Neoliberalism and Its Crises: A Festschrift Symposium in Honour of Janine Brodie
Host: Department of Political Science, University of Alberta, Edmonton
Venue: Matrix Hotel, Treaty 6 Territory, 4-5 May 2017

Symposium Overview
Neoliberalism and its Crises is a two-day symposium honouring and building from the career of Dr. Janine Brodie. Participants will engage the crucial issues animating contemporary political life that centrally inform Dr. Brodie's research. Neoliberalism is an approach to governance that privileges the individual and the market over more collective forms of social organization. It has informed politics and policy making since the 1970's. The questions for us now in the wake of the financial crash of 2008 and the rise of populist movements and governments is whether this is neoliberalism's final crisis? And what might emerge to replace it? These are the very questions that the 18 invited scholars will address in seven themed panels. Dr. Brodie's research has analysed this sea-change in the relationship between citizens and the state. Her insights set the table for a remarkable range of future projects. The capacious and generative quality of Dr. Brodie's work is sure to catalyze the research collaborations that will emerge from this symposium. Specifically, the symposium provides the foundation for a future SSHRC Insight Grant on the fate of neoliberalism and an edited volume derived from the symposium papers.

Hosted by the Department of Political Science in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta on May 4-5, 2017 at the Matrix Hotel, 1040 on Treaty Six Territory in Edmonton, the symposium brings together leading, emerging and established international scholars. The symposium offers an important opportunity both to celebrate Dr. Brodie's path-breaking intellectual contributions and to explore the range of research projects that her work has inspired. It will provide a rich experience for scholarly exchange, contribute to the intellectual networks of emerging scholars, produce a significant edited collection presenting current theoretical and empirical investigations of neoliberalism, and celebrate the career of one of Canada's most important political scientists.

Abstracts

Panel 1: Culture, Land, Borders

Davina Bhandar (Simon Fraser University)"*Demarking Status Through Border Techné: Site of Neoliberal Crisis*"

The border is a site of reconstituting, shifting, engineering and deploying various forms of political status and subjectivities. The border, whether resisted, invented, demanded, contained or proliferated, has become a central site of contemporary political and social crisis. In this paper I argue that the border is a central site in which status is demarcated, and the technology of the border, the extension of data surveillance, legal and social apparatus, and its portability is itself a technology of status production. How the contemporary social imaginary might operate in resistance to or contained by neoliberal governance is being articulated through the way that the border operates. This paper hopes to examine the darkening social imaginary, as discussed by Brodie (2007) evident in the formation political subjectivity and the understanding of freedom produced through regimes of neoliberal governance.

Isabel Altamirano-Jiminez (University of Alberta). *"Indigenous Women's Rights, Containment and the Neo-liberal State."*

Abstract: In my presentation, I will consider how the simultaneously recognition of Indigenous "culture" as a set of practices for asserting land rights and as "customs" that are "inconsistent" with national laws and international human rights has produced zones of legality/illegality shaping how the state relates to the Indigenous population. Focusing on the Family Homes and Matrimonial Interests Act in Canada and the Indigenous Electoral Reform 2014 in Mexico I will show how Indigenous women's rights are being mobilized by the state as a technology of containment of resistance to the deepening of neo-liberal policies in both Canada and Mexico. I will argue that this technology of containment is corollary of broader structures and processes and as such cannot be analyzed without the historical, social, political and economic contexts in which it is implemented.

Alexandra Dobrowolsky (Saint Mary's University, and Dalhousie). *"Re-Patriating Immigration Policy?: Present Day Puzzles in Neoliberalism and Problems for Multiculturalism & Equality."*

Abstract: Janine Brodie has provided innumerable contributions to the study of Canadian Politics. This paper will pay homage to several key dimensions of her *oeuvre*. First of all, it will be grounded in an appreciation of sub-national differentiation and distinctive political economic norms and practices, thereby evoking Brodie's pivotal work on regionalism; secondly, the paper's subject matter will deal with shifts over space and time vis-à-vis governance, neo-liberalism, and equality, all of which have been integral to Brodie's scholarship.

The straightforward aim of this paper is to detail devolutionary developments in Canadian immigration policy since the mid 1990s, and their impact on multiculturalism and equality, with a particular focus on the changes that took place in the Harper era. Two dissimilar provinces, Manitoba and British Columbia (BC), will serve as case studies. Despite their stark differences (e.g. historical, geographic, demographic, politico-economic and cultural), both were deemed "successes" for their respective provincial nominee programs (PNPs, i.e. expedited immigration pathways designed by provinces to meet their particular economic needs), and for the strides they made with their settlement service and immigrant integration programs when both responsibilities were "devolved" from the federal government.

The Harper government's involvement in both cases was inconsistent and somewhat paradoxical. In the context of advanced neoliberalism, a common pattern in federal states is one of decentralization and "offloading" onto their sub-national units. And, indeed, this was the first response of Canadian governments in the 1990s and into the first decade of the 2000s, with their provincial and territorial nominee agreements, in general, and especially with Manitoba and BC in relation to the block funding the federal government provided for these provinces' immigration integration programs. Yet, after intensifying such devolutionary practices, the Harper government, in its final years, proceeded to assert much more control over PTNPs, and it rescinded its settlement service agreements with Manitoba and BC, thereby "re-patriating" the national government's role in these areas. Why did these shifts take place, particularly if Manitoba and BC were indeed successes, and what were the repercussions before, during and after re-patriation? Thus, this paper raises several questions about the nature and effects of neoliberalism at the sub-national level, in a federal system, when it comes to changes to Canadian immigration policy, especially over the last decade or so. To do so, I will detail and assess the effects of these immigration policy fluctuations at macro, meso, and micro levels. The latter will include grounded research detailing the impact of these shifts on the lives of the immigrants in question. This "bottom

up" analysis will evaluate the foregoing developments and so-called "successes" vis-à-vis gender, race, and class intersections, and in light of their impact on equality and multiculturalism in Canada. The methodology for this paper will encompass primary and secondary sources, as well as interviews with nominees, service providers, and government officials in the two provinces in question.

Panel 2: Feminist Activists Meet Populist Governments

Shannon Bell (York University). *"The Post-Hysteric in Neoliberalism: Hacking the Lack."*

Abstract: "Hacking the Lack" is a hack of the phallic lack at the core of the subjectivity of Lacan's hysteric from the position of the post-hysteric who "owns" the phallus and in so doing blends the structural positions of truth/agent/other/production into a new agency and a new discourse: The Discourse of the Post-Hysteric.

"What the hacker calls into being in the world is a new world and a new being" (Wark, 2004: 72); in this specific hack, the Universe of Non-mastery and the being/agent of the Post-hysteric.
The post-hysteric comes into play in the later days of neoliberalism and is part of what has been identified as the emergent third strain of accelerationist politics, in which the focus is "a cunning practice through which to capture and redeploy existing energies" (Moreno, 2013) – the 'saving potential', or *poiesis*, indwelling within capitalism that facilitates a new way to conceptualize human, technology, art-science, body and space.

I contend that the post-hysteric is one of these saving potentials. In a sense then, the paper is opening key terms of Janine Brodie's engagement—gender, citizenship and neoliberalism (Brodie, 2007, 2008, 2012); —to the timely discourse of the post-hysteric.

Alexa DeGagne (Athabasca University). *"LGBT Politics, Police and Neoliberalism."*

Abstract: North American LGBTQ history has been shaped by hostile relations with police organizations and the criminal justice system. Riots against police surveillance, criminalization and abuse are depicted as critical and galvanizing moments in which queers and gender-nonconforming people fought back in collective ways against the regulatory bodies of the state. Over the past decade the relationships between LGBTQ people and police organizations have shifted as particular LGBT community members and organizations have argued that the criminal justice system is the best means to protect LGBT people.

This paper considers how neoliberalism functions through this changing relationship between police organizations and LGBTQ people. Particular LGBT citizens, who have access to marriage rights and economic privilege, are using police intervention to protect their lifestyles, private property, businesses, neighbourhoods, and economic standing. Such protection is said to be required in the face of anti-LGBT hate crimes and other offences. Yet police organizations have been used by particular LGBT citizens to receive protection in the forms of the gentrification of historically LGBTQ, lower-income, immigrant, and people of colour neighbourhoods; the surveillance and closing of public LGBTQ community spaces; and the eviction and exclusion of people who are deemed to be threats to the safety, and economic stability, of the LGBT community. Thus, in debates about policing, we see how incorporating some heteronormal citizens into the category of "protected" encourages some LGBT people to advocate for "tough on crime" approaches that reinforce neoliberal marginalization and criminalization of poor and street-involved people, trans people, Indigenous people, activists, sex workers, and people who engage in public sex.

In the context of this new relationship between police organizations and particular LGBT citizens, this paper considers the Toronto Police Service's June 2016 apology for the 1981 bathhouse raids, and the Toronto Police Service's November 2016 "Project Marie," an undercover operation that surveilled, arrested, and charged men who sought out and engaged in sex with men in a Toronto public park. Through a discourse analysis of these events, the paper examines the connections between the surveillance, regulation, and privatization of spaces; the criminalization and exclusion of marginalized people; and, the protection of heteronormal LGBT people, and their private property, spaces and neighbourhoods.

Gloria Filax (Athabasca University). *"Educating in Neoliberal Times."*

Abstract: Neoliberalism in higher education promotes skills-based curriculum along with a business agenda stressing efficiencies and competencies. Those writing in the area of critical pedagogy refer to this neoliberal agenda as teaching obedience, subordination, and oppression (Giroux, McLaren, others). For critical pedagogy, neoliberalism is the death knell for critical thinking (Lawrence) and contrary to social justice and equality. Neoliberalism argues for "economic and social inequity as a necessary function and outcome within societies based upon meritocracy and open-market logic" (Lawrence, 247), resulting in increasing self-interest, competition and individualism. The atomized self of neoliberalism has no need for feminism, queer theory, disability theory, or critical race theory and leaves little place in higher education for the social sciences and humanities.
In this presentation, I argue for the urgency of a reinvigorated critical pedagogy in higher education as a necessary antidote to these neo-liberalizing times. I take Giroux's point that critical pedagogy is a mode of teaching in which "one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which the discourses of critique and possibility in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom and equality function to alter . . . the grounds upon which life is lived" (2010: 10). I draw on the work of Paulo Freire and a host of critical theorists including those from education, feminist, critical race, queer and disability studies to forge an argument that a critical pedagogy of coalition based on intersectional relations and intersectional reflexivity is a necessary condition to take back higher education.

Panel 3: Migration and Markets

Suzan Ilcan (University of Waterloo, and the Balsillie School of International Affairs). *"The Citizenship-Humanitarian Nexus: Protracted Situations, Citizenship Training, and Refugee Activism."*

Abstract: Many refugees living in refugee camps live with long-term uncertainty as they face restrictions to their rights, mobility, security, and employment prospects. Refugee camps are increasingly becoming more of a permanent space as the average waiting time for refugees has increased substantially over the past few decades. Indeed, more refugees are living in protracted situations, or situations in which refugees live in host countries for extended periods of time, sometimes more than twenty years. But what is also salient here is that refugee camps are serving as archetypal sites for managing refugees and making citizen-subjects. Through techniques of humanitarian and state forms of governance, refugees and displaced persons are frequently subject to biometric, mobility, and security controls. They are often entangled in governing rationales that range from care, protection, and responsibility programs, to citizenship training initiatives. The latter include: encouraging the acquisition of necessary skills for integration into market economies; fostering economic and social commitments to neoliberal, self-reliance schemes; and, introducing feelings of obligation to the nation.

This paper focuses on citizenship training in refugee camps and emphasizes the role of humanitarian and state actors in these processes. First, I outline how refugee camps are shaped by humanitarian aid practices, entrepreneurial schemes, and initiatives that impart neoliberal views of citizenship. Then, I reveal how humanitarian aid organizations and their partners play a prominent role in fostering citizenship training and citizen-subjects in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement in South West Uganda, and in the context of the country's self-reliance strategy. I view citizenship training as forming part of a broader network of humanitarian organizations and partnership relations that aims to convey neoliberal views of citizenship, while simultaneously encountering refugee responses to these views, or what I term the 'citizenship-humanitarian nexus.' In elaborating this argument, I draw on and contribute to the critical citizenship and migration studies literature. I offer evidence of two forms of citizenship training in Nakivale – 'responsible citizenship training' and 'good citizenship training' – both of which entail learning socially acceptable conduct for refugees in an environment supportive of neoliberal, self-reliance strategies. These forms of citizenship training primarily emphasize citizenship responsibilities and some (limited) rights. In response to the limitations in citizenship training and refugees' limited status and rights, refugees in Nakivale advance their own understanding of citizenship – as subjects with rights. They engage in 'refugee acts of citizenship' that transform themselves into political subjects, into citizens, despite their lack of access to the rights and protections of citizenship. In this regard, the citizenship-humanitarian nexus provides critical insights into the politics of citizenship and citizenship training for protracted refugees in their situation of being included through their exclusion. My analysis is based on refugee policy and education documents, and interviews with refugees in Nakivale, officials from the Ugandan government, and representatives from international and national organizations that provide assistance to refugees.

Christina Gabriel (Carleton University). *"Neoliberalism, Migration and Metrics."*

Abstract: One of Janine Brodie's central contributions has been to focus our attention on the importance of governing paradigms – especially neoliberal governing practices. This paper builds on this insight to consider the current state of migration governance within neoliberal globalization. As Brodie has argued neo-liberal ideas have gained widespread currency and are frequently constructed as 'common-sense' insofar as they are presented as the basis of the *only* viable policy frameworks. Neo-liberalism recasts the relations between states, markets and citizens insofar as it displaces the state from the central position it occupied under the terms of Keynesianism in favour of the market. To some extent neoliberalism is often writ large in terms of class alignments and broader structural transformations (Harvey 2007). Yet at another scale policy environments are being re-written by neoliberal rationalities. This shift has been accompanied by what Shore and Wright (2015) term the rise of 'an audit culture' where ranking, metrics and good practice have become implicated in regimes of governing. This paper builds on these insights and draws on the work of Sally Engle Merry (2014) to consider how this turn to measurement and indicators finds expression in the embrace of "managed migration" by governments, such as Canada, and at the global level. It uses a recent 2016 report produced by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) *Measuring Well Governed Migration. The 2016 Migration Index* to trace how the report links development, migration, governance and metrics and the consequences that stem from the report's country specific rankings.
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Panel 4: Health, Housing and Happiness

Catherine Kingfisher (University of Lethbridge). *"Happiness and Governance: Orthodox and Alternative Approaches."*

Abstract: In recent decades, an increasing interest in happiness and wellbeing has come to permeate scholarly, governmental, and popular imaginaries and practices, signalling a paradigm shift in orientation to work on society and work on the self. Driven in part by the emergent sub-disciplines of positive psychology and happiness economics, these new engagements with happiness, marked by a radically individualistic perspective, both reflect and buttress neoliberal forms of governance.

Collective housing communities represent a challenge to this dominant, EuroAmerican orientation by locating wellbeing, at least in part, in the social. In this paper, I draw on research on two urban collective housing communities – Kankanmori, in Tokyo; and, Quayside Village, in Vancouver, to 1) place into relief the cultural assumptions and forms of governance at the foundations of dominant EuroAmerican approaches; 2) highlight alternative models of wellbeing that provide potential, practical responses to problems associated with the individualizing, fragmenting, and isolating aspects of neoliberal projects of governance; and, 3) explore governmentalities of utopia as method (à la Levitas).

Janet Phillips (University of Alberta). *"Promotion, Prevention, Recovery: The Neoliberalization of Mental 'Health' in Canada."*

Abstract: Recent and ongoing mental 'health' policy discussions in Canada put forth promotion, prevention, and recovery as 'solutions' to increasingly high rates of mental 'illness' in Canada. This paper locates these perceived 'solutions' alongside past approaches to the categorization, problematization, and governance of mental abnormality in Canada, between 1830 and the present. It situates these approaches within four mentalities that have informed its governance: Confinement, Prevention, Intervention, and Deinstitutionalization. It suggests that promotion, prevention, and recovery represent a shift away from Deinstitutionalization and towards a fifth mentality: Resilience. This paper situates Resilience within a broader neoliberal rationality to make four observations: first, that promotion, prevention, and recovery individualize (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002) and responsibilize (Brown 2015) those categorized as mentally abnormal for their own well-being; second, neoliberal cooptations of 'community' (Miller and Rose 2008) reframe mental 'illness' as a personal, moral failing; third, promotion, prevention, and recovery discourses reflect a decline in psychiatric authority and its diffusion across multiple sites such as school and workplace, a feature of neoliberalism (Clarke 2008); and, fourth, promotion, prevention, and recovery risk the discursive and physical erasure of those who do not 'bounce back' from life's stressors, while simultaneously overlooking the structural inequalities that render mental 'health' inaccessible for many. This occlusion betrays one of the guiding principles of a social way of thinking – that inequality exists (Brodie 2007, 160). The paper builds off of these observations to argue that promotion, prevention, and recovery are as potentially dangerous as past 'solutions' to the governance of mental abnormality.

Brent Epperson (University of Alberta). *"Neoliberal Narratives of Health Care in Media Representations of State-Level American Health Reforms: the Massachusetts and Utah cases (2002-2011)."*

Abstract: Nearly two decades after the failure of the American Health Security Act (Hillarycare), between 2002 and 2012, a number of state-level health reform efforts paralleled the federal Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) debates. Collectively, the state and federal reform efforts of the period revealed greater political openness to health care policy change. This paper examines newspaper media coverage of two state-level health reform efforts—the Massachusetts Health Reform Law (Romneycare) (2002-2006) and the Utah Health System Reform (2004-2011) at three key points in time: the preceding election campaign, the legislative debates surrounding the reforms, and the period following legislative passage. My research critically examines the movement of neoliberal language framing metaphors and narratives of health within the state-based and national newspaper media, demonstrating coalescence of media representations between Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning newspapers.

Panel 5: The Legacy of 'Crisis, Challenge and Change'

Steve Patten (University of Alberta). *"Partisan Politics, Neoliberal Hegemony, Epistemological Populism, and the Production of Social Illiteracy."*

Abstract: A core theme animating Janine Brodie's scholarly contributions is the importance of understanding the struggles that structure the discursive frameworks that shape the possibility of achieving social justice. Brodie's work on gender, citizenship, and social policy speaks to her deep commitment to enhancing social literacy and social equity in a society committed to rich and democratic notions of social citizenship. This paper reaches back over three decades to *Crisis, Challenge, and Change* and Brodie's work on party and class in Canada, in particular her innovative understanding of how partisan politics shapes discursive representations of the political and, through this, options for policy and governance. It also draws on her vast contributions to understanding gender, citizenship, and social policy in times of crisis and neoliberal restructuring. But it takes as its starting point, her recent use of the concept of 'social literacy' as a fundamental commitment to the political will to recognize our interconnected fates, embrace the social responsibilities implied by shared risks, and strive to protect social rights and achieve social equality. The paper draws on the framework for understanding the role and importance of partisan politics that Brodie and Jenson developed in *Crisis, Challenge, and Change,* to trace and explain the hegemony of neoliberalism in party politics. It then examines how the social dislocations of neoliberal restructuring created the conditions for various forms of populist politics, including the use of 'epistemological populism' – what Brodie has called 'manufactured ignorance' and others have called 'post-truth politics'. The paper's central argument is that, taken together, the political commitments of neoliberal policy and governance and the rise of epistemological populism are contributing to social illiteracy. To reverse this trend, progressive activists and partisans must agitate in favour of alternatives to neoliberal policy. But, as Brodie has argued, scholars from the social sciences and humanities must also boldly reclaim their role as innovators willing to contribute social knowledge to the academy, society, and the world of partisan politics.

Sandra Rein (University of Alberta). *"Continuing Politics on and from the Margins: of Crisis, Change and Intellectual Debt."*

Abstract: This paper proposes to accomplish two tasks: the first is to trace the ways in which "crisis" runs like a red thread through the work of Janine Brodie. In tracing the centrality of crisis to Brodie's prescient political analysis, particularly as it relates to the rise of neoliberal governance and restructuring, the paper also returns to the works of Karl Marx and later, feminist Marxist thinkers such as Rosa Luxemburg and Raya Dunayevskaya who also accord "crisis" a singular place in the process of fundamental social change. This "first task" does not intend simply to draw a

lineage among thinkers, Brodie is clear enough on her sources of intellectual inspiration, ranging from Marx to Foucault and beyond. Rather, the goal is to demonstrate the continuing importance of the social project that Brodie inherits from various radical thinkers and her unique contributions in rethinking crisis as it has unfolded largely in a post-war era that, since the 1990s, has witnessed the unravelling of the Keynesian welfare state, repeated recessions, retrenchment of all manner of social gains and a thinning of political/electoral choice among most so-called liberal democracies. Woven into Brodie's treatment of crisis is the systematic marginalization of the most vulnerable in our society and the growing backlash against activists and citizens who demand inclusion and equality.

The second task of the paper is intended to acknowledge my own intellectual debt to Brodie's work and long-time mentorship. While Brodie is not "responsible" for my research or the conclusions I draw from it, it would be impossible for me to engage those philosophical and political economy works I note above, without also having a long-time conversation with Brodie's work, her approach to "big" questions, and her sense of the historically constituted "now". On the face of it, the works of Raya Dunayevskaya (20th century Marxist Humanist philosopher), Rosa Luxemburg (19th century Marxist political economist), and Emma Goldman (early 20th century anarchist) – the main subjects of my research endeavors, would not seem to be in easy dialogue with Brodie's focus on the state, securitization, regionalization, feminist activism and organizing in the late 20th century and early 2000s. However, in my work and the intellectual curiosity that drives it, all these women engage each other, sometimes in confrontational tones, pushing the uncomfortable questions, and never-ceasing the political agitation both from and on the margins – the margins of Politics as a discipline, the margins that restrict access to political power, and the margins of what is increasingly unprecedented social upheaval.   When combined, these "tasks" are intended to demonstrate the relevance and importance of Brodie's contributions to our understanding of the current period of capitalism, the historical and material nature of this moment, and to recognize that amidst this uncertainty lies the prospect for a fundamental, positive change. One might even say, a revolution.

Yasmeen Abu-Laban (University of Alberta) *Ideas, Political Parties and Cultural Pluralism: Towards an Embrace of the Other?*

A major contribution advanced by Janine Brodie and Jane Jensen's 1980 book *Crisis, Challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada* concerns the profound role played by political parties in shaping our collective understanding of legitimate political concerns, and the fact that this has been dominated by issues of region and culture in Canada. In this paper, I build from this understanding and take my starting point to be the fact that Canada was formed and still exists as a settler-colony characterized by complex and unequal relations around race, ethnicity, class, language, region, gender and other forms of differentiation (Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995). In considering the history since Confederation which has mostly been dominated by Angloconformity, I will argue that there is an ongoing tension between two patterns when it comes to the interface with diverse others who fall outside of the dominant group. The first is one I call Open Canada. This is characterized by an openness, embrace and trust of others, and can lead to forms of recognition and co-existence.   The other is Closed Canada, characterized by a closure, rejection and fear of others, and can lead to assimilative pressures or outright denial. The Open and Closed Canadas exist in a tension that has reverberated in different ways over time, as evidenced from Canada's 2015 national election and aftermath.

Justin Leifso (University of Alberta) *LEAN ON EVERYTHING*
Neoliberalization and the emergence of Lean Management in North America

In this paper, I explore the emergence and proliferation of Lean Management (Lean) in North America. Developed by Toyota in the mid-twentieth century, Lean has become increasingly popular in all manner of organizations. From manufacturing to finance, from accounting to healthcare, and from information technology to public administration, Lean has become a panacea for organizations looking to improve their "efficiency" and "effectiveness." An industry of consultants and "gurus" has emerged to facilitate this process, marketing the benefits of Lean and its techniques and practices. Through books, blogs, social media, and conferences, these Lean practitioners have worked to codify the various principles of the approach into an increasingly formalized form of expertise that may be packaged and sold through lucrative training seminars, toolkits, and consulting contracts.

Deploying a vocabulary adapted from governmentality studies and critical political economy, I locate Lean's emergence in North America and growth in popularity as one manifestation of neoliberalization. I locate Lean's emergence within the context of the 1980s, when American business leaders, politicians, and media lamented the apparent "takeover" of corporate America by Japanese companies. I argue that such lamentations reflected a period of *problematization*, in which hierarchical, bureaucratic forms of organization became understood to be outdated, burdensome and ineffective in the face of more efficient Japanese practices – a problem in need of a solution. I then explore the network of academics, management consultants, and manufacturing practitioners that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s to find this solution, a network that coalesced around what they understood to be an exciting new form of technical knowledge with the potential to transform firms, individuals, and the state. Through examination of Lean's emergence in North America, I demonstrate how existing technologies can be adopted, translated, and reconfigured corresponding to shifts in broader political rationalities.