



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE SOCIALI E POLITICHE



Responsible Politics AND Dirty Hands Machiavellian Insights

PROFILE OF THE INVITED SPEAKERS

ANTONELLA BESUSSI

Professor of Political Philosophy, Università degli Studi di Milano

ANGELO PANEBIANCO

Professor of International Relations, Università di Bologna,
Professor of Political Theory, Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele Milano

JOSEPH FEMIA

Emeritus Professor of Political Theory, University of Liverpool

THIÉRY MENISSIER

Professor of Political Philosophy, Université de Grenoble-Alpes, France

MARTINE LEIBOVICI

Assistant Professor of Political Philosophy, Université Paris Diderot-Paris VII

ALESSANDRO ARIENZO

Assistant Professor of History of Political Thought,
Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"

STEPHEN DE WJIZE

Senior Lecturer in Political Theory, University of Manchester

GIOVANNI GIORGINI

Full Professor of Political Philosophy, Università di Bologna,
Visiting Professor in the Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago

BEATRICE MAGNI

Assistant Professor of Political Philosophy, Università degli Studi di Milano

LUCA MORI

Assistant Professor of Political Philosophy, Università di Pisa

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November 28th, 2013

Seminar Room

Department of International, Legal, Historical
and Political Studies

Faculty of Political, Economic and Social Sciences
Via Conservatorio 7
Milano

Responsible Politics

and

Dirty Hands

OUTLINE AND PURPOSES OF THE WORKSHOP

Machiavelli's Prince is five hundred years old, and it still provides insights for lively discussion. Machiavelli is an original thinker who breaks with the past and reframes the categories of his time. Unconcerned with metaphysical or theological subjects, Machiavelli's approach seems to be eminently and purely political and pragmatic. With a special focus on conflict, his political theorizing is aimed at facing up uncertainty and at securing stable and non-utopian regimes. Machiavelli puts forward a repertoire of tools and methods, meant to enable political actors to cope with the intricacies of politics and to achieve their goals.

Not by chance, The Prince was qualified by Bertrand Russell as a "handbook for gangsters". Machiavelli emphasizes the need to "learn not to be good": when necessary, political actors must be ready to do what is morally wrong. Contemporary reflection around the theme of dirty hands relies on the very same insight: in politics, being morally innocent and doing the right thing do not necessarily coincide. From a Machiavellian perspective, political responsibility rests on the availability to dirt one's hands, to endorse morally reprehensible means in order to achieve valuable ends. The notion of dirty hands more clearly conveys the idea that, even when doing evil is the right thing to do, responsible politicians should preserve the awareness about the morally blameworthy character of their conduct.

The 500th anniversary of The Prince offers an occasion both to celebrate Machiavelli and to critically reassess his approach to politics, and particularly his attempt to avoid moralism without becoming unprincipled. Promoted by the Political Theory Project, the main aim of the workshop is to offer, through direct engagement with Machiavelli's thought and through the notion of dirty hands, a deeper understanding about political responsibility, about the ethics of political leadership and about the implications connected to political decisions in times of trouble.

November 28th, Milan

Seminar Room

Department of International, Legal, Historical and Political Studies

Morning session h. 9.30 – 12.30

*To do wrong in order to do right:
the Machiavellian dilemma*

Chair

Antonella Besussi

Università degli Studi di Milano

Joseph Femia

Emeritus Professor, University of Liverpool

*Learning 'how not to be good':
Machiavelli and the problem of 'Dirty Hands'*

Thierry Menissier

Université de Grenoble-Alpes, France

Corruption, virtue and Republic in Machiavelli

Discussants

Martine Leibovici

Université Paris Diderot-Paris VII

Alessandro Arienzo

Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"

November 28th, Milan

Seminar Room

Department of International, Legal, Historical and Political Studies

Afternoon session h. 14.30 – 18.00

*Learning how not to be good:
reasons, consequences*

Chair

Angelo Panebianco

Università di Bologna

Stephen De Wjize

University of Manchester

*Re-examining 'democratic dirty hands' – accountability
and the transference of moral pollution*

Giovanni Giorgini

Università di Bologna, University of Chicago

*Machiavelli on Good and Evil.
The Problem of Dirty Hands revisited*

16.30 COFFEE BREAK

Discussants

Beatrice Magni

Università degli Studi di Milano

Luca Mori

Università di Pisa

Machiavellian Insights