

# POWER AND DEMOCRACY *PAPER*

---

2

(2026)



Tocqueville-Acton  
Centro Studi e Ricerche

# POWER AND DEMOCRACY *PAPER*

---

**2**  
(2026)

## POWER AND DEMOCRACY *PAPER*

---

La serie **POWER AND DEMOCRACY *PAPER*** è collegata alle attività della rivista *Power and Democracy* e al suo progetto editoriale, ma si sviluppa seguendo un percorso autonomo. Infatti, ospita contributi volti ad arricchire il dibattito scientifico con riflessioni originali che hanno l'obiettivo di inserirsi nel più ampio dibattito pubblico. I testi proposti aggiungono al rigore nell'argomentazione anche una dimensione propositiva, che non necessariamente pone delle conclusioni, ma lascia aperta la possibilità al dialogo e al confronto sulle tesi espresse. In tal senso, è anche uno spazio dove proporre ricerche *in fieri* che vengono presentate con l'intento di essere discusse criticamente.

### **Responsabile**

Flavio Felice, Università degli Studi del Molise

### **Comitato editoriale**

Fabio Giuseppe Angelini, Università Internazionale Uninettuno di Roma

Antonio Campati, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Maurizio Serio, Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi

### **Contatti**

Tocqueville-Acton Centro Studi e Ricerche

Via Giosuè Carducci 12 – 20123 Milano

e-mail: [redazione@poweranddemocracy.it](mailto:redazione@poweranddemocracy.it)

### **Website**

[www.poweranddemocracy.it](http://www.poweranddemocracy.it)

FLAVIO FELICE

# GOOD GOVERNMENTS AND THE SHACKLED LEVIATHAN

**ABSTRACT:** This paper seeks to relate a fundamental notion of political theory, “Good Government”, to a hypothetical form of governance: the outcome of a competing process of an indefinite number of good governments. This is the “Shakled Leviathan” which draws on the tradition of the pre-humanist Italian municipal movement. Divided into four parts, each examines a particular aspect of the possible political reading of Lorenzetti’s well-known cycle: “Municipal life in Siena”, with its institutional framework; “The allegory of good government”, reread in the light of a pre-humanist republican interpretation that sees self-government as the common good itself; “The effects of good government”, showing how “Security”, guided by “Justice”, triggered by the cardinal virtues and protected by the theological virtues, is the basis of freedom and civil prosperity; “The ‘Red Queen’ and the effects of bad government”, underlining how “Tyranny”, triggered by vices and “vainglory”, is the main enemy of the human species and leads to war and generalised misery.

**KEYWORDS:** Good Government; Common Good; Shackled Leviathan; Red Queen.

**SOMMARIO:** 1. Introduction. 2. Municipal life in Siena. 3. The Allegory of Good Government. 4. The benefits of Good Government. 5. The “Red Queen” and the consequences of Bad Government. 6. Conclusions.

Lady Prassede was a woman of high birth, somewhat advanced in age, and exceedingly inclined to do good; which is surely the most praiseworthy employment one can be engaged on in this world; but which, indulged in without judgment, may be rendered hurtful, like all other good things.

ALESSANDRO MANZONI

Without fear, let each man freely walk  
And working let everyone sow,  
While such a commune  
This lady will keep under her rule  
Because she has removed all power from the guilty  
SECURITY

## 1. Introduction

This first epigraph is a famous passage from chapter 25 of *The Betrothed*, where Manzoni introduces the noblewoman Prassede, wife of Don Ferrante, who takes Lucia into her home after her release from

the castle of The Unnamed. Lady Prassede is dedicated to the common good, but it is always she who decides what that good is. The second epigraph is a transcription of the scroll held by the personification of *Security* in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's famous fresco, displayed in the Sala del Consiglio dei Nove, also known as the Sala della Pace, in the Palazzo Pubblico in Piazza del Campo, Siena. This fresco, dedicated to the *Effects of Good Government*, is accompanied by two other works that complete the cycle: *The Allegory of Good Government* and the *Effects of Bad Government*. The fresco was commissioned by the Council of Nine, who met in this very room, and was completed between February 1338 and May 1339 (Capitano, 2021, pp. 129-137).

We cannot address such a classic theme in the history of political ideas, one that has been explored by numerous interpreters of modern and contemporary political philosophy<sup>1</sup>, without first introducing it with a reflection by Luigi Einaudi. Einaudi dedicated pages of profound political, economic, and cultural analysis to the very theme of "Good Government." Einaudi, as Silvestri observes, saw Lorenzetti's depiction as an ideal model of society, where freedom, justice, order, and industriousness were harmonized in a single snapshot, in a manner that was more "allusive" than "theoretical" (Silvestri, 2008, p. 301).

We intend to relate the notion of *Good Government* – in this case, an expression of the *common good* – to a form of *governance*: the outcome of a concurrent process involving an indefinite number of *good governments*, each autonomous, and where none, at least in principle, can claim to be preordained over the others. This is the so-called "Shackled Leviathan," which draws on the tradition of the pre-humanist Italian *municipal movement* and greatly interested Luigi Einaudi<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, it has been recently revisited and theoretically redefined by the neo-institutionalism of American scholars Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bobbio analyzes the concept of good government, breaking it down into *rule of law*, *rule by good rulers*, and *mixed government*; see Bobbio, 1983, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> "...democracy begins with the municipality, which belongs to the citizens. They not only elect their councilors, mayors, or presidents, but also govern it themselves, without intervention, protection, or command from anyone outside or above the municipality. They either administer it, ruin it, or make it prosper." (Einaudi, 1954, p. 53); see Silvestri, 2008, pp. 295–305.

<sup>3</sup> Silvestri, following in Sabetti's footsteps, points out that many have argued that Italian political history, particularly after the Risorgimento, can be seen as a true "laboratory of good government" or a workshop for "alternative constitutional designs," if the pursuit of good government is understood as the "attempt to build strong, effective, and responsible institutions." (Sabetti, 2004, p. 4). Silvestri comments: "From this perspective, and although good government cannot be reduced to a question of 'performance' or 'institutional

Therefore, we use the political analysis of Acemoglu and Robinson as a reference point. After addressing the reasons why nations fail, and noting the “inclusive” and “extractive” nature of institutions, these scholars then tackle the question of how nations can be free. The rich political analysis they provide intersects with a specific form of *governance*, well represented by the *municipal movement*, which particularly, but not exclusively, affected the cities of Northern Italy: “There are three forms of government [*seignouries*]: the first depends on kings, the second on nobles, and the third on communes [*communes*]; of these, the third is the best” (Latini, 1948, p. 211). As an example of that period of civil reform, these authors select the city of Siena and the Lorenzetti cycle as an artistic representation capable of illustrating the political and economic characteristics that highlight a specific political culture: republican self-government. Among the key figures of this political culture is the so-called Shackled Leviathan, a complex institutional framework that extends far beyond Montesquieu’s separation of powers. It encompasses areas of civil life that cannot be reduced to politics, thereby preventing such an authority – and the modern state – from asserting a monopolistic claim over civil life<sup>4</sup>. The competition between political authorities and civil society institutions is what Acemoglu and Robinson refer to as the “Red Queen effect,” drawing inspiration from Lewis Carroll’s novel *Through the Looking-Glass and what Alice found there*. This concept has drawn the attention of numerous scholars across various disciplines, evoking the scene where Alice and the Red Queen, despite running at breakneck speed, remain in the same place. To Alice’s astonishment, the Red Queen replies, “Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!”

## 2. Municipal life in Siena

Before highlighting some allegorical features of the three frescoes that implicitly reference political and economic theory, we believe it is useful to recall that, since 1125, Siena has had a unique form of consular government, administered through a series of institutions known as the *commune*. We know that the concept of the commune emerged

---

efficiency,’ Cattaneo’s writings on federalism, developed in light of the issue of Italian Unification, contain one of the most interesting institutional projects.” (Silvestri, 2011, p. 155).

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the conceptual historical aspect, see Bassani, 2021, p. VI: “An institutionalized power always encountered an opposing counter power that demanded loyalty from its own subjects. The result was that every command was merely a claim, subject to being opposed and contained within a network of competing counterclaims”.

in Italy between the 9th and 10th centuries, when citizens in Northern Italy began to challenge and overthrow bishops, ecclesiastical authorities, and various lords, replacing them with different forms of republican government<sup>5</sup>. This process, also known as the “*conspiratio populi*,” affected numerous Italian cities, including Modena, Turin, Cremona, Treviso, Brescia, Pisa, Siena, Milan, Genoa, Pavia, Bergamo, and Bologna<sup>6</sup>. The municipalities involved nominally remained part of the Holy Roman Empire; however, with the Peace of Constance in 1183, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa granted them a degree of autonomy. Bishop Otto of Freising, the emperor’s uncle, expressed this in the *Gesta Federici Imperatoris*, a report detailing the difficulties in the relationship between the emperor and the municipalities:

in the governing of their cities [...] and in the conduct of public affairs [...] they are so desirous of liberty that [...] they are governed by the will of consuls rather than rulers [...] And in order to suppress arrogance, the aforesaid consuls are chosen [...] from each of the classes. And lest they should exceed bounds by lust for power, they are changed almost every year. The consequence is that, as practically the entire land is divided amongst the cities [...] scarcely any noble or great man can be found in all the surrounding territory who does not acknowledge the authority of the city. (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019)

After describing the nature of republican government and the efforts to prevent those in power from succumbing to the arrogance and hubris that often accompany discretionary authority, Otto proceeds to emphasize the connection between the political autonomy of municipalities and economic prosperity, explaining it as follows:

---

<sup>5</sup> For a more in-depth look at the municipal movement, see Ellul, 20145, p. 133: “The *communes* movement played a major role in urban emancipation [...]. It accelerated normal development: as the *communes* gained their freedom in the 12th century, the bourgeoisie of other cities followed their example and, emboldened by it, also obtained their freedom”.

<sup>6</sup> “During the golden age of municipal freedom, merchants and citizens established their own statutes for all matters concerning self-government. During this period, there was no clear definition of power over a given territory, as there were no borders in the modern sense” (Bassani, 2021, p. VI). Adam Smith’s account of the municipal affair is particularly interesting: “Mutual interest, therefore, disposed them [the burghers] to support the king, and the king to support them against the lords. They were the enemies of his enemies, and it was in his interest to make them as secure and independent of those enemies as he could” (Smith, 1976, p. 404); see Silvestri, 2012.

from this it has resulted that they far surpass all other states of the world in riches and in power. They are aided in this not only, as has been said, by their characteristic industry, but also by the absence of their princes [i.e., emperors], who are accustomed to remain on the far side of the Alps. (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019)

In Acemoglu and Robinson's analysis, the Siena depicted in Lorenzetti's frescoes is the republican Siena of the Government of the Nine, founded on a popular assembly in which all adult male citizens participated. During the years in which Lorenzetti executed the frescoes, the powers of the assembly diminished considerably, although the body was still mentioned in the Constitution and convened on special occasions, such as the inauguration of the Podestà<sup>7</sup>. Generally speaking, it was figures such as the Podestà who marked the decline of the communal movement in favor of the lordship, a decisive step towards the definitive shift from medieval pluralism to modern state-centric monism<sup>8</sup>. During the mid-14th century, the assembly's role was absorbed by another institution: the "Council of the Bell," composed of 300 male citizens, 100 from each of the city's three most influential administrative divisions, known as "third". The "Council of the Bell" was elected by the Nine Consuls, the Podestà, and other officials, including the Camerlengo, the four highest treasury officials, and publicly appointed magistrates.

The so-called Government of the Nine, which administered Siena, gradually evolved. Between 1236 and 1272, it became the Government of the Twenty-Four, and later the Government of the Thirty-Six, always maintaining a multiple of three to ensure equal representation for each "third". In summary, "The Nine who commissioned Lorenzetti's frescoes were chosen at a meeting consisting of the previous

---

<sup>7</sup> See also Lisini ed., 1903. For a commentary on the 1296 document, which was expanded and translated into the vernacular in 1309, see Ascheri, Papi eds., 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Given the extensive literature and the marginal relevance of the topic to the work's objective, we will limit ourselves to highlighting the key issues. Drawing on the terminology of the French scholar Pierre Manent, we are confronted with what he calls the "political-theological problem of Europe": "Given the characteristics of the Catholic Church, we must find a political form that guarantees the independence of the secular world." Since the city and the empire are inadequate, what remains is the monarchy" (Manent, 2010, p. 21). Manent identifies the reasons for the city's inadequacy in the three points outlined below: 1. Cities are ideologically weak and internally divided between two universal factions: the Guelphs and the Ghibellines; 2. Cities have a very intense, if not tumultuous, life, often leading to ungovernability; 3. Given its hostility toward the Empire and the Church, the city tends to close itself off, like a fragile earthenware vessel between two iron vessels.

Nine, the Podestà, the consuls of the merchant guild, and the Capitano del Popolo (another executive position originally intended to represent the Popolo, the people)” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, 183). As Acemoglu and Robinson point out, it is interesting to read the oath taken by the Nine upon their inauguration. It directly states the task they would undertake and the responsibilities they would assume; they committed themselves to preserving the city of Siena “*in good peace and concord.*” This is significant because, in the pre-humanist Italian tradition, “peace” does not simply mean the absence of war, but rather the triumph of conditions that make resorting to war impossible, or at least difficult<sup>9</sup>. Acemoglu and Robinson argue that this formulation echoes a crucial aspect of freedom, specifically what they call “negative freedom”: “freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad.” The oath explicitly articulates the principle that a community’s prosperity depends on its ability to keep the Leviathan in check. Among their duties was economic development, a function of civil society’s political control over power – the duty to expand, grow, and preserve the city of Siena. Here is an excerpt from the oath:

that law and justice be done and administered to the citizens subject to you and to those persons subject to you without discrimination by your rectors or officials. And that the statutes of your commune and its ordinances be observed for each person who demands it<sup>10</sup>.

A distinctive feature of Siennese republican life was that the popular assemblies, along with other councils, served as checks and balances, limiting the discretionary power of each authority, starting with the Government of the Nine. In fact, these bodies were not accountable to any aristocratic or ecclesiastical authority, hence their autonomy. They were supported by a vibrant and self-aware civil society, capable

---

<sup>9</sup> For an analysis of the Oath of the Nine, see Ascheri, 2001, pp. 81-107. Regarding the meaning of the notion of “peace” in pre-humanist political culture, distinct from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, the following is worth reading: “The pre-humanist treatises continue to invoke the essentially Roman belief – one that finds no place in Thomist thought – that peace should be viewed not as a mere absence of discord, as Aquinas was to define it, but rather as a state of triumph, a victory over the forces of discord and war that constantly threaten to destroy our common life” (Skinner, 1986, p. 7).

<sup>10</sup> See also Bowsky, 1986, p. 97. This was, moreover, a task mandated by the constitution itself: “that this city [...] be preserved in perpetual peace and pure justice.” [...] lovers of peace and justice. [...] The Nine [...] shall have the license, free authority, and full duty to restore the city [...] to truth, justice, loyalty, and unity, both communally and individually” (Papi, 2009, pp. 488-498).

of challenging the nascent state for power. Acemoglu and Robinson note that this aspect particularly impressed the Spanish geographer and explorer Benjamin of Tudela, who was of Jewish origin, when he visited the cities of Genoa, Lucca, and Pisa in 1165 circa.

They possess neither king nor prince to govern them, but only the judges appointed by themselves (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 185)

### 3. The Allegory of Good Government

We may now return to the scroll with which we began: an inscription supported by the personification of *Security*. This feature is positioned at the top center of the fresco, slightly offset to the right, so that it overlaps the section depicting the effects of Good Government in the city and countryside. It shows farmers at work, a hunting party, merchants carrying their goods to the city market, and people threshing, reaping, and sowing wheat. Everything appears peaceful, well-maintained, and conducive to the creation of wealth. The message could not be clearer, conclude Acemoglu and Robinson: “Above the depiction of the countryside, the figure of Security holds a scroll that directly links prosperity to liberty”. Indeed, this is the very promise that *Security*, positioned above the city, makes to the citizens of Siena:

Without fear, let each man freely walk,  
And working let everyone sow,  
While such a commune  
This lady will keep under her rule  
Because she has removed all power from the guilty

At this point, drawing on the work of Robinson, a political scientist, and Acemoglu, an economist, and a number of other scholars who have studied Lorenzetti’s cycle over time, we will attempt to understand how the effects of Good and Bad Government emerge from the fresco the “*Allegory of Good Government*”. The depiction of Good Government in the work is quite complex, owing to the richness of detail in the painting and the allegorical significance of each character, which allows for multiple, often conflicting interpretations. For this reason, we will focus on highlighting the salient features of the pictorial cycle, beginning with a specific interpretation, in order to elucidate fundamental aspects underlying the concepts of the “Shackled Leviathan” and the “Red Queen effect,” as developed by Acemoglu and Robinson.

On the right side of the fresco, one figure immediately stands out as more prominent than the others. At first glance, one might assume that it represents a sovereign; however, as we have seen, Siena had no king in 1338, and neither the Government of the Nine, nor the Twenty-Four, nor the Thirty-Six would not have welcomed such a presence. In reality,

the presumed sovereign is dressed in black and white, the colors of the city of Siena, and at his feet is the city's symbol: the she-wolf nursing the twins Romulus and Remus. At the top, is the acronym C.S.C.V.: *Com-mune Senarum Civitas Virginis*, which literally translates as "Municipality of Siena, City of the Virgin." Its protectors are the theological virtues: *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. At this point, some have suggested that the sovereign may represent the city of Siena itself, embodying the common good in Aristotelian-Thomistic terms (Rubinstein, 1958; Borghesi, 2018, p. 30). Others, such as Quentin Skinner, drawing on the pre-humanist Italian tradition and classical republicanism, have argued that the personification of the *commune* does not signify an entity or a social body, but rather a form of *governance*: municipal governance, or republican self-government<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, the *Commune Senarum*, personified by the figure in question, would represent a form of *governance* that exalts the virtue of self-government. Building on the analyses of Skinner and Acemoglu and Robinson, we would add the plurality and autonomy of *self-governments*, which arise from the industriousness of citizens, economic enterprise, the influence of factions, and the role of the institutions that constitute the city. This is a *plurarchic* and *polyarchic* system, irreducible to a single entity: a singular *good government*, whether political, economic, religious, or of any other kind<sup>12</sup>.

What we aim to highlight is that the fresco reveals no desire for political *power* or supremacy, as expressed by an exclusive authority, such as a sovereign power<sup>13</sup>. To this interpretation, we add that

---

<sup>11</sup> "The figure is, rather, a symbolic representation of the type of *lord* or *lordship* a city needs to elect if the dictates of justice are to be followed and the common good secured." To put it more precisely, using the language of pre-humanist writers, the figure symbolically represents the kind of magistracy through which a body of citizens can hope to create or attain an ideal of the common good, and thus the blessings of peace. (Skinner, 1986, p. 44).

<sup>12</sup> According to a classical interpretation, the sovereign in the painting represents the commonwealth itself and, consequently, the "common good," as understood by the Aristotelian-Thomistic interpretation of the "common good." From an Aristotelian perspective, the "common good" is the foundation of good government and is attributable to the ruler, and therefore to politics and the state; see Rubinstein, 1958, pp. 184-185. See also Borsook, 1980, p. 35; Bowsky, 1981, p. 288; Starn, 1992, pp. 50, 51, 56; Smart, 1978, p. 105; Rubinstein, 1997, pp. 781-802.

<sup>13</sup> Acemoglu and Robinson share Skinner's concerns about Rubinstein's Aristotelian interpretation, who states: "I remain convinced that I was on the right track when I put forward my contrasting hypothesis to the effect that the regal figure ought instead to be seen as a depiction of the type of *signore* or *signoria* that a city needs to elect if the dictates of justice are to be followed and the common good secured" (Skinner, 1999, p. 10). See also Skinner, 1986, p. 44.

the role of politics is not defined by the production of the common good, but rather is situated within its own domain, concerned with the political common good: order and defense. This places it in competition with other spheres, each channeled into its respective domain and contributing, in part, to the production of that special form of the common good: the civil conditions and common rules of the game that enable the pursuit of individual well-being. It is notable that the rulers are positioned in the background, while the common people, represented by civil society (merchants, professionals, artisans, and farmers), are placed in the foreground. As we shall see later, this is precisely one of the fundamental theoretical traits of so-called *Good Government*, a kind of *governance*, the result of many *good governments*: the continuous tension and reciprocal interplay between the political class and civil society. Neither can ever assume a monopoly of power, ensuring the highest degree of freedom and mutual autonomy, which form the basis of incentives and opportunities. From this, the political, economic, and cultural conditions for economic prosperity emerge.

Continuing our observation, we see that the personification of the *commune* – the form of republican *governance* and self-government – is surrounded by six virtues: the four cardinal virtues, accompanied by *Peace* and *Magnanimity*. *Fortitude*, *Prudence*, and *Peace* are on the left, while *Temperance*, *Justice*, and *Magnanimity* are on the right. The figure on the far left is *Peace*, which is significant because it occupies the center of the fresco. According to Skinner, *Peace* is central to the painting because she truly lies at the heart of communal life<sup>14</sup>.

Mirroring the royal figure, on the left side of the fresco we find another large image: *Justice*. She is recognizable by the scales she holds whose two pans, according to classical interpretation, refer to Aristotle's distinction between distributive and commutative justice. However, from the perspective we are adopting here, while retaining Aristotelian terminology, the scales express a different dual level of justice: corrective and procedural<sup>15</sup>. And here we enter the heart of the political theory expressed by the work in question: from the angels placed above the scales, two ropes descend – one red and one gray – that traverse the entire painting and reach the sovereign's hands, passing from figure to figure

---

<sup>14</sup> "Peace is seated at the center of the middle tier of the middle painting of the cycle, and thus at the heart of civic life," (Skinner, 1999, p. 4).

<sup>15</sup> However, despite its plausibility, this thesis creates more puzzles than it solves. The most obvious point is that, although the terms *distributive* and *commutative* are unquestionably Aristotelian in origin, the theory of justice depicted by Lorenzetti is hardly Aristotelian at all. It is true that the activity represented under the heading *commutative*, though far from unambiguous, might perhaps be interpreted as an exchange." (Skinner, 1986, p. 37).

among the members of the Government of the Twenty-Four, the executive body of the municipality of Siena. In reality, the Twenty-Four do not receive the cords directly from *Justice*, but from another figure: *Concord*, who is positioned beneath *Justice* and is shown planing wood. The allegorical meaning of this tool, which serves to smooth a surface and eliminate its roughest features, is evident. In this sense, we propose an interpretation that differs slightly from the more classical view, which sees *Concordia* (Harmony) as the very personification of *politics*: a sphere superior to all others, tasked with harmonizing conflicting interests and thereby healing the wounds of conflict. This perspective underscores the primacy of the political and the finalistic function of the State (Cacciari, 1994, p. 140). Conversely, another interpretation suggests that no sphere is inherently superior to another, and politics, therefore, lacks any social primacy, existing as a sphere that competes with others of equal rank. *Concord*, in its political representation, serves to establish the rules of the game that allow for conflict without descending into a war of all against all (Diotallevi, p. 2010)<sup>16</sup>. Acemoglu and Robinson, referring to *Concordia* (Harmony), write, “A plane is used to smooth rough edges and create a level surface, possibly signifying the “rule of law” – the fact that in Siena law was supposed to apply equally to everybody” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 185). This interpretation is also found in Einaudi’s analysis of “good government,” understood as “government by law”, “government of the rulers”, “mixed government”, “the art of governing public affairs well”, and “the art of administering private life well” (Silvestri, 2008, p. 303).

While embracing Skinner’s interpretation, Acemoglu and Robinson point out a crucial detail: The Twenty-four, who represent civil society, hold the ropes in their hands but are not bound by them. This suggests that power originates *from* society-and is granted *to* the government, rather than the other way around<sup>17</sup>. It is no coincidence that the same ropes, when they reach the opposite side of the painting, are tied to the wrist of the presumed sovereign; our scholars comment: “the Le-

---

<sup>16</sup> “We would simply like to recall some of the reasons why such a position (namely, the Catholic defense of the social primacy of politics and the opportunity for its restoration) proves to be: (i) subordinate to an ideology that was dominant in continental Europe for about three centuries, from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century, (ii) devoted to a reactionary and likely impractical position, (iii) in contrast to the reform in continuity produced in the magisterium since the Second Vatican Council.” (Diotallevi, Felice, 2021, p. 104).

<sup>17</sup> Interpreters of the allegory from an Aristotelian-Thomistic perspective hold a different view, suggesting that the royal figure merely holds the ropes without being bound by them. See Rowley, 1958, p. 100; Rubinstein, 1965, p. 55; Feldges Henning, 1972, p. 145; Frugoni, 1983, p. 136; Southard, 1981, p. 280.

viathan is shackled by the rope emanating from Justice” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 185). Ultimately, through the personification of the form of *communal governance*, the common good itself is associated with what the Sieneese have in common, enabling them to live in peace, security, freedom, and prosperity. This encompasses the political, economic, and cultural conditions, as well as the rules of the game, without falling into a collectivist reification (Antiseri, 1996, 2001). The acronym refers to the *commune* of Siena, understood as the form of *governance* that unites the *Sieneese*, their activities, orders, *governments*, and interests, rather than a vague and mystical *Sieneese social body*. It is worth noting that Siena’s Latin name is plural (*Saenae*), likely indicating that the *commune* was formed from multiple parts – an ancient Etruscan colony composed of small settlements scattered across the three hills overlooking the Tressa valley.

This notion of the common good, understood as a form of plurarchic *governance*, is the *method of freedom* – the free interplay of parties and orders aimed at seeking the necessary consensus on legitimate dissent. It involves individuals and social forces, organized into parties, unions, businesses, associations, families, and the entire spectrum we call civil society (Felice, 2020, pp. 141-150). In this sense, the political form depicted by the allegory – a pluralism of power centers and a diversity of social forms, formalized by political science and political sociology through the concepts of *polyarchy* and *plurarchy*<sup>18</sup> – serves the common good by creating the political, economic, and cultural conditions that enable citizens to pursue their existential goals<sup>19</sup>. These conditions are best ensured when those in power are bound by Justice, and when it is the citizens themselves who bind them. This affirms the broader scope of civil society compared to the specific objectives of politics, and formalizes the instrumental role of politics in serving the common good, which is embodied in the conditions that enable the well-being of individual citizens. Below, on the wall depicting the personification of the *commune* form of government, the following inscription stands out: “*This holy virtue [Justice], where it reigns, unites many souls, and these, gathered together, form a common good as their lord*” (Skinner, 1999, p. 11)<sup>20</sup>. Justice, that go-

---

<sup>18</sup> “[...] Pluralism will be identified as an essential value for individuals and the autonomy of civil society, serving as a unique counterbalance to a centralized bureaucratic state, and as a prerequisite for the ‘bottom-up’ reconstruction of a liberal-democratic society.” (Silvestri, p. 295).

<sup>19</sup> For the concept of polyarchy, see Dahl, 1981; for the concept of plurarchy, see Sturzo, 1960, p. 150; see also Felice 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Skinner writes to explain why his interpretation differs from the classic one by Rubinstein and others: “Rubinstein’s interpretation requires that the word ‘per’ in the second line be translated as ‘for’ or ‘as’; my interpretation

verns city life and binds administrators to their duty as servants, unites the many existing orders, conflicts of interest, and conflicting values and ideals (the many *governments*) around common rules. This ensures that they are governed not by a *sovereign*, but by the *common good* itself: the shared rules of civil coexistence that regulate conflict, rendering it civil, without suppressing it.

The situation we have just described, drawing on the interpretation of the Lorenzetti cycle by scholars Acemoglu and Robinson, identifies a civil context where civil society and authoritative power belong to a common system, and entrepreneurial action is not subordinate to political action. The primacy of politics over the economy is rejected as each sphere asserts its autonomy while influencing the other without being able to encroach upon the other's domain or appropriate that portion of the common good that does not belong to it. Republican *governance*, in its polyarchic and plurarchic form as depicted in the cycle of good government, is founded on the security and freedom of citizens. The latter grant the potestative authority the role of a non-exclusive provider of a range of public services, enabling them to rely on political authority without blindly trusting the political class. This authority is under constant observation and scrutiny, and is subject to the most severe criticism. It is from this ongoing and seemingly intractable competition between civil society and political authority that the greatest opportunities and most effective incentives for prosperity emerge, particularly for the entrepreneurial community and civil society at large. To quote Skinner, while keeping in mind Brunetto Latini's words on self-government: "The supreme regulator or judge of Siena is the Sienese people themselves"<sup>21</sup>.

#### 4. The benefits of Good Government

This is the civic significance that Acemoglu and Robinson discern in Lorenzetti's pictorial representation, from which they derive a series of political and economic-entrepreneurial considerations. Examples include businessmen of the time, such as Francesco di Marco Datini, known as the Merchant of Prato, or Pietro di Bernardone, the father of Saint Francis of Assisi<sup>22</sup>, who were able to benefit from the opportunities and

---

requires that it be translated as 'by means of' or 'through'." Both meanings were common in the 14th century, as Rubinstein points out. But in Latin, the basic meaning of "per" is "through," and this appears to have remained the primary meaning in the relevant vernacular texts.

<sup>21</sup> "For the 'good of the people,' it is necessary to preserve 'the rule of the commune' and the understanding that this is the best form of government" (Latini, 1948, pp. 263-165) [my translation].

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed review of medieval economic thought, with particular re-

the associated freedom to invest, start businesses, experiment with new ideas, innovate, and rise from a lower social status to become wealthy merchants. This grassroots experimentation, and the social mobility it fosters, are the economic fruits of freedom (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 202). On the other hand, such benefits arise from a complex system where the freedom and security of individuals are guaranteed by the administration of justice. This system is responsible for preventing and resolving conflicts through the application of law, which, as we have emphasized, always serves a corrective and procedural function. Therefore, it is essential that political authority and the political class are not so powerful as to administer justice, tipping the scales in their favor. For this reason, the chains depicted by Lorenzetti are crucial for maintaining a fair system, and consequently, a social order that promotes opportunities and incentives for economic operators.

Thus, one can hypothesize that the Shackled Leviathan represents the essential foundation for economic prosperity: “If the Leviathan weren’t shackled, how could we make sure that laws applied to it and to politically powerful people?” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 202). The *rule of law*, *accountability*, and *responsiveness* (Ieraci, 2003) – essential conditions for a liberal democracy – are functions of the quality of the chains that control the Leviathan’s actions. These chains do not depend solely on the constitution and formal procedural rules, but also on the quality of civil society, its awareness of its role, and its willingness not to compromise with established power. The quality of the ropes is a function of the liberal and democratic culture of civil society (Grilli di Cortona, 2020, p. 47).

Freedom, security, and justice are essential prerequisites for a civil society that offers abundant opportunities and incentives, fostering economic prosperity. However, these conditions must be supported by a series of crucial elements, such as a robust system of tangible and intangible infrastructure, and free access to knowledge, enabling competition in the entrepreneurial field without reliance on the patronage of political power. These services can be provided by a public authority in a way that is not necessarily exclusive, using a variety of tools to regulate the relationship between the public and private sectors. This prevents the formation of monopolies, both public and private (Angelini, 2020), which would allow the omnipresent oligarchies to collect rents that solidify their positions of power and impede social inclusion (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2013). This is why Acemoglu and Ro-

---

ference to the role played by Italian merchants, see Nuccio, 1984–2003. Volumes 6 and 7 (tome 3) were published by Capitalia Gruppo Bancario. See also the most recent work: Evangelisti, 2016, specifically chapters 5-6, which discuss the concepts of the “common good” and “economic humanism.”

binson emphasize the importance of these services, not only because they objectively improve citizens' lives, but also because they broaden the range of opportunities, increasing inclusiveness (Dahl, 1971)<sup>23</sup> and consequently reducing the extractive nature of institutions<sup>24</sup>. "This is what the Italian communes achieved, thanks to their ability to found a Shackled Leviathan, and this is what the *Allegory of Good Government* so brilliantly explains" (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 203).

The theoretical perspective outlined thus far is that of the social market economy, which intersects with the neo-institutionalism of Acemoglu and Robinson, focusing on the distinction between inclusive and extractive institutions<sup>25</sup>. The essence of this theoretical encounter lies in the realization that our best safeguard against politics' claim to dominate all aspects of society is to prevent it from becoming strong enough to do so. This would inhibit the transmission of knowledge and skills, condemning civil society to a neo-feudal regime marked by poverty and dependence on political power<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, the so-called Shackled Leviathan is not a final destination, a finish line, beyond which we can safely relax and savor a well-deserved victory. On the

---

<sup>23</sup> Dahl was among the first to view inclusivity – understood as access to political processes – as a defining characteristic of liberal democracies.

<sup>24</sup> By extractive institutions, we refer to the distinction made by Acemoglu and Robinson, who emphasized institutional quality as a central element of economic development. "Inclusive economic institutions [...] are those that allow and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make best use of their talents and skills and that enable individuals to make the choices they wish. To be inclusive, economic institutions must feature secure private property, an unbiased system of law, and a provision of public services that provides a level playing field in which people can exchange and contract; it also must permit the entry of new businesses and allow people to choose their careers. [...] We call such institutions, which have opposite properties to those we call inclusive, extractive economic institutions – extractive because such institutions are designed to extract incomes and wealth from one subset of society to benefit a different subset" (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2012, pp. 86-88).

<sup>25</sup> On the social market economy, see Felice, 2008. Regarding this school of economic and political thought, see Forte, Felice eds., 2016; Forte, Felice., 2012. For a comparative analysis of the social market economy perspective and the neo-institutionalist perspective of Acemoglu and Robinson, see Felice, 2016, No. 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Now, for a conception of life based on commerce, the feudal system is an obstacle: tolls, diverse monetary and measurement systems, banditry, local wars, trivialities, and seigneurial regulations of the market and manufacturing are all obstacles, de facto or de jure, to the development of exchange currents." (Ellul, 2014, *History of Institutions*, p. 135).

contrary, the it represents an ongoing process, one that hinges on the inclusiveness of political and economic institutions. Consequently, it depends on the tangible ability to break the “iron law of oligarchies” and reverse the “vicious cycle of extractive institutions,” thereby initiating the “virtuous cycle of inclusive institutions”<sup>27</sup>. According to the theoretical framework developed by Acemoglu and Robinson, the Shackled Leviathan relies on the so-called “Red Queen effect,” which is “the ability of society to contend with, constrain, and check the state and the political elites.” This underscores the central role of norms that help society organize, engage in politics, and, if necessary, rebel against the state and its elites (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 204).

## 5. The “Red Queen” and the consequences of Bad Government

At this point, let us turn to the third panel of the Sienese triptych: the *effects of Bad Government*. While the fresco depicting the effects of Good Government is dominated by *Security*, holding a scroll that exalts freedom as the source of prosperity, the painting illustrating the effects of Bad Government is instead dominated by a hideous figure, complete with horns, fangs, and claws, aptly named *Tyranny*, with *Justice* bound at its feet. Rather than virtues, *Tyranny* is now dominated by *Pride*, *Avarice*, and *Vanity* – the “principal enemies of human life,” according to the *Oculus Pastoralis*, the first manual of Good Government that circulated in Tuscany at the time and was addressed to city officials<sup>28</sup>. All around, we find dispositions such as *Betrayal*, *Cruelty*, *Fraud*, and *Fury*. On the far right of the painting, we see *War*, sword raised, and beside her, *Discord*. In contrast to *Concord*, *Discord* wields a saw instead of a plane. Acemoglu and Robinson comment: it is division that tears society apart and leads to war. On the left side of the painting, we see the effects of such Bad Government on city life – a government dominated by despotism that produces harmful consequences, especially economically. We see a city in the grip of absolute decay: piles of filth, dilapidated and half-ruined houses, violence on the streets, and, most

---

<sup>27</sup> “The essence of the iron law of oligarchy, this particular facet of the vicious circle, is that new leaders overthrowing old ones with promises of radical change bring nothing but more of the same” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2013, p. 377). The two authors explicitly reference Roberto Michels’ theory, which posits that organizations inherently tend towards oligarchy, to the extent that the emergence of oligarchies within various forms of democracy is an “organic phenomenon.” This is a trend that every organization, even a libertarian one, will have to contend with. See also Michels, 1912.

<sup>28</sup> See also Franceschi ed., 1966. This document explicitly states that “*hostes vite hominis [... ] sunt praecipue superbia, inanis gloria, avaricia*” (to which the author adds “*invidia*”), p. 52. Quoted in Skinner, 1999, p. 3.

importantly, no trace of commerce or economic life. If this is what is happening in the city, the situation in the countryside is certainly no more comforting: an army on the march, fields left abandoned, houses in flames, and withered trees. This is “a dramatic description of the economic consequences of a Despotic Leviathan, insightfully blamed on bad government” (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2019, p. 205).

This depiction of Bad Government aligns with Einaudi’s analysis, where, in contrast to the American experiment, the economist cites historian Jacob Burckhardt’s interpretation of the Roman Empire’s collapse. Einaudi writes: “[...] and the state, to provide food and entertainment for the masses, had become a colossal machine controlled from above, devoid of spontaneous inner life, with everyone serving the prince and organized by him into closed circles and corporations, bound together by a deadly mechanical solidarity; [...] the state had fallen because a person who lacks inner reasons for living is incapable of raising an arm to defend themselves” (Einaudi, 1954, p. 68).

The lesson we can draw from observing the Sieneese cycle on *Good Government* – which we interpret as the collective effort of countless *good governments* – is that its essence lies in Acemoglu’s and Robinson’s Shacked Leviathan, and which we have identified as irreducible plurarchy. Implementing such a system to control power is necessary to achieve the delicate balance essential for exercising freedom, and to navigate the so-called “narrow path,” where the “despotic Leviathan” and the “cage of norms” are the margins to be avoided. The first issue is the inevitable tendency of any political authority to become an omnivorous monster, unless it is held accountable by a civil society unwilling to sacrifice its autonomy for privileges. Meanwhile, the “cage of norms” is a chaotic and uncertain system of rules that makes civil life impossible, to the point of fostering the rise of a tyrant who promises order in exchange for freedom. Ultimately, according to the Shacked Leviathan model, the freedom and efficiency of political authority depend on the balance between the state and society: “If the state and the elites become too powerful, we are left with a despotic Leviathan; if they fall behind, we are left with an absent Leviathan.” Therefore, the state and society must advance in parallel, with neither prevailing (Einaudi, 1954, pp. 68-69). This is what Acemoglu and Robinson refer to as the “Red Queen effect,” drawing inspiration from Lewis Carroll’s famous novel.

The Red Queen effect is what Alice experiences when, while racing with the Red Queen, she realizes that although they were both very fast, everything around them remained motionless, as if they were standing still. At this point, Acemoglu and Robinson state, the Red Queen invites Alice to stop and reveals the spell:

Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!" "Of course it is," said the Queen, "what would you have it?" "Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing." "A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

## 6. Conclusions

While in Carroll's novel Alice perceives her running as a pointless waste of energy, in the real world, from our perspective, it is precisely this race that prevents civil society and the state from overwhelming one another, allowing the system to remain balanced and thereby navigate the bottleneck of the Shackled Leviathan. Acemoglu and Robinson write: "We need society's competition to keep the Leviathan in check, and the more powerful and capable the Leviathan is, the more powerful and vigilant society must become." The Leviathan must also keep running, both to expand its capacity in the face of new and formidable challenges, and to maintain its autonomy, which is essential for resolving disputes and applying the law impartially, but also to break open the cage of norms. This may seem quite chaotic, and indeed it is, but it is the price we must pay to keep the Leviathan – a two-faced Janus, as our authors assert – under control, as despotism is ingrained in its very DNA, and to break free from the constraints of rules. It is the latter that, by limiting freedom and preventing grassroots participation, consistently benefits the most cunning and powerful, who can profit from their positions and thereby solidify their power<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, as Luigi Marco Bassani reminds us in his essay *Chaining Down Leviathan*, the history of freedom is the story of the state rising as a monopolist of power, the source from which everything emanates and derives legitimacy. Therefore, the history of freedom is less about the exercise of power and more about resistance it; beginning with spontaneous disobedience and, as it becomes institutionalized, giving rise to further forms of dissent against the established authority. In Sturzian terms, this is an ongoing duality that sometimes manifests

---

<sup>29</sup> Concluding his extensive discussion of the history of constitutionalism, presented in six lectures at Cornell University between 1938 and 1939, Charles Howard McIlwain stated: "The problem of law versus arbitrariness remains the most important of all practical problems. We must leave open the possibility of an appeal from the intoxicated to the sober, if we want individuals and minorities to be protected during periods of excitement and hysteria, from which we are unfortunately not immune" (McIlwain, 2015, p. 166).

as struggle, and at other times as “a harmonious and happy collaboration” (Sturzo, 1935, p. 224). It is a rapid transition from the objective to the subjective, a concrete duality that appears as a contrast between the ideal and the real, between the spiritual and the material. Ultimately, “The slow march of freedom is found in the attempts to restrict and contain the state, in the small surviving pockets of immunity, guarantees, and medieval legacies in Europe, and not in their eradication. Freedom flows like an underground ‘karst river,’ often running counter to the major institutional changes of the modern and contemporary era.” (Bassani, 2021, p. 44).

## References

- Acemoglu D., Robinson J.A. (2012), *Why Nations Fail. The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, Crown Publishers, New York.
- Acemoglu D., Robinson J.A. (2019), *The Narrow Corridor. States, Societies and the Fate of Liberty*, Penguin Press, New York.
- Angelini F.G. (2020), *L'intervento pubblico tra diritti fondamentali e razionalità economica. Disfunzioni democratiche e funzioni amministrative come esercizio della sovranità popolare*, CEDAM, Padova.
- Antiseri D. (1996), *Trattato di metodologia delle scienze sociali*, UTET, Torino.
- Antiseri D. (2001), *Teoria unificata del metodo*, UTET, Torino.
- Ascheri M. (2001), *La Siena del “Buon Governo” (1287-1355)*, in *Politica e cultura nelle Repubbliche italiane dal Medioevo all'età moderna: Firenze - Genova - Lucca - Siena - Venezia*, M. Ascheri, S. Adorni Braccesi (Eds), Roma.
- Ascheri M., Papi C. (Eds) (2009), *Il costituito del Comune di Siena in volgare (1309-1310). Un episodio di storia della giustizia?*, Aska, Firenze.
- Bassani L.M. (2021), *Chaining Down Leviathan. The American Dream of Self-Government 1776-1865*, Abbeville Institute Press, McClellanville.
- Bobbio N. (1983), *Il Buongoverno*, in *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Adunanza del 26 giugno 1981*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma.
- Borghesi F. (2018), *Teologia delle religioni nel Quattrocento. La concordia in Niccolò di Cusa e Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*, in *Filosofia politica*, n. 1.
- Borsook E. (1980), *The Mural Painters of Tuscany: from Cimabue to Andrea del Sarto*, Oxford.
- Bowsky W. (1986), *Un Comune italiano nel Medioevo: Siena sotto il regime dei Nove, 1287 -1355*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Bowsky W. M (1981), *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena under the Nine, 1287-1355*, Londra.
- Cacciari M. (1994), *Geo-filosofia dell'Europa*, Adelphi, Milano.

- Capitano A. (2021), *Enigma e fantasia. Immaginando Ambrogio Lorenzetti in un passato contemporaneo del presente e del futuro*, in Id., *Cronache dal mondo dell'arte 1. Storie curiose di artisti e dintorni*, Albeggi, Roma, 2021.
- Dahl R.A. (1981), *Poliarchia. Partecipazione e opposizione nei sistemi politici* [1971], Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Diotallevi L. (2010), *Una alternativa alla laicità*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Diotallevi L., Felice F. (2021), *La Chiesa e la questione del politico in tempi di modernità avanzata*, in "La Società", No. 4.
- Einaudi L. (1954), *Il buongoverno*, Laterza, Roma.
- Ellul J. (2014), *Storia delle istituzioni. Il Medioevo*, Mursia, Milano.
- Evangelisti P. (2016), *Il pensiero economico nel Medioevo. Ricchezza, povertà, mercato e moneta*, Carocci, Roma.
- Feldges-Henning U. (1972), *Pictorial Programme of the Sala della Pace: a new Interpretation*, in "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", a XXXV.
- Felice F. (2008), *L'economia sociale di mercato*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Felice F. (2016), *Poverty, Inclusion, Institutions. A Challenge for Latin America and the European Union*, in "The EuroAtlantic Union Review", Vol. 3, No. 1.
- Felice F. (2020), *I limiti del popolo. Autorità politica e democrazia nel pensiero di Luigi Sturzo*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Forte F., Felice F. (Eds) (2012), *L'economia sociale di mercato e i suoi nemici*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Forte F., Felice F. (Eds) (2016), *Il liberalismo delle regole. Genesi ed eredità dell'economia sociale di mercato*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Forte F., Felice F., Di Nuoscio E. (Eds) (2020), *Moneta, sviluppo e democrazia. Saggi su economia sociale di mercato e teoria monetaria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Franceschi D. (Ed) (1966), *Oculus pastoralis*, in *Memorie dell'accademia delle scienze di Torino*, XI.
- Frugoni C. (1983), *Una lontana Città*, Einaudi, Torino.
- Grilli di Cortona P. (2020), *Crisi o trasformazione. Come cambia la democrazia?*, in Id, R.A. Modugno (Ed), *Le trame della democrazia. Riflessioni tra politologia e storia del pensiero politico*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Ieraci G. (2003), *Teoria dei governi e democrazia. Ruoli, risorse e arene istituzionali*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Latini B. (1948), *Li livres dou trisor*, F. Carmody, Berkeley (Ed).
- Lisini A. (Ed.) (1903), *Il costituito del Comune di Siena volgarizzato nel 1309-1310*, Tip. e Lit. Sordomuti di L. Lazzeri, Siena.
- Manent P. (2010), *Storia intellettuale del liberalismo* [1987], A. Campi (Ed), Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.

- McIlwain C.H. (2015), *Costituzionalismo antico e moderno* [1947], N. Matteucci (Ed), Universale Paperbacks, il Mulino, Bologna.
- Michels R. (1912), *La sociologia del partito politico nella democrazia moderna. Studi sulle tendenze oligarchiche degli aggregati politici*, UTET, Torino.
- Nuccio O. (1984-2003), *Il pensiero economico italiano*, Voll. 7, Edizioni Gallizzi, Cagliari. I volumi 6 e 7 (tomo 3) sono stati pubblicati per i tipi di Capitalia Gruppo Bancario, Roma.
- Rowley G. (1958), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, Princeton.
- Rubinstein N. (1958), *Political Ideas in Sieneese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico*, in "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", a. XXI.
- Rubinstein N. (1965), *Marsilius of Padua and Italian Political Thought of his Time, in Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, J. Hale, R. Highfield, B. Smalley (Eds), Londra.
- Rubinstein N. (1997), *Le allegorie di Ambrogio Lorenzetti nella Sala della Pace e il pensiero politico del suo tempo*, in "Rivista storica italiana", CIX.
- Sabetti F. (2004), *Alla ricerca del Buon Governo in Italia*, Piero Lacaita Editore, Manduria-Bari-Roma.
- Silvestri P. (2008), *Il liberalismo di Luigi Einaudi o del buon governo*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Silvestri P. (2011), *Buon governo*, in *Dizionario del liberalismo italiano*, T. 1, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Silvestri P. (2012), *Il "Good Governemnt" in Adam Smith: tra Jurisprudence, Political Economy e Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in *Quaderno di "Teoria e Critica della Regolazione Sociale"*, Catania.
- Skinner Q. (1986), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher*, in "Proceedings of the British Academy", letto il 19 febbraio 1986, a. LXXXII.
- Skinner Q. (1999), *Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Buon Governo Frescoes: Two Old Questions, Two New Answers*, in "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", Vol. 62.
- Smart A. (1978), *The Dawn of Italian Painting 1250-1400*, Londra.
- Smith A. (1976), *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations* [1776], Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Southard E. (1981), *The Frescoes in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, 1289- 1539*, [Ph.D., Indiana University, 1978] University Microfilm International.
- Starn R., Partridge L. (1992), *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600*, Berkeley.
- Sturzo L. (1960), *La società. Sua natura e leggi* [1935], Opera Omnia, Serie I, vol. III, Zanichelli, Bologna.
- Sturzo L. (1972), *Politica e morale* [1938], Opera Omnia, Serie I, Vol. IV, Zanichelli, Bologna.

### **Author**

**Flavio Felice** Flavio Felice is Full Professor of History of Political Doctrines at the University of Molise, President of the Tocqueville-Acton Study Center Studies and of the Scientific Council of the San Pio V Institute of Political Studies. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journals “Prospettiva Persona”, “Power and Democracy”, and “Il Pensiero Storico”, Research Ordinary Professor at the Catholic University of America, member of the Mont Pèlerin Society and the Faith and Reason Institute in Washington DC. Among his recent publications: *Pensare il Buongoverno*, LEV 2025; *Wilhelm Röpke*, IBLLibri 2024; *Michael Novak*, IBLLibri 2022; *Popolarismo liberale*, Morcelliana 2021; *I limiti del popolo*, Rubbettino 2020.

# **POWER AND DEMOCRACY** ***PAPER***

---

N. 2 (2026)

[www.poweranddemocracy.it](http://www.poweranddemocracy.it)