

Ετερολογίες

Περιοδική Έκδοση Κοινωνικής Θεωρίας και Έρευνας
για το Δίκαιο

Τρόπος παραπομπής:

Milioni, Anna, «Imperialism and conflict in Machiavelli's political thought», *Ετερολογίες. Περιοδική έκδοση κοινωνικής θεωρίας και έρευνας για το δίκαιο*, τεύχος 2, Ιούλιος 2021, σελ. 61-71..
Προσβάσιμο σε: <https://eterologies.com/2021/07/03/pasukanis/>

Imperialism and conflict in Machiavelli's political thought

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Introduction

One of the most striking features in Machiavelli's analysis of the republic in his *Discourses on Livy* is the defense of conflict as conducive to liberty. Breaking with the prevalent humanistic tradition of his time, Machiavelli dismisses civic concord as both unrealizable and pernicious for the republic; instead, he argues that conflict is not only ineliminable in human relations, but also has a potentially positive role to play, as it can

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¹ In that, I follow the radical democratic interpretation of Machiavelli, as expressed by John McCormick (in McCormick, John P., *Machiavellian democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Filippo Del Lucchese (in Del Lucchese, Filippo, *The political philosophy of Niccolo Machiavelli*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015 and Del Lucchese, Filippo, *Conflict, power, and multitude in Machiavelli and Spinoza: Tumult and indignation* (Continuum studies in philosophy), London: Continuum, 2009), Marie Gaille (in Gaille, Marie,

lead the republic to liberty and glory¹. However, Machiavelli is not ignorant of the fact that, when exceeding certain limits, tumults can also be destructive, escalating to civil war and bringing the end of the republic. Therefore, it becomes crucial in his analysis to find out the ways in which conflict can be contained, so that it retains its positive role and leads to liberty instead of ruin.

Many passages in *The Discourses* suggest that Machiavelli regards the adoption of an imperialistic agenda as a potential solution to this problem. According to Machiavelli, in order to ensure that conflict does not degenerate to civil war, it is necessary that the republic adopts an imperialistic external policy. Following the example of Roman imperialism, he argues that expansive war is essential for the survival for the republic: if the human desire to fight and dominate is not turned outwards, as imperialistic ambition, it would inevitably turn inwards, resulting to civil war and, ultimately, tyranny. From this perspective, imperialism becomes the other side of liberty, as internal peace depends on external expansion.

Machiavelli on freedom and civil conflict: An historical and medical approach to political thinking, Leiden: Brill, 2018) and Gabriele Pedullà (in Pedullà, Gabriele, *Machiavelli in Tumult: The Discourses on Livy and the Origins of Political Conflictualism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). I therefore differentiate myself from the republican interpretation advocated by John Pocock (in Pocock, John G. A., *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003) and Quentin Skinner (in Skinner, Quentin, "The republican idea of political liberty", In G. Bock, Q. Skinner, & M. Viroli, *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

This, however, is a bleak conclusion when one denounces imperialism. The question that inevitably arises for the contemporary reader is whether it is possible to hold onto Machiavelli's insight on the positive role of social conflict, while rejecting its connection with imperialistic expansion. This is a crucial challenge for political philosophy. Since Machiavelli's times, imperialism has been delegitimized as morally and politically unjust, and the technological advancements have rendered wars extremely dangerous for all countries involved. Thus, there are strong reasons to reject Machiavelli's imperialistic aspirations. Does this entail that the dynamics of internal conflict, and the liberty it creates, have to be rejected as well? Or is it possible to still advocate for a conflictual internal politics, which would neither necessitate external expansion, nor lead to the collapse of the republic?

In this paper, I argue that it is indeed possible to advocate for conflict, without having to combine it with imperialistic external politics. First, I briefly present Machiavelli's analysis of social conflict as conducive to liberty, arguing for the validity of his approach. Then, I examine Machiavelli's argument in favor of the expansive imperialism of the republic, as a factor that secures its survival and leads it to glory. Situating the tensions in Machiavelli's work, I demonstrate that his support of imperialism results from the historical conjuncture in which

² Pitkin, Hanna F., *Fortune is a woman: Gender and politics in the thought of Niccolò Machiavelli*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

³ Zuckert, Catherine H., *Machiavelli's politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

⁴ All references to *The Discourses* are to the translation by Mansfield & Tarcov (Machiavelli, Niccolò, *Discourses on Livy*, translation: Harvey C. Mansfield -

he was living, and does not hold an integral position in his philosophical analysis of conflict and liberty. Following the steps of Hanna Pitkin² and distinguishing the historical Machiavelli from "Machiavelli at his best", I argue that Machiavelli's own theory indicates that there are many ways to channel social conflict, and enjoy the liberty it entails, without having to recur to imperialistic external politics.

As a final remark, it should be noticed that the question of imperialism is present, in one way or another, in all of Machiavelli's works³. However, I focus my analysis solely on *The Discourses*, because there, conflict and imperialism are explicitly related to the question of founding and maintaining a state that promotes liberty.

1. Liberty and conflict

Machiavelli's argument in favor of tumults as conducive to liberty is grounded on the sociological observation that "in every republic [there] are two diverse humors, that of the people and that of the great" (D.I.4)⁴. Among them, the great are driven by a "great desire to dominate",

Nathan Tarcov, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). According to the metaphor of the humors, both the great and the people are necessary for the "health" of the political community. Conflict is not a pathology, but a condition of civil life; the aim is not to eliminate it, but to reach a "dynamic equilibrium". See Pedullà (2018) op. cit. p. 49.

while the people “only desire not to be dominated” (D.I.7)⁵. So, the great (also referred to as “the grandi”, “the ottimati”, “the nobles”) represent the governing elite that, in any given moment in a republic, seeks to dominate the social body. Conversely, the people (“the plebs”, “the ignobles”, “the multitude”) represent those members of the republic who do not belong in the ruling class⁶.

The fact that in any republic, the great desire to dominate, while the people desire not to be dominated implies a radical division of the social body. Unity can never be obtained, since it is impossible to simultaneously satisfy both the desire of the great and that of the people. Coming to a radical break with the prevailing humanist tradition of his times, Machiavelli maintains that a republic should not aim at the elimination of conflict and the achievement of social peace, which is impossible, but at the channeling of the opposition of these two humors, so that they do not become dangerous for the continued existence of the community. The example of the Roman Republic, the regime which, according to Machiavelli, best achieved this channeling of conflict, demonstrates that proper management of conflict leads to the achievement of freedom and glory. As Machiavelli boldly claims, “those

⁵ For a similar division in the Prince, see chapter IX: “For in every city these two diverse humors are found, which arises from desire neither to be commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire to command and oppress the people” (all references to the Prince are to the translation by Mansfield [Machiavelli, Niccolò, *The prince*, translation; Harvey C. Mansfield, University of Chicago Press, 1998.]).

⁶It is questionable whether Machiavelli uses these terms interchangeably, as McCormick (2011) op.cit. maintains, or whether they represent different variations of the social division. In any way, they all come down to the

who damn the tumults between the nobles and the plebs blame those things that were the first cause of keeping Rome free, and that they consider the noises and the cries that would arise in such tumults more than the good effects that they engendered” (D.I.4). Conflict guarantees the freedom of the republic, as the greats’ desire to dominate is kept under constant control by the people, who assume the role of the “guards of freedom” (D.I.5).

2. Machiavellian imperialism

This integral connection of conflict and liberty is the reason why, for Machiavelli, republics should not seek to appease the conflictual nature of social life through regulations that would aim at a supposed equilibrium. Due to the existence of the two conflicting humors, any aspirations to social harmony are unattainable and bound to fail. This,

fundamental opposition between the two conflicting humors. McCormick (2011) op. cit., Del Luchese (2015) op. cit., and Pedullà (2018) op. cit., claim that these categories correspond to the socioeconomical division between the poor and the elites. Other scholars (Gaille [2018] op.cit., Zuckert [2017] op.cit.) maintain that we should conceive these categories in terms of opposing desires, and that the emphasis on the economic division is overestimated. I see no reason to confine Machiavelli’s analysis only to the economic plane; however, given the growing economic inequalities, it is indeed important not to disregard the economic dimension of social conflicts.

however, is no cause for lamentation, as Machiavelli shows that conflict is essential for the realization of freedom.

Nevertheless, Machiavelli is not naïve; he is fully aware that conflict can always potentially escalate to civil war and destroy the republican political community. As Pedullà underlines, “for Machiavelli no one can guarantee in advance that tumults strengthen the republic rather than lead it to ruin”⁷. Indeed, in *The Discourses* there are constantly recurring cases in which the tumults either threatened the republic (e.g. D.I.7, 8), or ultimately ruined it (as in the case of the agrarian law, D.I.37), reminding the reader that the project of a tumultuous republic that realizes freedom is a fragile one. Therefore, the main question that has to be answered is how a political community can accommodate conflict in a way that leads to freedom and glory, and not to ruin⁸.

Attempting to answer this question, Machiavelli turns to the imperialistic expansion of the republic. Imperialism is a pivotal, yet mostly disregarded, aspect of Machiavelli’s political thought⁹. On par with the Renaissance ideal of his times, Machiavelli does not consider

⁷ Pedullà (2018) op.cit. p. 253.

⁸For an account of the republic’s struggle to resist destruction through social conflict, while being in various stages of corruption, see Gaille (2018) op. cit.

⁹ See Hörnqvist (in Hörnqvist, Mikael, *Machiavelli and empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), who accuses the Cambridge School’s approach of Machiavelli (e.g. Skinner [1993] op. cit.) of disregarding the imperialistic aspect of Machiavelli’s work while focusing on the Florentine’s republicanism as ideology of liberty. Hörnqvist argues that the separation of the concepts of liberty and imperialism is one of the most enduring fictions of the prevailing orthodoxy.

imperialism as incompatible with the quest of freedom. Quite the opposite: he states that “a city that lives free has two ends –one to acquire, the other to maintain itself free” (D.I.29). This means that for Machiavelli, internal freedom and external dominion comprise the two ends of the republic; they are not contradictory but complimentary. As Mikael Hörnqvist¹⁰ demonstrates, “the love of liberty permeating republics should be seen as the other, reverse side of free men’s desire for territorial and economic expansion. Citizens love their republican liberty because the republic offers greater prospects of acquisition than the principality. Conversely, the republic’s acquisitive character derives from its free form of government and free way of life”¹¹.

Indeed, in many passages in *The Discourses*, internal freedom and external dominion are seen as mutually supportive, the one presupposing the other.¹² This complementarity is related to Machiavelli’s account of the two humors. An expansive external politics enables the great to satisfy their desire to dominate, without oppressing the people, as their oppressive appetite is turned outwards, against the foreign states. Simultaneously, the adoption of an imperialistic strategy

¹⁰ Hörnqvist (2004) op. cit. p. 73.

¹¹See D.II.2: “It is an easy thing to know whence arises among peoples this affection for the free way of life, for it is seen through experience that cities have never expanded either in dominion or in riches if they have not been in freedom”.

¹² See, for example, D.I.6: “But if the Roman state had come to be quieter, this inconvenience would have followed: that It would also have been weaker because it cut off the way by which it could come to the greatness it achieved, so that if Rome wished to remove the causes of tumults, it removed too the causes of expansion”.

satisfies the people's desire not to be oppressed in a twofold way. First, they are not subjected to the full extent of the greats' dominating humor, which is vented through external dominion. Second, Machiavelli demonstrates that the adoption of a bellicose external politics is the best way for a republic to secure itself from subjugation to external forces: in a world where "all things of men are in motion and cannot stay steady, they must either rise or fall, [...] when a republic that has been ordered so as to be capable of maintaining itself does not expand, and necessity leads it to expand, this would come to take away its foundations and make it come to ruin sooner", since it would be easy prey to the dominating appetites of other states (D.I.7)¹³. Therefore, the adoption of an imperialist politics both vents the greats' dominating humor, reducing the extent to which the people are oppressed, and secures the republic from external oppression by other states. Imperialism seems to be intrinsically connected to the freedom of the republic.

Helping to vent the humors, imperialism provides a solution to the riddle of how to ensure that conflict does not ruin the republic. Through territorial expansion, the aspirations of the great and the people, the desire to oppress and not to be oppressed, cease to contradict one another. As Hörnqvist¹⁴ argues, "instead of quenching [the] natural

¹³ This is the crux of Machiavelli's argument in favor of Rome's imperialism as opposed to the Spartan regime. McCormick's (2011) op. cit. pp. 36-61, view that Machiavelli's endorsement of imperialism is but a tacit pact with his aristocratic readers, in order to convince them to support the republican project, cannot account for the central and recurring position of imperialism in Machiavelli's text.

drive to power, the task of the prudent statesman should be to direct it outward, towards the pursuit of empire, territorial growth, greatness, and glory". In this way, "the great and the people, the acquisitive and the security-seeking, can come together and collaborate for the common good of the *patria*."

3. Criticising Machiavelli's imperialism

Claiming that imperialism is the only way to vent internal conflict and to ensure that the republic does not degenerate into tyranny is, however, a bleak conclusion. Nowadays imperialism and aggressive external politics are rejected as against the core human values of freedom and equality. The rights to national self-determination and to non-interference in a state's internal affairs are among modernity's greatest conquests and entail condemnation of imperialistic politics. Moreover, war leads to atrocities unimaginable in Machiavelli's era and is generally condemned in international relations.¹⁵ Overall, Machiavelli's claim that imperialism and war are causes of freedom and glory no longer seems to hold.

¹⁴ Hörnqvist (2004) op.cit. p. 74.

¹⁵ See, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). For a consideration of the ethics of war, see Luban, David, "Just War and Human Rights", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 9, no. 2, 1980, pp. 160-181.

Does this mean, however, that Machiavelli's endorsement of conflict as conducive to freedom needs to be abandoned as well? Machiavelli brilliantly demonstrated that the people's resistance to the oppression of dominating elites should not be condemned; instead, it should be understood as a necessary condition for the realization of freedom. But without an imperialistic external politics to vent the social humors, is it still possible to adopt Machiavelli's positive attitude towards social conflict? If external imperialism were indeed the other side of a republic's internal freedom, the rejection of imperialism would mean that nothing would constrain the opposing humors. Internal freedom would have to be eliminated as well: either the greats would turn their dominating desire to the inside of the community, transforming the republic to a tyranny of the elites, or the unchannelled conflict between the people and the great would escalate to civil war and to the ruin of the political community. Is freedom the price we have to pay for the rejection of imperialism?

In this part of my paper, I argue that we can still appeal to Machiavelli's theory on freedom through conflict while rejecting the imperialist ambitions that accompany it. This, however, requires to adopt a critical perspective on Machiavelli's work, and to distinguish the normative core of his analysis from the biases and the presuppositions of his times. Following the path indicated by Hanna Pitkin, I will attempt to separate the historical Machiavelli from the ideal thinker called "Machiavelli at his best", that is, a figure that emerges through Machiavelli's writings and "formulates an understanding of human autonomy that is activist

¹⁶ Pitkin (1999) op. cit. p. 301.

¹⁷ Hornqvist (2004) op. cit.

without megalomania, insisting on our capacity and responsibility for choice and action, while nevertheless recognizing the real limits imposed by our historical situation". This normative reading of Machiavelli enables us to find in his work "an understanding of autonomy [...] that is neither cynical nor hortatory, but realistic: tough-minded about political necessities and human weaknesses without being reductionist about our goals and potentialities"¹⁶. These are the elements in Machiavelli that are worth keeping in the examination of our political realities.

Machiavelli the imperialist is not "Machiavelli at his best". As Hörnqvist¹⁷ demonstrates, the endorsement of imperialistic aspirations reflects the prevailing attitude of Renaissance Florence: viewing their city as the descendant of the Roman Empire, Machiavelli's fellow Florentines dreamed of a republic that would conquer Tuscany, Italy, or even the whole world. Moreover, Machiavelli's positive attitude towards territorial expansion reveals a clear-sighted view of the way in which international affairs were conducted at the time. According to Wolin¹⁸, Machiavelli "saw quite clearly that the absence of arbitrating arrangements, such as law and institutional procedure, left the international field more exposed than the domestic to conflicts of interest and the drives of ambition". This situation rendered imperialism the only way to protect the republic from foreign enemies.

Machiavelli's defense of imperialism can thus be understood in historical terms. This does not mean, however, that it is justified, nor that it is

¹⁸ Wolin, Sheldon S., *Politics and vision: Continuity and innovation in Western political thought*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 199.

inextricable from his account of freedom and conflict, as Hörnqvist suggests. Contrariwise, there are elements in *The Discourses* indicating that imperialism is not a necessary regulator in the correlation of liberty and conflict; in fact, we can locate within Machiavelli's work various other modes to deal with social conflict. Even more, in certain passages Machiavelli seems to recognize that imperialism is ultimately detrimental to freedom.

First of all, imperialism in *The Discourses* is not merely a means to appease social conflict by providing a way to vent the opposing humors. Its role is more complicated, since it interacts with internal conflict and, in some ways, intensifies it. Machiavelli points out that an imperialistic external politics entails arming the people; but that inescapably accentuates the force of internal tumults and makes them hard to manage: "if you wish to make a people numerous and armed so as to be able to make a great empire, you make it of such a quality that you cannot then manage it in your mode" (D.I.6). Moreover, popular armies give people power in opposing the greats, as they can refuse to participate in war unless the great concede to their demands (D.II.32). On the other side, by appealing to external enemies, the great can distract the people from internal affairs and promote regulations in their own benefit¹⁹. Consequently, external conflict realized through imperialist wars does not only serve to maintain internal peace; it is also exploited as a means for the two social humors to gain power for their

¹⁹ D.III.1 & Evrigenis, Ioannis D., *Fear of enemies and collective action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 48-70.

²⁰ Evrigenis (2010) op. cit. p. 59.

²¹ Pedullà (2018) op. cit. p. 68.

respective sides in the internal conflict of the republic. As Evrigenis²⁰ notes, in Machiavelli, "a complete separation of the internal from the external is impossible". In a similar vein, Pedullà²¹ refers to a "the progressive inability to think about conflict between citizens as something fundamentally different from the fight against an external power".

Indeed, the ineradicability of conflict in social life, which is due to the existence of the two conflicting humors, implies, upon closer inspection, that we should surpass the binary external conflict/internal peace. It is true that Machiavelli advocates for imperialist expansion as a means for achieving internal peace; however, as it has been shown, he demonstrates that external war may channel internal conflict but never completely neutralizes it. On the contrary, the social humors can take advantage of the external conflict to gain benefit in their internal opposition. So, external war does not ensure that the internal conflict will not escalate to civil war, nor that one of the humors will not prevail over the other. Political communities should not rely on imperialist expansion to ensure that internal conflict does not destroy the republic.

Thankfully, Machiavelli's analysis accounts for various ways in which social conflict can be vented. While some of them may not comply with the normative values of our communities and should thus be rejected²², the Florentine's commitment to the republic leads him to envisage a

²² Such would be the purely instrumental use of religion, in order to ensure the people's compliance with the rules of the political community. See Evrigenis (2010) op.cit.

vivid political community which continuously comes up with new ways to defend its freedom against oppression, avoiding ruin. Crucial is the institutionalization of conflict, through the provision of legal and extra-legal means such as public accusations of the enemies of the republic, riots, the power to veto new laws, and the creation of institutions for the representation of the people, in the model of the Roman tribunes²³. Through this institutionalization, the inescapable social struggle does not lead to the destruction of the republic. Simultaneously, Machiavelli's analysis indicates the importance of institutions being open to constant reform, in order to adapt to the changing circumstances and not to consolidate existing power relations²⁴. Consequently, the republic need not recur to imperialist expansionism in order to manage social conflict. Even if we accept that war is the "archetype of the political" and that "the model of civic life is always military life"²⁵, *The Discourses* account for the possibility of internal conflict between adversaries within the city, with no escalation to civil war.

Moreover, Machiavelli's own endorsement of imperialism seems at times to contradict with his commitment to freedom. An indicative case is his analysis of the consequences of Roman imperialism. Claiming that "Rome became a great city through ruining the surrounding Cities" (D.II.3), Machiavelli contends that the demise of freedom after the fall of the Roman Empire was because "the Roman Empire, with its arms

²³ McCormick (2011) op. cit.

²⁴ Del Lucchese (2009) op. cit.

²⁵ Wood, Neal, "Machiavelli's concept of virtù reconsidered.", *Political Studies*, 15, 1967, pp. 159-172.

and its greatness, eliminated all republics and all civil ways of life. And although that empire was dissolved, the cities still have not been able to put themselves back together or reorder themselves for civil life except in very few places of that empire" (D.II.2). Moreover, imperialism is described as the cause of the fall of Rome, as loss of the fear of enemies and rising economic inequalities led to the corruption of the Roman Republic²⁶.

While Machiavelli insists on defending the Roman imperialistic model, his argumentation seems weak, and cannot account for his own analysis regarding the detrimental consequences of imperialism for freedom. If Machiavelli was unable to transcend the imperialistic biases of his times, however, it does not mean that his theory needs to be reduced to them. As it has been shown, adopting an imperialistic external politics does not secure the republic for potential ruin due to internal conflict. Moreover, there are other ways that can be employed in order to channel conflict and ensure that it leads to liberty and does not escalate to civil war. Finally, despite the imperialistic aspirations of Machiavelli, his own text indicates that imperial politics not only does not secure internal freedom but is extremely harmful to it, both in the interior and in the exterior of the republic.

²⁶ Zuckert (2007) op. cit., maintains that Machiavelli is critical to the model of Roman imperialism, actually advocating the Etruscan model. However, this interpretation contradicts Machiavelli's own words, as he characterizes the Etruscan model "the second best", to be adopted only because when it is impossible to follow the Roman model.

All these elements suggest that it is possible to disentangle Machiavelli's commitment to freedom from any defense of imperialism. If Machiavelli were to follow the ultimate consequences of his own argument, and given his commitment to freedom, he would have to renounce imperialism. Is this reading still faithful to Machiavelli's political thought? It is, if we concede, along with Wendy Brown²⁷ (1988: 118), that at the heart of Machiavelli's analysis lies the connection between "freedom, power, creativity, and struggle". As Brown remarks, in light of this connection, "the lessons [Machiavelli] drew from the tumults of Rome need to be placed in the service of human life, genuine freedom, and equality rather than devotion to the state, imperialism, class, or gender domination". In this vein, disentangling imperialism from the quest of realizing freedom in the republic is very much on par with the core of Machiavelli's thought.

Conclusion

Throughout this analysis, it has been shown that Machiavelli's defence of civil conflict as conducive to freedom can be disentangled from the adoption of an imperialist external politics. Machiavelli has provided us with a valuable insight on the role of civil conflict as the conflict between the two humors of the republic: the elites who want to dominate against the people who want not to be dominated. Freedom is the result of this conflict, as the dominant status quo is constantly put into question by

²⁷ Brown, Wendy, *Manhood and Politics: A Feminist Reading in Political Theory*, Totowa, N.J: Rowman & Littlefield, 1988, p. 118.

the struggle of the people. It is true that Machiavelli connects this account with an imperialistic external politics, which is considered to be the other side of the internal freedom of the republic. However, as I demonstrated, it is possible to separate these two elements. Machiavelli's endorsement of imperialism can be attributed to the political situation of Renaissance Italy, but should be rejected in light of our commitment to the fundamental values of freedom and equality.

The challenge of this paper was to demonstrate that it is still possible to adhere to Machiavelli's analysis of civil conflict as conducive to liberty while rejecting the imperialistic side of the Florentine's thought. Looking for "Machiavelli at his best", I indicated that the Florentine's analysis goes more in depth than simply correlating internal peace with external expansion. Machiavelli demonstrates that conflict is constantly present both in the interior and the exterior of the republic, and external conflict can also be employed to enhance internal confrontations. Moreover, Machiavelli underscores that there are many different ways deal with social conflict; imperialism is only one of them. Furthermore, there are indications in Machiavelli's own text that imperialism leads to the demise of freedom. The ultimate consequence of this position, however, is that imperialism needs to be abandoned; the commitment to freedom requires that social conflict is vented in other ways.

This reading remains faithful to Machiavelli's insight that republican freedom is realized through social conflict. Even though imperialism is rejected, liberty and conflict still endure. After all, the lesson of *The*

Discourses is that civil life depends of having the political imagination to deal with conflict in ways that, instead of destructing the community, would lead to freedom. As Pedullà²⁸ remarks, “politics requires a constant reckoning with the unforeseen. Faced with new threats, the old recipes may no longer suffice, but it is from them that one must begin: training oneself to preempt the emergencies that lie in wait through comparison with the Ancients in a never-ending kind of role-playing”. Imperialism may be an old recipe, and anyone committed to the values of freedom and equality should fight for it to become extinct, forever relegated to history books. However, conflict with the status quo remains a condition in order to realize the people’s quest for freedom. In that regard, Machiavelli’s analysis still has a lot to say.

²⁸ Pedullà (2018) op. cit. p. 257.

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