

MACHIAVELLI'S ADVICE TO THE REIGNING "PRINCE" OF ITALY ON IMMIGRATION  
Interview with Daniele Scalea, author of "Immigration – The truth of the populists"

DOI 10.35402/kek.2024.2.17

"In actions of all men, especially princes, where there is no recourse to justice, the end is all that counts. A prince should only be concerned with conquering or maintaining a state, for the means will always be judged to be honourable and praiseworthy by each and every person, because the masses always follow appearances and the outcomes of affairs, and the world is nothing other than the masses." (Machiavelli 1532: Chapter 18)

**Sejla Almedi: You are one of the founders (and also the president) of the Machiavelli Centre for Political and Strategic Studies (think thank). Why did you give this name to the institute?**

Daniele Scalea: Niccolò Machiavelli, the first great modern political scientist, believed it was the duty of a scholar like himself to advise the prince, the leader. Similarly, our Centre aims to ensure that academic and specialised knowledge supports the actions of policy-makers. Let us not forget that Machiavelli was a staunch patriot; all his studies were geared toward the liberation of Italy. Patriotism remains a guiding value for our Centre.

**SA: What are the topics that your centre is focusing and advising on?**

DS: We have the ambition to cover all topics of political interest. However, in this phase of growing that we hope will elevate us to that level, we are primarily focused on defence, security, foreign policy, immigration, and democracy. Nevertheless, we do not disregard so-called ethical and cultural topics.

**SA: What kind of impact do you think the centre can make on decision-making?**

DS: Think tanks traditionally serve to assemble expertise and provide solutions to decision-makers. Their role is increasingly significant in our era, especially as political parties in many countries are deconstructing, reducing themselves to electoral committees whose competencies are confined to election campaigns. State administration cannot replace the function of strategic planning and shaping a worldview. Its role remains one of administrating the existing, and often, bureaucratic structures are

far from neutral. This is where think tanks like ours come into play: defining a worldview and determining the best way to make it a reality.

**SA: How, by what tools, do you fulfil this role? For example, are you publishing policy briefs to help decision-makers solving a timely crisis or case?**

DS: Yes, we publish policy papers that we distribute to decision-makers. Given their purpose, these documents are brief and concise, as decision-makers typically lack the time for extensive reading. The language used is direct and pragmatic: every line aims to practically address the proposed problem.

But we also organise about a dozen of conferences each year to promote public debate on issues of political and strategic importance. Our events are mainly held in Rome, within the Parliament, to facilitate the participation of policy-makers. In seven years of activity, we have hosted 7 ministers, 11 vice-ministers or under-secretaries, 50 MPs and MEPs, as well as a numerous leading figures from the military, diplomatic and industrial worlds.

The most important events are the thematic Machiavelli conferences. These are one-day events of debates and discussions on specific current issues, like the *immigration*, with the participation of distinguished guests.

**SA: In your book, "Immigration – The truth of the populists", you warned that by the middle of our century, the majority of the Italian society will not be composed of native citizens, Italians, but of migrants. And yet, although the feedbacks to your book were positive, moreover you got acknowledgements to it from Italian politicians, you did not think you could ring the alarm bells, warn and motivate the people, the politicians to actually stop immigration to your country. Does that still apply or are there any changes in the Italian politics?**

DS: The vast majority of the public, including decision-makers and intellectuals, still fails to grasp the epochal dimension of what is unfolding.

The current migratory flows have triggered a demographic and cultural shift in Europe, capable of closing an era that began 4,000 to 5,000 years ago. And, this transformation will not occur without radically altering Europe's social, political, and philosophical categories, many of which have persisted through modernity, the Middle Ages, and classical times.

Widespread hostility toward mass immigration is often superficial—a reaction that combines some rationality with mostly instinctive elements. As our familiar and predictable surroundings gradually become exotic, foreign, threatening, dangerous, and unpredictable, this reaction emerges. Yet, this initial impulse must be contextualised within a historical-philosophical understanding and justification. Unfortunately, this crucial step remains insufficient, hindering the formulation of effective, coherent countermeasures.

**SA: In your work, you collected evidence for the downsides of accepting millions of people from different cultures, whose aim is mainly not integration into the European societies, but rather to establish their owns in parallel. If it is not beneficial neither for the Europeans, nor for the incomers, how do you think that current receptive attitude towards the illegal and/or large-scale migration could be changed?**

DS: Already today, we can assert that the attitude of the majority of European citizens has changed. Those who view immigration critically and anxiously constitute the majority. If we exclude those who are first or second-generation immigrants, the critics represent an overwhelming majority. This is evident in the rightward shift among European voters. In many countries, the traditional moderate, conservative, and centre-right parties have been surpassed by more radical right-wing parties. This shift has occurred in France, Italy, and recently in the Netherlands. In several other countries, although there has not been a complete overtaking, right-wing radical parties have grown—Spain and Germany being notable examples. In some cases, the moderate parties themselves have shifted their platforms to become more radical (as seen in Hungary).

On the left, there is also a noticeable shift. For instance, in France, the socialists have been replaced by Macronism, which leans less to the left.

However, this rightward shift struggles to materialise in immigration containment policies. This

is primarily because pro-immigration forces have strongholds outside the electoral and democratic systems—in supranational bodies, laws, and international treaties. The new forces have not yet fully grasped how to impact these extra-democratic pillars that ensure the continuation of the multicultural and pro-immigration agenda.

**SA: You are a historian, and mention in your book that the barbaric invasions were not different in their scales from the today experienced mass immigration to Europe, thus those were not necessarily accompanied by weaponised attacks either. What do you think how a such invasion could be fight against?**

DS: Essentially, wars are fought over resources, and space is one of the most crucial resources. This has been the case throughout history because the struggle for existence, as taught by Darwin, serves as the primary engine of biological dynamics. Under normal circumstances, when someone seeks to conquer, subjugate, or colonize another's space, they encounter resistance from the current owner. War erupts, and the victor gains control of the contested space.

What we are witnessing today with the mass extra-European immigration into Europe is a surrogate for war. Extra-European peoples are effectively colonizing our continent, albeit in a relatively peaceful manner (although instances of violence do occur, as seen in various predatory and criminal phenomena disproportionately involving immigrants against natives). This peaceful approach actually depends on the fact that Europeans have surrendered. They are not resisting the invasion; otherwise, there would be war or, more likely, a halt to migration flows (since external populations are still incapable of defeating us in war and would thus give up).

The lack of resistance can be attributed to three factors:

Betrayal by the ruling classes: Driven by ideology or self-interest, they have deemed the ethnic replacement of European peoples desirable.

False consciousness among the rest of the population: Propaganda has induced ignorance of the phenomenon or a lack of resistance.

General apathy among our people: For some reason, our vitality has waned (as evidenced by declining birth rates).

So, how do we fight back? By replacing the ruling classes, countering propaganda, and, above all,

reawakening the vital forces of European nations.

**SA: Besides, the categories of “refugee” and “migrant”, recently a new concept has emerged both in research and policy-making, the “environmental/climate refugee/migrant”, which refers to “people who must leave their homes and communities because of the effects of climate change and global warming” – according to the National Geographic (n.d.). However, the European Parliament (Apap – Harju 2023) claims that the “term ‘migrant’ might not always be considered appropriate, as it suggests a degree of volition in the decision to move.” Therefore, the climate refugee is a person who is forced to migrate to e.g. Europe because of environmental disasters (like earthquakes and floods), which are partly due to temperature rise and the CO2 emission; and whose situation was just worsened due to the coronavirus pandemic.**

Annually, appr. 21.5 million people (UNHCR 2016), “who live on the frontlines of the climate crisis”, are displaced (McAllister 2024), but predictions warn that their number can grow to 1.2 billion by 2050 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2020). Since the cause of climate change is regularly associated with human activity, the Global North is blamed for the situation of climate refugees (i.e. Global South). Therefore, the EU wills to “lead by example, by establishing, for a start, a European framework of rights for people forcibly displaced owing to climate hazards, envisaging, among other things, proper and timely remedial action in support of the victims of climate disasters.” To this end it took initiatives (e.g. COP27, Egypt; COP28, Dubai) to “support victims of climate change”, and “ensure a just and balanced energy transition” (Apap – Harju 2023). **What do you think about that concept and how/whether it should be handled differently from “regular” migrants in the effective politics?**

DS: I find this new category utterly absurd. Firstly, the global temperature increase, except in certain desertification-prone areas, corresponds to a rise in natural productivity. Secondly, the theory of climate migrations stems from an entirely unproven notion that we are witnessing an escalation of catastrophic climate events. But even if we accept these flawed premises, it remains unclear why Europe should compensate anyone, especially since it is not currently at the top of the list in terms of

CO2 emissions or water pollution.

In a broader sense, I am opposed to any regulation or policy based on a “sense of guilt,” whether founded or not. The secularization of European politics once meant that political decisions were driven more by objective and practical interests than idealistic aspirations. However, we are now witnessing an irrational cult—one that portrays Mother Earth as violated by “human parasites”—gaining prominence and dictating the political agenda. In essence, we are witnessing a return to a pre-secular era in European politics. What’s worst, this new cult is no more centred around human value and dignity – as it was the old one – but it is essentially misanthropic.

**SA: As a researcher and author, are you planning to focus on a new topic (for e.g. an upcoming book) in the near future, or sticking with the in-depth investigation of immigration?**

DS: I am working on a book that revolves around the thesis that, due to specific generational dynamics, the West is approaching a probable epochal turning point. This turning point will likely give rise to ideologies, governance methods, and lifestyles radically different from those that characterized the modern and contemporary eras. Even conservatives should recognize this and put forth a more courageous, ambitious, and unconventional narrative.

**SA: As a last question, what do you think Machiavelli would advise to the reigning “Prince” of Italy on immigration?**

DS: In the time of Machiavelli, large-scale migrations like these were unthinkable. However, there is no doubt that he would have viewed them as a threat to be contained. Machiavelli taught that threats should be confronted as soon as possible, ideally prevented altogether. True wisdom lies in recognizing problems at their inception because wars are not avoidable; they are merely postponed. All of this Machiavelli wrote about in “The Prince.” Therefore, I believe he would recommend decisive and resolute actions in the short term, rather than allowing enclaves of unassimilated cultures to take root in our land. The predictable effect of such enclaves would be to undermine democracy and civil coexistence, potentially leading to the same internal strife and unending conflicts observed in many “multicultural” countries of the second and third world.

**Bibliography**

- Apap, Joanna – Harju, Sami James 2023  
The concept of ‘climate refugee’. Towards a possible definition. *European Parliament*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698753/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)698753\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698753/EPRS_BRI(2021)698753_EN.pdf)
- Institute for Economics and Peace 2020 September 9 *Over one billion people at threat of being displaced by 2050 due to environmental change, conflict and civil unrest*. <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Ecological-Threat-Register-Press-Release-27.08-FINAL.pdf>
- Machiavelli, Niccolò 1532 *Il Principe*. Chapter 18. Translated by Hooker, Richard 1996. [https://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary\\_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Dante.%20etc/Philosophers/Idea/PRINCE18.HTM](https://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Dante.%20etc/Philosophers/Idea/PRINCE18.HTM)
- McAllister, Sean 2024 January 17 There could be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050. Here’s what you need to know. *Zurich*. <https://www.zurich.com/en/media/magazine/2022/there-could-be-1-2-billion-climate-refugees-by-2050-here-s-what-you-need-to-know>
- National Geographic n.d. *Environmental refugee*. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/environmental-refugee/>
- Scalea, Daniele 2019 *Immigrazione. Le ragioni dei populisti*. Olaszország: Historica Edizioni.
- Scalea, Daniele 2023 *Migráció – A populisták igaza*. Budapest: Alapjogokért Központ.
- UNHCR 2016 Frequently asked questions on climate change and disaster displacement. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/stories/frequently-asked-questions-climate-change-and-disaster-displacement>