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NEW APPROACHMENT AT POLITICS: THE CASE OF MACHIAVELLI

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ABSTRACT

Basically this paper wishes to show that the “Case of Machiavelli” is a case which modern thought caused. Furthermore, if the relation between Enlightenment and Machiavellian thought were clearer, it must be admitted that both these two facts affect each other within circularity. Leo Strauss claims, Classical political Philosophy that is being pioneered by classics like Aristotle and Plato, bound with the political life. As a consequence, it can be said that there is a magnificent cleavage between classical and modern political philosophy. What is being meant by saying “political life”? The concept “Political life” indicates a phenomenon which includes something that provides to the humanbeing pleasure or displeasure. Ultimately, Machiavelli’s main ideas and attitude at politics are gathering into the brief structure that contains to reject the traditional behaviours. But, the Machiavellian approachment to the Politics determines the measures of the science of politics instead of tradition of politics.

Keywords: Politics, Machiavelli, Enlightenment, State, Modernity

POLİTİKADA YENİ YAKLAŞIMLAR: MACHIAVELLİ ÖRNEĞİ ÖZ

Çalışmanın temel amacı, “Machiavelli örneği”nin modern düşüncenin yol açmış olduğu bir sonuç olduğunu göstermektir. Hatta eğer Aydınlanma düşüncesi ve Machivellici düşünce arasındaki ilişki çok bariz bir şekilde görülebilir olsaydı, bu ikisinin bir döngüsellik içinde çift-yönlü olarak birbirlerini etkiledikleri gerçeği itiraf edilmek zorunda olurdu. Leo Strauss bu konuda, Aristoteles ve Platon gibi klasiklerin başını çektiği klasik politik felsefe geleneğinin ayrırcı özelliğinin, onun, “politik yaşam”a bağlı olması olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Buna bağlı olarak bu fenomenin, klasik ve politik felsefe gelenekleri arasında bir ayrışma noktası olduğu söylenebilir. Peki bu ayrışma noktası olan “politik yaşam” sözcük grubu ne ifade etmektedir? “Politik yaşam” tamlaması insan ırkına haz veya acı nesnelere sağlamsa konusunda yardımcı olan bir fenomeni imlemektedir. Machiavellinin “politik yaşam” olarak belirlediği yapı, bunlara ek olarak örtük olarak, “geleneksel” olarak yapılagelen ananevari ritüellerin politik yaşamda tasfiyesini konu almaktadır. Ancak Machiavellici girişimin asıl en büyük özelliği politik felsefe ve politika biliminin problemi

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olan ve bahsetmiş olduğu bilgi türünün, düşüncenin ve kültürün temel bileşenlerinden olduğunu söylemesidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Politika, Machiavelli, Aydınlanma, Devlet, Modernite*

Ervah-ı ezelde levh-i kalemde,
Bu benim bahtımı kara yazdılar,
Gönül perişandır devri alemde,
Bir günümü yüz bin zara yazdılar

Dünyayı sevenler veli değildir,
Canı terkedenler deli değildir,
İnsanoğlu gamdan hâli değildir,
Her birini bir efkara yazdılar.

Âşık Sümâmî

1. INTRODUCTION

What could be the reflections on the relationship between political philosophy and political practice? Can be totalitarianism would be a great regime for political system at state? How can be fulfilled the concept of “autonomy” at politics? How much would it be true, if one were located the concept socialism against the concept of barbarianism? These questions are the very all-encompassed questions at political philosophy.

This study aims to prove, hypothetically but not obviously, every practical system has been inspired by theoretical system of about it. So that, the structures we mentioned while we were discovering the political life, and the systems, are not independent from the theories of those. By trying to do it, we are offering to analyze, especially the exemplification of Machiavelli. So, basically this paper wishes to show that the “Case of Machiavelli” was a case which modern thought caused. As Strauss claimed that the Machiavellian Political thought is the first wave of Modernity (1989:84), we think that the figure of “Machiavelli” roles e key part at history of modern philosophy.

Leo Strauss, in his article which is named “*Three Waves of Modernity*”, shows us the societies that emerged in history by the floating of time, were not the expected actors of modernity. According to him, modernity is actually a political fact. At his reasoning, he proves and demonstrates to us that the crisis(problems) of modernity is the crisis(problems) of modern political philosophy (Strauss,

1989:82). So that, while he speaks about “modernity”, he means “political philosophy”. Because, he claims that political philosophy is not independent from societies.

Continuously, he divided the political philosophy into two parts as modern and classical. Although he thinks that Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is the pioneering figure of modern political philosophy, namely modern state. However he thinks, in fact, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) is the trigger of modern political thought. This is not contradiction in accordance with Strauss, because the distinction between “trigger” and “pioneering figure” became more and more sophisticated at history by floating of time.

But also Strauss claims, Classical political Philosophy that is being pioneered by classics like Aristotle and Plato, bound with the political life (1988:78). As a consequence, it can be said that there is a magnificent cleavage between classical political philosophy and modern political philosophy.

1.1 The very essential distinction made by Machiavelli: political thought and political act

The dichotomy of realism/idealism is most crucial idea at Machiavelli. He thinks the state is supposed to be not inspired by something celestial or something includes an indefinable power which can make whatever they want on terrestrial area.

Moreover, this dichotomy contains the division of notions, affected many political thinkers and philosopher likewise Vilfredo Pareto, Antonio Gramsci, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Christopher Pierson, Cornelius Castoriadis etc.

For instance, following this dichotomy made by Machiavelli, Gramsci discovers an opposition between diplomacy and politics, and *piccola politica*(small, narrow politics) and *grande politica*(essential, huge politics), where the former terms represent the conserving, restorative activity that occurs within a given historical structure, and the latter signify transformative, a creative activity which leads us to establish a new order (1977: 1563-1564). Also this distinction categorically implies the other one: *politica/diplomazia*, the first term refers to a transformative action which endeavours to discover new structures, and the second is to restore and preserve the given order.

1.2. Political life

What is being meant by saying “political life”? The concept “Political life” indicates a phenomenon which includes something that provides to the humanbeing pleasure or displeasure.

Moreover, this phenomenon restricts the people by being stuck in something unlimited and cannot determinable. Because of this reason, Machiavelli

abstracts the political philosophy from political life. In accordance with Machiavelli, being undeterminable is very classical manner which reminds us while you believe in a book which is named Holy Book.

As a consequence, faith in something you cannot determine is not accepted in accordance with Machiavelli's political thought.

1.3. The Conclusions on Machiavelli's Thought: Discovery of the mass

The concepts "The discovery of the society" or "The Discovery of the mass" has many significance at Machiavellian theory. Because in this way, so to say, "each person in society can be legislator or legislated. Briefly, this situation has been formulated by Machiavelli as "the discovery of the mass".

If we approach to this concept within the analogy, that Martin Luther (1483-1546) had translated the Gospel in order to everyone who know merely their native language and don't know the languages of the holy book, many things would be clear to understand: Machiavelli had given to the mass the authority that provides them to make "the discovery", namely the reflection that reflects on them and he had done that by the means of Age of Enlightenment. For instance, his main ideas and attitude at politics are gathering into the brief structure that contains to reject the traditional behaviours. Machiavelli opposed it because he defended to think. So that, it can be said that this attitude that is rejecting the tradition and defending to think is the something about Enlightenment.

...Therefore, if then a ruler was forced to please the soldiers rather than the people, because the soldiers were stronger than the people, now all princes, except the Turk and the Soldan, are forced to please the people rather than the soldiers, because the people are the stronger (Machiavelli, trans. 1989: 75).

But the reason why he posed "the Soldan and Turks" at exception is that he analysed the system of those were different from others:

You should note that the Soldan's government is different in form from all other principdoms; it is like the Christian papacy, which cannot be called either a hereditary principdom or a new principdom, because the descendants of the old prince are not his heirs and do not rule by inheritance; the new prince is chosen by lawful electors (Machiavelli, trans. 1989: 76).

So that, we can describe Machiavellian state as constitutionally legitimative but as being holy it is not legitimative.

As a conclusion, it could be said that two factors are crucial at Machiavellian though, in accordance with these last two passages: Thinking and being not hereditary. We see that the significance of thinking at Machiavellian thought at second passage. He rejects the heirs and hereditary principdoms whatsoever. These are not acceptable because of being established by law. But, what is the significance of "law" besides "heir"? Law provides to people to obey the rules that are established by thinking of legislators.

As we see at next paragraphs of this study, a work which leads us to 'constitutionality' and aims to establish a right order is an extremely important component of the idea of the modern state.

2. EMERGENCY OF THE "NEW SCIENCE" AND ITS CATEGORIES

Machiavelli offers something that can be pointed out as a "science" in terms of being "Rigorous (German: *Streng*)". Also this thing could be uttered as empirical as any phenomenal things which are proved by natural sciences. In other words, his claim of the "new route" about political science is that it is an empirical science which anyone cannot abuse it by the means of political rhetorics that include persuasions rather than demonstrations.

Moreover, a discipline which is claimed as "new science" by Machiavelli, this discipline has many features different from other sciences and disciplines.

Because as Gramsci says Machiavelli is not a mere scientist; he is partisan, a man of powerful passions, a committed political actor engaged in the world's actual politics *politico in atto*, who wants to create new relations of force and thus cannot but address the question of the "*dover essere*(ought to be)" but certainly not one understood in any moralistic sense. ... Political man is a creator ... but he does not create out of nothing. He acts within an effective reality *realta effettuale*], but what is this effective reality? Is it something static and immobile, or rather isn't it a relation of forces in continual movement where the balance of forces is constantly changing.¹ (Gramsci, 1977: 1577-1578)

Moreover as Wolin claimed that 'the most important significance of Machiavelli's political thought is that the "political metaphysic" is totally differed from systematic philosophy (Wolin, 2004:189). Furthermore, his attitude in political approachment is to reject the previous one especially religious tradition. As we say like Wolin, traditional application in accordance with "Italian Political Thought", practical relevance of political thought was closely tied to religion (Wolin, 2004:177)

2.1. The reason why Machiavelli is the father of modern politics: Autonomy

It is well known that in *The Discourses* Machiavelli's viewpoint was that of a convinced republican. It is also generally agreed that the same conception of political action and the same kinds of advice were consistently adhered to in both works. In evaluating the difference between the two, most students have taken the position that the monarchical absolutism recommended in *The Prince* had been intended solely as a desperate remedy for a badly corrupted political condition.

¹ Looking at these concepts as these are dichotomy is absolutely the reflection of modern political thought.

The Machiavellian enterprise is seen purely in terms of the problems of political philosophy and political science; that is, the subject of this knowledge is located within the moment of thought and culture. Thus the autonomy of politics is the autonomy of a political knowledge from the other moments of Spirit, an autonomy achieved by the individuation and differentiation of this knowledge within philosophy and culture (Fontana, 1993: 57).

Moreover, the concept autonomy does not belongs to merely Machivelli. The concept comprise the main structure of state. Continuously, the significance of the concept truly understood by statesmen, age by age. The statesmen and governors managed states. But the meaning of autonomy can be divided into two parts: The significance which is given by modern state and the significance which is given by traditional states. In traditional states, categorically, the sovereignty over the public is being provided by means of generally lacked conceptions of constitutionality, nationality, sovereignty, authority of the state which is monopolistic, and so on. But modern state, sovereignty has not been established over public by lacking lawful means, as opposed traditional states. Because the sovereignty is being provided by autonomy and autonomy is being established by law, at modern state.

2.2. Machiavelli's understanding of "nature"

Machiavellian approachment to the politics based on his views at some aspects likewise nature and he differs from his predecessors in terms of his views likewise "nature". In accordance with that understanding, all natural beings, at least all living beings, are directed towards an end, a perfection for which they long; there is a specific perfection which comes to them innately and belongs to each specific nature. But moreover, it could be mentioned for man has a specific perfection which entails him to being a rational and social animal.

Yet, it can be clearly seen, Machiavelli's own understanding that differs him among other philosophers especially political ones. Difference in understanding of either nature or history or something else, would consecutively cause his politics vision. His understanding on basic principles likewise Galileo's principle, made him different political philosopher in the history. He is not physicist at all but his understanding of history and politics comes from very basic problem at physics.

As Cassirer said, Machiavelli's political science and Galilei's natural science are looking like each other in terms of basing upon a common principle and these have a mutual aspect which they both seeks in their own a fundamental several principles that lead everything. These principles are called "uniformity" and "homogeneity", intentionally accepts the nature is always the same; all natural events obey the same invariable laws (Cassirer, 1946:156).²

² This formulation belongs to us but conceptualization belongs to Ernst Cassirer. Also making such resemblance between Galilei and Machiavelli is very rare in academics.

2.3. Machiavelli's understanding of "history"

At Machiavelli's *Magnum Opus*, namely *The Prince*, he draws a schema concerns about history: history is a consequence of past time that comprises from epochs which are looking like each other. In other words: history was conceived not as a smoothly flowing continuum, but as a process which irrupted in destructive frenzy, obliterating the achievements and memory of the past and condemning man to a perpetual labor of recovery.³

This causes the "flowing of history": new habits done by people, new goods used by people, new value-judgments which are changing in every epoch. However, it makes the speaking of universal values which are not subject to time, impossible. According to him, this speaking fundamentally concerns the statesmen.

Therefore, history is, according to him, is not only a cumulation of events which have been came true in past event consequences. History is an art making the facts, "fact".

2.4. Moral Disinterestedness of "new science"

The closest analogue to Machiavelli's separation of political expedience from morality is probably to be found in some parts of Aristotle's *Politics*, where Aristotle considers the preservation of states without reference to their goodness or badness (Sabine, 1961:398). It is not at all certain, however, that Machiavelli took these passages as his model. It is not likely that he was conscious of following anyone, though there may possibly have been a connection between his secularism and the naturalistic Aristotelianism that produced the *Defensor pacis* two centuries before. Apart from a common hatred of the papacy as the cause of Italian disunion, which Machiavelli shared with another political thinker which is named Marsilio, the two men had categorically similar ideas about the political utility which religion had to had as its secular consequence.

But we could clarify the conceptualization of secularism with another political philosopher's word:

Machiavelli's secularism, however, goes much beyond Marsilio's and is free from all the sophistications imposed by the twofold truth. Marsilio defended the autonomy of reason by making Christian morals otherworldly; Machiavelli condemns them because they are otherworldly. The Christian virtues he believed to be servile in their effects on character and he contrasted Christianity unfavorably in this respect with the more virile religions of antiquity (Sabine, 1961:339-340).

³ Machiavelli, clarifies his opinions about history at many of his works: *The Prince*, *The Discourse* and *The history of Florence* are enough to see his views about history.

The essential difference between Machiavelli's "new science" and ones rejected by him is at "moral". In other words, there is a magnificent cleavage between new science's opinion about virtue and classics'. Machiavelli's own words are so crucial that they deserve to be quoted at length:

For a prince, then, it is not necessary actually to have all the above mentioned qualities, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. Further, I shall be so bold as to say this: that if he has them and always practices them, they are harmful; and if he appears to have them, they are useful; for example, to appear merciful, trust; worthy, humane, blameless, religious-and to be so-yet to be in such measure prepared in mind that if you need to be not so, you can and do change to the contrary. And it is essential to realize this: that a prince, and above all a prince who is new, cannot practice all those things for which men are considered good, being often forced, in order to keep his position, to act contrary to truth, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. Therefore he must have a mind ready to turn in any direction as Fortune's winds and the variability of affairs require, yet, as I said above, he holds to what is right when he can but knows how to do wrong when he must (Machiavelli, trans. 1989: 66).

Machiavelli broke with classical theory of the politics that intentionally carries a moral view. To clarify "classical theory", this theory was approaching to the moral problems of statesman as these are necessary for everyone who is supposed to be moral. But Machiavelli thinks about the contrary of it. Because he also thinks "the virtue of state" besides the "the virtue of men". Hence, he tries to explain by saying utterances like above quoted paragraphs.

Public and private morals are not dissociated. Politics and ethics are not divorced. Because public and private morals are not dissociated. And the last proposition are reasoning on that criterions between morals and justices: The criterion of justice was the security and well-being of the community. But the criterion of morals and private virtue, not public one.⁴

According to Machiavelli, however, the problem became more acute, because the issue no longer included the statesman in his quest for moral excellence; instead, a political actor who tried to break moral laws to protect his society.

Thus, it can be said that likewise Carl Schmitt, "the affirmation of dangerousness as such as no political meaning but only a "normative," moral meaning; expressed appropriately, that affirmation is the affirmation of power as the power that forms states, of *virtù* in Machiavelli's sense" (Schmitt, 2007:112).

3. EMERGENCY OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

As long as one pose a question for the quality of new modern state, there are many answers given by many of political philosophers. But at Schmitt's

⁴ The clarification of this problem by a political philosopher, see Doyle, 1955, p. 131

answer, he firstly tried to draw a model of this state, and, secondly, to focus particular attention on the centrifugal forces within the state that were responsible for tearing it apart.

The decisive problem of our current historical context concerns the relationship between State and politics. A doctrine formed in the 16th and 17th centuries, inaugurated by Niccolò Machiavelli, Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes attributed an important monopoly to the state: The European classic state became the only subject of politics. State and politics were inextricably linked to each other to the other, in the same way as, in Aristotle; "polis"⁵ and politics are inseparable (Schmitt, 1972: 23-24).

In accordance with this passage, the relation between concepts of politics and state become clearer: The relation and difference between concepts of state and concept of politics can be understood in a way that these could be separated from each other.

Its historical role as the most advanced, thorough form of creating a political order is undeniable. In this sense, the modern state with its centralized, independent authority, as described by Hobbes in the 7th century, represents the central political achievement of European modernity. (Cichoki, 2014:97)

When Cichoki is saying "European modernity", he addresses the political field of this nations. It can be said that Cichoki follows the putting in terms of politics by Carl Schmitt and by Leo Strauss. So that, as he pointed out the importance of Hobbes at making the significance of concept of modern European state, also it can be said that Hobbesian politics is not independent from Machiavellian one because of several reasons: in terms of being after of Machiavelli historically and also because of the interpretation made by Leo Strauss's article saying the first attempt of establishing the modern state, belong to Machiavelli.

The essential difference point of modern state from classical ones, in accordance with Machiavelli, being dependent with constitute. According to some interpreters, Machiavelli has a manner of absolutist monarchian at some passages and also he has a manner of republican at another passages. But as a conclusion, he thinks the phenomenon of state must be dependent something can be uttered as constitution, namely human artifact. He, radically rejects the hereditary princedoms, namely heirs of states. So that, he mentions from "soldan" as analogous item of "papacy".

The result of Machiavelli's argument was to repeat the concept of political unity in accordance with the new picture of political society as a diagram of forces driving interests. These forces can be said as "democracy".

⁵ The Greek word for "City" that comes from "polemikos. Polemos(war)"

These forces depends upon those can be manageable by statesmen. Machiavelli says:

Ancient writers say that men usually worry in bad conditions and get bored in good ones, and that either of these afflictions produces the same results. Whenever men cease fighting through necessity, they go to fighting through ambition, which is so powerful in human breasts that, whatever high rank men climb to, never does ambition abandon them. The cause is that Nature has made men able to crave everything but unable to attain everything. Hence, since men's craving is always greater than their power to attain, they are discontented with their acquirements and get slight satisfaction from them. Men's fortunes therefore vary because, since some strive to get more and others fear to lose what they have gained, they indulge in enmity and war. These cause the ruin of one province and the prosperity of another. (Machiavelli, trans. 1989:272)

After these words, Machiavelli's upshot of decision at politics can be understood more clearly: He thinks that the people has a nature, natively. This nature must be managed by statesmen. Otherwise every states, either province or state, ruins caused by the passions of human. So that, states must be managed by constitution.

Every constitutions in terms of being product of law can be mentioned as human-artifact. But, as uttered at section of Moral Disinterestedness, Machiavelli is putting in terms the notion of reason dividedly, public and private reason. This division into two different section is based upon Kant's enlightenment (Karatekelli, 2018:136). As mentioned in the title named "moral disinterestedness", making the division between public and private is a keypart conceptualisation of Machiavelli's virtue. But this is also Kant's conceptualisation in the article called "What is Enlightenment?" This circumstance can be sufficient for mentioning Machiavelli as partially father of modern thought.

3.1. The Theory of Violence

As many commentators, it is expressed that Machiavelli has pointed out some instruments which are expected when running the state. External forms of violence are three aspects: 1) War 2) Imperialism 3) Colonialism. But these are some concepts concerning the political science dogmatically.

4. EARLY ENTAILMENTS AND CONSECUTIVE FACTS

It must be admitted, and can be, that Marxist theory of classments and classification of Marx are looking like with Machiavelli's theory of interest. While Marx is condemning the capitalism in the direction of "surplus value", he says, hypothetically, people can be divided in accordance with their interests of

professions. Moreover, we could say, like Croce, that Marx is Machiavelli of labour movement.⁶

Also it can be said that, this new route of science, namely “political knowledge”, had affected people. But this proposition does not have to be said a posteriori knowledge, it could be said a priori. Because this proposition could not be justified by the means of any external data. This proposition, establishes itself over and over again. Because the consecution of Machiavellian thought is not anything which is just the difference that implies mere difference over some aspects between traditions. But this thought is also, meta-philosophical and meta-political because of the relation between Enlightenment Thought and Machiavellian Thought.

Because of the relation above-mentioned, it would be not true entirely if the resemblance of a thinker and Machiavelli tried to be proven. So that, it must be admitted that Machiavellian thought had affected those thinkers who had spoken of modern state, in the way that a fact which draws the limits of thinking of those thinkers.

5. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it is supposed to claim that Machiavellian historical theory, which differs fundamentally the idealism and realism, assumes the distinction grande politico/piccolo politico (huge politics/small politics) which had been posed by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) as a crucial distinction (Gramsci, 1977:1563-1564). But this distinction is the entailment of a distinction which accepts idealistic and realistic worldview. But also this worldview is a derivation form of the dichotomy idealism/realism. This dichotomy also derives. in accordance with Machiavelli, a political knowledge.

Political knowledge, therefore, is reduced to a technique and a means, which, by its very nature, does not contain within itself any ends or purposes: as instrument and technique it is ethically and morally neutral. Politics is a cold, purely scientific, logical activity detached from the passions, needs, and interests of conflicting and antagonistic people (Fontana, 1993:58).

Machiavellian Political thought, had established a new form of knowledge like above mentioned. By establishing it, he truly justified and determined the roots of it within all-encompassed manner. For this reason, the Machiavellian political system runs likewise gearwheel: every former wheel determines the next one. By this way, every step in this system could be determined in the first place.

⁶“I am surprised that no one has thought of calling him [Marx] 'the most notable successor of the Italian Niccolò Machiavelli'; a Machiavelli of the labour movement" (Croce, 1973:104)

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