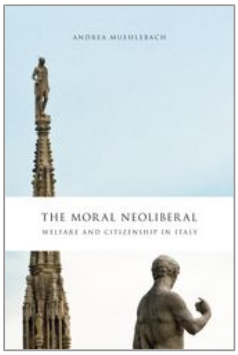

The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy
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Print publication date: 2012
Print ISBN-13: 9780226545394
Published to Chicago Scholarship Online: February 2013
DOI: 10.7208/chicago/9780226545417.001.0001

An Opulence of Virtue

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DOI:10.7208/chicago/9780226545417.003.0001

[–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter introduces the concept of neoliberal moral authoritarianism, though of a very particular kind, which comes in the form of a highly moralized kind of citizenship that has emerged in the northern Italian region of Lombardy. The Italian state has in the last three decades sought to mobilize parts of the population into a new voluntary labor regime—one which has allowed the state to conflate voluntary labor with good citizenship, and unwaged work with gifting. Many of those invested in the creation of this voluntary labor regime think of it as a sphere located outside of the realm of market exchange. This book aims to treat markets and morals as indissolubly linked and to propose that the contemporary neoliberal order works to produce more than rational, utilitarian, instrumentalist subjects. On the other hand, it shows that some forms of neoliberalization may simultaneously posit an affective, that is to say a compassionate and empathetic, self as the corollary center of their social and moral universe. Such attention to the moral neoliberal portrays neoliberalism as a form that contains practices and forces that appear as oppositional and yet get folded into a single order.

Keywords: neoliberalism, moral authoritarianism, citizenship, labor regime, market exchange, northern Italy

Death of a King

Sometime during the early hours of January 24, 2003, the king of Italy died. This was the way one of the twentieth century's most powerful industrialists, Gianni Agnelli, was referred to by the Italian press—a king who led the country's postwar trajectory toward modernization, industrialization, and massive economic growth. As the heir to the legendary car manufacturing company Fiat, Agnelli introduced American-style assembly-line production to the country, making Fiat the world's third-largest car producer after General Motors and Ford. “For a long

time," as one journalist put it, "economic power in Italy had a very simple structure. At its center was Fiat. And at the center of Fiat was Agnelli" (Luzi 2003: 4). The story of Fiat, then, was not just the story of one Turin-based company or of one larger-than-life figure. It was the story of a nation.

The days after Agnelli's death were characterized by a remarkable media frenzy. Journalists referred to the king as "the patriarch," "grandfather," "father" or "the *padrone*" (the boss or master) of Italy. Hundreds of obituaries were published nationwide, commemorating this fabulously famous member of Italy's capitalist aristocracy who was also a senator, a personal friend of the Kennedy family, the owner of Juventus, one of Italy's major football teams, and a number of national daily newspapers. But what caught the media's attention most was the spectacular number of ordinary Italians who flocked to the mortuary chapel where the body was kept. When the doors of the chapel swung **(p.4)** open in the morning of the funeral, thousands of people who had stood in the cold for hours were waiting to pay their last respects. By the end of the day and late into the night, more than 100,000 mourners, many of them wearing blue factory workers' overalls, had thronged past the coffin. How could one explain what one journalist dubbed this "strange case of a capitalist loved by the people"? How should this moment of collective grief be understood in a country that "does not love capitalists and harbors great suspicions toward the rich" (Ottone 2003: 18)?

Some sought to solve the riddle by pointing to the man's seminal charisma. Others, including the famous journalist and Agnelli biographer Enzo Biagi, dug deeper to reveal what was really at stake: the death of Agnelli signaled the death of an era. Indeed, there was perhaps no other event in early twenty-first-century Italy that provided a more deeply resonant symbol for a widely experienced paradigm shift—the irrevocable passing of one order and the ascendance of another. No one articulated this sense of collective grief more poignantly than the mourners themselves. The snippets of interviews they gave and notes of condolence they left as they waited in line served as eloquent testimonies to the significance of the moment. A pensioner, demonstratively wearing his blue overalls, exclaimed: "He was our father. He fed the entire family. He gave people work for life, and their pensions" (Offeddu 2003: 5). A woman, described as having carefully applied makeup to her face, weary after a lifetime of work, said: "Of course I got up this early [at three o̊clock in the morning, to come to the funeral]! This is a man who took care of us all. He gave us health insurance and housing, of course!" (D̓Avanzo 2003: 2). Another mourner explained that "he was a great man. His greatness has become even more evident today, in an era where big business has no sense of morals. Agnelli still believed in the value of work" (Strippoli 2003: 6). Indeed, Agnelli's sense of style, love of art and philosophy, notorious boredom with the management of the company, and a dress-sense so distinctive that it was imitated by his workers, were evoked repeatedly to imply that his worldview "went far beyond a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year." Agnelli embodied a type of capital that was propelled by more than a brute desire for profit; a capitalist with class who cared for his employees. His death was a spectacular instantiation of a disappearing moral order built around the core pillars of work, pensions, and the stability and dignity that the mourners identified with an era lost. This was an era widely associated with a historic social contract—between labor, capital, and the state—all of which had crystallized into the securities of the modern welfare state. Agnelli was iconic of this state. As a "benign," "temperate," "democratic," **(p.5)**

“fatherly,” and even “poetic” capitalist, his death had made, as one paper put it, “orphans of the Italian people” (Bocca 2003: 1).

It did not matter to the mourners that the relationship between the king and his people had historically been fraught.[1] On the contrary, Agnelli served as a potent template against which Italians measured and bemoaned current insecurities. When prime minister Silvio Berlusconi arrived at the funeral—late and in an Audi—he was loudly booed. For the mourners, Berlusconi's reign had become associated with a merciless US-style form of deregulation and privatization—the flexibilization of Italy's labor market, the birth of a new stratum of poor, and the dismantling of welfare.

Yet it is not only Agnelli's workers in Italy who mourn a moral order lost. Many of Europe's most famous public intellectuals have long engaged in their own acts of grieving; a grieving quite ambivalent in that it is directed toward an object never quite loved (Brown 2003).[2] These scholars have produced a melancholic account of twentieth-century welfare as a “Golden Age” now in demise, an age marked by an expansion of public services, education, health, unemployment and old-age benefits, and an increase in real wage income (Hobsbawm 1996). This was an age of full citizenship, consolidated not with the electoral reforms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but with the social reforms of the twentieth (Marshall 1992 [1950]). Lamenting the loss of a “social and moral economy” (Harvey 2007: 11), scholars have portrayed the era past as one where capitalism for once did not thwart the Republican promise to include all citizens as equals before the law, but instead made a relatively high degree of collective justice possible (Habermas 1989). This epoch represented “a triumph of ethical intentions” and “one of the greatest gains of humanity” (Bauman 2000: 5 and 11).

Tightly intertwined with such nostalgic ruminations is the argument that an immoral order of “competitiveness, cost-and-effect calculations, profitability, and other free-market commandments rule supreme” (Bauman 2000: 9). The new order has killed off all “utopian possibility” (Bourdieu 1998: 66) and exhausted utopian energies (Habermas 1989). Zygmunt Bauman has gone so far as to urge an “ethical crusade” in favor of the “morality” of welfare—a morality that he counterposes to the immorality of our times (2000: 11).

Such stark distinctions between today's amoral market fundamentalisms and the moral economies of twentieth-century welfarism circulate widely in both the popular imagination and in scholarly writing. The drawing of such distinctions between the market and its less alienated (or even nonalienated) counterparts has a long history in leftist thought. **(p.6)** One seminal iteration of this distinction is, of course, E. P. Thompson's work on the moral versus the market economy, which he describes as “de-moralizing,” “heartless,” and “disinfested of intrusive moral imperatives.” To Thompson, capitalism does not have the capacity to let “questions as to the moral polity of marketing” enter, “unless as preamble and peroration” (1993: 201–202). Markets, in short, are only marginally or epiphenomenally accompanied by morals. “Real” morals are for Thompson located outside of the market in a sphere heroically pitted against it. Thompson's model, in short, hinges on a conceptualization of morals as either epiphenomenal or as oppositional—as preamble, as mere afterthought, or as always already resistant.

This book explores morality as neither epiphenomenal nor as oppositional but as integral, indeed indispensible, to market orders. If neoliberalism consists of a mixture of neoclassical economic fundamentalism, market regulation in place of state intervention, economic redistribution in favor of capital, international free trade principles, and an intolerance toward trade unions (Moody 1997: 119–120), it also at its very core entails a moral authoritarianism that idealizes the family, the nation, God, or, in the US especially, right-to-life issues (Berlant 2007; Moody 1997; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Comaroff 2007). Many scholars have thus insisted that morals do pulsate at the heart of the market; that the gospel of laissez-faire is always already accompanied by hypermoralization. Atomization, for David Harvey, is always paired with a propagation of "an overweening morality as the necessary social glue to keep the body politic secure" (2007: 82–83).

This book is a sustained interrogation of neoliberal moral authoritarianism, though of a very particular kind. The moral authoritarianism I focus on comes in the form of a highly moralized kind of citizenship that has emerged in the northern Italian region of Lombardy at the very moment that social services are being cut and privatized. The Italian state has in the last three decades sought to mobilize parts of the population into a new voluntary labor regime—a regime that has allowed for the state to conflate voluntary labor with good citizenship, and unwaged work with gifting. Many of those invested in the creation of this voluntary labor regime think of it as a sphere located outside of the realm of market exchange, animated not by *homo oeconomicus* but by what one might call *homo relationalis*, not by self-interest but by fellow feeling, not by a rational entrepreneurial subject but by a compassionate one. The state tends to frame voluntarism in Catholic terms and volunteers as subjects touched by the grace of the divine. The rise of voluntarism, in short, has thus allowed for an insertion of the fantasy of gifting into the **(p.7)** heart of neoliberal reform. Hyperexploitation is here wedded to intense moralization, nonremuneration to a public fetishization of sacrifice.

The story I tell is thus a story about the neoliberal state's investment in the creation of zones of nonremuneration seemingly untouched by the polluting logic of market exchange. But this is also a story about labor, for the state has marshaled citizens—particularly "passive" and "dependent" citizens such as retirees and unemployed youths—into working to produce communities animated by disinterestedness.[3] The mobilization of "dependent" populations into unwaged labor has rendered the purportedly unproductive productive through what many volunteers call *lavoro relazionale*—relational labor. As citizens central to the production of a postwelfarist public morality, their labor is part of a much larger resignification of the meaning of work in a Europe confronting the specter of growing unemployment rates and the growth of an increasingly precarious, low-wage labor market. In Italy, this crisis prompted a number of sociologists to produce a set of reflections infused with both anxiety and utopic promise—a promise that translates the crisis of work into a sacralization of "activity." Relational labor allows ostensibly dependent populations to purchase some sort of social belonging at a moment when their citizenship rights and duties are being reconfigured in the profoundest of ways.

They do so by providing what one could simply read as the unwaged iteration of the "immaterial" labor that has become prototypical in the post-Fordist era. Voluntarism in the social service sector is indeed an activity "without an end product" (Virno 2004: 61; Hardt 1999; Hardt and Negri 1994). But the crucial difference here is that everyone—politicians, policy

makers, volunteers themselves—thinks of this immaterial labor as valuable because it is located outside of the wage nexus. Everyone interprets it as a redemptive force emerging in the midst of generalized atomization and anomie. As a regime of accumulation, the unwaged labor regime produces and accumulates the value of the relation. Relational laborers help recuperate and reactivate solidarity under neoliberal conditions and create a form of living that appears not as atomized or isolated, but as intent on building social relations through acts of intense moral communion and care.

I use “care” deliberately here because the moral neoliberal hinges on a particular kind of ethical subject. To some degree, this caring subject is engaged in acts of care in the Foucauldian sense—a care of the self that entails specific forms of self knowledge and self-detachment “whereby one's innermost feelings become object of scrutiny and then articulation” (1997: 223), and whereby the acquisition of certain attitudes with **(p.8)** the goal of self-transformation are central to becoming an ethical being (1997: 225). But at the same time, my stress here lies not on this *souci de soi*, this care of the self, but on the making of ethical citizenship as something that relies on a *souci des autres*, a care for others. The ethical subject I am interested in performs two kinds of labors of care at once; it feels (cares *about*) and acts (cares *for* others) at the same time. This subject is one that the state and many other social actors—nonprofit organizations, government experts, the Catholic Church, labor unions, and volunteers themselves—imagine to be animated by affect rather than intellect, by the capacity to feel and act upon these feelings rather than rational deliberation and action. As the state marshals unremunerated labor by publicly valorizing sentiments such as compassion and solidarity, it sentimentalizes highly feminized forms of work that are today decreasingly provided by the state and female kin. By mobilizing sentiments as productive force (Yanagisako 2002: 7) the state is attempting not only to mediate the effects of its own withdrawal, but to craft an anticapitalist narrative at the heart of neoliberal reform.

The goal of my exploration is to treat markets and morals as indissolubly linked and to propose that the contemporary neoliberal order works to produce more than rational, utilitarian, instrumentalist subjects. On the contrary, I show that some forms of neoliberalization may simultaneously posit an affective, that is to say a compassionate and empathetic, self as the corollary center of their social and moral universe. Such attention to the moral neoliberal allows us to grasp neoliberalism as a form that contains practices and forces that appear as oppositional and yet get folded into a single order. It not only allows us to see the versatility and malleability of neoliberal projects but also lets us explore their limits—the unexpected ways in which new kinds of collective living may emerge out of, and despite, new forms of difference and inequality.

An ethnographic study of such processes of moralization is vital for understanding not only processes of neoliberalization, but also how and why such post-Keynesian forms of citizenship, based on free labor, can become persuasive and desirable to people in their everyday lives. Morality must be thought of as the very vehicle through which subjects—often very clear-eyed ones at that—get drawn into processes they might not be in agreement with. This process is a complicated one in that it sometimes allows for even neoliberalism's critics to ambivalently participate in its workings. I thus differ from those who view morals as doing little more than performing the labor of socially repressing the “objective truths” of economic activity and of

masking the calculative aspects of all forms of exchange (Bourdieu 1977: 171–172). Here, morals cloud **(p.9)** reality and perform only the numbing work of the opiate. Nor are morals a mere social palliative in moments of social dislocation, allowing people to “flee anxiety” (Geertz 1973: 201).[4] What I want to do here, in contrast, is to document a larger shift in social conventions of moral responsibility, a shift that is shared across the political spectrum and thus points to the emergence of a new culture of ethical feeling and action that is intrinsically linked to the intensification of marketization (see also Haskell 1985a: 353). The moral neoliberal thus hinges on the creation of a new sense of self and good citizenship, of inferiority and action, of sensitivity and agency—a sense broadly shared by many northern Italians I met. If morality masks, it does so not as an instrument of class interest that produces false consciousness (Haskell 1985a: 353), but because it is wrought out of existing cultural materials such as Catholicism and Socialism, thus allowing those uneasy or explicitly critical of neoliberalization to render these novel practices of citizenship meaningful and graspable in their own terms. And if morality operates as palliative, then not in the sense of allowing for an escape from bitter realities, but on the contrary as a means to attempt to build practices of insubordination in opposition to these realities.

This is important to take into account if one wants to understand the fact that many members of Italy's Left have used the rise of the voluntary labor regime to actively reimagine the neoliberal reordering of the social fabric through available, emotionally resonant categories such as *solidarietà*. Their participation in the privatizing service economy thus appears to them not as a radical break with their political past but as a continuation, even recuperation of it. Morality, in short, allows members of the Left to participate in the moral neoliberal in both wholehearted and yet also critical-complicit ways, and to forge out of this historical moment practices that are both oppositional and complicit at the same time. Morality, in short, can operate as social palliative in light of social dislocation in some moments and as smoke screen in the next. But it is always also indispensible to the very processes through which meaningful social life is rendered possible.

My exploration moves across several ethnographic locations which I visited over the course of sixteen months of fieldwork in the northern Italian city of Milan, Italy's financial and industrial capital, between January 2003 and November 2005. These locations ranged from volunteer training classes in Milanese high schools that I observed, to everyday voluntary practices I participated in, to some of the myriads of public conferences held in Milan on what reformers often called, in English, the “welfare community,” to private homes where new affective transactional **(p.10)** economies are unfolding. Through these sites, I show how the state and many northern Italian citizens think of the rise of voluntarism as an enhancement of society's affective and relational productivity, an enhancement accompanied by the state's harnessing of this productivity, the capturing of the value generated, and the channeling of the flow of value thus produced (Smith 2011: 17). In the process, some of Italy's citizens are called upon to learn to exhibit and act upon affective dispositions and sensitivities such as compassion and solidarity, and to cultivate such interiorities through proper public practice.

Markets and Morals

The phenomenal rise of voluntarism in many parts of the world has been well documented (Archambault and Boumendil 2002; Eikås and Selle 2002; Sarasa and Obrador 2002; NCVO

2006; Milligan and Conradson 2006). In Europe, voluntary organizations have become key to the shifting social architecture in postwelfarist societies and the new forms of citizenship that accompany it. Former British foreign secretary Jack Straw, for example, anticipated David Cameron's "Big Society" when he argued that he considers volunteering to be "the essential act of citizenship" (cited in Rose 2000: 1404). The European Commission similarly stated that volunteers were an "expression of citizenship capacity" and thus particularly valuable as social services all over the region were being reorganized not according to market logics but according to the "solidarity principle" (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 4–5).[5]

Italy was the first country to treat voluntarism with a distinct body of law and to grant voluntary associations a special juridical status by offering tax reliefs and subsidies difficult to obtain for nonprofit organizations employing paid workers (Ranci 2001: 76). Several other countries, including Portugal, Spain, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Luxemburg, and Poland, have since followed suit and adopted a slew of legal provisions governing the voluntary sector (Hadzi-Miceva 2007: 38). Indeed, as the *Guardian* put it, there seems to have emerged a more general tendency to interpret voluntarism as an activity that can "boost community happiness" (quoted in Hadzi-Miceva 2007: 39). And yet, no other country in Europe relies as extensively on volunteer labor as Italy—about one-quarter of all nonprofit organizations rely exclusively on volunteers, not on paid labor (Ranci 2001: 75–76). The figure of the volunteer has thus emerged with particular clarity as a central category in Italian public life, and as a species of citizen that the state renders productive **(p.11)** through unremunerated labor. When government agencies call for a "citizenship to be lived with the heart" (*una cittadinanza da vivere con il cuore*),[6] or when volunteers themselves state that the services they render are animated by "love," they all participate in generating a public fantasy of affectively animated individuals made productive through state law, policy, and citizens' sentiments themselves. It is thus in Italy that experiments in citizenship making have most poignantly come to the fore, and where the volunteer has emerged particularly clearly as the central symbolic figure through which people are reimagining social solidarity and collective life more generally.

But how are we to understand the emergence of such a highly moralized subject in a neoliberal era so often described as fundamentally amoral? What are we to make of the public production of citizens as heartfelt subjects at a moment that so many scholars argue is characterized by a spirit of immorality and heartlessness? The rise of unwaged labor regimes should not merely be interpreted as the state's mobilization of free labor as it withdraws its twentieth-century promises of care, welfare, and social redistribution. This is about more than the Italian state's putting to work of, say, young unemployed southern Italians who are only too happy to work for a pittance in the volunteer sector without union protection and social security—though it is certainly also that (see, for example, Ghezzi and Mingione 2003). This is about more than the putting to work of retirees who in public cultural discourse all over Europe are construed as "passive" and "dependent" while at the same time purportedly playing, as a recent UN-initiated Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing put it, increasingly "crucial roles in their families and community" by making "valuable contributions that are not measured in economic terms: care for family members, productive subsistence work, household maintenance and voluntary activities" (DESA 2002: 7). These sociological facts—that "welfare state restructuring [is] dependent not only on the spread of specifically gendered notions of personhood, but also, to a

large degree, on the mobilization of gendered sources of cheap labor and of unpaid domestic and volunteer work" (Kingfisher 2002: 33; Ghezzi and Mingione 2003; Bryn Hyatt 2001)—are very important. But the argument about cheap labor extraction takes us only halfway toward understanding what is really at stake. In Lombardy, a much deeper shift is at work—one that is seeing the rewriting of the larger signifying social and cultural whole within which free labor, conceptualized as a pure, free gift to the collective, is now an increasingly significant part. As the state shifts the burden of the reproduction of solidarity onto a citizenry conceptualized as active and dutiful, solidarity **(p.12)** is outsourced (or, as regional representatives in Lombardy sometimes prefer to call it, "externalized") onto citizens, every one of which is now coresponsible for the public good. The ethical labor of citizens is thus much more than merely cheap. It has, precisely because it is unwaged, become the pathos-laden vehicle through which collective transcendence and meaning and value get conjured. Unwaged labor, at the very moment that it is deployed and exploited, allows for the emergence of utopic promise at the heart of neoliberal reform.[7] In Lombardy, the rise of the market neoliberal is accompanied by a moral neoliberal that takes on highly elaborated, theatrical, almost baroque forms.

The stabilization of the moral neoliberal occurs not necessarily because it is ideologically coherent but because unity is achieved despite and, indeed, through difference. I saw many a citizen disagreeing ideologically with the prevailing order while signing on, either consciously or inadvertently, to its discourses and practices in ontological terms (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). The moral neoliberal has become organic, that is to say, historically effective, because it articulates and incorporates "different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations" into a single configuration (Hall 1988: 166). Indeed, the project of ethical citizenship and its forms of conduct so saturate the Lombardian public sphere that it was most instructive to look for them in unlikely places. Rather than conduct research with a Catholic nonprofit organization or parish, a focus that might have been an obvious move for a study concerned with ethics, I spent much of my time with an organization that grew out of Italy's vibrant Communist tradition. AUSER, the Voluntary Association for the Self-Management of Services and Solidarity (Associazione di Volontariato per l′ Autogestione dei Servizi e della Solidarietà), was founded in 1992 by Europe's largest trade union, Spi-CGIL, the pensioners' union of the ex-Communist Italian General Confederation of Labor (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro [CGIL]).[8] Of its 300,000 mostly retired members, 40,000 are volunteers spread all over Italy in about 1,500 vibrant local organizations, including one in Sesto San Giovanni where I spent much of my time.

Sesto is a working-class town located in the industrial hinterland about five miles north of the glittering city of Milan, in the city's urban peripheral "red belt" that saw the Left dominate politics for most of the postwar period. When I would mention to my friends in Milan that I was conducting research in Sesto, taking the subway from my tiny Milanese apartment, getting out at the Sesto Rondò station, weaving past dilapidated newspaper kiosks, bars, and a Rom woman, begging, baby strapped to her body, I was sometimes met with responses ranging from mild bemusement **(p.13)** ("Oh! Little Stalingrad!") to perhaps a whiff of something like nostalgia. Milan and its periphery have since the 1980s suffered the complete deindustrialization and industrial decentralization so characteristic of the post-Fordist era. Sesto had been particularly hard-hit. The town's productive plants were almost completely abandoned, leaving empty a total of 2.5 million square meters of evacuated industrial space—almost a third of Sesto's entire

urban area. Trade, employment, and population levels in the city dramatically declined, and the number of industrial workers fell from 40,000 to 3,000 in just over a decade. This was the end of an era for a town whose entire social and cultural fabric had for almost a century been steeped in the rhythms, sounds, and smells of industrial life. Today, the streets are no longer dominated by the thousands of workers wearing their blue overalls, and street signs warning of *uscita operai!* (workers' exit!) had long been taken down (Foot 2001: 174–175).[9] But the image of Sesto, known for its heavy industrialization and for hosting one of Italy's largest concentrations of organized labor, remains.

My exploration of ethical citizenship in Sesto, among those who think of themselves as belonging to an actively oppositional tradition, offers insight not only into the moral neoliberal's workings in what appears to be a counterintuitive location. It also allows me to show that what many analysts interpret as a radical neoliberal break may appear to members of the Left as a continuation and reinvigoration of political action and passion. The moral neoliberal allows for restoration even as it transforms; it is a recuperative project even at its most revolutionary moments. This is not to say that the rise of voluntarism as paradigmatic citizenship act has not reinvigorated the Catholic Church as much as it has reinvigorated the leftist activists I worked with. On the contrary, ethical citizenship is very much anchored in Catholic social doctrine but has been assimilated and remade by leftists as well.

Because the cultural materials out of which the moral neoliberal order is being spun are to a large part Catholic, it is tempting to argue that this unremunerated labor regime is an essentially charitative one. Indeed, it was the Catholics, having already for centuries performed good works, who first responded to the Italian state's early legal-theological calls to citizens' action. In contrast, the Socialists and Communists have long derided charity and initially interpreted the state's legal sanctification of voluntarism in the early 1990s as a move toward a culture of beneficence that would take away from state-mediated forms of welfare.[10] Yet calling this mere charity disregards the important part that ideologies of participatory and local democratic action play in the making of the new moral order. Indeed, the leftists I worked with compared their current voluntary **(p.14)** activities to the radical spirit of late 1960s and early 1970s workers' struggles. By the time I arrived in Italy in 2003, many leftist volunteers had begun to consider voluntarism to be an expression of *solidarietà;* a form of radical gifting that allowed for a politics of insubordination vis-à-vis the market. They interpreted their free labor in these terms even as they were aware of the shifting institutional structures of which the state's mobilization of their unwaged labor is a part. Voluntary labor also allowed for members of the Italian Left to resignify neoliberal reform as an opportunity to concretely intervene in the world in ways consistent with Gramscian *prassi* (praxis), and to recuperate a rights-based politics. It is precisely because of the moral neoliberal's capacity to appear not as charity but as a form of critical emancipation that ethical citizenship has become so persuasive. Even in its persuasiveness, the moral neoliberal allows for practices of insubordination and antagonism that are unpredictable and politically creative.

As my story progresses, I explore how ideas and practices regarding this new normative citizen-subject get promoted by a myriad of social actors in the Lombardian public sphere today. The making of a new Lombardian landscape of welfare is a very self-consciously modular affair. Policy makers often refer to themselves as participating in the creation of *il modello Lombardo*

del welfare (the “Lombardian model of welfare”). At stake is a regionally fostered citizenship ethic that will not only be exported to other parts of Italy but to other European contexts as well.[11] The regions of Lombardy and especially Milan are, both in the scholarly and in the Italian national imaginary, often configured as national laboratories that have “always anticipated phenomena that later register all over Italy” (Pasolini 2003: 3). As former prime minister Bettino Craxi put it, Milan is a city “whose name is written in stone on every event that has to do with progress, with modernization, with democracy” (Ginsborg 2001: 151).[12]

Milan is indeed an extraordinarily productive site for experimentations in neoliberal citizenship. As a city, it looks back on a process of deindustrialization which began in the 1980s when companies that had built the city and given work to tens of thousands of people began to close, one after the other. The old Fordist industries of Breda, Falck, Alfa Romeo, Innocenti, OM, and Pirelli were soon eclipsed by Armani, Prada, and Versace, who became the city's new economic bosses (Foot 2001: 2–3). Today, Lombardy is the fourth richest region in Western Europe and produces 21 percent of Italy's wealth. It claims 40 percent of the country's businesses, half of its jobs in the information sector, and 30 percent of all research and development (Foot 2001: 163). It is also a **(p.15)** stronghold of right-wing politics, with Berlusconi's party (Il Popolo della Libertà [The People of Freedom], previously Forza Italia) and the antiimmigrant, secessionist Lega Nord (Northern League) in power. Both parties, but particularly Il Popolo della Libertà and its regional leader, president Roberto Formigoni, have formulated a distinct, original model of governance steeped in a homegrown variety of neoliberalism suffused with elements of conservative Catholic social doctrine (Colombo 2008: 177). Yet the Lombardian experiment is not a mere local curiosity. Rather, it is part of a far more consequential intellectual movement that may well extend beyond Europe—an attempt at “Catholicizing” neoliberalism that involves not just a wide array of Catholic intellectuals, but international luminaries such as Nobel Prize–winner, onetime World Bank chief economist, and Columbia University economics professor Joseph Stiglitz.

Formigoni, who has led the region since 1995 and is at the time of this writing serving a fourth consecutive term, insists that his is an attempt to generate a “cultural and even anthropological” shift in Lom-bardian citizens' conceptions of “man and society” (Casadei 2000). The regional government has, accordingly, overseen several waves of neoliberal reform, including a “drastic and generalized” move toward the privatization of public services, particularly care (Ascoli and Ranci 2002: 135). This is a move that goes hand in hand with the steady deregulation and flexibilization of Italy's already highly segmented labor market (Samek Lodovici and Semenza 2008: 160) as well as with a radical transformation of health provisioning away from classic monopoly service provisioning toward a devolved, decentralized management of health services (Colombo 2008: 189).

The privatization of Lombardian care and health services has drawn on and promoted the growth of what is by now a huge presence of voluntary and nonprofit organizations in the region. Reformers insist that the latter have directly risen out of the region's strong tradition of civic associationism (see also Putnam 1993); indeed, Lombardy boasts not only the largest Catholic diocese in the world and some of Europe's largest and most effective trade unions, but more recently also a very high number of independent civic associations, many of which actively

participate in welfare provisioning (Ranci 2001). The extensive integration of public and private nonprofit care providers has led some commentators to argue that privatization Lombardy-style differs fundamentally from UK-style marketization because of the nonprofit sector's “explicit ethical mission” which arises out of the “strong sharing of objectives,” “the sharing of common values,” and “a vocation to operate in network” **(p.16)** (Lippi and Morisi 2005: 74). Such assessments not only reproduce the conceit that ethics stand opposed to neoliberal marketization, UK-style or otherwise. They also serve the highly moralized ideology of welfare-state reform so avidly promoted by Lombardian neoliberal reformers.

These regional particularities are embedded within a very specific Italian political economic culture which has allowed for neoliberalism to fall on grounds more fertile than elsewhere in Western Europe. Indeed, the landscapes of neoliberal institutional restructuring that are unfolding before Italians' eyes are quite dramatic. The withdrawal of the Italian state, always exceptionally “alien” to its citizens (Ginsborg 2001: 139) and appearing as incomplete, inconsistent, partial, riddled with factionalisms, and “in pieces” (Schneider and Schneider 2003: 34), has occurred with a swiftness unusual for Western Europe and is perhaps better comparable with some non-European contexts where the *déplacement* of the state has so rapidly occurred because states had less of a presence there in the first place (Trouillot 2003: 91). Just as importantly, the neoliberal tendency to devolve social welfare functions to lower levels of government intersects with a long regionalist history in Italy. The national health service, for example, was already decentralized and regionalized in the 1970s (Calza Bini and Pugliese 2003), which has led some authors to argue that the current devolution and “territorialization” of services should in Italy more aptly be called a “re-territorialization” (Bifulco, Bricocoli, and Monteleone 2008: 148). The state's withdrawal[13] has not gone unnoticed even among international media commentators, including the *Guardian*, which in an article entitled “Selling Off Society” argued that Italy's massive wave of privatization indicates that “it may be that Italy is the first post-modern state, functioning without a central government in the usual sense and relying instead on its social capital.”[14]

Furthermore, the free-market fundamentalism embodied by a figure like Berlusconi, who explicitly compares the governing of Italy to the management of a company (hence his use of the phrase Azienda Italia [Company Italy]), cannot be interpreted as entirely novel, but rather as an iteration of an already existing market-friendly and state-wary culture with intricate links to Catholic social doctrine. Indeed, Italy's “economic miracle” of the 1950s and 1960s (an extraordinarily intense period of economic development which saw maximum growth rates of over 7.5 percent between 1958 and 1961) was built upon a low-wage, high-unemployment regime actively pursued by Italian leaders preaching a policy of deflation and containment of demand. These policies contrasted sharply with those of many of Italy's neighbors, where national **(p.17)** welfare-state building hinged on policies of full employment and the full utilization of capital resources. Italy's laissez-faire economic policy came to an end in the 1960s and 1970s only in light of massive worker's strikes (Lumley 1990).

Further features of neoliberalization have appeared with particular clarity in the Italian context. The increase in subcontracting, which David Harvey identifies as central to the neoliberal reorganization of industry, has allowed for “older systems of domestic, artisanal, familial (patriarchal), and paternalistic (“godfather,” “guv̇nor” or even Mafialike) labour systems to

revive and flourish as centerpieces rather than appendages of the production system" (1990: 152). Yet such labor systems have been constitutive of the Italian economy all along. The economies of central and northeastern Italy were and continue to be structured around an effusion of small and medium-sized family enterprises where women, children, and retirees have worked illegally in the shadows of an undocumented labor regime for generations (Blim 1990: 10; Yanagisako 2002). There are, in short, several factors that make up the Italian sociopolitical-economic landscape that seem to invite, indeed anticipate, neoliberalization. It may therefore well be that we must view Italy, as Slavoj Žižek does, as an "experimental laboratory where our future is being worked out" (2009: 6).

It is from within this national and especially regional laboratory that ethical citizenship emerges as an elaborate social and cultural achievement. It is deeply reshaping the contours of Lombardian public life and of the citizen-subjects peopling it. Ethical citizenship signals the emergence of a new mode of social and moral subjectivity, new assumptions about citizens' rights and duties, and new conceptualizations of human agency, affect, and will. These ideas and policies regarding the new citizenship ethic are mediated by public policy and new legal and bureaucratic frameworks. They become materially anchored in people's everyday lives through an emergent regime of state-mediated pedagogical practice. The rise of the new citizens' ethic through relational labor is also coupled to the emergence of a newly sentimentalized public sphere—a public that many social actors imagine as flooded with private emotions. This public hinges on the supposed desire of citizens to create the collective good through empathetic acts.

Catholic thought defines voluntarism, derived etymologically from the Latin term for will (*voluntas*), as a philosophy that foregrounds that wisdom ought to be sought through the soul rather than mere intellectual activity. Michel Foucault told the story of modernity by arguing that power began to pass through the body whereas it used to pass through **(p.18)** the soul (1988: 196). The rise of this new ethic of voluntarism—of willed soulfulness rather than rational action—indicates that the workings of power may have shifted yet again. Today, Italian state rationality is invested in producing a "soulful" citizenry that translates the corporeal stirrings of the heart into publicly useful activity. It does so through new legal regimes and other forms of rational and bureaucratic action that have proliferated around the production of ethical citizens. The target here is the soul. When it comes to voluntarism, statecraft is very much soulcraft.

As this story unfolds, I explore the discursive and pragmatic ways through which citizens have learned to relate to each other and a newly conceptualized common good in distinctly moral and ethical terms. I call this new kind of relationship between citizens and between citizens and the state ethical citizenship.[15] I use the term "citizenship" here because citizenship is a crucial dimension of social, political, and moral subjectivity (see also Fikes 2009; Ong 2003; Petryna 2002). It is of abiding importance to how individuals learn to orient and reorient themselves vis-à-vis others and the larger collective whole. I treat citizenship as a formal institution entailing rights and duties as well as a modality of belonging that must be achieved through everyday practice, just as it can be foreclosed. Citizenship is not a state or possession, but a process, social position, or orientation that can be precarious and that must be repeatedly asserted and attained. People have to exhibit the capacity to remain valued members of society. Indeed, the question of public recognition is a crucial part of this story, as voluntarism allows citizens to appear in public as more than merely private and "dependent" figures. Thus, the fact that

unremunerated activity is now in Italy legally recognized endows volunteers with a public personality never granted to, for example, women performing housework—and this despite a long history of radical Italian feminism that insisted that women's work in the domestic sphere ought to be salaried (Bono and Kemp 1991: 260–272). The public recognition that both the state and the more general public bestows on some forms of unremunerated labor hinges on the continued nonrecognition, even denigration of others. This includes the labor of a growing underclass of immigrant women who work precariously in the shadows of Italy's private homes. Though they provide care that is often very similar to that of volunteers, immigrant labor is often not recognized as being of the relational kind. Ethical citizenship thus appears as a racial and cultural thing; as a method that is best practiced by those who are culturally predisposed and able to reconstitute broken social ties.

I take the term “ethics” to mean an “education of the passions into **(p.19)** conformity with pursuit of what theoretical reasoning identifies as the *telos* and practical reasoning as the right action to do in each particular time and place” (MacIntyre 1984: 162). I also privilege the association of ethics with action rather than propriety, though I do not associate the two with freedom and constraint respectively (Lambek 2010: 9). I also hesitate to draw too sharp a distinction between ethics and morality and instead use them side by side, not only because these terms often overlap in philosophical and social scientific use, but because the many distinctions made between them are often not consistent with one another (Lambek 2010: 9). Indeed, even an all too crisp distinction between ethics as everyday, embodied practice versus abstract moral imperatives (Mahmood 2005: 25) is a tenuous one for me because the Italians I worked with often evoked abstract moral principles at the very moment that they engaged in embodied affect and action, thus irreducibly intermingling the two. The ethic I am interested in exists as much as a structure of feeling that lies at “the very edge of semantic availability” (Williams 1977: 134) as it can become highly articulated moral doctrine. I thus avoid the Kantian distinction between rationality and the senses and return to Aristotle “to locate ethics first in practice and action” (Lambek 2010: 7).

With such a focus on ethics—its histories, social life, and meanings—this book tells a story of neoliberalism that moves not from a presumed utopia to a dystopia, and from a moral welfarist order to a heartless, immoral one. Rather, I trace the ways in which welfarist and postwelfarist forms of collective good are complex intertwinements of both. I show that the supposedly dystopic neoliberal order is in fact increasingly dependant on and enabled by new forms of utopia—new kinds of collective moral order that are produced and disseminated through a whole industry of persuasion and consistent symbolic and pragmatic work. I am not referring to what has been called neoliberalism's “utopia of unlimited exploitation” (Bourdieu 1998), nor do I mean the “utopian vision of a fully commodified form of social life” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 363). Rather than focus on the salvational value that liberalism assumes inheres in market exchange (see also Hayek 1994 [1944]), I focus on the ways in which neoliberalism can exhibit an extraordinarily ethical—in this case, Catholic and even Socialist—face.[16] Rather than track neoliberalism as a historical dynamic of global market forces that dissolves all forms of reason and social relations other than those governed by utilitarian calculation and instrumentalism, and that aims to encompass all human action and meaning within the rationalizing domain of the market—that is, the kind of neoliberalism perhaps best **(p.20)** called market neoliberal—I focus

on the moral neoliberal as a form of ethical living that appears as the negation of and yet is integral to neoliberalism more broadly conceived.

Zygmunt Bauman once said that neoliberalism distinguishes itself from previous social orders by answering in the negative a question from which, as ethical philosopher Emmanuel Levinas put it, “all immorality began” (Bauman 2000: 5). This was the question that Cain angrily asked God (“Am I my brother's keeper?”) in response to God's question where Cain's brother, Abel, was. This question, and the answering of it in the negative, is to Bauman the *fons et origo* of all immorality. To him, this basic assumption structures our world where welfare is under attack. Yet the experiments in ethical citizenship that I document here offer insight into a scenario very different from the one sketched by Bauman. This is not a neoliberal order rising under the sign of Cain. Rather, this is a neoliberal order rising under the sign of brotherly love.

Liberalism has since its inception provided us with a theory of moral being and belonging that functioned as a corollary to its other core concern with the rational, self-interested, utilitarian subject. A number of scholars have argued that the formation of the liberal subject depended crucially on this dual ontology. Liberal subjects could only come into meaningful being because they were able to think of themselves simultaneously as *homo oeconomicus* and *homo relationalis*, as animated by both self-interest and fellow-feelings such as love, compassion, and social solidarity, by both rational, profit-driven, self-interested behavior and “various forms of disinterested love—charity, motherly love, benevolence, compassion” (Feher 2009: 35). Indeed, “the ideology of a disinterested gift appears in parallel with an ideology of purely interested exchange,” writes Jonathan Parry. Those who make purportedly “free and unconstrained contracts in the market also make free and unconstrained gifts outside it” (Parry 1986: 466). Compassion and coldness are thus “not opposite at all but are two sides of a bargain that the subjects of modernity have struck with structural inequality” (Berlant 2004: 10).

Yet compassion and coldness do not work according to identical logics. In fact, liberal capitalism “presupposes that we do not grow spiritually rich in the same way that we acquire material wealth” (Feher 2009: 23). Gifts were defined as being incommensurable with market relations —“altruistic, moral, and loaded with emotion” (Parry 1986: 466). **(p.21)** This dual ontology found particularly vivid expression in the enlightened rationalism of the eighteenth century which saw as many pleas “for passion, for the heart, for the soul, and especially of the soul torn in two” as it saw the ascendance of reason. It was that “first theorist of intimacy,” Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Arendt 1958: 38–39), who discovered the magic of compassion. Rousseau “summoned up the resources of the heart against the indifference of the salon and against the ‘heartlessness’ of reason” (Arendt 2006 [1963]: 78; see also Sznaider 2001). He pitted the heart of the sufferer against the iciness of the rich and the rational. The age of reason, in short, was an age of sentiments and sentimentality as well (Habermas 1991: 48).

This split that constituted the liberal subject has most often been interpreted as having manifested itself in the distinction between and coconstitution of the public and the private, specifically of market and domestic domains, instrumentalism and familial intimacy, atomization and love (Berlant 2007; Habermas 1991; Povinelli 2006; Yanagisako 2002). Many scholars have argued that the opposition between public instrumentalism and private love, or between the public domain of property owners and the domain of pure humanity and lasting love within the

family (Habermas 1991: 46) had the function of displacing the aggressiveness of market exchanges with a conceptualization of the capitalist subject as loving family man. Private "autonomy" and "freedom" denied the social, particularly economic, origins of love (Habermas 1991: 46; Povinelli 2006: 190) and made it the "loophole through which people [could] view themselves … as fundamentally non-instrumental—selfless, sacrificial, magnanimous." It enabled the capitalist subject to "disidentify with what's aggressive about his pursuit of desire and interest in all spaces and to see himself as fundamentally ethical because he means to have solidarity with some humans he knows" (Berlant 2007: 293).

This scholarly emphasis on the categorical distinction between the public economic and the private familial domain, between instrumental action and intimate affect, has been enormously productive. But it has often obscured the fact that a similar split ran across the fabric of the public sphere as well.[17] Here, the liberal subject simultaneously engaged in aggressive market transactions on the one hand and benevolent nonmarket transactions (such as charitative gifting) on the other. Indeed, it was not just the domain of private love that was conceptualized as separable from the mere calculus of interests while in fact being indispensible to them. The domain of public giving in the form of charity, for example, performed the same kinds of work as it emerged in tandem with the market. As Jonathan Parry put it, the "renewed ideological stress on **(p.22)** the autonomy of the market" saw the rise of "renewed pleas for philanthropy to assume the responsibilities it denies" (1986: 469). Capitalism, in short, saw the rise of a new humanitarian sensibility as well (Haskell 1985a; 1985b). Both private familial love and public beneficence thus delineated a larger "existential realm" where human life was not lived through bargaining and self-interested exchange, but was instead "met or humbled by the manifestation of disinterested feelings" (Feher 2009: 23–24).

Some scholars have interpreted this dual nature of liberal subjects and society as a matter of psychic necessity. The realm of disinterested exchange offered the subject a moral or emotional loophole (Berlant 2007: 293) through which moral dignity and emotional nourishment could be achieved (Feher 2009: 23–24). The realm of disinterested feeling, "of divine charity, parental or spousal devotion, social and national solidarity, love and compassion for humanity, and so on," existed not only to supplement what market relations can or cannot deliver. Rather, it "is required for the formation of subjects who can distinguish between the negotiable and the inalienable and may be expected to be treated according to this distinction" (Feher 2009: 24). Yet rather than focus on psychic necessity—the individual need for ethical being-in-the-world that balances out the intolerability of immoral living—I am here interested in ethics insofar as they offer the promise of meaningful social relations at a moment where the integrity of these social relations is put to question. It is thus less the psyche that I am concerned with than morals and ethics as public cultural necessities that help provide collective meaning—and help orient collective practice meaningfully—at a moment when the social fabric is strained. After all, it is in highly differentiated societies with a strong division of labor that "the progressive disembedding of the economy from society and the increased differentiation of economic relations from other social relations" occur. The disembedding of previously undifferentiated social spheres necessitates a clear distinction, indeed polarization, between the transactions that are appropriate to each (Parry 1986: 466). In short, once different spheres of human exchange are categorically distinguished from each other, they come to be thought of as

structured around distinct sets of norms, rules, and sentiments—monetary versus moral, commodified versus decommodified, rational versus affective. And it is precisely around this dual ontology that hypermarketized social life is oriented in Lombardy today.

Even Karl Marx, who has been accused of positing an all-too-drastic distinction between alienated and nonalienated modes of human life, was in fact very aware of the intimate connection between the two. He **(p.23)** argued that while "the ethics of political economy is *acquisition*, work, thrift, sobriety … , the political economy of ethics is 'the opulence of a good conscience, of virtue' ("ein Reichtum an gutem Gewissen, an Tugend")" (1987: 97). Marx was thus very vividly aware of the fact that liberal political economy exhibits not only a market but a moral face. This moral face was one where political economy's cardinal doctrine of ascetic self-denial ("The less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you *save*—the *greater* becomes … your *capital*" [1987: 94–95]) was dialectically intertwined with a political economy of ethics, animated by forms of virtue that allowed for a good conscience. This dialectic, of course, is a highly dynamic one. The worker, after all, "becomes poorer the more wealth he produces" and a "cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces"; the devaluation of the human world thus "grow[s] in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things" (Marx, cited in Berardi 2009: 37). Similarly, the opulence of virtue flourishes in proportion to marketization. Moralization abounds in proportion to exploitation, gifting in proportion to commodification.

For Marx, then, there were two forms of ethics, two economies of virtue at work in liberal political economy. There existed a calculative and instrumental self that man was expected to exhibit within the market place, a self animated by the virtues of scarcity and thrift, by ascetic self-control for the sake of capital accumulation and profit (an ethic which was, of course, most famously studied by Max Weber), and a corollary set of benevolent dispositions that man would exhibit purportedly outside of it. The ethic of thrift and the ethic of gifting, the ethic of scarcity and the ethic of generosity and good conscience—all are for Marx in constant dialectical interplay. Adam Smith called the former self-interest or self-love, the latter fellow-feeling. In this latter realm of moral sentiments, as Smith called them, man would encounter not equals with whom he trafficked, bartered, and exchanged commodities, but those pitiful beings with whom he would engage in a benevolent transactional economy of feeling, one animated by "pity or compassion, the emotion that we feel for the misery of others" (Smith 1976 [1759]: 9).

Much recent scholarship on neoliberalism has oriented its analytic eye toward the economies of virtue directed toward the self, thus placing itself firmly within the Weberian and Foucauldian traditions of the study of modes of self-fashioning and self-subjection through rational means (that is, through virtues of work, thrift, and sobriety). In these readings, to quote Wendy Brown, neoliberalism "reaches for the soul of **(p.24)** the citizen-subject" by prescribing social action as something that ought to be conducted as "rational entrepreneurial action" and "according to a calculus of utility, benefit, or satisfaction against a micro-economic grid of scarcity, supply and demand, and moral value-neutrality." The human is "configured exhaustively as *homo oeconomicus*, all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of market rationality" (Brown 2003: 9). Such new mechanisms for self-cultivation or self-care reflect a "fundamental shift in the

ethics of subject formation" (Ong 2006b: 501); a move toward "inscribing" an "ethico-politics" of self-management and self-governing control onto the souls of individuals (Rose 2000: 1409).

But more than that, scholars have argued that neoliberal morality is categorically distinct from its nineteenth-century liberal forebear in that it is now solely measured in terms of individuals' capacity to "self-care—the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions" (Brown 2003: 15). For Brown, neoliberalism equates moral responsibility with rational action; it dissolves nineteenth-century liberalism's "discrepancy between economic and moral behavior by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences," all of which are directed toward the self (Brown 2003: 15). Michel Feher, who like Brown leans on Thomas Lemke's reading of Foucault's interpretation of neoliberalism, makes a similar point. He argues that in contrast to nineteenth-century liberalism, which allowed for a dissonance between the commodified and the inalienable, between profit-driven activities and selfless giving, neoliberalism conflates these two domains; "the various things I do, in any existential domain … , all contribute to either appreciating or depreciating the human capital that is me" (Feher 2009: 30). For these authors, neoliberalism does away with the split between markets and morals so fundamental to the liberal self and instead makes the latter subservient to the former.

In contrast to such readings, I explore neoliberal morality as a realm that is not simply collapsed with or subjected to neoliberal market rationalities but that instead continues to exist in productive tension with it. This productive tension, and the tendency of proponents of this morality to present it as opposed to market rationalities, is precisely what makes the moral neoliberal so persuasive to so many people in so many ways. This tension becomes most apparent if one moves away from an analytic of self-fashioning toward the other side of (neo)liberalism's ethic—the ethic that is decidedly other-oriented and that hinges on an ideology of disinterested love, empathy, and compassion. This is not to say that self-fashioning is absent from my analysis. In chapter 4, for instance, I show **(p.25)** how a state-mediated pedagogy directed toward volunteers attempts to produce subjects attuned to their capacity to listen and to feel the suffering of others. Yet the point of this pedagogy is not mere self-care, but the training of one's affective capacities toward the exterior world, and the putting to work of one's feelings in the creation of relationships with others. The relational richness, indeed wealth, that the state and many volunteers imagine will ensue from this *souci des autres* is a means to counteract the relational poverty gripping the body politic.

My focus on this other-oriented economy of virtue allows me to propose a different reading of neoliberal morality that does not conflate neoliberal morals with the market but that pays attention to the dissonance or split that scholars such as Brown and Feher argue has been done away with under neoliberal conditions. This ethics of other-orientation is far from morally value-neutral, as Brown proposes. Nor is it animated only by rational, instrumentalist, utilitarian techniques. It is not propelled by an ethic of thrift but by excesses in affect such as compassion and empathy, not by sobriety but by an opulence of virtue. Again, this is not to say that I did not find the kinds of neoliberal calculative rationality that "renders technical" through market-driven calculations (Li 2007; Ong 2006a; 2006b). But the focus here is not on calculative rationality but on its corollaries: on other-orientation rather than the fashioning of the self, on affect rather than rationality, on fellow feeling rather than self-interest.

This allows me to do three things: First, it allows me to grasp neoliberalism as a complex of opposites that can contain what appear as oppositional practices, ethics, and emotions (Muehlebach 2009). Neoliberalism thus appears not simply as malleable, but as a process that may allow for the simultaneity and mutual dependency of forms and practices that scholars frequently think of in oppositional terms. Neoliberalism is a force that can contain its negation—the vision of a decommodified, disinterested life and of a moral community of human relationality and solidarity that stands opposed to alienation. This means that a "science of economics" cannot be separated from a "science of morals" (Fassin 2008: 334)—morals that are not only historically contingent but crucial to study if one wants to understand the persuasiveness of economic regimes.[18]

This attention to the oppositional allows me to make another intervention. I question the often presumed coherence of subjects, subjects that in classical liberalism were conceptualized as engaging in moral and economic action considered to be in tension with each other but whose souls have now, for some scholars of neoliberalism, become indissolubly **(p.26)** inscribed with an ethos of individual self-management (Brown 2003: 15). Put differently, I show that citizen-subjects come into being not through the "infiltration" of market-driven truths and calculations into previously untouched domains such as politics, or through the "inducement" of individuals to self-manage according to market principles of discipline, efficiency, and competitiveness (Ong 2006a: 4). Rather, I track the very fraught and often uncertain ways through which people navigate and contemplate shifting, unfamiliar terrains and make them their own through historically informed, culturally specific interpretive practice. At stake is a portrayal of people as not always very coherent, but as critical-complicit in their engagement with the shifting parameters of social life. They are not seamlessly governed, but capable of both acts of appropriation and rejection at once.

Such a focus also, finally, allows me to move away from familiar reiterations of liberal-secular capitalist modernity as "rationalized, affect-evacuated technicism" slowly unfolding with the seamless precision of machines (Mazzarella 2009: 295; see also Aretxaga 2000; Stoler 2002).[19] I instead move toward conceptualizing both liberalism and neoliberalism as entailing subjects that since their inception trafficked in, bartered, and exchanged virtues and passions as much as they did money and commodities, to produce a public as ontologically split as the liberal self itself. My focus on compassion as central to neoliberal welfare-state restructuring further allows me to move away from considerations of this sentiment as a force that bears down on "undesired" noncitizen populations (refugees, immigrants, and the recipients of humanitarian aid)—that is, on the bare life that disturbs the tranquil life of the citizens' *polis* (Fassin 2005; Ticktin 2006). Instead, I suggest that the *polis* cannot be understood as a zone protected from the violence of humanitarianism, a sphere where the "happy few" stand in tense relation with the wretched of the earth (Fassin 2005: 381). Compassion, with its links to social exclusion, has made its way into the very heart of citizenship making itself. What are often perceived as "the only real rights, … the rights of citizens, the rights attached to a national community as such" (Rancière 2004: 298) are under profound configuration, such that citizens and their noncitizen counterparts are not always clearly distinguishable by a set dividing line but instead hover along a gradation of rights and rightlessness.[20]

There has thus always existed a morality intrinsic to what might today appear as an immoral neoliberalism—a morality that ostensibly exists as a negation of the market logic while in fact being integral and necessary to it. Within this public circulates both an opulence of material **(p. 27)** wealth and an opulence of good virtue; this public hinges both on aggressive acquisition and clean conscience. It is with this in mind that this story is inspired by those who have explored neoliberalism as an "odd coupling" of hyperrationalization on the one hand and exuberant magicalities, mysticisms, and other forms of enchantments on the other, and who have attempted to account for such strange correlations and copresences (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). Or, to go back to the origins of anthropology, it is in this sense that my writing is indebted to Marcel Mauss's original insight that any socioeconomic order, be it that of the potlatching Kwakiutl or of the redistributive French welfare state, was as ontologically indeterminate as the very act of gifting itself, wrought out of both self-interest and generosity, calculation and obligation. Mauss's analysis hinged not a naïve romance of social reciprocity versus capitalist instrumentalism, but on an acute sensitivity toward the fact that any social and economic form cannot easily be classified as one or the other.

I would at this point like to dwell on Adam Smith's work a little longer, because it is one of the clearest expressions of this intimate connection between markets and morals, economics and ethics. Many scholars have puzzled over the "celebrated Adam Smith Problem," that is to say, on the question of the compatibility of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* with *The Wealth of Nations* (Hirschman 1977: 109). They have found Smith's work vexing in its seeming dissonance, arguing that his classically liberal distinction between economic and moral conduct presupposed a distinction, even tension, between these two spheres. This is why, as Wendy Brown has argued, there are "striking differences in tone, subject matter and even prescription between Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*" (2003: 15). Contrary to such theories of dissonance, I would instead argue that Smith's oeuvre as a whole is exemplary of the coherence of economies of self-interest and economies of fellow-feeling. In fact, it is Smith's work, taken as a whole, that perhaps best instantiates the Janus face of liberalism whose unfolding articulations I trace in this book.

Others have found other ways to connect the two works. Albert Hirschman wrote that the *Moral Sentiments* conclude that "the principal human drives end up motivating man to improve his material well-being," and that *The Wealth of Nations* therefore logically proceeded to detail the conditions under which this improvement could be achieved (Hirschman 1977: 110). Thomas Haskell has argued more elaborately that there existed a "kinship" between the promise-keeping contractual self so central to the rise of capitalism and the responsible compassionate self similarly central to the humanitarianism that arose at the same time **(p.28)** (most obviously in the form of the antislavery movement). The new humanitarian sensibility was thus more than a mere technique of class interest. Instead, it was part of a larger "moral universe" (1985a: 361) that came with the rise of capitalism and that hinged on a new, generalized sense of self, responsibility, and sovereign agency. It is precisely such a moral universe, entailing both the market and the moral neoliberal, that I would like to argue for here by taking a closer look at Adam Smith.

We are familiar with Smith's argument in the *Wealth of Nations* that the most persistent, universal, and reliable of man's motives is the pursuit of his own self-interest or, as he calls it, self-love. “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker,” Smith famously wrote, “that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love” (1976 [1776]: 18). There is no need for benevolence in the sphere of the market, since the law of supply and demand automatically transmutes each individual self-interest into the common good (Haskell 1985b: 549). Market transactions, in short, are evacuated of benevolent feelings. But they are not evacuated of the passions. The above cited passage is but one moment in the *Wealth of Nations* where the fundamental emotional component to Adam Smith's theory of human motivation becomes apparent. Smith's equation of the passions with interests is often misrecognized by scholars who have interpreted Smith's concept of interest in all too rationalist and instrumentalist terms (Hirschman 1977: 69; Yanagisako 2002: 8).[21] Read in this light, Smith's heavily sentimentalist *Theory of Moral Sentiments* appears not in contrast to the *Wealth of Nations*, but as another variation on a general theme—that of a universe of human (that is to say economic, political, and moral) action animated by affective dispositions and actions.

Smith's thought was firmly rooted in the eighteenth-century sentimentalist or emotionalist school of ethics strongly influenced by David Hume. While the seventeenth century had a very somber view of the passions and rested on the “general belief that passions are dangerous and destructive,” the succeeding century rehabilitated the passions, which were now thought of as invigorating rather than pernicious (Hirschman 1977: 27–28). For the sentimentalist school it was sentiments (also known as passions, dispositions, affections, or propensities) that made up the basis of human judgment. Sentiments were considered to be more fundamental than reason in that they guided reason in man's pursuit of happiness and well-being. All of these sentiments, be it the “calm passion” of economic interest (Hirschman 1977: 64) or other more turbulent ones, were subject to law-like uniformities. The Age of **(p.29)** Contract was an Age of Principles as well (Haskell 1985: 560b; see also Povinelli 2006: 187–188).

The *Moral Sentiments* preach love. Not toward the self, as in the *Wealth of Nations*, but toward others. It is sympathy or fellow-feeling that produces social bonds between people. To Smith, humans are naturally sympathetic: “Compassion … is one of the original passions of human nature” implanted into humans by God (1976 [1759]: 9). Smith's theory of society in the *Moral Sentiments* is that of a society held together by spontaneous affective bonds, by the passion and compassion that people feel toward others. This kind of unmediated sociality appears to be of the most intimate and unmediated kind because social bonds spring from the “affection of the heart” (1976 [1759]: 18). Like market exchange, which Friedrich Hayek much later argued hinges on the “spontaneous forces of society” (1994 [1944]: 21), moral exchange is conceptualized as a spontaneously emergent reciprocal transactional economy that trucks in beneficence and sympathy on the one hand, and gratitude, friendship, and esteem on the other. Society is thus “bound together by the agreeable bands of love and affection, and [is], as it were, drawn to one common centre of mutual good offices” (1976 [1759]: 85).

Yet even as Smith makes affect the basis of both his market and moral socialities, he is aware of its fickle nature. He warns that this sympathetic sociality might prove to be faulty because

sympathy's operations are imperfect. Like the potentially imperfect operations of the market, the operations of morality require regulation. Smith spends dozens of pages fretting over the question of balance and proportion in moral and emotional life, and over how a perfect equilibrium between self-love and fellow-feeling can be achieved. He worries over the fact that the passions and sympathies of men cannot always be in “perfect concord” with each other, and over how this unfortunate state of affairs might be overcome (1976 [1759]: 16). As with the market, which in Smith's aesthetic functions like a perfectly oiled machine, Smith is concerned with harmony in human emotional life and with an equilibrium of emotions that ought to correspond with each other.

Smith therefore proposes two technologies of equilibration that ought to harmonize social life. First, individuals are capable of judging their own actions through the reactions of others. It is other individuals who are the “looking glass” according to which “we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct” (1976 [1759]: 112). Morality is thus not regulated through laws transcending human particulars. On the contrary, it appears in infinite, minuscule, self-reflexive individual encounters. There is another regulatory **(p.30)** operation that Smith proposes. Like the *Wealth of Nations*, where the invisible hand magically sublimates individual greed into the collective good, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* features a corollary appearance of the divine. Here Smith argues that God, “the great judge,” equipped humans with a higher “tribunal,” an “impartial spectator,” “a demigod” and “great inmate of the breast” acting as our conscience and deciding “the natural and proper object of approbation or … disapprobation” (1976 [1759]: 128–131). Once again, the supreme arbiter is not secular law or the state. It consists instead of a quasi-divine regulatory force nestled within the depth of the human breast. Both market and moral forms of exchange are, in short, to be conducted in the freest and most unhindered of ways. Just as the contractual individual is committed to the “free” exchange of commodities, the moral individual is engaged in “freely” chosen acts of compassion, unhindered by a meddling intermediary force such as the law. Beneficence, Smith insists, “is always free, it cannot be extorted by force, the mere want of it exposes to no punishment” (1976 [1759]: 78).[22] Indeed, liberal polities have always posited that public morals ought not to be regulated by law. Virtue ought to be spontaneous and voluntary, flowing from a person's desire to do good rather than from state prescriptions. This is why liberal polities so adamantly refuse to provide relief as a matter of right and instead heavily rely on charity, which is legally unenforceable and thus often tragically patchy and inconsistent (Castel 2003: 210).[23]

The moral neoliberal unfolding in Lombardy today is wrought out of a metaphysics that hinges precisely on such heavy sentimentalism, fantasies of spontaneous and unmediated affective communion between individuals, and visions of a society self-regulated through heartfelt individual feeling rather than the state. The moral neoliberal, like its liberal forebear, exhibits just such an oscillation between and mirror imaging of markets and morals, “reason” and sentiments—though it differs from liberalism in that the Left can today also occupy that moral slot. Such sustained oscillations are not new and can be traced across more than a century of Italian liberal welfare-state building. In fact, nineteenth-century liberalism's dual ontology never vanished but found different expression in twentieth-century liberal welfarism, in the form of a metaphysics of solidarity mediated by the state (Holmes 2000). This twentieth-century

relationship between markets and morals is changing again at the cusp of the twenty-first century. And this is where my story begins.

Notes:

(1.) What was written out of these narratives of a benign capitalist past was the fact that the securities and stabilities of the modern Italian welfare state had grown only incrementally for most of the twentieth century and were only institutionalized in the late 1960s and 1970s, when some of the most massive, coordinated, and continuous workers' strikes that Western Europe had ever seen exploded. These strikes so badly shook Fiat and other large Italian industries that the government, together with employers like Agnelli, caved in to many of the workers' demands for proper pensions and other rights (Lumley 1990).

(2.) This ambivalence was well expressed by Pierre Bourdieu, who in a conversation with Günter Grass remarked that European intellectuals are today "paradoxically … defend[ing] what is not entirely defensible" (Grass and Bourdieu 2002: 71). These kinds of unease stem from the fact that the welfare state emerged at the intersection of several forms of power and exclusion (Bauman 2000: 5). Max Weber was one of the twentieth century's first intellectuals to insist that welfare policy was in fact an instrument of state power. Indeed, welfare-state bureaucracies did not often encourage citizens to take charge of their own lives (Habermas 1989: 47; see also Fraser 2009: 97). Feminist critics of T. H. Marshall's famous *laudatio* on the welfare state as the culmination of modern citizenship have also long argued that these rights were in fact deeply gendered and highly exclusionary of women (Balbo 1987; Knijn and Ungerson 1997; Lewis 1998; Fraser 2009). Scholars have, finally, argued that the production of citizens as needful subjects was not an instantiation of social justice, but of capitalism consolidating its power and depoliticizing revolutionary struggles (Wolin 1989: 154–155). As Michel Feher puts it, it caused "revolutions to lapse into bureaucracy" (2009: 34). Indeed, the welfarist project was deeply contradictory to begin with, subordinating itself to the market while at the same time attempting to mitigate its commodifying effects (Offe 1984). Welfare pitted the social state against the liberal state and was a compromise between market and labor (Castel 2003: 192) in that it "linked together private property and social property, economic development and the acquisition of social rights, the market and the State" (343).

(3.) Throughout this book, I follow Marx in my preference for the use of the term "labor" over "work" in that he thought of labor as an intrinsically social process. Laborers are never isolated, but embedded in social relationships.

(4.) Clifford Geertz, in his famous discussion of ideology, called the former "interest theory" (where morality serves only as mask or weapon in a universal struggle for advantage) and the latter "strain theory" (where morality serves only as symptom and remedy that correct chronic social dislocation). In the one, "men pursue power; in the other, they flee anxiety" (Geertz 1973: 201).

(5.) The EC states that social services have a "special role as pillars of the European society and economy, primarily as a result of their contribution to several essential values and objectives of the Community." They therefore ought to be organized according to "not for profit" principles and grow out of "strongly rooted … (local) cultural traditions" that include "the participation of

voluntary workers, expression of citizenship capacity” (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 4–5).

(6.) The conceptualization of citizenship as heartfelt comes from the title of a conference, “Active and Solidaristic European Citizenship,” held by a state program called Cittadinanza Europea Attiva e Solidale (CEAS) in Milan on December 4, 2004, at the Palazzo Affari ai Giureconsulti. Taken from the personal notes of the author.

(7.) The EU, in an effort to emphasize its distinctly European (as opposed to American) approach to welfare, has defined social policy not as cost but as a productive factor. Productivity is conceptualized in several ways. Not only are social services crucial in their potential to create jobs, thus making the care of populations a key site through which citizens are mobilized through labor. Because social services also complement and support the role of families in caring for the youngest and oldest members of society in particular, they are productive in the sense that they play what the European Commission refers to as a “vital social cohesion” role (Andersson 2005).

(8.) See www.auser.it.

(9.) See also a document by the EU's Urbact, a European exchange and learning program that promotes sustainable urban development. It has on its web page a “City Partner Profile” of Sesto San Giovanni.

(10.) I thank Professor Costanzo Ranci for this information.

(11.) See, for example, the regional president's presentation of the Lombardian model of welfare as a “proposal for all of Italy” (*una proposta per tutto il Paese*) (Nembri 2008).

(12.) As Italianist John Foot elaborates, “All the crucial movements, booms, slumps and moments in twentieth-century Italian history have had their epicenter in Milan. The first trade unions took root in Milan, fascism was made in Milan and the Socialist reformists made of Milan the jewel in their crown. The resistance was led from Milan and saw its final act there in 1945. The city was the centre of the economic miracle that transformed Italy. […] Berlusconi created the first private television empire in the city. […] De-industrialization of the 1980s also hit this city first. […] Much of Italy's history is bound up with that of Milan, and the story of Milan can be read as the story of the nation” (Foot 2001: 3).

(13.) I mean here the withdrawal of the state from the direct provisioning of services but not as a morally authoritarian force in Italian social life. I show in the course of this book that the production of ethically laboring subjects demands much state work. Chapter 4 in particular explores how the state attempts to produce new kinds of citizens equipped with a sensibility of duty. The production of dutiful citizens allows for what appears as state withdrawal. State absence must thus be actively produced by the state itself—that is, made thinkable and persuasive to an often skeptical citizenry. The era of modernist “big government” may have passed. And yet the conditions for this passing have to be created by the state itself.

(14.) “Selling Off Society,” *Guardian*, August 5, 2004.

(15.) While developing this concept, I discovered that others have begun to do so, too. In an excellent article published in the *American Behavioral Scientist* in 2000, Nikolas Rose speaks of the Third Way as a new way of "governing through ethics." A "new politics of conduct seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of responsible communities" (2000: 1395), and as "ethical citizens" belonging not to societies as "national collectivities," but to "neighborhoods, associations, regions, networks, subcultures, age groups, ethnicities, and lifestyle sectors—in short, communities" (1398). I have learned an enormous amount from this text but also diverge from it by analyzing the rise of ethical citizenship as more than a "novel form of politics" (1395) and instead as a form of subjectivity and practice intrinsically linked to the (neo)liberal economic order.

(16.) For a particularly poignant example of Hayek's market utopia, consider his argument that "it [is] men's submission to the impersonal forces of the market that in the past has made possible the growth of … civilization …; it is by thus submitting that we are every day helping to build something that is greater than any one of us can fully comprehend" (1994 [1944]: 224).

(17.) One laudable exception is the recent interest anthropologists have shown for the growth of corporate social responsibility as a problematic form of benevolence that has emerged under neoliberal conditions. See, for example, the excellent collection of essays edited by Katherine E. Browne and Barbara Lynn Milgram (2009).

(18.) In his call for a moral anthropology, that is to say, an anthropology that makes morals its object of analysis, Fassin defines morals as "the human belief in the possibility of telling right from wrong and in the necessity of acting in favour of the good against the evil" (2008: 334).

(19.) I am also indebted to many productive conversations with friends and colleagues Elana Shever and Dar Rudnyckyj, who have similarly thought of neoliberalization from the vantage point of affect. See Shever (2008) and Rudnyckyj (2010 and 2011).

(20.) This point has been made very well by others before me. As Aihwa Ong puts it, there today exists "a continuum of inclusion and exclusion, one that does not necessarily map onto the distinction between citizens and bare life" (Ong 2006a: 197). And as Lauren Berlant writes, "citizens without capital and migrants are *almost* in the same boat, and all might as well be called survivalists, scavengers bargaining against defeat by the capitalist destruction of life" (2007: 282).

(21.) See Albert Hirschman's magnificent treatment of the topic. He explains that Hume used the term "passions of interest" and the "interested affection" as synonyms for the "avidity of acquiring goods and possessions" or the "love of gain" (Hirschman 1977: 37). The term "interest" arose as a mediating force between two traditional categories of human motivation—passion and reason—and helped "inject an element of calculating efficiency, as well as prudence, into human behavior." In fact, "interest was seen to partake in effect of the better nature of each, as the passion of self-love upgraded and contained by reason, and as reason given direction and force by passion" (Hirschman 1977: 40–43).

(22.) To Adam Smith's credit, he recognized that this nonenforceability makes beneficence a mere "ornament" to society, but never its foundation. "Beneficence," he writes, "is less essential

to the existence of society than justice. Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence; but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it" (1976 [1759]: 86).

(23.) As Robert Castel so well puts it, the tight circumscription of the sphere of the law "does not mean that the rest of social life could simply be left to the whims of the fantastic or arbitrary. Instead these matters should be entrusted to another kind of obligation altogether, just as strict but of a qualitatively different nature: that is, to the realm of *moral obligations*. The 'moral' is not confined to the private. There is a public morality as well, that is to say, certain moral obligations that regulate our social relationships but which do not have behind them the sanction of the law." Liberalism, according to Castel, built its social policy out of ethics, not politics (2003: 210).