



**Teoria politica**

**9 | 2019**  
**Annali IX**

---

## This Issue. Next Issue. Call for Papers

**Michelangelo Bovero**

---



**Electronic version**

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/tp/776>

**Publisher**

Marcial Pons

**Printed version**

Date of publication: 1 June 2019

Number of pages: 19-29

ISSN: 0394-1248

**Electronic reference**

Michelangelo Bovero, « This Issue. Next Issue. Call for Papers », *Teoria politica. Nuova serie Annali* [Online], 9 | 2019, Online since 01 April 2020, connection on 26 May 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/tp/776>

---

# This Issue. Next Issue. Call for Papers

## This Issue

The present volume of *Teoria politica* is divided into three sections.

The first section is dedicated to the theme of *Bad Government*, aim of the «invitation to contribute» announced by *Teoria politica* in the call for papers for volume VIII / 2018. Most of the articles included in this section have their origin in the texts presented at the *Eighth Seminar of Teoria politica* held in Turin on October 25-26, 2018.

In the initial essay, Geminello Preterossi takes into consideration the broader scenario of neoliberal globalization, which tends to erode the constitutional state and, with it, the classic principle of good government as a rule of law. The latter has been ousted and displaced in various ways by either explicit or concealed forms of «personal» power, the arbitrary power of man over man. One of the deepest roots of bad government today lies in the arbitrariness of private powers and their abuse or colonization of public powers. The same scenario is reviewed in the second contribution, in which Roberto Schiattarella focuses on the variations of power distribution in society: these shifts may be traced back to the different conceptions of the relationship between politics and economics that have been forcefully established in the transition from the era of the New Deal to ours. When politics has delegated the task of establishing the rules of coexistence to the (financial) market, the result is the progressive emptying of democracy, along with the growth of inequalities and the deepening of social injustice.

Following these two contributions dedicated to the prevailing forms of political and economic mismanagement in the contemporary world, the three following essays take up and build upon the three paradigmatic categories of bad government in Western culture since its classical origins. The article by Giovanni Giorgini is dedicated to the concept of tyranny, whose genesis and declinations are traced in Greek culture. He also centers his attention on the re-emergence of the category as a symbol of political evil throughout the history of thought; particularly emphasizing on the uses of the notion present in the works of Machiavelli and Tocqueville. In the following essay, Mario Tesini delves into the category of despotism, beginning with the interpretation of Montesquieu, followed by the examination of the metamorphosis of the notion in the twentieth century thought. Tesini draws attention to the fertility and relevance of Montesquieu's figure of «theocratic despotism», particularly useful as a frame for the analysis of the contemporary Iranian regime. The contribution of Pier Paolo Portinaro traces the path of the theoretical reflection on dictatorship through the entire span of political thought. His reflection starts from the study of the ancient Roman magistrates, past the Schmittian dichotomy between commissary dictatorship and sovereign dictatorship and concludes with the renewed fortune of the category in the time of the crisis of constitutional democracy.

The subsequent three essays bring attention to the family of innovative and controversial figures that have been shaped by the political thought of more recent centuries, although not without taking inspiration and drawing examples from the most ancient centuries: Caesarism, Bonapartism, charismatic power. Massimo Luciani dedicates his essay to setting the characteristics of the categories of Caesarism and Bonapartism, classifying the latter as a species of the *genus* indicated by the name of the first, with respect to which the Bonapartist species is identified by additional characters linked to political modernity. He then clarifies the essential differences between both figures and the classical or neoclassical categories of tyranny, despotism, and dictatorship; and concludes his reflection by tracing the conditions and favorable signs to new Caesarist or Bonapartist ventures in our time. Dimitri D'Andrea examines the thought of Max Weber, the inventor of the category of charismatic power. He focuses his analysis on the Weberian conception of democracy and defends that there is a substantial continuity in the value reference, not affected—according to D'Andrea—by the plebiscitarian turn. The latter is here interpreted as an «accentuation» of the immediacy of the relationship between governors and governed, functional to a «democracy of decision». Lucilla Moliterno reconstructs the figure of the demagogue, one of the varieties—along with the military general and the prophet—of Weberian charismatic power. The author isolates the characteristics that identifies the «eternal return» of all the regimes founded on the appeal to the people throughout the history of political thought: their communication strategies, their techniques of persuasion or (more precisely) seduction and corruption of the people and, finally, the purpose of establishing a «democratic tyranny».

The last three essays of this first section nourish the interest for three ostentatious case studies of particular relevance. They almost suggest themselves as the starting pieces of a greater mosaic, a collective research project supported by *Teoria politica*: a geographical and historical atlas of bad government. Nadia Urbinati's article—written in response to our specific invitation to contribute—constructs the figure of «trumpism» as an exemplary model of populism in power, examining the rhetoric, ideology, aims, and results achieved by Trump. She points to «populist democracy» as a new form of representative government, based on the immediate relationship between the leader and the «righteous» or «good» people as well as the supreme authority of the audience. Giuseppe Tosi—also replying to our invitation—illustrates and analyzes the most recent political developments in Brazil, presenting the case as the extreme outcome of a globally widespread dynamic, in which the affirmation of neoliberalism—here interpreted as the oppression of economic liberalism against political liberalism—climaxes in the advent of what the author calls «authoritarian populism». The section closes with an essay by Remo Bodei, which examines the nature and characteristics of the extreme form of bad government established by the *conquistadores* in the New World, which would then reemerge in various forms and with various vicissitudes in Latin American political history, as if the region had an inescapable destiny to live with violence, corruption and oppression.

The second section has a «logically odd» title: *Equal and Unequal Thoughts*. It is almost halfway between an ellipse and an anacolute, which alludes to the pe-

cular nature of this great recurring theme of political thought, to the dilemmatic form, of opposition and indistinguishable tension, in which it is always present, and to the insuperable difficulty of thinking of it. It was the title of the study session organized in Brescia by the *Arifs* —the Italian *Association for the Research and Teaching of Philosophy and History*— on November 4 2017: *Teoria politica* publishes here the revised and corrected texts of the reports presented on that occasion, with the addition of a new contribution. In the first essay, Valentina Pazé examines the three main species in which inequality in the ancient world is presented and the ways in which it is justified. Each of these distinctions (the woman, the slave, and the metic —the resident foreigner), rely on the nature of the disadvantaged subject, and are considered unequal with respect to the male, free and indigenous citizen, the only privileged subject. The author considers that the principle of equality established in the modern world has not yet succeeded in eroding the third kind of discrimination. The second contribution, by Massimo Cuono, is dedicated to the thought of the first great egalitarian philosopher: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The author identifies and analyzes the complex, elusive, and controversial relationship between two fundamental dichotomies: one that opposes (different forms of) equality and inequality and one which separates nature and artifice. This allows him to trace echoes and responses, but also perverse reversals of this interweaving of conceptual relations in the ideological thought of neoliberalism. In the third essay Ermanno Vitale, uses the typology of equality outlined by Norberto Bobbio as a starting point to, meritoriously, draw anew scholarly attention to the thought of Gracchus Babeuf, the most radical partisan of egalitarianism. The article highlights the genuine theoretical value and the strenuous moral vigor; but it also traces the inexorable dystopic falls of its design, while at the same time opposing the «realized dystopia» of current neoliberalism, against which, for Vitale, even the most moderate Bobbian egalitarianism appears to be an ideal characterized by its inefficacy and ineffectiveness. The article by Gianfranco Ragona is dedicated to Karl Marx, in whose juvenile writings are contained the first properly political formulations of his interest in the themes of inequality and equality. After reconstructing these early arguments, the author moves on to examine the variations on this issue in Marx's mature work. More specifically, in the *Capital*, the opposition between political equality and social inequality, previously indicated in the *Jewish Question*, is accompanied and replaced by the split between the «egalitarian» kingdom of the market and the inequality that dominates the relations of production: a historical condition from which *mutatis mutandis*, still seems difficult to imagine the possibility of emancipation. The last essay in this section was composed by Agustín Menéndez accepting the explicit invitation addressed by *Teoria politica* to consider the incidence of the problem of «equality» in contemporary thought: The author examines specifically the branch of political philosophy that focuses its interest on equality as a «sovereign virtue» (Dworkin), in the context of the affirmation of the democratic and social state; renewed in the last part of the 20th century. However, he notes how this philo-egalitarian theoretical discussion, paradoxically, has grown (perhaps out of proportion) at the same time and with the same rhythms in which real inequality, in all its parameters, has embarked on an opposite and unstoppable path, favoring the re-emergence of authoritarian po-

litical conceptions that are also caused by the absence or weakness of movements oriented towards the «polar star» of equality. Nevertheless, the constitutional structures of equality show that they still know how to resist these setbacks and can be defended and improved.

The third section, entitled *Essays*, includes five contributions and has, as usual, a miscellaneous character. The essay by Maria Vittoria Ballestrero offers an illuminating conceptual framework to understand and deal with a complex social pathology of our time: the dissociation between work and income. Firstly, the author looks towards «work without (sufficient) income»; and reconstructs the debate on the introduction of a mandatory minimum wage by law. Secondly, she considers the proposals of an «unemployment income», understood as a way to contrast poverty due to lack of employment; and she discusses the normative disciplines diversely called «inclusive income» or «citizens' income». The article by Luigi Bonanate reconsiders, from the perspective of international relations, the problematic connection between «conceptual and factual» notions of «nation» and «state». The author emphasizes on how the latter is in itself linked to the establishment of structures for coexistence, while the first is intimately connected to the surmounting of conflict. He concludes that it is necessary to keep one separate from the other at all levels. The essay by Luigi Ferrajoli, vigorously recalls the abnormal violations of human rights caused by the uncontrolled exercise of global —political and economic— powers. He proposes to designate them as «systemic crimes» and, although they cannot be properly considered criminal offenses, he stresses the importance of recognizing them as legal crimes as well as the need to denounce the political and moral responsibilities of those individuals who could prevent or counter systemic crimes by instituting adequate guarantees in international law. The section closes with two contributions dedicated to the thought of Hobbes, an author that has returned to the center of scholarly interest for some time. Mauro Farnesi Camellone's article invites us to renew our reflection on the famous controversy between Hobbes and the Anglican archbishop Bramhall about freedom and the tension between divine omnipotence and free will, underlining its intrinsic theological and political relevance. Francesco Toto's article reconstructs Hobbes's attitude towards early Christianity in its ethical-political dimension and puts forward hypotheses on the degree of compatibility of the alleged autonomy of the Christian community with the cornerstones of the Hobbesian theory.

## Next Issue

*Teoria politica* welcomes contributions that continue to develop multidisciplinary research on both of the themes articulated in the present volume; namely, bad government and the antithesis between equality and inequality. Even a simple glance at the contributions included in this year's issue can confirm that both themes are closely connected: every bad government rests upon existing inequalities and/or inequalities generated by it; even when disguised as the opposite. Different forms of inequality establish different forms of bad government, on both of the classic parameters: contempt for the public interest and the

imposition of arbitrary power. The search for equality, or rather of different and incremental equalities, has guided many modern political subjects in the battle against different forms of bad government.

The collective reflection on the first thematic focus that inaugurates the present volume was channeled in two complementary directions: towards the composition of a *dictionary* and a *historical-geographical atlas* of bad government. *Teoria politica* now invites to consider the broader phenomenon, which does not seem to accompany the contemporary (re)surfacing of ancient and new forms of bad government—in the broad sense, of bad politics, and in the strict sense, of deviated and degenerate *regimes*; but rather offers the best environment for them to develop. The change in the form of state that has established itself as prevalent in modernity, the *representative state* (I underline that I consider it appropriate to designate it and recognize it as a «form of states», and not a «form of government» or a «form of regime»). The expression «representative government», commonly used nowadays, seems to me inappropriate and a harbinger of confusion). Norberto Bobbio wrote: «With the advent of the representative state in the form of a constitutional and then parliamentary monarchy in England after the “Great Rebellion”, in the rest of Europe after the French Revolution, and in the form of a presidential republic in the United States of America after the revolt of the thirteen colonies against the motherland; a [...] *phase of transformation of the State began, which continues still*. [...] The representative State shaped in Europe for the past three centuries is still the *ideal model* that has been affirmed in the written constitutions of these last decades». (Note well: the «forms» of «first constitutional and then parliamentary monarchy» and the «presidential republic»—the parliamentary republic must be added as well—are precisely (recognizable and designable as) different alternatives for the possible *forms of government* of the one representative *form of state*).

In extreme synthesis, and assuming inevitable ambiguities and inaccuracies, this model is characterized by the eminent centrality of a collegial electoral body in the architecture of its institutions. Recipient of the supreme political function, that is legislative power, its composition is determined by the citizens not as members of classes or corporations, but as individuals equally bestowed with the right to participate in collective decisions, that is, *erga omnes* decisions, specifically through the exercise of the right to vote and to be elected. Thus, this electoral body is presented as the organ of «political representation» of the *polis* and its general interest, not of factions and their particular interests. In other words, in this almost universally diffused form of state, political power as a whole—namely the power to establish, execute, and apply the public will—is divided and articulated (variously) in a plurality of distinct organs. In its ideal model, the one that inspired post-war written constitutions, this system of organs finds its center of gravity—the predominant place in the determination of collective decisions—in the elective collegial body that «represents» the community as such, which acts in its name because it is a reflection of it. However, in more recent times the form of representative state with division of powers has suffered a degenerative process virtually everywhere; which has, on the one hand deformed, and on the other weakened the organ of political representation. Due

to the combined effect of the distortions induced by electoral systems (and often invoked, in the name of the so-called «governability») and transformations in the dynamics of the aggregation of consent (the so-called «party crisis», with its multiple and complex causes), the representative bodies, the parliaments, are in many cases gradually becoming less representative: the image —precisely, the «representation»— of the political collectivity they exhibit in their composition is (to different extents) deformed, to the exclusion of certain orientations which they do not exceed barrage thresholds, and due to the alteration of the relative proportions among those that access them. At the same time, the center of political power has shifted increasingly from the representative assemblies to the so-called executive bodies, which become the real decisive organs. In reality, this process has more distant origins in time, but in the most recent period it has reached extreme results: in some cases, parliaments appear not only weakened but almost ousted by the heads of government.

The pathologies of representation —that *Teoria politica* invites to reconstruct and analyze in their multiplicity of aspects, and in the complexity of the causes and consequences— are in my opinion to be seen in their entirety as the complementary and revealing institutional face of that polymorphic phenomenon, yet homogeneous, that many scholars have called «dis-intermediation» for some time. In short: the institution of political representation itself is nothing but the form of mediation between the citizen and the state, between the individual and the collective will. It is the way —the «*medium*»— through which the many individual wills are transformed into a collective will. It is the «*means*» (again: the *medium*) with which the moderns have tried to gradually achieve democracy. However, for some —the new «elites of power»— the democracy of the moderns is too demanding, it is dangerous, and it must be tamed by distorting and weakening representation, to the point of reducing it to the appearance of democracy that covers and disguises the immense power of an elective autocracy. For others, discouraged by the effective functioning of the institutions of representation, representative democracy is impossible, it is an *adynaton*, indeed a deception, and it is necessary to find the way (the means) to do without representative mediation, beginning by progressively eroding the powers of the representative body: reducing the number of parliamentarians, abolishing the prohibition of imperative mandate, promoting decisions by referendum, designating by drawing lots... Even evoking the official formulas that set forth the attributions of a ministry, the Rousseauian ghost of direct democracy, or its virtual ectoplasm, «on the net»; thus inducing to consider representatives as, at least potential, usurpers of the will of the sovereign people, and therefore of democracy.

The ghost of Rousseau, of course, wants to be an egalitarian phantom, even in its virtual revival it claims to be such. More clearly and unambiguously egalitarian, was the phantom evoked by Marx in the *Manifesto* of 1848. The phantom of equality is always a «sinister» phantasm, both in the sense that it presents itself every time as a disturbing threat to disrupt the tranquility of the «unequal», the privileged, and in the sense that it appears from time to time «towards the left» of the political alignment. According to a simplified but reliable representation (at least up to a certain moment), in modern history the movements that have

assumed equality—or better, from time to time a specific kind of equality—as a value principle have followed one another «bestriding towards the left». Liberals were born «on the left», fighting for the constitutionalization of individual rights of freedom against the advocates of the *ancien régime* and of the restoration, but they later «slipped» to the right because they were «bypassed» to the left first by the Democrats, who fought for the extension of political rights beyond the census barriers, and then by the Socialists, who assumed (in various and even contradictory ways) economic-social emancipation as a political objective beyond the political one.

Thus reconstructed, it seems that modern history makes sense, that it has a clear and univocal direction; but it did not happen that way. Above all, it did not turn out that way. This is a story, a «great narrative»—following a French fashion usage—that has gradually lost credibility. First of all: in the last century, history has been overpassed and devastated by radically anti-modern ideologies, movements and regimes. Often defined as «reactionaries», they deny the principle of equality in any way it may be understood, as they advocate the authoritarian imposition and hierarchy as the only (natural) principle of political order. They are those who, in the simplification of the common language, we designate as «right-wing dictatorships», and whom we place, as enemies in the first place of the (equal) freedom of individuals in every aspect, «to the right» of liberal movements, even of the most conservative: therefore, to the «extreme right». Nonetheless, we probably should say that at the same time, the so-called «real socialism» has given rise to what in current language has been called «left-wing dictatorships», conveyers of terrible new inequalities between oppressors and oppressed, and thereby disrupting the connection between the left and equality. After the Second World War, with the assertion and spread of the model of constitutional democracy, it seemed to many that the history of equality could resume its linear, incremental path, «towards the left». Instead, around the mid-1970s we witnessed the opening of a widespread and ruinous cultural crisis, even before it was political, of the value of equality, of the gradual but unstoppable imposition of neoliberal hegemony, and the progressive disappearance of the left. The left has become a ghost. In a sense opposite to that of Marx's *Manifesto*. It is no longer a threatening scarecrow for the dominant classes, for the «unequal», and ready to materialize and take life and shape, but rather the residual, shadowy, and lifeless appearance left by someone who no longer exists: an empty sheet. «On the left» a void has been created. And with the left, equality has also disappeared: the search for equality, the aspiration for equality. This gives way to an unheard-of and paradoxical situation: in the time in which global inequalities exploded in unprecedented forms and dimensions, almost all the parties of the (ex?) left have stopped orienting their path towards the «pole star» of equality (as Bobbio called it; see the article by Menéndez in this volume).

Thus «the unequal», the global elites, the notorious «one percent», seem to have succeeded in imposing their rule almost without facing any effective opposition; provoking resounding waves of protest, of course, which in some case have given way to the rise of relatively successful anti-elitist political reaction



movements. But where there are no credible left-wing avenues, the protest can only flow into right-wing channels. Old and new. Except that some of the subjects who propose themselves as new claim, in their (ambiguous) way, egalitarian identities: among these, the advocates of the new direct democracy, the alleged and supposed digital democracy. Here I limit myself to observe —by offering this spark for common reflection— that these new egalitarians seem to have acquired, out of the two categorical dimensions of equality, inclusiveness and equivalence, the second (in simplified formulas, «one is worth one»); but have not understood the first: the hostility towards migrants seems to confine them to the oxymoron of an exclusive egalitarianism.

*Teoria politica* invites a renewed and deepened reflection on the most recent paradoxical events of the sinister ghost of equality.

## Call for Papers

### 1. *Beyond the representative state?*

The transformation of the powers and functions of parliaments is a multifaceted process that has been observed from the origins of the modern institution of political representation. More recent, and specifically different, is trend of the parliamentary form of government to mutate; which has been called the «presidentialization of parliamentarisms». Still, there is a different and more radical process of change, one that favors the erosion and perhaps the beginning of the extinction of the representative form of state as such, whatever the form of government in which the design of the institutions is articulated in the different countries. Has political representation in itself exhausted its historical cycle? Has it lost its use, and therefore its *raison d'être*? What are the reasons for representation? What were those alleged and claimed by the advocates of the establishment of the representative form of state, in the passage —evolutionary or revolutionary— from legal representation to political representation? Are these reasons still defensible? Or can they be replaced by other reasons? And once again: are representation and democracy still compatible? Is their institutional conjugation desirable? Or are less «representative» institutions preferable for reasons of efficiency? Would these institutions be less democratic for that reason? Does representation itself imply less democracy and, in order to have a democracy, would it be necessary to do without representation? Has a new form of non-representative democracy become possible? How, with which decision-making processes? Would it be desirable? Wouldn't it prove to be a form of bad government as the great ancient classics thought?

*Teoria politica* encourages contributions on the following specific topics:

- rethinking the meaning of «political representation»;
- the decline of representative democracy and democratic representation;
- the powers and non-powers of parliaments, today;
- the taming of the representatives: imperative mandates;
- deciding directly: the referendum;

- avoiding elections: the draw;
- who is not and who does not want to be represented.

## 2. *The conspiracy of the Unequal, and the reaction against the different*

According to the famous characterization of Norberto Bobbio, equality is the category that inspires the vision of the world, and the principle that guides the programs of action, of the «left» movement. Since the consolidation of the horizontal representation of political space —with modern parliaments, with the advent of the *moderne régime*— «left» movements (from time to time, in different, and successive historical circumstances) have been the promoters of the emancipation of subordinates: the third state, the fourth state... up to, how many others? Their goal is to defeat privileges, to eliminate discrimination. Their enemy is inequality, or rather inequalities; old and new, economic, social, political: in resources, in rights, in powers. The struggle between the «parties» of the equal and of the unequal has marked the centuries of political modernity; a story that has been anything but linear, and neither magnificent nor progressive. After the fall of the upside-down utopia of real socialism —precisely: the utopia of equality reversed in its opposite— the «wild liberty» (Kant) of the neoliberals has overwhelmed the aspiration for equality: in the political space, the left has become depopulated. Inequality has won in the real world and in the widespread images that represent it: on the one hand —indeed, «from the top», there is almost a return to the vertical configuration of the *ancien régime*— the elite, the establishment, the rich, the privileged...; on the other —«from below»— who? The mass, the «people», the impoverished, the deprived? Or even lower, the excluded and the very last, the foreigners, the immigrants... And often the «popular» anti-elitist reactions of the impoverished, of the subjects pushed downward, are captured by the demagogic networks of the entrepreneurs of consensus who belong to the world of the privileged and perpetuate their dominion; channeling the resentment and fears against the last, of the «unequal from below» against the «different».

*Teoria politica* encourages contributors to reflect on the following specific topics:

- forms of equality and inequality: times and phases of a perennial conflict;
- the «conspiracy of the unequal»: subjects, institutions, and powers of the global order;
- radical inequalities: is democracy without a future?
- radical inequalities: is the age of rights exhausted?
- the unequal and the different: the logic of discrimination and exclusion.

M. B.