



The Search for Good Government: Understanding the Paradox of Italian Democracy

Filippo Sabetti

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The Search for Good Government: Understanding the **Paradox of Italian Democracy**

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The Search for Good Government: Understanding the Paradox of Italian Democracy Filippo Sabetti Sabetti argues that poor government performance in contemporary Italy has been an unintended consequence of attempts to craft institutions for good - or democratic - government. He shows that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, a chief problem in contemporary Italy is not the absence of the rule of law but, rather, the presence of rule by law or too many laws. A principal conclusion of his study is that postwar Italian politics can best be understood as a laboratory for revealing how and why a search for good government can generate antithetical and counter intentional results. The Italian experience has important implications for all those who aspire to be self-governing - as opposed to state-governed - for it shows what people can do to enhance human cooperation in collective-action dilemmas, and suggests the probable results if "democracy" continues to be identified with parliamentary government and representative assemblies rather than with the universality of the village or the local community. The Search for Good Government changes our understanding of postwar Italian politics and provides new ways to evaluate the impact of the political changes that have occurred since 1992, arguing for a perceptual shift in the way we think about politics and the educative role of public institutions.



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