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## POLITICAL ACTION IN MACHIAVELLIAN REPUBLICANISM

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### ABSTRACT:

Our objective in this brief article is guided by the demonstration of the existence of a theory of political action in Machiavelli's republican thought, with such a theory having its own character that directs it to highlight the action of individuals in the social context. In addition to this objective, we hope to support the thesis that such a theory of political action has a republican scope, not just "republicanist", in keeping with the Machiavellian preference for institutions that impress on individuals a civic sense based above all on the materiality of political action in the body social. From this assertion, we indicate that our itinerary will be guided by the demonstration of the search for the valorization of political action in Machiavelli's theory, the materiality of such action, to the detriment of its pure intention, the central focus of Florentine's work. This disposition of the centrality of political action in Machiavelli republicanism will underscore its appreciation for outlining the political functions of the search for recognition, glory and especially the benefit of the political body as a whole.

**KEYWORDS:** Machiavelli; Republicanism; Political action; Glory.

## A AÇÃO POLÍTICA NO REPUBLICANISMO MAQUIAVELIANO

### RESUMO:

Nosso objetivo neste breve artigo está pautado pela demonstração da existência de uma teoria da ação política no pensamento republicano de Maquiavel, tendo tal teoria um caráter próprio que a direciona para o destaque da ação dos indivíduos no contexto social. Além deste objetivo, esperamos sustentar a tese de que tal teoria da ação política tem um escopo republicano, não apenas "republicanista", coadunando-se à preferência maquiaveliana por instituições que imprimam nos indivíduos um senso cívico baseado sobretudo na materialidade da ação política no corpo social. A partir desta assertiva, indicamos que nosso itinerário será pautado pela demonstração da busca da valorização da ação política na teoria maquiaveliana, sendo a materialidade de tal ação, em detrimento à sua pura intenção, o foco central da obra do Florentino. Esta disposição da centralidade da ação política no republicanismo maquiaveliano ressaltará seu apreço em delinear as funções políticas da busca do reconhecimento, da glória e principalmente do benefício do corpo político como um todo.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Maquiavel; Republicanismo; Ação política; Glória.

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## Introduction

The political construction of Nicolau Machiavelli is not, unlike the various authors of modernity, a systematically established theory. However, fleeing the typical refinement of Renaissance rhetoric, Florentine dealt with the theme of politics in a broad way, which allows for the existence of such a wide range of interpretations that we have today about his work. As Gilbert (1996, p. 135) rightly points out: “the position from which he considered the political world was different from those of his contemporaries who wrote about politics. She [position] was neither that of the humanists nor that of the aristocrats in Florence”. In this way, it should be a prudent endeavour to demonstrate any specific theory that exists in the wide Machiavellian production, since it disagrees with both the thinkers of his time and those of modernity.

Our research objective is to demonstrate the existence of a theory of political action in Machiavelli's republican thought, with such a theory having its own character that directs it to highlight the action of individuals in the social context. In addition to this objective, we hope to support the thesis that such a theory of political action has a republican scope, not just “republicanist”, in keeping with the Machiavellian preference for institutions that give individuals a civic sense based mainly on the materiality of political action for the benefit of the political body. From this assertion, we indicate that our itinerary will be guided by the demonstration of the search for the valorization of political action in Machiavelli's theory, the materiality of such action, to the detriment of its pure intention, the central focus of Florentine's work.

In view of these first indications of our argument, we will start by pointing out what the guidelines of a republican orientation are in Machiavelli, seeking to indicate the centrality of the action of individuals in the political context, and then to present the intricacies that form their theory of political action. Such movements must allow us to characterize the Machiavellian theory, presenting its character of originality. It seems to be made clear, incipiently, that our understanding of Machiavelli's work starts from the perception that its republicanism contributes to the foundation of a theory of political action, not the other way around. Let us move on to the presentation of our arguments about the work of Florentine.

## Classic republicanism in Machiavelli

To claim that Machiavelli's thinking is republican is a task that must be carried out at the expense of intense debate. At first, it is necessary to establish a parameter that indicates which republicanism can be associated with, whether it be a classical or modern understanding of this type of political regime. The simple fact that Machiavelli uses classic authors associated with republicanism does not constitute a guideline for an allegation that, by inheritance, his political thought is also so.

We can intuit with Coby (1999, p. 3) that Machiavelli “appreciates the written word as an instrument of propaganda and that he sees the theoretician-historian as an alternative founder of modes and orders.” As an observer and researcher of politics and history, being himself a theoretician-historian when studying classical authors, Machiavelli does not seem to close himself in an intransigent theoretical circle, and starting from there, establishing an inflexible line of thought. On the contrary, his preference for republicanism is by no means unconditional adherence.

This aspect of machiavellian thought seems to present an insoluble paradox, the republican form of government is the most reliable, but not necessarily the best. Both aspects are different, at least in machiavellian thought, being reliable does not mean being the best form at

all times, while being the best form is conditioned by some transitory factors. Such transitory factors are constituted as: individuals and their passions and ambitions; the necessity; and the effectiveness of laws and institutions, political cohesion. This transience is the engine of all changes in forms of government in human history, because, as he indicates in the *Discorsil*: "There is nothing that is permanent among mortals, and nothing is stable, it is natural that things get better or worse." (D. I, 6).

Thus, it is important to understand the way in which Machiavelli articulates these transitory factors, in order to define which form of government is more reliable, be it republic or principality, and which is the best in a given situation. As Hale (1963, p. 156) comments:

If Machiavelli seems to go from admiration of the republic to the admiration of the prince, it is because the former, in dealing with the outside world, behaved like the 'princes', or should behave, acting quickly and as one man, and because he believed himself to be necessary for the republic, sometimes, the stimulus of a reformer prince.

The changes in these forms of government, principality and republic, their possible alternations, depend on the transience of social matter, with the republican form being obviously preferable. However, given the need there are no preferences, but effectiveness, we must begin to clarify this issue from the understanding of what is 'more reliable', then the understanding of what determines 'to be better'. "The aspect of Machiavelli's political thought in which his intellectual debt to the Roman tradition of *civilis scientia* is particularly evident is his theory of the Republic." (VIROLI, 2004, p. 05).

Certainly, this movement is preambular and should allow us to understand why Florentine opts for republicanism as the preferable form of government in view of greater stability, but it is not strictly restricted to it as the best form of government regardless of the situation. In his theoretical construction, when confronting the transient factors of social matter, Machiavelli establishes a dynamic understanding of social relations between individuals and between them and political institutions.

Therefore, it cannot be argued that a form of government is an end in itself, on the contrary, it becomes a means to 'manage' transitory interactions between individuals and social institutions. One of the first questions to be analyzed in this Machiavellian 'mathematics', in which the factors are not always in the same order and obtaining the same result, is what type of republic to be founded. The Machiavellian analysis of the fundamentals of constitution of a republic takes place in view of a clear paradox, namely, expansion or stability, as follows:

This is seen in every human thing, who examines it well, that one inconvenience cannot be remedied without causing another. In this way, if you want a warrior and numerous people, expanding the possession of the republic, you need to give it a character that will make it difficult to govern, on the contrary wanting to restrict it within narrow limits, or disarm it for the better control him, he will not be able to preserve his conquests, or he will become so cowardly that he will be easy prey for the aggressor.

In these terms, the founder of such a political body must, from the beginning, establish what the fate of his people will be, expand or remain stable, however small. However, the Florentine, even in this same chapter of the *Discorsi*, is categorical in stating that necessity will always afflict the republic, which is indelibly led to seek expansion. In proposing this paradox, Machiavelli brings as opposite examples the republics of Rome and Sparta in the past, as well as the republic of Venice in its present. Rome is the example of an expansionist republic, active,

difficult to govern, but belligerent and eager for conquests. The opposites, Sparta and Venice, are examples of closed, stable and hermetically constituted republics.

The two main factors that contribute to the definition of the future of a type of republic and its opposite are: social belonging and the body of laws. In this first one, the restriction on the right to belong to the political body, as well as the restriction of social recognition, are crucial to keep the republic stable. A case illustrated by the Republic of Sparta, shaped by Licurgo's skilled mind, as Machiavelli indicates, "convinced that nothing would be more harmful to its laws than receiving immigrants, he ordered all institutions in order to prevent foreigners from contacting with the Spartans." (D. II, 3).

This expedient was adopted in a similar way in Venice at a certain time, being formed, according to Machiavelli, by fugitive individuals from other regions, as the number of its inhabitants increased, older citizens proposed laws that would restrict the access of foreigners to the highest positions. Machiavelli also describes this characteristic of founding Venice, as follows:

[...] and deliberating together in the city council, when the inhabitants seemed to be sufficient to establish a political life, they closed the way, for all the new inhabitants who arrived, to be able to participate in their governments. At that time, there were enough inhabitants outside the government, to give reputation to those who governed, called them *Gentiluomini*, and the others were called *Popolani*. Being able thus to be born and to remain without disturbances, because when it was born, all that inhabited Venice were put in the government, so that none of them could complain (D. I, 6).

This device created the first social division in the Venetian republic, the *Gentiluomini*, lords or nobles, and the *Popolani*, people or commoners. The Venetian republic was extremely dependent on this political-social arrangement, since its disposition as a political body was aimed at maintaining a stability that guaranteed both the privileges of the masters and the freedom of the popular. Thus, the possible social belonging to individuals who migrated to this city was only that of a citizen subject to the laws of the aristocratic government. It is possible to argue that Machiavelli is merely illustrating the beginnings of the Republic of Venice, without taking into account the changes that have taken place over the centuries. However, his intention seems to be exactly to demonstrate that the configuration given to a republic in its early years will shape its history and development.

Although it is characterized by being a republic focused on stability and not on expansion, this being the factor that allows it to remain stable for a longer time, and immune to the alternations of government, but, at the same time, restricted in its might, Venice is not a limited city. Its growth is linked to trade and maritime activity. Privileged by its geographical position and its stable constitution, it was able to resist for a long time the need to expand territorially, maintaining, however, the character of an aristocratic republic. However, if Machiavelli's analysis is right, sooner or later the need will make it expand or accept the influence of its new inhabitants.

Taking as a reference the opposition put by Machiavelli, we can infer that the situation was different in the Roman republic, in fact it can be said that it was the opposite. Every individual who wanted to be part of the republic at the beginning, and to fight for it, was welcome as a citizen and shared the same rights and duties. The inconvenience of this provision of republican organization is the difficulty in achieving political and social cohesion.

Contrary to a whole tradition of republican thought, especially that which sought in the republic a form of perennial government, Machiavelli indicates that the possibility of conflict is the main way to achieve a stable government in view of freedom. Let's see what he says:

I say that those who criticize the turmoil between the nobles and the commoners, it seems to me that they condemn those things that were the first cause of freedom in Rome; and who consider the rumours and screams that arose out of such turmoil more than the good effects of them arose. They do not consider that in each republic there are two different *umori* [forces], that of the people and that of the powerful (D. I, 4).

In these terms, transient factors cannot be eliminated, or rendered harmless in relation to the existing tensions within the political body itself. Passions and ambitions are so inherent in the human being that they should not be neglected, nor should one have the illusion that one form of government can be perennially better than the other in the sense of suppressing this characteristic of individuals. "The object of ambition is multiple and, in principle, that is, as an impulse inherent in human nature, it cannot be considered either good or bad." (AMES, 2002, p. 100).

However, such characteristics of individuals are latent dispositions that emerge as a result of the different situations, or occasions, that unfold in the civil life of a political organization. With 'dictates of necessity' and the opportunity of the occasion as a 'trigger', passions and ambitions can become detrimental to political stability and do not contribute to the improvement of freedom. These inconveniences can be present in any of the forms of government, mainly republic and principality, but, it can also be avoided in both, following the same principle, as Machiavelli warns:

It is that the Romans did, in these cases, what all prudent princes must do, which they must not only guard against present inconveniences, but against future ones, and with all efficiency to prevent them, since, by preventing them, it is easy to give them medicine; and hoping, on the contrary, for them to come closer, the remedy does not arrive in time, because the disease has already become incurable. And what happens here is what doctors say about tuberculosis, which at the beginning of its harmful action is easy to be treated and difficult to be diagnosed, but, as time goes by, since it has not been diagnosed and treated, it becomes it is easy to know and difficult to cure ( P. III).

The republic of Rome proved to be as prudent as could be expected from an absolute ruler, a prince, this is possible, according to Machiavelli, due to the institutions that emerged from the conflicts that broke out there. In view of this, a republic can be as reliable as the government of a prince, but an understanding of social matters is necessary. At this point, the body of laws that governs the republican organization and its institutions becomes essential. Because, "if it is a prince and a people subject to the laws, the people will demonstrate virtues superior to those of the prince." (D. I, 58).

From this perspective, we can argue that the 'best' form of government is one that responds effectively, in a determined historical and political situation, to the management needs of the transitional elements of social matters and external threats. While the most 'reliable' is the one that guarantees the possibility of freedom for the longest time in view of the inevitable corruption, in this case the republican form, anchored in institutions solidly established by laws and with the support of individuals.

Still considering the paradox put by Machiavelli, being the republican form the most reliable in times of freedom and civic commitment of individuals, it is necessary to highlight that the republican type expressed by Rome, active and expansionist, is the favourite of our author. According to Machiavelli himself: "...I believe it is necessary to follow the order of the Roman republic and not that of the other republics, because finding an intermediate way between one and the other, I believe that it is not possible..."(D. I, 6).

The Florentine is well aware that there is no perfect, perennial form of government, one should seek one that fits the conditions imposed by the transitory social factors, and can be more reliable or better in relation to such conditions. As stated, for him, the republican form seems to be the one that offers more conditions of adequacy for such factors.

It is necessary to understand the role of political action by individuals in this scenario posed by Machiavelli for the establishment of a strong and cohesive republic, as well as the willingness of institutions to act. We will continue in this line of thought printed by Florentine, keeping in mind the valorization of the incisive actions of individuals and their valorization on the basis of a civic and active spirit in the social context of the republic.

### **Theory of political action in Machiavelli: the centrality of action**

Machiavelli thought should not be divided in two, as we tried to demonstrate in the previous topic, there does not seem to be a Republican Machiavelli (*Discorsi*) and a monarchist (*Principatibus*), it is necessary to understand his comprehension of the flexible and changing character of forms of government and their usefulness for the influx of the political body in the transit of history. We lack space to argue all the intricacies of this statement, however, we defend that the principle of the centrality of political action is valid both within the republican government and in the princely regime.

What differentiates them is the characteristic of the occasions and the objectives for the actions undertaken in view of the political context. For Machiavelli, despite their apparent adherence to a Polybian influence, the two forms of government mostly seen in human history are republics or principalities. As he himself postulates: "All states, all domains that have had and have empire over men, are states and are either republic or principalities." (P. I).

On this point of government alternations, clearly supported by the Polybian work, Bignotto (1991, p. 175) says that: "Adhering to a classic view of the issue, rejecting the Christian conception of linear time, the Florentine secretary avoids shock with the conservative mentalities of his time, but the meaning of his gesture does not fully reveal to us." Our opinion, on the contrary, is that Machiavelli goes to the heart of the matter and directly confronts the understanding established in his time. As stated in the previous topic, he does not accept the search for a perennial, perfect, lasting form of government, as proposed by both Christendom, a perennial Christian republic, and by the political thinkers of his time who advocated a stable form of government.

This Machiavellian position does not represent a theoretical reductionism on the theory of alternating government, on the contrary, it reflects its tendency to extract from history the most objective way of establishing its parameters. In this binary analysis, republic and principality, he ends up more easily depurate the actions, individual or collective, as well as the occasions when the destruction or the flourishing of the government is more predictable. His theory of political action also follows this calculation, which actions on which occasions of political need can be taken as a reference.

The question is to establish, within each form of government what can differentiate actions and occasions, it seems to us that the only valid differentiation, when it comes to the study of a theory of political action, is between actions aimed at to establish, renew or maintain the stability of the State, this in the case of individuals with leadership positions. In relation to ordinary individuals, all actions must follow the examples that contribute to the common good, both in the republic and in the principality.

The Machiavellian position on the possibility of taking the action parameters of the past in a broad sense, not just approximately, is well-founded, which placed him in a direct line of confrontation with the thinkers of his time. He becomes quite direct in stating that:

Hence it is born that many who read history are content to glimpse the various past events, without thinking, however, of imitating them, considering imitation not only difficult, but impossible. As if the Sky, the Sun, the elements and the men were different in way, order and power, from those they were in the past. Therefore, wanting to get men out of this error, I thought it necessary to write about all those books by Tito Livio that were not damaged by the malignity of time [...] (D. I. Proemio).

Assuming the possibility of comparing and imitating the actions of prominent individuals from the past, Machiavelli also assumes the perspective that historical analysis is not only to glimpse the past, but rather to identify and understand the occasions that fostered the actions of individuals. In this exercise, it is possible to understand the occasions of the present, confront them with those of the past, analysing the actions of individuals and seeking to apply them within their adaptations. As indicated in the first topic, the form of republican government seems to offer greater conditions of adequacy precisely because it allows a greater degree of variation in the actions of the individuals who compose and direct it.

In the Discorsi, Machiavelli points out three important factors for understanding Rome's success, namely: what the Romans did to organize the republic; what they did to expand their empire; the examples of ordinary individuals who stood out for their actions. As he indicates: "And to demonstrate to everyone how the actions of ordinary men made the greatness of Rome, causing many good effects in that city, I turned to their narration and speech..." (D. III, 1). This emphasis given to the actions of prominent individuals, ordinary men, can point us to the republican spirit of Florentine, the thread that runs through all Discorsi is the theme of the action of the Roman people as a group or in their outstanding heroes.

From the actions taken by the founders and legislators, to those who acted to strengthen or enhance the republican principles of Rome, the understanding is that they are part of the people, either as an individual in an outstanding condition, or as the single voice of the people assembled. Concerning the Umori, Gentiluomini and Popolani, the premise is also valid, since in the Machiavellian conception of society the antagonism between them is vital for the political stability of the republic and its freedom.

This Machiavellian movement for valuing the actions of individuals establishes the highlight of political action along the lines that have become characteristic of Roman tradition, thus, he evokes the place of the politician in classical antiquity, its materiality and effectiveness. Contrary to all the rhetorical and abstract construction that will be made of antiquity in the humanist texts of the Renaissance, the focus given by Machiavelli highlights the construction of political relations undertaken by the action of individuals.

In the scheme established by the theory of action in Machiavelli, the construction of the politician takes place in the context of changing social scenarios caused by the consequences of the actions undertaken by individuals in view of the dictates of the necessity and requirements of the occasions. The forms of government, mainly the republic, are adapted to the social matter that results from this inescapable relationship, the perpetual political movement imposed by the action of individuals in the face of the inevitable change of times. As well observed by Colonna d'Istria / Frapet (1980, p. 136), when commenting on this question of changing times in Machiavelli: "Man inhabits a world governed by time. It is time that brings new, predictable or



unpredictable needs. Man as a society, and like all things in the world, completes his time, from his birth to his death.”

Thus, the engine of the dynamics inherent in this political construction is therefore the valorization of each political action, individual or collective, that takes place in the constitutive movements of the social fabric. "This change in the way of thinking about the relationship between action and circumstances is, first, articulated by Machiavelli conceiving history as an effect of free action." (VATTER, 2000, p. 07). Based on this understanding, it can be argued that the Machiavellian movement for the valorization of political action is at odds with what has become the focus of the humanist resumption of the classic ideal, which valued more the form than the result of the action, in other terms, more the intention of the action than its effective consequences, what we call materiality here.

The question for Machiavelli, at the heart of his theory of political action, is rather the final content of the set of actions of the subjects that constitute the ‘political’, whether they are individuals in leadership positions or simple citizens. In this way, an incisive political action is valid as a parameter of political example when it is clearly expressed in its consequences, this being its materiality. The mere construction of social or moral guidelines, erected only in virtuous intentions, without having been approved by the screening of the experience, cannot be sustained. The materiality of the actions lies precisely in the possibility of valuing their consequences for the political community, that is, their results as an effective means of facing the needs of the political body.

In turn, this effectiveness, or materiality, of the actions undertaken on the political scene, by ordinary individuals, resonates as an example and as ballast for the recourse of laws and customs vital to good social order. Machiavelli reserves an enormous weight to the social recognition of these actions, both on the part of good and bad individuals. We are interested in the perception, expressed by Machiavelli, of a collective commitment of individuals, a concern to recognize their belonging to the social body to the point of being ashamed to disagree with valiant actions, as follows:

This return of the republics towards their principle is also born from the simple virtue of a man, without depending on any law that encourages them by some obligation: nevertheless, they are of such reputations and of so much example that good men wish to imitate them. it, and the wicked are ashamed to have a life contrary to theirs. Those who in Rome, in particular, did these good effects were: Horácio Cocles, Scevola, Fabrício, the two Décios, Régulo Atílio and some others, who, with their rare and virtuous examples, did in Rome almost the same effect that the laws would do and institutions (D. III, 1).

It can be argued that the valorization of good examples of political actions, aimed at the common good of the republic, gives the mortar that best sediments the political body. Again evoking the classic influence in machiavellian republicanism, we can also argue that the formation of Roman individuals, their education, converged towards the valorization and encouragement of such actions that proved to be incisive and profitable to the common good of the republic.

This perspective of the formation of the Romans and their political organization is rescued by the theory of machiavellian political action, contrasting it with the education imposed by modern religion, it rescues the valorization of the action of individuals in the political scenario and the incentive to its imitation by part of those who also want to be recognized. The search for recognition on the part of an individual, or his personal glory, is not harmful, rather, it is one of

the factors that encourage the execution of actions aimed at the good of the republic, it is accessible to all individuals.

As Machiavelli points out: "Therefore, men born in a republic must follow this path and undertaking some extraordinary action to begin to reveal themselves." (D. III, 34). It can be understood that Machiavelli postulates two fundamentals, the first, every individual has freedom of action within the republic, and can act to stand out, second, that such extraordinary actions must stand out in view of the profit for the republic itself. What the individual gains is recognition and glory, everyone, in a republic, is capable of valiant actions in political coexistence for the common good.

The machiavellian understanding of the alternation of forms of government according to the alternation of social matter and the need imposed by time is very clear, we have dealt with this earlier, but we must consider it still at this moment of analysis of the materiality of the action. Invariably in the course of history, wandering between republic and principality, political organizations will always depend on the existence of good examples of political action that serve as parameters. As Machiavelli says: "because there is only one path to stability for the principality, which is to descend towards the republic; and so there is only one way for the republic to stabilize itself, which is to climb towards a principality". (Discursus, § 11).

Thus, after briefly indicating the condition of individuals in a republic, as above, who have freedom of action in pursuit of personal glory and duty to strengthen and grow the republic, we need to deal briefly with the condition of the rulers. According to Machiavelli, it is impossible to escape the alternation of forms of government. Individuals in leadership positions, in the case of a prince, king or ruler, are also free to seek personal glory, however, they also remain conditioned in view of the benefit of such a search for the political body. As the Florentine argues: "Nothing makes a prince appreciate as much as great deeds do and gives him rare examples of himself." (P. XXI).

The prince, in addition to being a skilled connoisseur of the outstanding actions of the leaders of the past, studying and employing them when possible, has to set great examples of himself. The valorization and imitation of political actions of the past take into account the timeless factors of social matter, in which generally the same consequences are seen; as well as the passions that move men. However, the exceptional and virtuous man, must know how to adapt to the time in which he is inserted, this being the main mark of his extraordinary character. According to Machiavelli:

I have often considered as the reason for the bad and good fortune of men the way they fit in their time: because it is seen that men proceed in their actions, some with impetus, some with respect and with caution. And because, in one and the other of these modes, convenient terms are passed, one cannot observe the true path, in one and the other one fails. But, what comes less to make mistakes and to have the most prosperous fortune, is the one who adapts, as I said, his manners to his time, never proceeding according to his nature's strength (D. III, 9).

It is extremely important to highlight here the machiavellian position, in his theory of political action, in the case of the action of the rulers, the analysis of the lessons of excellent individuals, plus the recognition of the occasion and its unfolding, plus the adequacy of his action in due time, it is more valid than a virtue that has become a habit in the individual, as the Greeks wanted. For the Greeks, based on a theory of action based on virtues, it was important to control the erratic human nature, prone to addictions, leading the individual to a virtuous action that was repeated in all situations. However, according to Machiavelli, the individual of virtù,

establishes his calculation of action, overcoming the erratic force of his nature when evaluating all the variables that influence his action.

From this perspective, one can understand the centrality that Machiavelli gives the idea of effectiveness, materiality, of political action and its viability as a premise for the calculation of the ruler. As stated, this materiality expressed in the effectiveness of the consequences of actions is preponderant, because, as seen, the political body can regenerate or remain stable from the influence of an individual who inspires others. The figure of the prince, or of the political leader, carries in itself a great weight for the stability and regeneration of the State.

Taking this perspective, it is possible to argue that the question of the appearance that the prince must support, so discussed as a resource for a capacity for dissimulation and maintenance of power, may have as its main function, in the internal organization of the political body, to maintain the inspiration of individuals to act for the common good and renewal of the State. Even if we continue to discuss the aspect of the search for personal glory on the part of the political leader, this argument is still valid. Let us not forget that the search for recognition, glory and honour are encouraged by Machiavelli, as well as being central to the formation and organization of Roman society.

Machiavelli makes use of a rhetorical argument to defend the search for glory, even if individual, always in submission to the common good. Machiavelli makes, in his theory of political action, a type of hierarchy based on the actions that deserve more glory and honour, placing the actions that found and renew a republic or religion as the greatest reasons for glory. It is clear that such glories are of a very restricted character, however, when developing the idea of the effectiveness of political action, Machiavelli urges ordinary individuals, as well as princes, to aim for their share of recognition, however diverse it may be.

The rhetorical movement, used by Machiavelli, to condition personal glory, inseparably, to the promotion of freedom, renewal and the good of the political body, makes political action meaningful only in its concrete consequences. This disposition can be seen when analysing the exhortation to the political leader to seek glory wishing the government of a corrupt 'State', thus being able to win for himself one of the greatest possible glories in restoring the order and freedom of such 'State'. As follows:

And truly, looking for a prince in the glory of the world, he must wish to own a corrupted city, not to devastate it like Caesar, but to reorder it like Romulus. And truly the heavens cannot give men greater occasions of glory, nor can men greater desire (D. I, 10).

In both cases we are dealing with, whether an ordinary individual in a republic, a head of government or a prince, the idea of the effectiveness of political action, its materiality, as well as its appreciation for individuals, traces a link between the political freedom of homeland and the search for individual recognition. For Machiavelli, the republic is the most lasting form of government, and it also has the highest occurrence of individuals who, through the consequences of their objective actions, and the ability to adapt to the needs imposed by the times, guarantee the freedom and strength of the body political. (D. III, 9). Nevertheless, in his theory of political action, the materiality of action must be a central point in the valuation of political leaders, in the case of the principality, whose actions must result in an effectiveness that translates into consequences.

## Conclusion

We seek to succinctly demonstrate that the theoretical Machiavelli construction is guided by the search for the material effectiveness of political actions, private or public, of the individuals who form the political body, a body that is understood in a cohesive and unanimous way. In a form of republican government, such effectiveness of political actions, undertaken by social individuals, is only valued in view of the central objective of political life. Thus, the valuation of actions in the political sphere depends, necessarily, on their consequences, based on this disposition Machiavelli establishes the constitution of a theory of political action. Unlike what a theory of political action based on moral virtues is based on, in Machiavelli the focus is on the materiality of the action, its effectiveness and consequences.

In Machiavelli, this theory of political action, established in his writings, brings in its scope the centrality of the collective character of the actions of individuals, especially those in a prominent position and those who demonstrate exceptional capabilities. It seems to us minimally demonstrated the weight that Machiavelli gives to the unfolding of individual actions in view of the common good and freedom of the republic. As well as, the highlight of the actions that can be judged as examples of conduct, not in the moral sense based on the execution of formal virtues, but, in the political sense of effective actions that present concrete results in the social context.

Therefore, we believe that the role of the materiality of the political action of individuals is satisfactorily demonstrated, constituting in Machiavelli a theory of political action, which goes far beyond the search for valorization of formally established moral concepts. At the heart of his speech is the centrality of the effectiveness of actions in the political context, with the primary objective of the common good and freedom of the republic, regardless of an ethical valuation unnailed from the concrete developments of political action. His theory of political action is, in this way, a theory that fits the ideal of a classic republicanism, aimed at social cohesion and the strengthening of the political body.

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