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ON THE CONCEPT OF 'FELICITAS PUBLICA' IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLITICAL ECONOMY

BY
FEDERICO D'ONOFRIO

This article presents some observations on "public happiness" in order to clarify the idea's meaning in the eighteenth-century Italian context. It examines Lugino Bruni's interpretation of this concept, and criticizes his understanding of public happiness as the continuation of Artistotle's eudaimonia*. Bruni stresses the social and collective nature of happiness in the civil economy of the Italian eighteenth century. By examining the works of Ludovico Antonio Muratori and Antonio Genovesi, this article addresses instead the political meaning of public happiness for absolute monarchies, and underlines its origins in the German tradition of natural law.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this article, I present some observations on "public happiness" in order to clarify the idea's meaning in the eighteenth-century Italian context. This clarification appears to be necessary because of the recent rise in popularity that the notion of happiness enjoys among economists and historians of political economy. In many of his works, alone or with co-authors, Luigino Bruni has been the prime mover behind the revival of this idea.[1]

donofrioinnl@gmail.com. I would like to thank Prof. Antonio Trampus, Daria Farafonova, Gerardo Serra for their comments and encouragements.

[1]Bruni tried to establish, on the basis of his own interpretation of public happiness, "civil economy" as a kind of economics sensitive to social capital; on his interpretation of social capital and trust in Genoves, *inter alia*, see: Luigino Bruni and Robert Sugden (2000), which refers to a very brilliant reconstruction of public trust in the Kingdom of Naples in Anthony Pagden (1987). Zamagni has been particularly consistent over the years in the use of the term "civil economy"; for instance, Stefano Zamagni (2007). Others have followed Bruni's interpretation of Genovesi. See, for instance, Filippo Sabetti (2012). Mark A. Sargent (2005) employs Bruni's interpretation of Genovesi in order to stimulate a catholic alternative to law and economics.

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Recently, in particular, he insisted, together with Stefano Zamagni, on the importance of rediscovering the lost art of "civil economy" as a more humane alternative to free market capitalism, in order to provide a theoretical framework within economics for non-profit activities,[2] or even as an ambitious "foundation for an economic theory of civil society" associated with claims that before the peace of Westphalia, "social evolution was much more complex and richer than the one characterizing modernity."[3]

Bruni identified "public happiness" as the distinctive trait of a continental, mainly Italian, way of understanding political economy. He claims there was an "original theory of public happiness in the Neapolitan School" of political economy.[4] Building on a scholarly tradition that dates back to the early nineteenth century, Bruni stressed how understanding political economy as the science of achieving public happiness, as the Italians did, differed from understanding political economy as the science of increasing the wealth of nations.[5]

Bruni mentions Ludovico Antonio Muratori as one of the initiators of Italy's tradition in the economics of public happiness but focuses very soon on the Neapolitan Antonio Genovesi as the figure that made civil economy flourish. In Genovesi, Bruni underlines the influence of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and John Locke.[6]

The influence of Aristotle serves Bruni's argument particularly well, and he therefore analyzes the complex concept of *eudaimonia* in *Ethica Nichomachea*, and its "social" nature. Aristotle thought that *eudaimonia* was the final end of human life, and that it was a consequence of the practice of virtues. Bruni underlines that "today the neo-Aristotelians philosophers . . . translated *eudaimonia* as 'human flourishing'."[7] *Eudaimonia* or human flourishing means the fulfillment of the true nature of man. Such fulfillment can be attained only within the community of the Greek *polis*, and entails participation in the political life of the city and, most of all, friendship, because man is essentially social. Only in the *polis*, and only through friendship, man can attain his inner goal (*telos*) and be virtuous. Bruni quotes the *Nichomachean Ethics*:

> Surely it is strange, too, to make the supremely happy man a solitary; for no one would choose the whole world on condition of being alone, since man is a political creature and whose nature is to live with others. Therefore even the happy man lives with others; for he has the things that are by nature good. And plainly it is better to spend his days with friends and good men than with strangers or any chance persons. Therefore the happy man needs friends.[8]

The *telos* of the *polis* consists in providing the conditions for a good life (*eu zen*), and the most important manifestation of human virtue is the pursuit of the common good of the city. Bruni, though, focuses rather on the importance of friendship for Aristotle: "The happy man needs friends." The social value of happiness rests, therefore, on the importance of human relationships, and especially of friendship.

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[2]Bruni and Zamagni (2007, p. 14).
[3]Bruni and Zamagni (2007, p. 10).
[4]Bruni (2006, p. 49).
[5]Bruni and Luigi Porta (2003).
[6]Bruni and Porta (2003, pp. 373 and 381).
[7]Bruni (2006, p. 19).
[8]*Nichomachean Ethics*, IX, 9, 1169b, quoted in Bruni (2006, p. 21).

Bruni interprets the idea of public happiness that dominated Italian political economy in the eighteenth century as the continuation of Aristotle's *eudaimonia*. While correctly pointing out that happiness was inherently "public" for Aristotle, he fails to exploit the political meaning of public happiness for the political economy of the eighteenth century, and he moves on, instead, to criticize methodological individualism on the basis of the intrinsically social character of happiness. Bruni understands public happiness in Genovesi, and in general in the Italian tradition of political economy, as socialized happiness with some form of reciprocity and altruism: "the good life can only be lived with and thanks to other human beings (by 'making them happy')."[9]

By concentrating on public happiness, sociability, and reciprocity, Genovesi and the Italian tradition parted ways with modern political economy, which followed Adam Smith in putting at the core of its discourse the notion of self-interest: "Therefore, to Genovesi it is only natural that every human being acts in pursuit of his or her own 'interest'; he does not condemn self-interest.… To Genovesi, however, interest means a kind of 'happiness' that is ontologically *social*, because it can only be reached through others and thanks to others: in his view, in other words, happiness can only be *public* happiness."[10]

There are two main points in Bruni's interpretation:

1. Genovesi and other political economists of the Italian eighteenth century followed Aristotle in stressing the "public" nature of happiness.
2. The collective rather than individual nature of happiness made the political economy in Italy differ from the tradition that developed in Scotland and England.

What this interpretation seems to miss is the political aspect that this concept entailed for Italian political economists. It is true that the Italian tradition of political economy generally rejects Thomas Hobbes's methodological individualism, but its target is mostly the legalistic tradition of the *ancien régime*.

In this paper, I want to qualify Bruni's claims in different ways. First, I want to clarify that by "public happiness," Muratori and Genovesi meant something very specific; namely, the goal of a good monarch. For Genovesi and Muratori, public happiness was a useful formula in asserting the rights of the prince and the government over and above the rigidity of the legal system.[11] The phrase was obviously not meant as the individual happiness of the members of the community, but rather as the final goal of the monarch and his duty toward the society. At least since the 1760s, the political program of Genovesi and his pupils envisaged a strong government that would be able to pursue public happiness rather than be entrapped by the legal litigations of private interests. Second, I want to show that although public happiness resembles the Aristotelian ideal of *bonum commune*, it has also different characteristics and

[9]Bruni (2012): "La felicità ha natura paradossale proprio perché è costitutivamente sociale, relazionale: in continuità con la tradizione classica, in Genovesi c'è l'intuizione che una 'vita buona' non può essere vissuta se non con e grazie agli altri (facendo 'felici gli altri'). Per questo non abbiamo su di essa un controllo pieno: l'essere umano per realizzarsi ha bisogno di reciprocità, ma per averla deve fare il salto della gratuità, la quale può portare o meno alla risposta reciprocante (e qui sta un rischio micidiale, avvertito da Platone e da molta della filosofia greca), ma senza della quale la reciprocità genuina non si riprodurrebbe."

[10]Bruni and Porta (2003, p. 381).

[11]Vincenzo Ferrone (2008, p. 18).

it actually originates in that sort of Aristotelian synthesis that was the German natural law tradition. The German tradition of natural law provided Muratori and Genovesi with an overall framework for understanding these issues. Third, I will show that Italian economists fell within a broader stream of thought that dominated central Europe, and that their intellectual roots in the natural law tradition make them close relatives of the German Cameralists rather than of the Scottish Enlightenment.

II. WHAT IS FELICITÀ PUBBLICA?

What was public happiness concretely in the political discourse of the eighteenth century? *Felicitas publica,* or "public happiness," was not an invention of the eighteenth century. In the allegories of the late Reinassance, Virtue and Plenty were companions of Public Happiness, thereby illustrating that virtue begets a well-acquired and stable plenty.[12] As Angela Voelker's entry in the *Reallexicon der deutschen Kunstgeschichte* clearly demonstrates, though, the eighteenth century saw the iconography of *felicitas publica* acquire an hitherto unprecedented importance.[13]

"Felicitas publica" was, first of all, a motto that appeared on Roman imperial coinage after the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Muratori went to great lengths in his *Della Pubblica Felicità* to discuss this coinage. Medals and coins—a well-known means of communication for early modern political entities—fully reflect the key role of *felicitas publica*. Unsurprisingly "felicitas" appeared most prominently in the coinage of the Habsburg imperial family, therefore stressing the continuity of the Roman and Holy Roman empires. This was a novelty of the Habsburg propaganda of the eighteenth century. We do not often see mentions of "felicitas" in earlier coins of Habsburg rulers, but the *Catalog der kaiserlich-koeniglichen Medaillen-Staempel-Sammlung* records a medal with Maria Theresia's bust on the *verso,* and the motto IVSTITIAM ET CLEMENTIAM COMITATVR FELICITAS on the *recto*. The motto is illustrated by the image of a sword and a scale on the two sides of a cornucopia, the horn of plenty. "Felicitas" is here the abundance that results for the empire from the justice and benevolence of the empress.[14] Another medal with the felicitas theme was coined for the birth of Maria Theresia's son Leopold (actually coined in 1758, when Leopold was already seven). The motto was FOECVNDITAS AVGVSTORVM PATRIAE FELICITAS, linking together dynastic continuity, and therefore peace, with the happiness of the country.[15]

Leopold, the grand duke of Tuscany, also had a medal coined for the birth of his son and heir. This time, the *recto* presented an image more directly reminiscent of its Roman antecendent: a feminine figure standing, with a child in her arms and a horn of plenty, a lion at her feet, and the motto FELICITAS PUBLICA. Coined in 1768, the coin has an obvious symbolism that brings together the idea of a country able to

[12]"Felici sono tra di noi coloro, che hanno tanti beni temporali, che possono provvedere alle necessità del corpo, e tanto virtuosi che possono allegerir quelle dell'anima," says Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, quoted in Graham Smith (1984, p. 394).
[13]Angela Völker (1979).
[14]Joseph C. von Arneth (1839, p. 58n212).
[15]von Arneth (1839, p. 65n260).

support her children with the fecundity of her rulers. The invigilating lion stands for the city of Florence.[16]

"Felicitas" also appeared in medals coined to celebrate the return of "good governments" to a country by means of military victories. The Emperor Charles VI, to commemorate his victory over the Turks, issued a medal with Victory standing on Turkish trophies and the motto VICTORIA CAROLI FELICITAS CHRISTIANORUM. Under the reign of Charles's grandson, Emperor Joseph II, the conquest of Dacia was marked by the medal FELICITAS DACIAE; the campaign against the French army and the Belgian revolutionaries ended with the return of the governor general and a new medal that reads AVGVSTI PROVIDENTIA. FELICITAS. BELGIS. RESTITVTA.[17] The medal was coined when the imperial army reconquered revolutionary Belgium in 1790, together with other medals coined to commemorate the return to Bruxelles of the governor general of the Low Countries that read LAETITIA PVBLICA.[18]

In all the cases examined, the happiness of the country and her people appears to be the result of some fortunate action of the rulers: whether the birth of an heir that will ensure dynastic continuity and therefore peace, or the happy conclusion of a military campaign against an oppressive ruler of some kind (the Turks or the French revolutionaries). Happiness is something that affects the subjects and it is identified with a plenty of fruits. It is, so to speak, an affection of the subjects, but it originates in the actions of the government. It falls entirely within the iconographic style that has been described for the triumphal arch of Francesco Stefano of Tuscany, Maria Theresa's husband. The triumphal arch was built in Florence to commemorate Francesco Stefano's visit to the capital city of his newly acquired grand duchy. The celebration of the grand duke's victories over the Turks combines here with the exaltation of his role as *propagator commercii.*[19]

The imperial family was not alone in the rediscovery of this theme, as many German and central European courts had medals engraved with mottoes mentioning "felicitas." As Bruni himself noticed, the king of Naples, Charles III, also had a medal struck with the inscription *deliciae regis felicitas populi*, but, as Bruni failed to notice, Charles referred to his newly built palace of Caserta, the delight of the king, and consequently the happiness of the people. In any case, the Habsburgs seem to have been more consistent in mentioning "happiness" in their propaganda.

I have gone to great lengths in discussing the value of public happiness in the imperial iconography because I wanted to convey the kind of associations the term would evoke for people like Muratori, who was a direct subject of the empire, or Genovesi, who lived in an independent kingdom that only in 1734 had ceased to be part of the territories ruled by the Habsburg family. Although it would be in vain to look for a good definition of public happiness in these medals, it seems beside the point to understand it as some sort of collective private happiness, as the "happiness of friends," as

[16]von Arneth (1839, p. 72n311).
[17]von Arneth (1839, p. 90n438).
[18]Georges Cumont (1888, p. 59). Particularly interesting is the stress put on the "vertus pacifiques de Notre Auguste Maitre" that the Belgian chancellery wanted to stress with the *felicitas* inscription: "[Sa Majesté] ne veut être que le Père de ses peuples et non pas leur vainquer" (Cumont 1888, p. 106).
[19]Bruno Klein (1988).

"making others happy."[20] Instead, it had to do with peace and war, and justice, and general prosperity: the supreme aims of the state. It was the happiness of the public, not the collective happiness of individuals, that mattered here. Reciprocity and friendship were hardly an issue. We will see that more closely in Muratori and Genovesi.

IV. MURATORI, GENOVESI, THE PRINCE, AND HIS MINISTERS

Muratori was part of the broad "imperial culture" with the Habsburg rule effectively connecting the German world and the northern Italian states. What was public happiness for him? While the quest for private happiness was stimulated by "the ceaseless impulse of Nature" (*impulso incessante della natura*), humans also experienced another desire: "Of a more sublime sphere and of a more noble origin is another desire, namely that of the Good of Society, of the Public Good, i.e. of Public Happiness. The first [*scilicet*, the desire of individual pleasures] originates in Nature, this other one is generated by Virtue."[21]

The unruly pursuit of individual happiness could lead, according to the erudite of Modena, to vice. The pursuit of public happiness, instead, would be rewarded by God and men: "Desiring and getting public Good is a great merit in the face of God and Men, as long as it is achieved by honest means."[22] True heroes put public happiness before their own private happiness, while private citizens ordinarily pursued their private interest. This meant that private and public happiness, for Muratori, were distinct and not easily reconciled.

Although the pursuit of public happiness remained a duty for everyone, this duty was especially binding for "those in charge of the rule of mortals" ("chi presiede al governo dei mortali") and for the men of genius and of letters, because they could contribute to the "improvement of the World"[23] on a much larger and decisive scale. For them, Muratori wrote his book on public happiness, "which should be the daily and most cherished goal of him, whom Providence chose for the throne."[24]

Public happiness did not consist merely in the absence of individual evils—this was unthinkable for Muratori—but in peace and tranquility (cap I).[25] The motto FELICITAS PVBLICA found on Roman coins expressed, therefore, a crucial but also rather limited role of every government: "Be satisfied with the wool, without taking out the skin of

[20]Bruni and Porta (2003, p. 94).

[21]"Di sfera poi più sublime, e di origine più nobile si è un altro desiderio, cioè quello *del Bene della Società*, *del Ben Pubblico* o sia della *Pubblica Felicità*. Nasce il primo dalla Natura, quest'altro ha per madre la Virtù."

[22]"Di gran merito all'incontro presso Dio e presso gli Uomini sempre è il bramare e proccurare il pubblico Bene, purché si eseguisca con onesti mezzi" (Muratori 1749, pp. 2–3). (In the case of the original work of Muratori and Genovesi, the editions actually used are always specified.) For the literature on Muratori, see the discussion in Muratori (1996, *Introduzione* by Cesare Mozzarelli; in particular, pp. ix–xi).

[23]Muratori (1749, p. 50).

[24]Muratori (1749, p. 48).

[25]Not even individual happiness can rest on virtue alone: virtue is not "bastante a difendere quaggiù l'uomo da varj disastri, dalla malattia, dalla povertà; perché nol rende invulnerabile, non comanda alle stagioni, né ha la forza di stornare le calamità pubbliche o private, alle quali non è sottoposto meno il malvagio che l'uomo dabbene" (Muratori 1736, p. 195).

the sheep." Obviously, the sheep were the prince's subjects (a metaphor that is everything but Aristotelian), and the prince was the steward of a happy people.[26]

Public happiness was "the task of princes" ("è mestiere dei principi," cap. II); "for this reason, they have been elected and they transmit their power to their successors, and for this reason they are obliged to their subjects, who, in return, must obey."[27] The task of protecting their subjects makes the princes shepherds and fathers of the people: "In any case, God created the rulers of peoples, so that they could love and benefit the people."[28] Private individuals can attain a certain degree of individual happiness, but, for the enjoyment of public happiness, they have to rely on the prince and his ministers. Significantly, what makes happiness public is not its vaguely collective nature, but the fact that it is brought about by the state and its agents.

The stress on the absence of evil and on peace (i.e., the absence of war) as the fundamental component of public happiness comes to Muratori probably from Thomas Hobbes *via* Samuel von Pufendorf, and is characteristic for supporters of absolute monarchies: it is the tradition of *salus publica*. Many of the maxims of government contained in *Della Felicità Pubblica* resemble somehow the Ciceronian motto "salus populi suprema lex esto" and reflect an effort to make the prince appear (against Machiavelli) as a part of the state, bound by the same necessity of obedience to a superior law as his subjects. This is the case of the "Golden Principle," according to which a prince should "strive to treat his subjects, in the same way he would like to be treated by another Prince who was his superior."[29]

In exchange, his subjects will wilfully obey his orders: "and what are the right desires of the people? That their Prince have full authority on them; but that the Laws of Nature, of Nations, and above all the Gospel, have full authority upon him."[30] In order for public happiness to appear, the ruler must not be hindered in his promotion of his subjects' well-being, but he must himself obey three kinds of laws: those of God (true religion being the foundation of public happiness), those of nature, and those of the nations. An absolute monarch, bound by law, seems to be Muratori's ideal.[31]

If we look, then, at the tasks of the prince's ministers, they consist in promoting the good and protecting from evils: this implies waiving abuses and corruption, better regulating trade and the arts, and introducing new arts (industries). Their task is not simply to administer justice, but to "stimulate the Rulers to make their people wealthy and happy, as much as they can."[32] This is the "Economic Government of a State"

[26]"accontentarsi della lana, senza volere anche la pelle delle pecorelle"; Mozzarelli stressed the evolution that Muratori's thought underwent between his *Rudimenti di filosofia morale per il Principe* (1714), where the main duty of the prince were honour and glory, and the later *Felicità Pubblica*, where the prince's duties stretch over a much larger number of issues: the *governo economico* (Muratori 1996, pp. XVIf).

[27]"che per questo sono stati eletti e tramandano ai successori il loro potere, e ad essa sono obbligati verso i proprii sudditi, che perciò devono obbedire."

[28]"Del resto dio ha fatto nascere il rettor di popoli perché li amasse e beneficasse."

[29]"sforzarsi di trattare i Sudditi suoi nella stessa maniera, con cui egli bramerebbe d'esser trattato da un'altro [sic] principe, che gli fosse superiore."

[30]"E quali sono i giusti desiderj de' Popoli? Che il Principe abbia tutta l'autorità sopra loro; ma che le Leggi della Natura, delle Genti, e massimamente del Vangelo, abbiano autorità sopra di lui" (Muratori 1749, pp. 20–21).

[31]Muratori (1749, p. 122).

[32]"eccitare i Regnanti a rendere il più che si può, benestante e felice il loro popolo" (Muratori 1749, p. 29).

("Governo Economico di uno Stato") to make it flourish; "i.e. wealthier, more put together in its customs, more exempt from vices, more polite, more civilized, more populated, etc., whereby Public Happiness will ensue."[33] Removing hindrances to trade is part of the duties of the government, but public happiness goes hand in hand with state intervention, which promotes the arts and trade, by imitating other countries in what they do best.

The model was King Louis XIV of France, not for his military conquests but for his promotion of the arts, trade, and inventions, and of the navy. Another example was Peter the Great of Russia, who "went to be educated in the best trading posts of Christianity, and with prizes attracted into his broad Empire everyone who could, in one way or another, make it more refined and improve it."[34] This is but the image of the good prince of the late seventeenth century: willing to invite the best traders and craftsmen, and to develop manufacture and trade in his dominions, and who stylized himself as a "propagator commercii."

An understanding of political economy, of trade, and of the crafts that are needed to improve agriculture and manufacture was the basic requirement for the prince and his ministers to make public happiness appear in their dominions. There were actually two enemies to the endeavors that Muratori promoted: one was the selfishness of rulers, ministers, and influential private citizens; the other was the sterile erudition of false wisdom. The great imperative bestowed upon the shoulders of writers of political economy is the education of youth for the service of the prince, and the education of the princes themselves. It is therefore the philosopher's duty to promote useful "Lettere e Scienze." Germany was the land of flourishing universities, where princes promoted letters, because they understood "whereof the true ornament and advantage of Nations consist."[35] It was also a country where moral philosophy (*filosofia morale* or *filosofia dei costumi*) was extensively discussed in universities. For Muratori, moral philosophy was the key science for public happiness, and included economics, as well.

Antonio Genovesi's dedicated teaching throughout his whole life had a similarly patriotic meaning. Genovesi's appeals to the Neapolitan youth acquired a special status after his death, and lay in the origins of the movement for reforms in the kingdom.[36] Genovesi's most famous text in political economy, the *Lezioni di economia civile*, went together with the *Della Diceosina*, a compendium of moral philosophy very much in the line with the natural law tradition and innumerable other textbooks in logic, ethics, and other disciplines.[37]

Just like Muratori, Genovesi believed that good moral principles can be attained only on the basis of God and nature, and in nature we find the true laws of humanity:

[33]"cioè più ricco, più composto ne' costumi, più esente dai Vizj, più pulito e civile, più popolato e così discorrendo, onde poi risulti la Pubblica Felicità" (Muratori 1749, p. 30).
[34]"[Peter] andò … a far questo studio ne' migliori Emporj della Cristianità; e poi con premj trasse nel suo vasto Imperio, chi per una parte o per altra potesse sempre più dirozzarlo e migliorarlo" (Muratori 1749, p. 31).
[35]"in cosa consista il decoro ed il vantaggio de'Popoli" (Muratori 1749, p. 80).
[36]Melissa Calaresu (2001, p.165). Since Franco Venturi's *Settecento Riformatore*, the literature on Genovesi has reached such proportions that they do not allow us to keep track of its extent here. I refer to Bruno Jossa, Rosario Patalano, and Eugenio Eugenio Zagari (2007) for the state of the art of the historiography on Genovesi, among both historians and historians of economic thought.
[37]On the context of *Diceosina*, see Niccolò Guasti (2006).

nature cannot be baffled, "ei non si burla la natura." Obedience to the laws of nature was therefore essential in order for man to be happy.

The object of the *Diceosina* was "the nature of man, the goal he is targeting, the law of the world whereto he strives to obey for his own happiness, and the general duties that arise from it."[38] These issues had to be considered with regard both to the family and to the republic, in order to understand what a good man, what an honest citizen, and what a wise ruler of the state ("savio reggitore della Repubblica") are, because, in every case, the nature of man is the only infallible guide. Man's actions aim to escape evils and achieve pleasures. Political evils originate in the clash of private interests.[39] Happiness consists in having the least metaphysical, ethical, political, and religious evils. Therefore, happiness requires prudence, fortitude, justice, temperance, exercise, and "much virtue, in a word, that is the perfection of human strength."[40] For Genovesi, the happiness of man meant to "occupy a niche neither bigger nor smaller than his natural needs."[41]

Consequently, Genovesi condemned the false myth of *indipendenza* (isolation) as the source of major evils for individuals, families, and states. Man being so limited a creature, none is truly independent, not even the emperor of China, who is "the master of 120 million souls, and commander in chief of 800 thousand regular troops" (1780, p. 14). Genovesi even claimed that dependence, on the contrary, increases with office and command. The pursuit of independence begets immoderate tyranny; i.e. the violation of the "communia foedera pacis," the rebellion against the natural bonds of man toward his like, society, and nature.

The natural sociability of man, instead, would originate in the ruling forces of human societies: the *forza concentriva* and *diffusiva*, the love of others and of self. Public happiness is the result of the equilibrium of these two forces, which rests on the strict observance of everyone's rights.[42] This links to the strictly modern alternative of pleasure and pain, which we find also in Pietro Verri: pain moves man; actual pleasures do not; but the desire of pleasures does move, because desire is actually pain. This is the individualistic foundation of association among humans: association within the state minimizes pain. This statement was not just an homage to the Newtonianism of the day, as Bruni and Zamagni would claim. This was instead an individualistic foundation of the political community, in a fully modern way. The long quote from Machiavelli that followed this passage in the *Diceosina* makes it clear. Since Genovesi assumed that the establishment of the state would reduce pain, he praised, with Machiavelli, those who established religions, kingdoms, republics, etc.

At the core of the concerns of kingdoms and republics lay political economy, or, as Genovesi called it, "Economia Civile," the subject that Genovesi taught at the University of Naples from 1755 within the chair of *commercio e meccanica*. The celebrated *Lezioni di economia civile* condensed this teaching. In sticking to the traditional subdivision of moral philosophy into ethics, economics, and politics, the Neapolitan philosopher

[38]"la natura dell'uomo, il fine, dove riguarda, la legge del mondo a cui per sua felicità vuol essere sottoposto, i doveri generali che ne nascono" (Antonio Genovesi 1780, vol. 1, Proemio).
[39]Genovesi (1780, vol. 1, p. 12).
[40]"molta virtù in somma, ch'è la perfezione delle forze umane" (Genovesi 1780, vol. 1, p. 13).
[41]"occupar una nicchia nè più grande, nè più piccola de' suoi naturali bisogni."
[42]Genovesi (1780, vol. 1, p. 25); see Bruni and Zamagni (2007, pp. 91f).

stated that the first was the science of the isolated man, the second that of the "Chief and Prince of the Family," and the third saw man as the sovereign and father of his subjects. This last definition allowed Genovesi to completely redefine the Aristotelian framework. Since the ruler was the father of his subjects and he had to care for the material welfare of the *civitas*, Genovesi's *politics* consisted of two parts. One "embraces the rules that will make the subject nation more populated, rich, powerful, wise, and polite," and this he called "Economia Civile." The other treats "the art of legislation and of preserving the State and Empire" ("l'arte legislatrice, e servatrice dello Stato, e dell'Impero"). The latter one he called "Politica" *stricto sensu,* and it formed the object of a different science.[43]

Economia Civile therefore cuts across the Aristotelian oikonomika and politika. Although basically everyone would be affected by it, it was necessary for certain categories: "I. To everyone who owns land whereof he receives rent … ; II. for the men who deal with Courts and Inns. III; to the Theologians; IV. to the [King's] Financiers; V. to those who rule provinces and villages; VI. to the Ministers of the State."[44]

Economia Civile included all the practically oriented notions on "private economy," treated especially by English and French authors: husbandry, agriculture, shepherding, trade, etc. Then it included the discussion of all the laws that regulate trade. In the eighteenth century, minimizing the pain of the subjects increasingly meant dealing with economic issues; i.e., with the use of wealth: "The use of riches can and must be considered either from an ethical point of view, from an economical point of view, or from a political point of view; this means either as far as life and happiness of the private man are concerned, or as far as the growth, stability, and happiness of families, or, finally, as far as the true greatness, and happiness of Nations and Government are concerned."[45] Civil economy embraced this third aspect: national happiness.

Then, civil economy taught how to increase the possessions of a community. The king's financiers (the *finanzieri* above, in the Neapolitan context, were closely linked to the state), especially, must know—an acknowledgment that Genovesi shared with the German theoreticians of the *Policey*, as we shall soon see—that the king's income originates only in one "fondo," the arts and trade.[46]

Finally, the *Lezioni di economia civile* would be helpful for the king's ministers and councilors on the "issues relevant to the Economy": trade, export and import, agriculture, manufacturing, money, and food relief. According to Genovesi, Jean-François Melon, whose work was dominated by the fearful relationships among trade, power, and war, was the person who laid out the principles of this part of the science. The first part of Genovesi's work dealt with these very general principles, with a particular, patriotic attention for the Kingdom of Naples.

[43]Antonio Genovesi (1769, parte I, p. 12).

[44]"I. ad ognuno, che abbia de' fondi, onde trarre delle rendite…. II. a i Tribunalisti. III. a i Teologi. IV. a i Finanzieri. V. a chi governi provincie, e Terre. VI. a i Ministri di Stato" (Antonio Genovesi 1765, parte I, p. 3).

[45]"l'uso delle ricchezze si può, e dee considerare o eticamente, o economicamente, o in politica; e ciò vale a dire o per rispetto alla vita, e felicità dell'uomo privato, e singolare: o pel verso dell'ingrandimento, stabilità, e felicità delle famiglie ; o finalmente risguardo alla vera grandezza, fermezza, e felicità delle Nazioni, e del Governo" (Antonio Genovesi 1767, parte II, §.III).

[46]Genovesi (1769, parte I, p. 18).

In the end, the nation was the actual subject matter of the book, and the *Lezioni* was addressed primarily to the young, patriotically enthusiastic gentlemen (i.e., the *ceto civile*) willing to engage in the service of their country.

The main element of public happiness, as well as of the private happiness of the family, was that the power of the ruler not be hindered by any "gross and barbaric resistance." Such resistance Genovesi qualified as the "relic of the wild centuries," most likely referring to the feudal and ecclesiastic power to resist sovereign laws.[47] The sovereign, as "the chief of all families," was to be the only "moderator" of all obligations and rights that encroach in society. For the greater good of the political body and of individual families, he was supposed to make these rights and obligations compatible. There was no invisible hand, here, but mundane sovereign intervention.[48] It was therefore in the right and in the power of legislators to gather the forces of all citizens and, with a "light push," make them serve "for their own glory as well as for the greatness and happiness of the political body." These forces would make the sovereign almost almighty.[49]

In Genovesi's view, in order to make use of the forces of his subjects, the sovereign should bestow "prizes" and "honours" upon his subjects, and restrain from encroaching onto their natural rights; above all, property rights. Without the power of the state, society would not experience a new Golden Age. Rather, it would regress to barbarianism (this being the great lesson of Vico).[50] The Middle Ages and the feudal government were examples of regression for the educated Neapolitans of the Enlightenment. Feudal power, ecclesiastic abuses, and the prevalence of private over public interest were the legacy of such medieval barbarianism, which Genovesi and his pupil were fighting: "therefore, a law-making power is absolutely necessary to the civil bodies, that will force, by its strength and knowledge, all the members of society to strive for the same purpose with a geometric proportion of need, strength, and rights."[51]

In his mind, the aims of the political body would be three: the first was its own preservation, without which nothing else could be achieved; the second was the comfort of life; the third was natural and civic happiness, "which consists in eschewing, as much as it is possible, pains, disturbances, annoyances, grieves, and preoccupations."[52] In the introductory explanation that Genovesi offered of how these three goals can be achieved, he clarified that they involve demographic growth, a strict education of the subjects that would accustom them to endure hardship rather than let luxury mollify them, an inflexible justice that spares none (and clearly he had in mind aristocrats and churchmen here) and protects everyone rights, and, finally, an *economia* that nourishes the people: "The economy, therefore, must be the third concern

[47]Genovesi (1769, parte I, p. 22).

[48]On "the idea of a highly vulnerable, but naturally well-regulated balance that had to be monitored," see Koen Stapelbroek (2006, p. 416).

[49]Genovesi (1769, parte I, p. 27).

[50]On a truly historical dimension of the Neapolitan Enlightenment, see also Ferrone (2008, p. 70) on the role of the law as a means to modify history and invert the cycle of decadence.

[51]"Dunque ne' corpi civili è assolutamente necessaria una forza legislatrice, e coattrice, per vigore e sapienza della quale tutti i membri tendano uniformemente al medesimo fine per una geometrica proporzione di bisogni, forze, diritti" (Genovesi 1769, parte I, p.39).

[52]"che consiste nel distaccarne il più che si può i dolori, le noje, le molestie, l'afflizioni, le inquietudini" (Genovesi 1769, parte I, p. 41).

of Power. It comprises industry, the arts, crafts, the internal trade, the external trade, and a thousand more things that are useful for it. As a people grow, the need for food will grow as well, and also the paternal care of the Sovereign must grow in the same proportion."[53]

Again, just like in the *Diceosina*, the real mover of human action is the fear of pain, of disorder.[54] By threatening the political order, man would "offend universal order, and would question and endanger the security of the rights of individuals and families, and therefore his own existence (*se medesimo*)." It was therefore everyone's duty to do what he can for the "common prosperity," because of his obligations toward himself and toward society. This duty, nevertheless, was understood by Genovesi as eminently negative, consisting mostly in the obedience to the laws and in restraint from offence. The sovereign's arm would invigilate this.

The examination of the *Lezioni di economia civile* that we carried out so far should suffice to show that public happiness had not much to do with the "happiness of others" and relatively little even with the Aristotelian common goods. It existed instead in the activity of the government to shelter the subjects from the evils of war (peace), violations of their fundamental rights (justice), and famine (economy):

> Its [*scilicet,* the people's] happiness consists not only of its physical forces, but of the internal peace, and calm of the people, in such a way that they lack nothing that nature requires. This state is brought about by the knowledge and wisdom of the rulers, the knowledge and virtue of the subjects being the daughter of those of the rulers: because knowledge enables to adopt the best measures in order to keep peace with the neighbouring Nations, and preserve justice, humanity, politeness, and the arts within the political body.[55]

The protection of private property, including from feudal abuses, state monopoly, and rapacious tax officers, partook of justice and economy. The real activity in favor of public happiness lay in the hands of the sovereign and his ministers: not simply the defence of justice, but the promotion of education, of the arts, and of the navy; the fight against luxury and laziness, achieved by means of the establishment of academies; the construction of ports and ships; in forcing the poor to work; and in forbidding the import of dispensable goods—in a word, the promotion of virtue:

> Virtue teaches how to love the obedience to the laws, and how to practice justice scrupulously: it teaches how to be human, discrete, prudent, compassionate, how to appreciate and cultivate the arts, it teaches how to be ashamed of laziness, luxury, intemperance, lack of modesty, incontinence, stupidity, anger, vainglory, etc. You will

[53]"La Economia dunque debb'essere la terza cura dell'Imperio. Ella abbraccia l'industria, le arti, i mestieri, il commercio interno, ed esterno e mille altre cose che a questo servono. Quanto più cresce un popolo, a quella medesima proporzione crescono i bisogni del nutrimento; e proprozionevolmente aumentar si debbono le cure paterne del Sovrano" (Genovesi 1769, parte I, p. 43).

[54]The point is made particularly clear in Genovesi (1769, parte I, ch. II).

[55]"la sua felicità non consiste nelle forze fisiche, ma bensì nell'interna pace, e tranquillità de' popoli, senza che loro manchi nulla di quel che la natura richiede. Questa nasce … dalla sapienza, e virtù di coloro che il governano, figlia della quale è la sapienza e la virtù dei sudditi: perché la sapienza fa prendere le misure le più giuste per mantenere la pace con le vicine Nazioni, e la giustizia, l'umanità, politezza, l'arti nel corpo politico" (Genovesi 1767, parte II, p. 264).

> never read that a Republic was peaceful and happy where science, virtue, and the arts did not flourish, the only nurture of our happiness: and if we consider things more closely and more philosophically, we will discover that things could not be otherwise.[56]

The examples that Genovesi set before the imagination of the Neapolitan youth, and therefore, in a way, to the future ministers, magistrates, academics, and soldiers of the kingdom, are the patriarchal rule of China, the inflexible justice of Friederich of Prussia, the civilizing autocracy of Peter the Great: not exactly the model of catholic late Aristotelianism, but monarchies known for the fact that, in order to police their countries, they disposed of the vested interests that history had sclerotized.

V. NATURAL LAW AND PUBLIC HAPPINESS

In the context of this reasoning, it is not necessary, I believe, to go to great lengths in order to discuss the differences between the erudite from Modena and the Neapolitan professor. How Aristotelian was their perspective? In both cases, their ideas obviously originated in a broader Aristotelian heritage shared by most European political thinkers. It connected with the Aristotelianism of late Scholastics, for instance, in stressing the importance of good life for the *polis* ("finem civitatis esse bene et feliciter vivere") and therefore of common good for the lawmakers. If we look at a champion of Aristotelian common good and late scholastics, such as the Spanish Francisco Suarez, we know from his *Tractatus de legibus ac deo legislatore* that he considered the aim of legislative power to be not individual happiness, but the good of the community ("bonum communitatis").[57]

Nevertheless, there is a very significant difference between his understanding of the extent of the common good and Muratori's or Genovesi's *felicità pubblica*.[58] Suarez insisted that there was an absolutely clear-cut distinction between the rule of the state ("gubernatio politica") and the rule of the family ("oeconomicum regimen" or "gubernatio oeconomica"). Although he acknowledged the fact that the "gubernatio politica" can interfere with the private sphere of the family in those cases "which can affect the common good of the State, by hindering or fostering it" ("quae redundant in commune bonum civitatis, et illud possunt impedire, aut promovere"), he clearly emphasized the separation of the different spheres of "gubernatio": "everything else which concerns the private family, should be regulated by the each individual Head of the Household,

[56]"la virtù insegna ad amare l'ubbidienza alle leggi, a praticare scrupolosamente la giustizia: all'essere umani, discreti, circospetti, compassionevoli, a riputare e coltivare l'arti, a recarsi a vergogna la poltroneria, il lusso, l'intemperanza, l'immodestia, l'incontinenza, la stolidezza, l'escandescenza, le rodomontate, ecc. Mai non si legge esservi stata tranquilla e felice Repubblica, senza che vi fiorisse molta scienza, molta virtù, e molte arti, le sole nutrici di questa nostra felicità: nè a considerare le cose da vicino, e con occhio filosofico si troverà poter essere altrimenti" (Genovesi 1767, parte II, p. 264).

[57]Franciscus Suárez (1872, liber III, caput IX, §6).

[58]It is worth quoting here what Muratori, clearly targeting scholastics, wrote in a letter to Genovesi, 18 May 1747: "Mirava io negli anni addietro con invidia que' dotti oltramontani che trattano la filosofia, *libera dalle inezie de' secoli barbarici*, con tanta acutezza e precisione e con tanta libertà," quoted in Fabio Marri and Maria Lieber (1997, p. 25).

not by state laws."[59] Suarez engaged with the limits of "gubernatio politica" rather than with the duties of the legislator in the economic sphere.

Both Muratori and Genovesi had their own varieties of the "modern," rather than "medieval," natural law doctrine (and modern natural law was in many respects a radical break with the Aristotelian tradition).[60] Muratori, for instance, claimed straightforwardly that only the *Gius Pubblico*—the variety of natural law that was taught in Dutch and German universities—enabled one to judge the legitimacy and justice of laws themselves.[61]

Also, the anthropology behind Muratori and Genovesi is modern. Sociability in Aristotle and in his Scholastic followers was mostly a means to a positive end: the good life. In Muratori, and more explicitly in Genovesi, the main mover behind human action is the fear of pain, as it is in Hobbes.[62] The characterization of public happiness was therefore primarily negative: absence of war, absence of famine, and absence of threats to the demographic growth of the nation. The increase of comfort was important but secondary.

The focus on the role of the sovereign, with a strong stress put on the natural bondage of obedience, reflects early-modern rather than Greek or Scholastic concerns. As Maria T. Marcialis pointed out, Genovesi followed, in many of his works, the overall inspiration of Christian Wolff's deductive "scientific paradigm."[63] As Klaus-Gert Lutterbeck (2002) underlined, the *more geometrico* approach to moral philosophy and political philosophy in particular was an essential rather than accidental character of the natural law doctrine. Although Genovesi's sources are varied and he used them eclectically, Genovesi's particular version of natural law was deeply influenced by Wolff's. In particular, Wolff's conception of *bonum* as "whatever by nature adds to the perfection of man" must have pleased Genovesi,

[59]"reliqua enim, quae ad privatam familiam spectant, non per leges civiles, sed per uniuscuiusque patrisfamilias prudentiam ordinantur" (Suárez 1872, liber III, caput IX, §7).

[60]Klaus-Gert Lutterbeck (2002, p. 21) underlines that the natural law tradition in Germany was part of the process of dismantling the Aristotelian heritage (Abbau) that led to the rise of modern social philosophy (Entstehung der Moderne Sozial-Philosophie). He sees the distinctive trait of such modern philosophy in the severing of the Aristotelian and Scholastic connection between theory and praxis, whereby modern philosophy distinguished ethics and worldy *prudentia*—i.e., "Nomothetik" and "Handlungslehre"—but the relationship between the eighteenth-century German *praktische Philosophie* and Aristotle remains a contested field. See Axel Rüdiger (2005, pp. 7ff, esp. n18).

[61]Muratori (1749, p. 45).

[62]It would be misleading to assume that the Aristotelian, virtue-oriented concept of sociability disappeared in the German *Frühaufklärung*. The following definition of *Gesellschaft*, for instance, shows its persistence (but also the *modern* stress on authority): "Es muss hier voraus gesezet werden, dass der Mensch von Gott zur Gesellschaft erschaffen, weil dieses das eintzige Mittel, wodurch er glueklich leben kan, mithin da nach dem goettlichen Absehen die Gesellschafft ein Mittel der menschlichen Glueckseligkeit seyn soll, so haben wir uns davon einen solchen Concept zu machen, welcher der goettlichen Intention gemaes, dass … sie nemlich eine Vereiningugn gewisser Personen, welche unter einander ihr Bestes zu befoerdern suchen. Dass aber der Mensch zur Gesellschafft erschaffen, und er dadurch unter und neben andern Menschen leben soll, beweiset die Beschaffenheit seiner Natur, welche der Grund ist, daraus wir diese Erkaenntnis haben" (from the *Philosophisches Lexicon* of Johan Georg Walch; see Dagmar von Wille 1991, p. 73).

[63]Maria T. Marcialis (1999, p. 114); this is absolutely not to deny the influence of Locke, Shaftesbury, and of the French Enlightenment on Genovesi, as recently underlined again by Stapelbroek (2006) and Guasti (2006).

because it entailed a direct relationship between natural law and man's improvement in this world.[64]

Not surprisingly, Wolff saw the role of the sovereign in the promotion of common welfare (a good translation of *felicitas publica*). His laws, in order to be just, must contribute to the perfection of his subjects. The sovereigns "are not allowed to do what pleases them, they must instead, exactly like those who hold a limited power, look for the common welfare and security in order not to become tyrants."[65] They could not rule at their will. Their will, instead, should be ruled by the necessity of promoting the happiness of their subjects.

But, within this broadly teleological Aristotelian perspective, the stress on the natural role of the sovereign distinguished the two Italian authors from Aristotelian practical philosophy. As we saw, Muratori and Genovesi did not really distinguish the paternal rule within the family from the political rule in the *civitas*. While the Greek philosopher carefully distinguished the two, Muratori invoked the "Governo Economico," and Genovesi called the head of the household "Chief and Prince of his family," and the sovereign, the "Father and Sovereign of the people."[66]

This could look like a mere "lip service" to the Bourbon King in whose name Genovesi was teaching, but it was actually a very strong statement, setting Genovesi very explicitly aside from John Locke's ideas as expressed in the two treaties on government. Genovesi's proposal fell instead within the category of the *pastoral* mode of government that Michel Foucault so interestingly discussed in his 1978 course at the *Collège de France,*[67] citing Antoine de Monchrestien.

The very notion of *economia civile* is strongly connotated, but not in the way Bruni and Zamagni would want it to be. The difference between *economia civile* and *economia politica* is merely nominal, *civile* being the Italianization of the Latin *civilis*, from *civitas*, while *politica* derives instead from the Greek *polis*, usually translated as *civitas* in Latin.[68] The peculiarity of *economia civile* and *economia politica*, since Montchrestien in 1615, was the conflation of family and politics, of material wealth and the princely

[64]Muratori was a correspondent of Leibniz, who had been Wolff's mentor and model, and his relationship with, and knowledge of, the German Law School (and Wolff) is documented in Marri and Lieber (1997) and also in the recently published *corrispondenza* of Marri and Lieber (2010).

[65]The sovereigns "duerffen … doch nicht schlechterdinges thun, was sie geluestet, sondern sie haben sowohl als diejenigen, welche eine eingeschraenkte Gewalt besitzen, allezei auf die *gemeine Wohlfahrt* und Sicherheit zu sehen wo sie nicht Tyrannen werden wollen" (Christian F. von Wolff 1747, §441, p. 474; emphasis added).

[66]In Althusius and in the theorists of natural law, there was no clear-cut difference between the family and the state, both being *consociationes* or *Gesellschaften*; see Cornel Zwierlein (2005, pp. 148ff).

[67]Michel Foucault (2004).

[68]The first *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Venice 1612) explains the adjective *politico* as "Civile, che è secondo politica. Lat. *politicus*"; the idea that "a probable explantion involves the growing importance Genovesi places on civic, urban life over rural life in his theoretical development" is grossly absurd, as is the claim that "to the Neapolitan economists, the countryside was strongly associated with feudalism" and therefore less important than the city (Bruni and Zamagni 2007, p. 79). Freeing the countryside from feudal abuses was instead the main concern of the Neapolitan school, which never tired of stressing the importance of agriculture to the national economy. Genovesi expected that the kingdom would find its position on the international markets also, thanks to the export of agricultural products. See Adriano Di Gregorio (2009). For a thorough discussion of 'civil' and 'political,' see Landucci (2014, pp. 22ff).

duties, of *oikos* and *polis*. Genovesi introduced a definitional twist, as we saw, whereby he could recompose the traditional Aristotelian economics and politics into new categories, merging part of economics and part of politics into *economia civile*. Civil (or political) economy is the way to govern the "economy" of the state, of the *civitas* or *polis*, as a father would rule (*nomein*) his family (*oikos*).

As the eighteenth century advanced, *felicitas publica* came to replace almost completely *ragion di stato* as the the yardstick of any good government. Instead of seeking for outward expansion by means of wars as much ruinous for the winner as for the losers, princes should foster the happiness of their subjects with the help of "Lettere e Scienze."[69] The *Giornale dei Letterati* could confidently claim in 1771:

> Public virtue has been for a long time the subject matter of the politicians of antiquity: the subtle debates on the Reason of State kept the students of politics busy in the past century and in the 16th century…. For a while, now, … a great number of writers … has started clarifying the elements whereby the true publicwealth is brought about.[70]

And wealth became an essential part of politics, as in Genovesi's definition of *Economia civile*. The *Economia civile* so defined went together with a somewhat interventionist conception of the tasks of the state that resembles very much the Cameralist tradition. It is not a coincidence, of course, since Muratori, Genovesi, and the Cameralists moved within the natural law tradition.[71] Obviously, Genovesi was not a Neapolitan Cameralist, but, in mapping likenesses and differences between different schools of political economy in Europe, the very concept of *public happiness* signals a fundamental affinity between German and Italian forms of political thinking, a common paradigm of sorts.[72]

VI. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF *WOHLFAHRT*

The *Oekonomie-*, *Polizei-*, and *Kameralwissenschaft* stemmed from the natural law doctrine of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Germany. Since 1727, they were taught together at the University of Halle, eventually also in Frankfurt an der Oder and elsewhere in Germany, and they usually go under the common name of *Kameralwissenschaft,* the sciences of the *curia principis*. They present the historian with a multiplicity of books on *Gluckseligkeit* and *Wohlfahrt*, two different ways

[69]Muratori (1749, p. 49).

[70]"La virtù pubblica fu per lungo tempo il soggetto de' politici della antichità: i sottili esami sulla ragion di stato occuparono quelli del secolo passato e del decimo sesto … da qualche tempo … gran copia di scrittori … ha intrapreso a schiarire gli elementi, da cui risulta la vera ricchezza pubblica." *Giornale dei Letterati* 4 (1771: 81–83), quoted in Till Wahnbaeck (2004, p. 2).

[71]Notwithstanding the spurt in the literature dedicated to the German political philosophy of the eighteenth century in recent years, Pierangelo Schiera (1968) is still a useful introduction (see especially §2.2, pp. 234–247).

[72]The relationship was not univocal: Muratori was well known in Austria and his economic critique of religious excesses was influential there. See Eleonore Zlabinger (1975) and Grete Klingenstein (1994, p. 190).

of translating the Latin *felicitas*. Towards the end of the century, the unity of *Kameralwissenschaften* gave way to separate sciences: political economy, administrative science, political science, etc.[73]

The *Kameralwissenschaft* of eighteenth-century Germany speaks the language of happiness, but not of individual happiness. The happiness of the prince's subjects, "die Glückseligkeit der Unterthanen"—as a typical catch-phrase of the period expressed it—was the result of the prince's benign rule, of his obedience to the principles of good government discovered by the *Kameralwisseschaft*. The origin of German Cameralism lay in the concept of *Policey* or *Polizei*. Since the early seventeenth century, *Polizei* was the secular alternative that German thinkers could offer to *Staatsraeson*. While preserving the autonomy of politics from religion, *Polizei* provided the rule of the state with a moral justification: the common welfare of the subjects.[74] While *Staatsraeson* led to wars of expansion and internally to a growing tax burden imposed on the princely subjects, the *Polizei* would guide the prince and his ministers towards a peaceful and wise management of the resources that allowed a general plenty.[75] The *Kameralwissenschaft* of the eighteenth century inherited this combination of the traditional Aristotelian politics and economics.

The chairs of Cameralistik that were established in German universities in the early decades of the eighteenth century (Halle and Frankfurt an der Oder were inaugurated in 1727, Justi began teaching in Wien in 1754, and Joseph von Sonnenfels in Wien in 1763, while Genovesi's appointment as professor of *Commercio and meccanica* dates from 1754) were meant to teach the future administrators of the German states how to foster public happiness in the different branches of government. Johan Gottlob von Justi, who was only four years younger than Genovesi and probably the most important author of the *Kameralwissenschaft* of the eighteenth century, claimed that "the ultimate purpose [Endzweck] of the economic and cameral sciences is the common happiness [gemeinschaftliche Glückseligkeit]" and that "hence follows the first and universal principle, namely: all the governmental activities of a state must be so ordered that by means of them the happiness of the state may be promoted."[76]

The sovereign was to take care of innumerable aspects of the life of his subjects. He took over from the church the task of assisting the poor and the disciplining of antisocial elements.[77] The taking over of these competencies by the state is traditionally interpreted as the transition from the *Staendestaat* to the modern absolutist state of the eighteenth century; in any case, it marks a significant step towards the kind of centralization that the Neapolitan *Regalismo* would have hoped for in Naples.[78] The new *Kameralwissenschaft* attributed to the sovereign a leveling power: the intermediate bodies of the nobility, which had been so important for Montesquieu, were to lose their specific individuality and differentiation in a substantial equality of the sovereign's subjects when it came to matters of taxation and property.

[73]Schiera (1968, p. 274).
[74]Rüdiger (2005, p 128ff); the main classic on the topic remains Hans Maier (2009).
[75]Rüdiger (2005, p. 131).
[76]Justi, quoted in Albion W. Small (1909, p. 309).
[77]Rüdiger (2005, p. 137).
[78]Schiera (1968, p. 274), but for a more critical stance, see references in James H. van Melton (1979, p. 107).

On the other hand, the sovereign became, according to Friedrich der Grosse's celebrated *bon mot*, "the first servant of the state" in his obligation to foster public happiness.[79] This also implied that the power of the absolute monarch was bound by his recognition of the laws that ruled society and the production of plenty. For this reason, the knowledge of the economic, demographic, and military situation of states (i.e., statistics) ranked very prominently in German universities. At the end of the eighteenth century, August Ludwig Schlözer would famously say that "statistics and despotism cannot stand together,"[80] meaning that a full knowledge of the conditions of the state would make visible to the sovereign and the enlightened public all possible mistakes in the management of the state. Also, Justi's concern with investigative travels and with getting acquainted with the economic life of the Austrian provinces reflects the same preoccupation with factual knowledge that we find in Genovesi's appeal to the provincial youth and then in the German-inspired works of one of Genovesi's latest pupils, Giuseppe Maria Galanti.[81]

A good polity, "una nazione ben polita," was Genovesi's ideal, as it was the Cameralists'. But, while a good polity appeared a concrete possibility for the political scientists of German university, for Genovesi, it was a sort of utopia that he imagined realized in China, where an enlightened monarch reigned under the rule of natural law, assisted by his wise mandarins.[82] To Genovesi (and to Wolff), the Chinese government appeared not to be restricted by human counter-powers that made private interest prevail over the public good, but by a law intrinsic to things themselves. The discourse on taxation is a good index of their aspiration to a sovereign power that would be unlimited except by nature itself. Both the Cameralists and Genovesi underlined the necessity for the sovereign not to deplete by taxation the real sources of a kingdom's wealth; namely, the trade and industry of the subject.

The discourse on public happiness that was central to the *Economia civile*, as well as to the Cameralist tradition, differs therefore from the Scottish discourse on the invisible hand and the pursuit of individual happiness as much as the German differs from the English tradition of natural law.

This difference manifests itself most evidently when we consider the destination and function of Muratori's and Genovesi's books. Muratori's *Della Felicità* (tellingly dedicated to a prince of the Holy Roman Empire) outlines the scheme of a syllabus for the education of future sovereigns and their ministers. The book is entirely didactic. If it is not a handbook in itself, it sets the headings of a course in the *Polizeiwissenschaften.*[83]

[79]For the relationship with the Lutheran concept of *Beruf,* see Lutterbeck (2002) and Rüdiger (2005).

[80]On Schlözer and statistics, see Gabriella Valera (1986), and also Bödeker (2008) on the teaching of statistics at *Georgia Augusta*.

[81]Justi derived his attitude from Schlözer and the latter's teacher Gottfried Achenwall. On Galanti's *Della Descrizione delle due Sicilie* and its derivation from Friederich Anton Busching's *Neue Erdebeschreibung*, see Mirella Mafrici's introduction to Giuseppe M. Galanti (2003).

[82]Significantly, Genovesi shared his praise of Chinese rulers with the French Physiocrats (*Despotisme de la Chine*), and, again, Christian Wolff, who famously claimed that his *Deutsche Politik* was in perfect agreement with Chinese principles of government, and who laid out for the public his interpretation of Chinese practical philosophy in a celebrated Latin lecture of 1721, partially published even in Rome (Donald F. Lach 1953, p. 565).

[83]Sandro Landi (2008) cursorily tackles the issue of the readership of *Della Felicità Pubblica*.

Genovesi taught the Neapolitan youth how to contribute to national welfare as agents of the Neapolitan state. The service of the Neapolitan nation, then, could take different forms. It could be fulfilled in the capital city, in the king's direct service. But it could be carried out in the kingdom's provinces as well, for instance within the provincial academies that Genovesi expected to be established and, in a few cases, were actually established by his pupils. As the studies by Elvira Chiosi and Pasquale Matarazzo have showed, the Neapolitan government imagined a sort of ramified structure for his academies, with the Royal Academy in Naples at the core of a network of provincial academies.[84]

The aim of these institutions was not the promotion of individual happiness. Unlike the great thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, who lived in a parliamentary system, Genovesi wrote in an absolute monarchy, and his message was intended for the prince's future "mandarins." The problem of public happiness therefore was not how the pursuit of individual happiness could have a collectively desirable result, but how a country's rulers could bring about the positive welfare of their subjects.

VII. PUBLIC HAPPINESS: POLITICAL ECONOMY IN SUPPORT OF ABSOLUTISM

This article is intended to set the topic of public happiness in its right context; namely, that of the political and economic thought of the eighteenth century. What is left of Bruni's (and Zamagni's) original thesis? Relatively little, I believe. The concept of public happiness appeared to be not so immediately connected to Aristotle's theory of virtue as they assume, and a closer examination of the texts does not support the idea of public happiness as something that can be achieved only by reciprocal help among the citizens. Instead, Muratori and Genovesi were fully aware of the often tragic contrast between individual happiness and the truly heroic pursuit of public happiness. They stressed therefore the importance of sovereign action in preserving the subjects from a certain number of collective evils: war, famine, and injustice first and foremost.

The roots of the discourse on public happiness are to be found, rather than in Aristotle himself, in the nominally Aristotelian but deeply innovative doctrine of German natural law, in authors such as Samuel von Pufendorf and Christian Wolff. By discerning the roots of public happiness, I believe that I helped to recast *felicità pubblica* within the historiography on the eighteenth century. It was not a specificity of the "national Italian school," but a common feature of the monarchic discourse over a broad area of Europe that centered on the old Holy Roman Empire, in Italy and Germany.

This is not to deny either the local peculiarity of the Italian-speaking Enlightenment in its internal multiplicity or the strong influence of French and English economic literature (the latter more often than not mediated through French translations) on

[84]See Elvira Chiosi (1989) on the establishment of the Royal Academy in Naples, Pasquale Matarazzo (2005) on the case of the most active of provincial academies (see also Carlo Salerni [1996]), and Pasquale Matarazzo (2006) for an overview of this aspect of the reformers' project.

Genovesi and the Neapolitan School.[85] The notion of an imperial space of knowledge stretching north and south of the Alps (with ramifications in linguistically affine territories) seems, nevertheless, to be helpful in this case.[86]

As a consequence, public happiness appeared as a part of the quest for legitimization that characterized "absolute" monarchies in the age of reforms. In the Neapolitan context, it stressed the aspiration for a government that was not constrained by historically determined counter-powers, such as the feudal lords, the church, or law itself, but found the only limit to its action in the nature of things themselves, in the laws that regulate nature and society, and in the greater good of the citizens.

Both Genovesi and Muratori did not believe that private vices would turn into public virtues. They believed instead in the active intervention of the state to bring about public virtues and to educate virtuously its subjects.[87] The primary aim of writers of political economy, whether in Modena or Naples, was therefore the education of the future ministers of the sovereign, the future functionaries, men of letters, and provincial notables in the principles of the economic government. Their task would be to advise the well-intentioned ruler on the best means to bring about public happiness. This was "the ideal citizen"; this, the individual contribution to public happiness.[88]

Finally, is public happiness a positive model for our days? Certainly not in the way Bruni and Zamagni would like us to think. Its relationship with reciprocity, friendship, and relational happiness are not those the two authors postulate. Due to its centrality in the discourse of eighteenth-century monarchies, before and during the classic age of Enlightened Absolutism,[89] public happiness certainly deserves a much more thorough treatment than the sketchy remarks that I have listed here, but it also deserves more contextual awareness than the kind of superficial cherry-picking quest for ancestors that was carried out by Bruni and Zamagni. All those who are trying to adopt the categories of public happiness and civil economy for their economic theory should be aware of the real connotations of these notions.

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[85]Significantly, the most popular French authors in Naples are Jean François Melon, with his obsessive concern for security and war, and Claude-Jacques Hebert. Genovesi did not have Shaftesbury translated but John Cary, whose preferred economic policies were the imperial subjugation of Ireland and other nations that threatened to "undersell" England; see Istvan Hont (2005). On translations, see Sophus A. Reinert (2011, part I), and Sophus A. Reinert (2007).

[86]Historiography has been traditionally inclined to focus on processes of national differentiation in Germany between Prussia and Austria, and between German and Italian-speaking territories of the Habsburg Empire, and on reconnecting the Italian Enlightenment to the broader European Enlightenment centered on France (on the tension between patriotism and cosmopolitanism in Italian historiography, see the interesting review in John Robertson [2009]). However, Muratori's relationships with the German-speaking part of the empire have been carefully documented in the works already mentioned by Marri and Lieber. A polycentric economic enlightenment has been proposed, for Austria, by Klingenstein (1994).

[87]For Muratori, see Muratori (1996, p. XXI).

[88]The same insistence on the alliance between men of letters and rulers is underlined in Ferrone (2008, p. 73) in the case of one of Genovesi's most celebrated pupils, Gaetano Filangieri. Sabetti (2012), who builds on Bruni's interpretation, for instance claims that "the emerging political economy in Naples" was concerned with the idea of a virtuous citizen, and with the emebedding of the economy in social relationships, which stemmed from the consideration that "[i]ndividual happiness was derived from making others happy and not from the accumulation of things" (p. 1).

[89]Günter Birtsch (1996) and the special issue of *Aufklaerung* contain a very influential discussion of Enlightened Absolutism; an interesting (but dated) review of the historiographical debate on the topic in Germany can be found in Charles W. Ingrao (1986) (also stressing the Europe-wide influence of Wolff).

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