

## Panel 5.2 Abstracts

***Freedom and the Expansive Republic in Machiavelli's Political Thought*****Manjeet Ramgotra**

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In The Discourses I, 6, Machiavelli declares that conflict between the grandees and the people produces freedom. In the same chapter, he affirms that the Roman republican constitution is best because it is expansive. To Machiavelli, social conflict could be turned outwards in the pursuit of empire. He developed the notion of the mixed constitution in which the wealthy grandees (nobles) and popular social classes participated in public affairs on a hierarchical basis. The wealthy maintained political authority and the people were brought into the political process on a limited basis to express their voice. He maintains that the few, the wealthy nobles want to dominate; whereas the people want to live in freedom and security. They do not want to be oppressed by the upper classes. Machiavelli theorizes a mixed republican constitution with a strong princely power that, first, would mediate the conflict between these two social classes, and, second, would direct this conflictual dynamic outward to the pursuit of empire.

Machiavelli wrote shortly after Columbus and da Gama traveled to the new world and around the Cape of Good Hope. In general, Machiavelli is read in light of a fragmented Italy prone to French, Spanish and Papal domination. At the same time, this massive change in the understanding of the world impacted significantly on the European self-conception and its trading relations. With Papal backing, Spain and Portugal claimed dominion of overseas territories. Machiavelli composed his political works in this broad context. He dealt with the need to create a united Italian state under a strong prince that would regain its freedom from foreign domination. Moreover, he promoted an expansive republic that could compete against other powers. Most interpretations consider Machiavelli's two key political works as antithetical: The Prince treats monarchy and The Discourses, republics. In my view, these two works are not contradictory. Rather both advocate a mixed constitution that is either a civil principality or a republic. Both states incorporate the two social orders and a strong princely power. In the history of ideas, the civic republican interpretation of Machiavelli emphasizes that virtue is the core value of the republic which is destabilized by fortune. Scholars recognize that Machiavelli subverted this paradigm of virtue in The Prince. Machiavelli promotes a virile, masculine prince who dominates over uncertainty and change through his virtù, his strategic manipulation of power and force. Scholars read his understanding of principalities and republics as discontinuous. I contend that the virtue/fortune paradigm operates in both monarchies and republics. Both political orders seek to dominate over instability associated with the feminine. Domination of virtue over fortune is played out in social and colonial relations. This paper deconstructs the republican mixed constitution and virtue/fortune paradigm to reveal how freedom and power operate internally to maintain stability and externally to dominate over foreign territories and populations. In the context of a new world and beginning of European colonial expansion, this paper presents an innovative reading of Machiavelli's republicanism as advancing hierarchy and empire.

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***The Role of Violence in Russian Politics and Machiavelli's Perspective*****Tereza Smejkalova**

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Niccolò Machiavelli is famously known and interpreted in political science for his realism. His recommendations for *The Prince* are stated in various forms, particularly in terms of the role of violence in politics. However, his intentions are much more restrictive and prudent than it seems at the first sight. Violence is a necessity in political life. But it needs to be properly justified. Otherwise it does not benefit either the ruler or the ruled. He endorses violence but conditions it by prudence and lack of cruelty. Excessive cruelty leads to hatred and citizens' hatred would lead to limitations of power of the ruler/prince. "The prince must aim to be feared without being hated". On this basis, I will present a case study of the use of violence by Russian President Vladimir Putin in his considered "spheres of influence", particularly in the territory of Georgia in 2008 and analyse through Machiavelli lens, whether the use of violence can be considered to be justified. As Machiavelli writes, "yet it cannot be called virtù to kill fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious. These ways can win a prince power but not glory".

**Bibliography**Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, revised ed., trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975)John Baker, Violence for equality: lessons Machiavelli, in: *Global Crime* Vol. 10, No. 4, November 2009, 306–319, Routledge

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***Machiavelli in the Mirror of the Democratic Struggle with Foreign Intervention*****Pnina Shuker****Bar Ilan University (Israel)****Contact: [pninashu@gmail.com](mailto:pninashu@gmail.com)**

Liberal democracies are open to debate, political competition and opposition. These characteristics, which are the basis of democracy, ironically provide anti-democratic political actors fertile soil in order to undermine existing political arrangements. Although attempts by states to shape and influence the public opinion in other states are not a new phenomenon, the information revolution empowers these attempts and supplies a set of new tools, which are more effective than ever. Since the widely discussed Russian intervention in the US presidential election in 2016, there has been a growing discussion about the capacity of authoritarian regimes to utilize social networks to disrupt democratic Western counterparts. These influence operations require counteraction from democracies, which may involve certain violations of basic human rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of information. The tension between maintaining democratic values and defending effectively against foreign subversion attempts poses a significant challenge for liberal democracies.

Liberal democracies have been targets to an attack of foreign intervention by a variety of actors, the most important of which are countries with authoritarian regimes, primarily Russia. In recent years there has been evidence of various attempts to harm the democratic election process. Elections are perceived as the culmination of the democratic process; they are based on active civic participation and constitute a central component in building public trust in the state and its institutions. Due to the profound significance of the elections in a democratic state, any damage to the electoral process or external interference in the elections may have serious consequences.

The commitment of democracies to allow their citizens a free discourse presents them with a fundamental challenge in dealing efficiently with fake news and other manipulated information intended to seed mistrust and confusion. The current era sharpens this challenge for liberal democracies, because in today's political and media reality there is considerable difficulty in identifying the source of manipulated information – if it is internal or external - and removing it from the Internet, as this may involve a violation of freedom of expression. Therefore, the tools available for liberal democracies in defending themselves against foreign intervention are quite limited. The main question mark in this issue is whether a rejection of freedom of expression - amongst other human rights - is indeed justified, from the national security point of view. Given the difficulty in deciding on this issue, democratic states prefer not to use these methods at all.

In his masterpiece "The Prince", Machiavelli claims that in order that for rulers to maintain their government, they are entitled to use all means under certain circumstance. Similarly, I claim that effective defense against foreign attempts to undermine the stabilities of democracies sometimes requires a certain violation of other democratic values, as a "fending democracy". However, one must ensure that such a violation is indeed necessary, proportionate and limited, since democracies are still committed to the basic values of openness, freedom of expression and liberalism.



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