

Panel 1.1 Abstracts

Machiavellianism and Emmanuel Macron

Lei Letian

Charles University (Czech Republic)

Contact: leiletian@foxmail.com

This paper is to discuss the rise of Machiavellianism as new Republicanism in contemporary politics. The interpretation of Machiavelli and Hegel in Emmanuel Macron's thesis followed the method and position of Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor. Machiavelli rediscovered the Roman Republic and Macron tried to establish a Republic of Europa. Macron's classic Humanism faces the challenges of moral Nihilism and Hebrew religious tradition, all of which are rooted in the Western world and have their own interpretations of Machiavelli.

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Obsolescence and the Limits of Collective Learning. On Discourses I, 13**Stefano Papa**

Independent researcher (Austria)

Contact: stefano.papa@univie.ac.at

In Discourses I, 11, 3 one finds the most remarkable considerations on religion and social policy: “And truly there never was any extraordinary institutor of laws among a people who did not have recourse to God, because otherwise he would not have been accepted; for they (these laws) are very well known by prudent men, but which by themselves do not contain evident reasons capable of persuading others. Wise men who want to remove this difficulty, therefore, have recourse to God. Thus did Lycurgus, thus Solon, thus many others who had the same aims as they.” Is there a more adamant negation of agential status to groups? For, if the above passage is understood in the sense of collective agency being a fiction used to explain aggregate behaviour, then a drastic limit is cast on procedures modelling collective learning. Thus, if the main idea of social choice theory is to map preferences onto aggregation rules (majority rules), the idea of a machiavellian aggregation is that a feasible solution for a social ordering can be given only by introducing forms of asymmetry as figments of transcendence. (On collective agency see List, C. and P. Pettit (2011). *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design and Status of Corporate Agents*. OUP)

Another reading of Discourses I, 11, 3 can be constructed by articulating the greater computational power of conscious reasoning (“wise men”) if compared with intuitive reasoning (“persuading others”). Thus, the “recourse to God” is a tool used in order to overrule intuitions. Notice that this interpretation does not simply vindicate an instrumental role for religion within politics. In the quote above, Machiavelli seems to claim that a social ordering simply cannot be defined as convergence of an endogenous shift in preferences within a given collectivity (“by themselves, the laws do not contain evident reasons capable of persuading others”). Rather, religion, that is a set of functions which organise the institutional sphere in the context of what is deemed imponderable and inestimable both within the given infrastructure and beyond its boundaries, provides representations of the institutions, and by so doing makes it possible to project a social ordering onto an aggregate.

Considering what Machiavelli says elsewhere (also in *Principe*) on prophetic activism, religion can be defined as the set of rules for inclusions-exclusion over the set of transitions in systems of believe. The recent debate on moralistic gods and the expansion of human sociality (s. *Nature*, vol. 530, Feb 2016, p. 327- 330), based on extensive empirical data, is far less radical than the machiavellian tenet in Discourses I. Besides, the famous passage in Discourses II, 5 on cultural contacts among archaic societies resulting in the destruction of literary traditions, has a reading that complements what said above on Discourses I, 13. The question whether an institutional frame based on transmission (tradition) be reproducible in terms of retrieve and recall points to the following alternative: obsolescence is either a continuous transformation (for instance, keeping latin as language of learning) or an operation of fragmentation and defragmentation (when natural extreme events come into play). Once the alternative is understood, it becomes clear that the ontological question allegedly at the “roots” of the a genesis of the historical world, isn’t but a superficial misreading, not a destiny or the trace of a radical oblivion.

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On the Relevance of Niccolò Machiavelli's Understanding of Time for Contemporary Politics. Or: How to proceed with Machiavelli?**Benjamin Schmid**

Bundeswehr University Munich (Germany)

Contact: Benjamin.Schmid@unibw.de

The diagnosis of contemporary politics includes the result of an increasing acceleration. Caused by technical progress or social change politics has less and less time to make decisions. Hence politics suffers from a time crisis that makes risks the norm. Due to the increase in the density of events, politics is therefore constantly lagging behind. As a side-effect of acceleration the weakening of the time-consuming process of democratic deliberation and the emergence of populist movements can be noted. As a possible response to these consequences a policy oriented towards Niccolò Machiavelli was suggested, which could provide an answer to populism, but also to the time crisis of politics.

On the basis of Niccolò Machiavelli's understanding of time, the lecture will highlight the risks and side-effects of a policy oriented towards acceleration in three steps: (I) The relationship between time and politics will be sketched and demonstrated to what extent we can speak of a time crisis in politics. (II) Machiavelli's understanding of time is presented. His circular view of history on the meta-level, and his understanding of day-to-day political business on the micro-level, which is designed for rapid decision-making. (III) An answer must then be given to the question of how to proceed with Machiavelli.

Current circumstances don't demand an increase in political tempo, they demand hesitation. The question of whether politics, and especially democracy, can and should be accelerated in order to keep pace with general acceleration, must therefore be answered in the negative. Hesitation is to be regarded as the basis for political decisions, because only the moment of hesitation makes political decisions possible. Otherwise, all action remains without alternative and in a hectic pursuit of the next opportunity. Niccolò Machiavelli has integrated elements of hesitation into his thinking, so that one can argue with Machiavelli against Machiavelli and counter the decisionist Machiavelli with a hesitant Machiavelli. His understanding of history contains such an element because it relieves decision-makers. When circumstances return, then history can be learned and decisions can be repeated. Machiavelli also recognizes the significance of hesitant action at the micro-level of politics. On closer examination, however, opposing patterns of argumentation are discernible. Political forms of order can only make limited use of Machiavelli's understanding of history, since they usually only go through the cycle of constitutions once. Insofar, political decisions remain unique and tied to their specific present. To meet political events in dispassionateness is excluded if the opportunity is to be seized. Machiavelli thus opens the door for acceleration and its phenomena. Thus Machiavelli's political understanding of time leaves room for the abandonment of truthfulness because there's a lack of time to check informations. Politics is threatened with a loss of trust. Citizens run the risk of placing their trust in politicians who only give the impression of truthfulness. Machiavelli thus provides less guidance and advice on how to meet the challenges of current politics than a valuable counter-foil on which approaches to the challenges of contemporary politics are to be regarded as misguided.