to commercial trades and investments as market subjects. For that reason, the faces of producers and consumers circulating in the practice seem to be reduced to “entrepreneurial producers” imbued with exotic victimhood and “sympathetic investor” or “responsible consumers” with limited agency. Consequently, the whole mechanism of such representation seems to stumble into a trap of what Povinelli (2001) calls “the cunning of recognition” in her analysis of aboriginal reparations in Australia. As aboriginals had to stage and “perform” their already-damaged “nativeness” to gain the recognition and reparation from the state, the subjects in fair trade could gain their “face” and obtain recognition insofar as they primarily perform their market subjectivities as homo œconomicus.19 As a result, fair trade’s market-based activism, despite its valid criticism and

19 Various researches have illuminated how fair trade organizations attempt to discipline and supervise their producers through various techniques including certification (Jaffee 2014; Molberg 2010; West 2012). For example, in exploring the transformations of coffee agriculture in Papua New Guinea by fair trade NGOs, West (2012) strongly criticizes that fair trade NGOs contributes to disseminate market rationality among producers and introduce “neoliberal audit culture” in the global South. It is beyond the scope of this paper to question whether the criticism is valid and legitimate. In relation to our discussion, it would be enough to point out that we could reassure the intimate relation between recognition and discipline in the disciplinary and supervisory activities of fair trade organizations.
problematization of the current market system, can only stay within the limited solutions such as the empowerment of producers and the ethical consumption of customers.

IN PLACE OF CONCLUSION:
MARKETIZED MORALITY AND DEPOLOTICIZED SOLIDARITY

As is well known, Mauss’ theory of gift is an attempt to explore the grounding principle of “society” as a realm distinct from market and state. As Mary Douglas rather plainly puts it in her English preface to The Gift, “the cycling gift system is the society” and “the theory of the gift is a theory of human solidarity” (1990: ix-x). In the still-controversial conclusion of the book, Mauss maintains that contemporary societies are returning to the “group morality” of gift-giving, which begins to serve as the foundational principle of then-emerging social welfare states. According to Mauss, the institutionalization of social welfare and the resurgences of solidarity organizations such as cooperatives, mutual aids, and occupational groups signal the “great progress” that “Durkheim has often advocated” (1990: 70). In this sense, Mauss’ theory of gift-exchange can be understood as an attempt to locate general principles of social solidarity such as mutuality and reciprocity, and thus demarcate the plane of society within the then-emerging social welfare state.

In tracing how fair trade as marketized gift-exchange creates multi-faceted social bonds between producers and consumers, this chapter has elucidated that the faces of fair trade participants have three distinct layers. If the first layer is the pair of “exotic victim” and “tourist savior” that is characterized by traditional aid and its paternalistic dependency, the second layer consists of the mutual recognition of homo economicus as an anonymous partner of market
trade. Finally, the third layer includes the faces of aspirational entrepreneurs and responsible consumer-investors that are formed by a returned social and moral bond that are rooted upon the market. As the slogan “Let them taste a fish” (discussed in Prologue) indicates a new developmental paradigm that diverges from both conventional aid-economy and industrial developmentalism, the multi-layered social bonds created by marketized gift-exchange are also distinguished from both the interdependent sociality of gift-giving and anonymous transactions in the market. What we are witnessing in fair trade and ethical consumption is the emergence of the hybrid “social bond” that cannot be reduced simply to either economic/financial liaisons or social associations. It would be interesting, then, to ask what characterizes the social bond or solidarity between producers and consumers in fair trade activism and how the newly emerging sociality is differentiated from the Maussian notion of solidarity based on gift-exchange.

To address these questions, it might be useful to briefly consider a genealogical analysis of the notion of “social solidarity.” As Michel Foucault points out in examining the emergence of liberal government in the 18th century, the modern notion of “society” first emerged as a new domain for solving an inherent conundrum in liberal government: “the art of government must be exercised in a space of sovereignty... but the trouble, misfortune, or problem is that the space turns out to be inhabited by economic subjects” (2010: 294). According to Foucault, the newly emerging liberal subject, *homo economicus*, is based on different logics from the traditional model of sovereignty and its subject, *homo juridicus*: if sovereignty originates in a totalizing

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20 I appreciate Elizabeth Povinelli and Rosalind Morris for pointing out this ambivalence of the term of “social bond” and helping to develop my thoughts. In this sense, the newly emerging sociality is characterized by the indistinguishableness or indeterminacy between social affiliation and financial liaison (see also the discussion of the emerging notion of community in Chapter 2). Such a transformation seems to undermine the potential and perspective of various political projects that are based upon a sort of “logocentric” and dualist approach that distinguishes *immanent* social bonds and its *alienated* or *parasitic* financialized form, finding an alternative in the former (e.g. Graeber 2011; Hardt and Negri 2011).
unity of legal-political right, economic subjects are assumed to embody non-totalizable and irreducible multiplicities of interests; if sovereignty relies on the closed boundaries of the state, economic rationality surpasses the boundaries to create a global economic bond. A new governmental plane of “civil society”—which, Foucault adds, will be quickly called “society, the social, and nation”—emerges for mediating the irreconcilable heterogeneity and split between the subject of right and the subject of interest (2010: 296). That is to say, society is demarcated as an intermediary space in which to integrate multiple interests and build moral bonds among individuals via the paradoxical principle of what Adam Ferguson called “disinterested interest” and the modernized form of pastoral power based on “omnes et sigulatim (all and each)” (Foucault 2010; Procacci 1987). In this way, society would serve to bridge and reconcile two different principles—i.e. the multiplicities of interest (market) and the unity of right (state), in which individual pursuits of self-interests are translated into the general, national good.

According to Jacques Donzelot (1994) and Bruno Karsenti (1994), Mauss’ “theory of gift” and Durkheim’s “social solidarism” can be grasped as “strategic inventions” to provide a formula of stable moral and affective associations in-between the state and modern market and institute the organizational social solidarity on a national level.21

In this respect, what apparently distinguishes social solidarity sought in fair trade from the traditional one is that the new “imagined community” exceeds the boundaries of a nation. As noted by Gupta (1998), the hyphenated structure of nation-state is now being recomposed, as new national and fraternal bonds, which have served as the space for solidarity, recognition, and

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21 Karsenti argues that Durkheim and Mauss, despite shared scholarly and political purposes, take different approaches to “social facts.” While Durkheim views social facts as objective and independent entities by emphasizing an absolute separation between individual and collective representation, Mauss develops a more complicated framework regarding freedom and obligation in a society. According to Karsenti, Mauss presents the relation between individual and collective representations as one of “translation” that is open to ambiguity and interpretation rather than following Durkheim’s social determinism (Karsenti 1994).
gift in the modern state, begin to form beyond the boundaries of the states. The direct, intimate associations that fair trade and ethical consumerism pursue between producers in the South and consumers in the North exemplify the tendency toward such transnational, cosmopolitan solidarities, along with other moral economic practices such as international volunteerism, transnational corporate social responsibility, and the global microcredit movement.

The more significant and fundamental difference of the new solidarity, however, should rather be found in the fact that the traditional trichotomy of state-society-market surrounding social solidarity is now replaced with the dichotomy of market and society. That is to say, the cosmopolitan solidarity that fair trade imagines builds upon the foreclosure of the matters of political right and subject, and instead it works exclusively along the axis of market-society. What reveals such foreclosure in the most symptomatic way is perhaps the slogan of “Vote with your dollar!” that is commonly chanted in the practices of fair trade, ethical consumption, and global microcredit movements. The popular slogan betrays that the exercise of political right is now substituted by economic practices, and that a short circuit, in which the construction of social bonds is directly grafted onto economic practices, becomes successfully established. In an interview with Beautiful Coffee’s vice president who has maintained that fair trade is part of the human rights movement, I asked him to elaborate how he defined human rights; he answered, “I think that the fundamental human right is the right to live without the fear of poverty and maintain a sustainable, good life.” No matter whether we agree with his definition, this notion of human rights seems to illustrate that the concept of right in the new imagined community can be

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22 For example, World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) include “Fair trade as a social contract” in their charter of fair trade principles. They explain the principle that “Fair Trade transactions exist within an implicit “social contract” in which buyers (including final consumers) agree to do more than is expected by the conventional market, such as paying fair prices, providing pre-finance and offering support for capacity building.” FLO and WFTO. *A Charter of Fair Trade Principles*, 2009, p. 5.
conceived without going through the political dimension, which would be impossible in the traditional political right such as sovereignty within nation-state.

Finally, in this new social imaginary, “the social” seems to be imagined less as an autonomous and objective structure than as a set of affective, moral, and immanent networks that should be voluntarily constructed and sustained by ethical individuals. When Émile Durkheim argues that social facts should be treated to be an objective reality and society as a whole is bigger than the sum of its parts, he supposes society as a homogenous, transcendental, and universal plane that exists independently from subjective wills and individual representations. As Poovey aptly points out, such a Durkheimian assumption of underlying orders and structures lies “at the heart of the modern social imaginary” (2012: 141). Furthermore, paradoxically, the very assumption that society consists of an objectified set of invisible orders has enabled the modern social plane—that is also called nation or civil society, as noted by Foucault—to serve as a target of political intervention and state involvement, whether such interventions are for a radical transformation or gradual reforms of the abstract structure (Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Therborn 1985).  

The modern social imaginary, however, seems to be gradually superseded by a new imaginary based on an a posteriori set of direct, affective, and intimate—but simultaneously instable and fragmented—networks between socialized individuals (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Davies 2014; Muehlebach, 2012; Terranova 2016;). Likewise, what characterizes the

23 Charles Taylor posits the paradox as the “bifocal” character of the modern social imaginary (2003: 77). That is to say, on the one hand, a modern society is imagined as the public sphere that can be transformed by “self-ruling people” or “collective agencies” but simultaneously, it is also presented as following objectified laws and having abstract orders like other processes in nature (2003: 75-77). According to Taylor, this paradoxical understanding of society characterizes “modern social imaginary” that is distinct from the traditional social imaginary based on a static, cosmological hierarchy. See also Elliot and Turner (2012).

24 The examples that signal the transforming social imaginary are found in various fields beyond the social economy sector. To name a few: the decline of the hegemony of statistical knowledge (Davies 2015a), the rise of social network theory and big data in social science (Freeman, 2004), and the plethora of social network platform services (including ‘Facebook’). To trace the widespread symptomatic examples is beyond the scope of this dissertation that focuses on the new social imaginary in the social economy. The return of Gabriel Tarde in
social solidarity found in social economy activism, as well as fair trade, is not so much an imagined identification with the whole anonymous group of population or nation as connected communities in which you share affect and intimacy with “people whose ‘faces’ you know.” As the paradox of the modern social imaginary is dismantled, the politics that target the universal, national plane of society also come out of purview and are simply equated with the building of social bonds through market transaction (again, as in the slogan of “Vote with your dollars!”).

The aforementioned depoliticizing effects that fair trade has produced are not unrelated to this condition that the new form of solidarity has faced. Simply put, the problematic of social solidarity now seems to oscillate between the bleak axis of market and society with the foreclosure of politics. It is in this impoverished imagination that the meanings and implications of “face” in fair trade and social economy become evident. The metaphor of face undoubtedly shows that such practices seek to build mutual recognition and social bond through gift-exchange; nevertheless, it also seems to divulge that, as seen in the phrase of “market economy/capitalism with a human face,” the creation of social solidarity works only at the surface that is still deeply rooted and embedded onto the deeper structures of market economy.

Contemporary social theory, however, seems to be worth of noting. As the main rival of Durkheim, Tarde’s social theory has received little attention for a long time. Recently, however, his main arguments—that a society is open networks or associations that should be built through inventions—and his project of “psychological economy”—that examines the working of non-rational, affective elements such as passion in economic system—starts to attract more and more attention of scholars (e.g., Candea 2010; Latour 2002; Latour and Lépinay 2009; Lazzarato 2014). Bruno Latour and Vincent Lépinay even asks:

“How different the history of the 20th century would have been had the bible of men of action been Gabriel Tarde’s *Psychologie Économique*, published in 1902, instead of Marx’s work!” (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 1)

We can see clear consonance between Tarde’s arguments and the new subjectivity and sociality in the neosocial government. Let me note here that Gabriel Tarde is one of the first scholars who used the expression of “human capital” (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 49-56).
The gaping chasm that we have already observed between the diagnosis of social problems and the prescription may be caused by the contradictory attempt to redefine the whole economic structure only by engaging with the surface or face without political and radical challenges to it. Conversely speaking, the attempts to seek social solidarity and transformation in the lack of universal political right and subject would privilege face as a remedial locus, which nevertheless, as we have already seen, only serves as the point of juncture of humanist discourse based on gift-exchange and the increasing imposition of market rationality are met and mutually intertwined.

In conclusion, in order to escape from the closed circuit of society and market, we need to think beyond the conventional critique of market which is based on the water-downed Maussian and Polanyian dichotomies—market versus society, utilitarianism versus solidarism, *homo economicus* versus *homo socialis*. As shown by various works on ethical capitalism and the new form of solidarity, such blunt oppositions have not only been practically superseded by the practices of moralizing market and marketizing morality, but also have been mobilized to disseminate and justify the depoliticized neoliberal rationality rather than to serve as a critique of it (Collier 2011; Muehlebach 2009, 2012; Rajak 2011; Vogelmann 2012; Davies 2012, 2015b). By exploring the new ethicality and sociality found in fair trade in the heuristic terms of “the moral economy of face,” this chapter has illuminated and problematized the depoliticized articulation of the moral aspiration with market rationality. What I want to point out here is not simply that the moral economic practices have produced depoliticizing effects; my point is rather to show that such moral practices and their dream of new solidarities, which often appear to be

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25 In this sense, the practices of social economy and ethical capitalism, pace their Polanyian language, seem to produce a “market-embedded society” not a “socially-embedded market.” For Polanyian perspectives in the moral economic practices, see Browne and Milgram (2009), Hann and Hart (2011).
out of innocent non-political goodwill, are always-already haunted by recognition struggle and disciplinary intention. In other words, the construction of social solidarity cannot be conceived without the symbolic, political struggles for and beyond recognition. What we need, therefore, would be a sort of double deconstruction: on the one hand, we should deconstruct the narrow binary of the social/the moral and market to politically problematize the whole structure of contemporary capitalism; on the other hand, we should also deconstruct the nonpolitical, moral solidarity by revealing that gift-exchange and recognition are always saturated with the matter of power. It would only be through the elaborated framework via the deconstructions that we could fully grasp and go beyond the underlying contradictions inherent to the practices of “marketized gift-exchange” and its new form of solidarity, which are emerging as the new “face” of millennium capitalism.

26 In fact, this is a position that was already adumbrated by Mauss himself when he pointed out the ambivalence of “gift” as a present and simultaneously a poison. That is to say, the benevolence of gift always includes a potential hostility or curse within it. See Mauss (1997).
CONCLUSION

INNOVATION, CARE, GIFT, AND GARY BECKER

“The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour power, are determined only by their own free will… Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to his own advantage. The only force bringing them together, and putting them into relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interest of each.” – Karl Marx (1976: 280).

In analyzing the capitalist labor market as the “surface” that conceals “the hidden abode of production” or “the secret of profit-making,” Marx suggests the well-known association “Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham” as the principles that rule the ideological realm (Marx 1976: 278-80). It is important to understand that here Marx is not simply dismissing modern liberal values such as freedom, equality, and property.27 What this seemingly awkward association indicates is rather a sort of proto-logic of “signification” or more exactly, what I call the logic of translation. That is to say, the meanings and values of the universal, abstract ideas—freedom, equality, property—are not given and pre-determined; they can and should be determined in retrospect, only when the last element, “Bentham,” is added. “Bentham” here signifies a human condition that provides a matrix upon which the actual values of the universal

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27 I appreciate Seo Dong-Jin for reminding me of this phrase and its interpretation in a personal conversation. See also Seo (2015: 114).
ideas are translated and allocated. To borrow a Lacanian term, the Benthamite idea of utilitarian
*homo œconomicus* serves as a “punctuation” or an ideological “point-de-capiton” that “brings
them together” and quilts the drifting meanings of the abstract values (Lacan 2007; cf.
Stavrakakis 1999). As discussed in the Introduction, when Étienne Balibar argues that “the
dominant ideology in a given society is a specific universalization of the imaginary of the
dominated” (1992: 12-13), his point seems to be consonant with Marx’s. The utopian ideals—
which include the imaginary and dream of the dominated—are “translated” in a certain context,
conjuncture, and perspective in order to serve as the “dominant ideology.”

The question that I have attempted to engage in this dissertation can be encapsulated as
follows: how can we evaluate and establish the values such as “innovation,” “care,” and “gift-
giving”—which are advanced by the contemporary project of “ethical capitalism”—in
connection to the neoliberal human condition? In other words, what if the specific implications
of these universal, ideal values can be considered only in relation to the new figure of *homo
œconomicus*, human capital—which is represented, albeit insufficiently and non-exclusively, by
the name of Gary Becker? How can we understand the actual value of these ideas in the new
matrix, i.e., the new human condition? This dissertation is an attempt to follow such a
transformation in the ideology of contemporary capitalism by critically examining the emerging
social economy sector in South Korea.

The purpose of this discussion is not limited to determining whether the social economy,
social entrepreneurship, and their representative values are elements of neoliberal ideology. Nor
is it to argue that the emerging discourses of “the social,” “moral economy,” and “ethical
capitalism” are simply a “new ideological cover” that manipulatively screens the deeper
contradictions of capitalism. If I sound somewhat cynical at various points in this work, the
laugh is not directed at enthusiastic social economy activists and participants. In fact, it is rather easy to ridicule “moral homo economicus” who dresses up his or her business with a moral cloth, reflecting Žižek’s sardonic comment that “now we can have the global capitalist cake, i.e., thrive as profitable entrepreneurs, and eat it, too, i.e., endorse the anti-capitalist causes of social responsibility and ecological concern” (2008: 16). Instead, what I found during my fieldwork research is that something “utopian” exists in people’s desires, aspirations, and endeavors that are invested in the social economy and ethical capitalism (Wright 2010). In the social economy sector, one can find a social welfare beneficiary who establishes an elderly care cooperative to improve the working condition of care workers; a young idealist who quitted a prestigious job and is struggling to launch a social start-up to address the issue of wealth inequality; and people who willingly commit to affective labor or ethical consumption to help and empower the underprivileged in their own communities and developing countries. Where my laugh is directed is rather an ironic space in which the social, democratic, and utopian aspirations for building social bonds and taking care of social problems with their own hands are met and intermingled with governmental exigencies to prescribe moral solutions to the ongoing crisis of capitalist development and reproduction. What I have tried to illuminate throughout this thesis is how the desires are translated and contained through the working of various dispositifs—in other words, how the dispositifs contribute to a “specific universalization” of the utopian dreams of the dominated.

In summary, this dissertation has focused on a new social imaginary, knowledge form, subjectivity, and ethicality that have emerged in the social economy as a result of the imbrication of moral aspirations with the neoliberal human condition. First of all, I have argued that the neoliberal human condition presupposes a new form of homo economicus, human capital, who is
expected to manage all the aspects of life within a single value frame, acting as a “portfolio manager.” The new subjectivity thus incorporates non-economic factors—including social logics and moral orientations—as assets to appreciate his or her overall investability. As a result, the responsibilities for the social or the construction of social bonds are subjectified and transferred onto human capitals who are required to view and manage social and moral values and economic utility as mutually translatable forms. Furthermore, I have explored how the governmental programs that mobilize citizens to build social bonds have changed the natures and forms of community, care, labor, and ethical practices that serve as new potential foundations of sociality. In examining the various fields of community development (chapter 2), the social care market (chapter 3), the social innovation youth activist program (chapter 4), and fair trade consumption (chapter 5), this dissertation has explored how community, care, labor, and ethical practices have been intermingled and articulated with a new form of economic rationality that can be called financial or human capital logic. The notions such as “enterprization of community,” “projective ethicality,” “affective labor (hwaldong),” and “marketized gift-exchange” were discussed to flesh out and illuminate the transformation and articulation more clearly. In doing so, I have attempted to show how the financial logic of neoliberal human capital has conditioned and shaped the new sociality and ethicality: For example, affective social bonds are recast as business resources, caring practices turn into investable projects, and affective labor and ethical consumption contribute to the economization and individualization of social solidarity. Finally, I have conceptualized the dynamics of the new subjectivity, ethicality, and social imaginary in terms of “neosocial government” in which the crisis and dead-end of the neoliberal human capital regime are managed and addressed through social associations based on care, affective labor, and spirit of gift. In exploring how the new form of government emerges in the South Korea’s social
economy sector, this dissertation has sought not only to illuminate the depoliticizing effects of the new form of governing rationality but also reveal its political contradictions and predicaments.

IN SEARCH OF SOCIETY

“If one is going to talk about crises at all, would it not be more apt to speak of a crisis of politics, rather than a crisis of the social?” (Donzelot, 1991: 178)

The analyses of this dissertation eventually illuminate the political predicaments that anti-neoliberal social movements in South Korea are currently facing. As civil society movements have changed their roles from being the forefront of anti-dictatorship struggles, through the watchtower onto the market, to being an equal partner in governance with the government, the political imagination of South Korean social activism has not only lost its critical capacity but also has been gradually subsumed into various governing programs as a quasi-state apparatus. Despite the radical rhetoric and rosy vision found in the social economy or social entrepreneurship trainings, the opposition in these bodies to neoliberal marketization, as seen so far, has safely remained within the remit of the moral problematization of the market economy and thus have led to active participation in governance that aims to offset and correct the inhuman effects of the market. In so doing, their anti-neoliberal agenda has been often appropriated by the state to reproduce and reinforce the neoliberal hegemony.

In fact, the involvement of the anti-neoliberal critique with neoliberal hegemony, either advertently or inadvertently, is neither unique to South Korea nor an exclusive issue for social activism (cf. Paley 2001; Sinha, 2005; Zhan, 2017). In analyzing the current lethargy of critical
theory against neoliberalism, Nancy Fraser (2011) points out the general “crisis of critique”: although the neoliberal system has undergone a multi-layered crisis over the last decade, the critique of neoliberalism is still struggling with “clarifying the nature and roots of crisis as well as the prospects for an emancipatory resolution” (138). In fact, various diagnoses have been presented regarding the impotence of the critique of neoliberalism: while some locate the cause in the prevalent epistemological misunderstanding of neoliberalism that simply equates it with market fundamentalism (e.g., Amable 2011; Dardot and Laval 2013; Peck 2010), others illuminate more fundamental transformations in the language and grammar of the criticism of capitalism in light of “aesthetic critique” (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), “moralization of critique” (Brown 2001), or “the vanishing of negativity” (Badiou 2001; Davies 2015a; Han 2015). What should be pointed out in relation to our discussion is that these diagnoses share the vanishing of universal, objective “society” as their common background. As Poovey (1995, 2002) aptly points out, modern politics has presupposed a sort of meta-position through which to intervene onto the “objective” and “structural” order of a society, either to partially reform or radically transform it (cf. Taylor 2003). As the objective and universal nature of society has been gradually denied, however, the meta-position to institute and transform the social order has also been threatened (Marchart 2007). In a new social imaginary consisting of voluntary social bonds and intimate networks, what fills the lacunae of the structural analysis and political critique are rather moral or aesthetical discourses that reduce historical and political problems into the issues of individual ethics and existence. The decline of the universal and structural social has been thus deeply entangled with the crisis of anti-neoliberal politics and critique.

In this sense, it would not be surprising that the pursuit of “the social” in the social economy has only produced dubious political effects, at best. As seen so far, social economy
activists’ efforts to construct “the social” are justified and supported by Maussian or Polanyian language as part of gift-economy or society’s “self-defense” in opposition to neoliberal marketization. Such attempts, however, often appear to end up depoliticizing the social issue and deepening the crisis of anti-neoliberal critique. For example, during my fieldwork research period, the Seoul Social Economy Center and the Seoul Metropolitan Government have actively promoted “social housing” projects as an alternative to the precarious housing conditions and the saturated real estate market. The main purpose of the policy is to provide housing units with small private rooms and shared living space for impoverished youth who cannot afford the high rents in Seoul. The social housing residents are required to build a “community” in the unit and expected to become active and participatory in local community regeneration projects. Lee Joo-Won, who was introduced as the vice-president of the Youth School in the Prologue, is also a pioneering social housing activist and the CEO of a social enterprise “Toad Housing.” One of his main businesses is to renovate empty houses with the government’s financial support and rent them to youth at a 20% lower price than the average price in the neighborhood. A government policy report introduces Toad Housing’s social housing project as an “innovative” way to address housing and youth poverty issues. Given the explanation, it appears that everyone will benefit from the project: the homeowner who has abandoned the empty house can renovate it without financial burden and earn additional income; youth can get a stable residence with an affordable rent; and the government can solve the youth housing issue and prevent “urban crime” potentially caused by empty houses. Finally, “social” housing projects are expected to contribute

28 For the social precarity of housing among South Korean youth, see Jung (2017).
to “reinvigorating the residential communities around the empty houses” and “boosting the sharing economy” in Seoul.29

What is interesting in this situation is that the monopolized ownership of land and house properties—that has often been cited as a main factor in the current saturated real estate market—is completely out of purview and instead the issue is represented as manageable and solvable by individuals’ sharing practices. This is not saying that this program is meaningless or neoliberal because it does not touch the underlying structure. This is simply pointing out that the program shows how much the adjective “social” in the social economy is depoliticized and how bleak its political imaginations are. The political bareness would be strikingly revealed if we compare the program with Polanyi’s own prescription on the “fictitious commodities” such as land, labor, and money, which locates the solution in their de-commodification or socialization (Polanyi, 2011). In this sense, the “social” housing project seems to be an example of what William Davies (2015a) calls “neoliberal socialism” or what I call “neosocial government” in which the social problems are addressed by appealing to the values such as community, caring, and sharing and people’s moral commitments while being cautious not to interfere with the underlying structures—in this case, property ownership. As Edward Said (1983) conceptualized “traveling theory” in tracing how Lukács’ revolutionary concept of “reification” became reduced, codified, and instituted as a tepid literary theory as it went through different conjectures, the Maussian and Polanyian ideas are traveling and circulating in South Korea’s cramped “social” space where political imagination is foreclosed and the link between social solidarity and politics is broken.

To be sure, it might be misleading to say that the pursuit of society “heads off” the political challenge, or to describe society and politics as having a trade-off relationship. As James Ferguson argues, it is true that “a wide range of new social programs have been sites of political contestation and provided the grounds for new forms of mobilization” (2015: 207). It should be pointed out, however, that the politics in the field has a new feature that continually displaces the meta-intervention of politics with the ongoing pursuit of the social. In other words, politics is now equated with the construction of the social rather than with the transformation of social structure. The paradoxical coexistence of hope and despair in the social economy, as we have already discussed in Chapter 4, might be symptomatic of this transformation of the political. On the one hand, society—which is not regarded as an objective reality—can be easily transformed by individual innovative, caring, and sharing practices; on the other hand, although or because it lacks objective structures, the fundamental transformation of society has become unimaginable and impossible. The plethora of hope can be co-existent with the prevalent feelings of despair.

These analyses do not necessarily lead to a pessimistic conclusion, however. What I want to elucidate is a simple fact: criticizing and problematizing neoliberalism based on the liberal human condition and social imaginary will always miss the target. As repeatedly pointed out throughout the dissertation, the neoliberal condition and the new economic rationality require us to re-think the criticality of anti-neoliberalism that has relied on a series of conventional binaries between social logics and market rationality, the private and the public, and care and labor. In order to challenge the “Janus-faced” neoliberalism and pursue a new possibility for politics, therefore, we need to first understand the new forms of subjectivity, ethicality, and sociality that have cropped up in the transformed, neoliberalized conditions. The ultimate goal of this
dissertation lies in examining the novel, hybrid fields and emphasizing the necessity of further explorations to envisage a new politics as well as an advanced critique of neoliberalism.

TOWARDS NEW COMBINATIONS OF DISPOSITIFS

I conclude this dissertation by ironically suggesting that the clue for the new critique of neoliberalism could be found in the characteristic practice of “innovators,” i.e., seeking a “new combination” of the existing elements. If, as Ong (2006) argues, neoliberalism should be understood as “mobile assemblage” that involves the articulation, de-articulation, and re-articulation of “existing radical, alternative, and contestatory discourses and technologies” for its purposes, the alternative to neoliberal assemblage should be found in the re-articulation of its dispositifs toward a new direction. For example, we should ask and explore how the spirit of gift in ethical capitalism discourses can be used to radicalize fiscal issues and debt refusal (Lazzarato 2012, 2015; Ross 2013), how the ethics of care and affective labor can serve as a foundation for a new polity instead of being mobilized to ameliorate the crisis of the human capital regime (Federici, 2012; Hardt and Negri, 2011; Weeks 2011), and how the aspirations of communities can formulate a new notion of ownership and “communal property” (Coombe 2011). That is to say, what is at stake here is how to re-translate the “utopian” aspirations for different, divergent political purposes.

In this sense, cacophonies found in the translation works of the existing dispositifs should get more attention. A translation always leaves “the untranslatable” as remnant (Balibar 2012). Aspirations for communal lives, for example, cannot be completely translated into the desires for social capital or social networks. It is in the remnant of the untranslatable that the gap between
the potential and the actual is revealed. According to Agamben, the duty of “the contemporary” or an “archaeologist of the present” is to excavate the potential that is buried under the actual: “the contemporary”—in my opinion, understood as another name for “anthropologist”—should find the potential by “returning to a present where we have never been” (2009: 51-52). Although Agamben does not suggest any new dispositifs for re-translating or actualizing the potential, it could be said that what we need is a new arrangement of dispositifs for re-activating politics and political subjectivization beyond the existing translation and actualization.

This is not to say simply that we need to “re-write” or re-imagine the dynamic of contemporary capitalism. In criticizing the totalizing representation of the economy and capitalism, Gibson-Graham (2006) suggests a new politics of re-presentation of the economy as an open field that consists of heterogeneous tendencies and practices (253). According to them, the “capitalocentric representation” has made it so difficult for people to think about the existing anti-capitalist elements in the current capitalist system that a new discursive strategy is necessary to enable to “empty, fragment, decenter and open the economy, liberating discourses of economy and society from capitalism’s embrace” (45). The problems with this rather idealistic and pseudo-deconstructionist argument, however, lie not simply in that the heterogeneous non-capitalist elements are not easily separable and distinguishable from the articulated totality of capitalist (re)production, but also that representing and organizing the economy as diverse, heterogeneous fields has long served as part of the governing language and strategy. As we have seen so far, the neoliberal condition—which places social logics and economic rationality

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30 According to Bernard Stiegler (2010), this lack of internal re-appropriation of dispositifs marks a major limitation of Agamben’s politics. For Agamben, dispositifs are discussed as a set that should be either wholly embraced or entirely abandoned (Stiegler 2010: 162-165).

31 Their position leads to an analysis of “non-capitalist elements” in the system including community economies and ethical consumption. See Gibson-Graham (2013).

32 See also the footnote 20 in chapter 5.
onto the same plane as mutually translatable forms—continues to produce hybrid spaces where capitalist elements cannot be distinguished from what Gibson-Graham hastily called “non-capitalist” elements. What is most important, then, is not so much “re-writing” or de-centering the capitalocentric narrative about the economy as inventing a universal foundation of politics and “re-arranging” the dispositifs to restore a broken link between society and politics.

INNOVATION, CARE, GIFT, AND…X?

Let us return to Marx’s epigraph. Although Marx emphasizes that the “truth” of capitalist production lies in the “hidden abode,” it does not necessarily mean that the sphere of circulation and its values function as a simple screen or ideological hoax. It should be understood, rather, as indicating that the universal, abstract values are open to new translations and articulations and thus their definitions become the objects of ideological and hegemonic struggles. Such re-translation is, in fact, exactly what Marx attempts throughout his work: in the realm of capitalist production, he discovers and analyzes “labor power”—the “peculiar commodity” that internally escapes from and disrupts the rule of equal, free exchange and the principle of reciprocity—and thereby reveals the class partiality of the universal and ideal values. It might not be an exaggeration, therefore, to say that modern socialist and communist politics was born when “labor” took the place of “Bentham,” i.e., when universal labor was declared as “a new human condition” (Castel 1996, 2003). As the values of freedom, equality, and property were problematized and redefined in the perspective of labor and the “right to labor” (le droit au travail), the notions of social property, social citizenship, and universal solidarity have emerged as objects of collective, hegemonic struggles (Balibar 2004; Castel 2003; Procacci 1987). The
formation of what Balibar (1990) calls the “national-social state” and “social government”—in which the antagonism between capital and labor is registered and managed on the national-social plane—was a historical by-product of the struggles.33

Perhaps, what we are missing today, then, is a new conceptualization of the human condition that we can put in lieu of Gary Becker. How can we newly define the universal human condition in a way that would problematize and redefine abstract values such as innovation, caring, and gift, and thereby introduce space for critique, politics, negativity, and antagonism? In fact, potential candidates have been actively presented including biopolitical humanitarianism (e.g., Fassin 2007; Feldman and Ticktin 2010); precarity or vulnerability (Barchiesi 2011; Butler 2006; Gilson 2016; Ross 2010; Standing 2011); the common (Hardt and Negri 2011) and so on. Although this dissertation has shown that some of potential candidates—community, care, affective labor, and gift-exchange—remain within the threshold of depoliticized and ethical sociality, their potentialities should continue to be experimented and thoroughly examined. Can these alternatives not only provide “the source of social utility” and a “legitimate ground for social recognition” but also succeed in generating a universal vision of politics (Castel, 1996: 620)? Can they open up a new condition of possibility for politics by re-translating and re-appropriating emerging ideological values such as innovation, community, care, and gift, as wage labor once did? Can they provide a conceptual and practical foundation upon which the dispositifs are rearranged? Those questions cannot be answered immediately. What is for sure, however, is that addressing these questions will be the challenge for anyone who wants to go

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33 In this sense, the “developmental” government can be understood as relying on the governing rationality that adjusts the liberal universal values in terms of the collective or the nation but still denies the “right” to/of labor. Instead of enfranchising social rights, the developmental state sought to directly align individual interests with national prosperity by continuing to promote rapid economic growth.
beyond social and moral correctives to the crisis of contemporary capitalism and engage with its underlying structures.
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