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Sommario/riassunto	In this path breaking book Alan Tully offers an unprecedented comparative study of colonial political life and a rethinking of the

foundations of American political culture. Tully chooses for his comparison the two colonies that arguably had the most profound impact on American political history - New York and Pennsylvania, the rich and varied colonies at the geographical and ideological center of British colonial America. Fundamental to the book is Tully's argument that out of Anglo-American influences and the cumulative character of each colonial experience, New York and Pennsylvania developed their own distinctive but complementary characteristics. In making this case Tully enters - from a new perspective - the prominent argument between the "classical republican" and "liberal" views of early American public thought. He contends that the radical Whig element of classical republicanism was far less influential than historians have believed and that the political experience of New York and Pennsylvania led to their role as innovators of liberal political concepts and discourse. In a conclusion that pursues his insights into the revolutionary and early republican years, Tully underlines a paradox in American political development: not only were the path breaking liberal politicians of New York and Pennsylvania the least inclined towards revolutionary fervor, but their political language and concepts - integral to an emerging liberal democratic order - were rooted in oligarchical political practice. "A momentous contribution to the burgeoning literature on the middle Atlantic region, and to the vexed question of whether it constitutes a coherent cultural configuration. Tully argues persuasively that it does, and his arguments will have to be reckoned with like few that have gone before, even as he develops an array of differences between the two colonies more subtle and penetrating than any of his predecessors has ever put forth." - Michael Zuckerman, University of Pennsylvania.
