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Virtù and Fortuna: On Sustenance of Political Power

Chris Laurence A Boñol

Holy Name University, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Chris Laurence A Boñol

Abstract

Niccolò Machiavelli, who is considered as the father of political science, has made controversial methods in acquiring and maintaining political power. His philosophy continues to influence the ideas of today's political leaders. Niccolò Machiavelli is famous for his work, *The Prince*, which is a political handbook for achieving goals by any means necessary. His work consists of ways in acquiring power, maintaining power, and using political power. Machiavelli's political ideas can be deduced into a positivistic approach. He posits the idea on virtù (virtue) and fortuna (good fortune) as means in attaining political power. Also, fortuna (fortune) can also be destructive as it is an

arbitrary force that restricts half of man's will. It is only through virtù can fortuna be prevented. This way, any means that will be beneficial for the ruler and for the state's glory are necessary to be acted upon through virtù. With the use of virtù, the Prince will be able to sustain his political power. The sustenance of political power is essential to further his interests. Machiavelli may have offered a pragmatic and amoral approach to sustaining the prince's political power, but his political theory is deemed necessary because of its effectiveness in ensuring the sustainability and development of his interests.

Keywords: Niccolò Machiavelli, Political Power, Sustainability

Introduction

Every man has a desire towards power and glory. St. Augustine said that, "Man is not an intellect only, he is also a will, and so long as his will does not conform to the prescriptions of moral truth, there is no morality (Gilson, 1955) ^[21]." This desire includes material and immaterial control, sovereign attributes, and power. With the use of power, man can will what he desires. Nietzsche conceives the will to power as neither good nor bad. It is an intrinsic drive found in each one of us, but an individual expresses it depending on his preferences. In the context of politicking, political candidates will their power in accumulating political power for their glory and security. Nietzsche states, "My theory would be that will to power is the primitive form of affect, and all other affects are only developments of it (Nietzsche, 1968) ^[36]."

Power makes man invincible and supreme. In politics, power is important because it is what gives man a sovereign identity. Political power, when achieved, must be utilized to sustain also the said political position. Machiavelli did not also posit an idea on how to acquire political power but he also suggested ways on how to maintain and sustain the acquired political power. It must be noted that fortune (Fortuna) poses threats in the prince's regime. For this reason, fortuna may hinder the sustainability and development of the prince's political power. Thus, virtù plays an important role in overcoming fortuna and building defences against it. As Machiavelli has stated, "So, as a prince is forced to know how to act like a beast, he must learn from the fox and the lion; because the lion is defenseless against traps and a fox is defenseless against wolves. Therefore one must be a fox in order to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten off wolves (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) ^[28]." Therefore, if an aspiring ruler wishes to sustain his political power, he must embody the virtue of Machiavelli's political power so that there would be no power struggle along the way and only sustainability of political power.

Defining Political Power

Political power is the ability to control the behaviour of people through the passage, approval and implementation of laws and regulations (Sullivan, 2023) ^[38]. Niccolò Machiavelli did not give a definition of political power explicitly. But he suggested ways of acquiring political power and how to maintain it. It can be noted that political power is an avenue where physical force is done by the ruler in a society. As what Errol Harris has stated,

Power and the use of force are essential factors in political organization. The social co-ordination of human activities is not possible without regulations which control these activities and maintain their coordination must be formulated, promulgated, and enforced. These conditions necessitate the existence of a recognized authority which makes and declares the law and in whom the power is vested to enforce it (Harris, 2014) [22].

Clearly, basing Machiavelli's political theory, political power is a force done by a ruler. If the ruler holds political power, he can will what he wants. Without any moral borders, the ruler wills the necessary actions that are needed in sustaining his political power. Thus the foundation of Machiavelli's political theory is power and war which is opposed to morality (Abulad, 2009) [2]. Machiavelli paints the prince as forever immortalized by his power and glory (Deitz, 1986) [15].

Rhoderick John Abellanosa in his article entitled "Niccolò Machiavelli and the Possibility of the Post-political" said,

Machiavelli may not have developed a systematic treatment of politics and political concerns within the ethical framework. Two important things can be our response to this: (1) even among political philosophers who have a clear and extensive ethical treatment of politics have acknowledged the reality of evil in the sphere of politics (the secular sphere if we may) and thus some exceptions or justifications for lesser evils to be considered if only to defend the greater good, and (2) the exercise of power by way of legitimate authority is acknowledged (Abellanosa, 2019) [1].

Therefore, the political theory of Machiavelli serves as a guide for aspiring rulers. This guide contains the necessary information and strategies for the ruler to sustain his regime.

Defining Virtù

Virtù is drive, talent, or ability directed toward the achievement of certain goals, and it is the most vital quality for a prince (Machiavelli N., 2023) [31]. Virtù is an Italian word for "virtue." Machiavelli has stated that, "Now as the fact of becoming a prince from a private station presupposes either ability or fortune (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 25) [28]." Virtù is a set of qualities, or a pattern of behavior most distinctively exhibited under what may be described as battlefield conditions (Wood, 1967) [41].

Machiavelli thus acknowledged that a person can achieve political authority in a state by personal skill. There are leaders who have used their skills to gain political authority. Sun Tzu is one of the figures who cleared the path to achieving political authority. The King of Wu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and appointed him general. In the west Sun Tzu defeated the Ch'u state and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the states of Ch'i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad among the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the kingdom. So Sun Tzu became a general for the King of Wu (Tzu, 1988, p. 5) [40].

Indeed, an individual can gain political power by utilizing their own strengths. From a Christian standpoint, the term "virtue" denotes the performance of benevolent and ethical actions. However, Machiavelli presents an alternative definition about the virtù of a prince. Machiavelli asserts that a ruler must be compelled to employ all necessary means to secure and sustain political power. The prince therefore can be good or evil depending on the circumstances (Nederman, 2005) [35].

A prince who attains political power by virtù is more likely to be effective in governance than one who gains power through mere fortune. Their exceptional qualities enabled them to identify and seize opportunities, so giving honor and enhanced prosperity to their nations (Machiavelli N., 1532/1935, p. 22) [25]. Whereas an individual who attains political power through fortune is reliant on the populace that elevated him to the position of ruler. Consequently, the ruler is ineffectual and unlikely to govern the state effectively. In contrast to fortune, virtù constitutes the essence of the prince's strength and authority.

Nevertheless, he who has not relied on fortune has established the strongest (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]. A ruler reliant on his own capabilities have the strength to navigate the challenges of governance. He governs effectively because the populace perceives him as the legitimate authority to be followed. Consequently, no individual may impose his governance, nor can anybody oppose his political framework. Rulers must be educated in virtue rather than solely depending on chance. Politics requires an understanding of what and who are being managed, and of the very vision of the very process of governance or management (Abellanosa, 2019) [1].

Defining Fortuna

According to Machiavelli, "fortune governs the affairs of the world and men with their wisdom cannot direct them (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]." Therefore, fortune is not related to affluence or luck. Fortune refers to a capricious factor influencing human affairs. Fortune is like a raging river that destroys everything in its path (Machiavelli N., 1532/1935) [25]. Fortune's unavoidable events determine the shift in the prince's political authority. Machiavelli has stated that, "I am not unaware of the fact that many have held and still hold the view that the affairs of this world are so completely governed by fortune (Wooton, 1994) [42]." Fortune is now an unavoidable circumstance. The prince has not been ready to oppose the course of events brought about by fortune. As a result, valor is not ready to oppose fortune. Fortune is now something like a side constraint and a deterministically understood fate or destiny, the blind force of necessity, and it becomes the main obstacle (Donskis, 2011) [17].

In order to resist fortune, Machiavelli states that "fortune may be the arbiter of one half of the prince's actions, but she still leaves the other half, or perhaps a little less, to his free will (Machiavelli N., 1532/1935) [25]." In other words, there remains a means to defy fortune. In countering fortune, the prince ought to wield his political authority to alleviate its impacts. Machiavelli adds by stating, "Make provision, constructing both defences and barriers, so when fortune rose again, the waters would pass by safely in a canal, and their force be neither so wild nor so dangerous (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]."

The ruling prince should wield his political power by assembling the essential resources required to withstand fortuna. An example of how the prince should wield his political power to counter fortune is by fortifying the state's defenses. In a well-ordered State, government will concern itself first of all with justice, defence and economics (Allen, 1960) [4]. Foreign invaders pose a danger to the prince's sovereignty in governing a state. The threat arises unexpectedly, rendering the prince's response too late. Consequently, it is appropriate for the prince to be equipped to endure its consequences.

When the prince uses his political power, his virtue should help him make the proper choices and plans. The prince should only trust his virtue, not his luck. A prince may appear affluent now and be destitute tomorrow without altering his character (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]. Because he failed to foresee the potential challenge to his state and monarchy, the prince would ultimately fail when luck ran out. Machiavelli makes the point that the prince must alter his behavior when called for because of the unavoidable consequences of fortune. Machiavelli states that, "I believe that he will be successful who directs his actions according to the spirit of the times, and he whose actions do not accord with the times will not be successful (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]." The prince must utilize his power as a politician to take required actions, even if it requires altering his behavior. Machiavelli supports his claim in his book *The Discourses on Livy*, he states:

Good or bad fortune of men depends on whether their methods of acting accord with the character of the times... some men act impulsively, others warily and with caution... He, however, will make fewest mistakes, and may expect to prosper most, who, while following the course to which nature inclines him, finds, as I have said, his method of acting in accordance with the times in which he lives (Machiavelli N., 1996, p. 239).

Furthermore, the prince who wants to withstand the effects of fortune must accord his actions toward the signs of the times. The prince must not be bounded by morality or immorality. But rather he needs to be virtuous through being able to adapt and think strategically. In other words, the prince must not disregard the teachings of the Church. It can be noted that being a moral ruler can also be efficient in ruling a state. Demeterio in his article entitled "The Philippine Church, State, and People on the Problem of Population", argues that, "The Encyclical suggests that the Church should form the faithful into enlightened, ethical, moral, and charitable statesmen and people who will then be responsible in establishing a just and humane society (Demeterio, 2007) [16]." Hence, morality and ethical conduct will thrive in the lives of all citizens.

In using political power to build defenses and the like, the prince must rely on his virtue. Thus virtue must be the foundation of the prince that will help him sustain his political power and overcome the changes of events. By doing so, the prince can withstand the effects of fortune. Therefore, if the circumstances force the prince to be just and good, he will act accordingly. But if otherwise, he will also act accordingly based on the gravity of such action.

Anthony Lawrence Borja in his article entitled "Virtù, Fortuna, and Statecraft: A Dialectical Analysis of Machiavelli" said that,

Machiavelli's endeavor is comparable not to the act of stopping a river but to exertions to remain afloat or control its direction. Furthermore, with Fortuna as the overarching term used to tackle the grave and aleatory character of the aggregate effects of these others' activities and engagements with the subject and with each other (Borja, 2016) [10].

The relationship between virtù and fortuna are crucial in determining how the prince must stay on top of the state. Machiavelli's virtù and fortuna employ a dialectical strategy that suggests the prince's future endeavors. Virtù must be used to complement fortuna rather than oppose it because the uncertainty of the future is caused by a constant movement of fortuna. In Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, he said, "Fortune can never be conquered, human beings can learn to go along with it, picking up experience and making its plans their own, thus finally reducing its influence over human affairs (Machiavelli N., 1996). Henceforth, to sustain a political power without being interrupted by forces caused by fortuna, the prince must utilize his virtù.

Sustaining Political Power through Organizing the Army

An army is a large organized body of men armed for military service on land (Read, 2003) [37]. Its sole objective is to carry out the prince's instructions. Consequently, an army acknowledges the prince's authority. A state's level of readiness is demonstrated by its army. Depending on the prince's orders, it can react to any threat. If a state lacks a strong military, it cannot have excellent laws; conversely, if it does, good laws will unavoidably follow (Machiavelli N., 1532/1981) [26]. A robust army serves as the cornerstone for the prince's continued dominance. A weak army would ultimately lead to the prince's downfall since it would undermine his political base. It is comparable to constructing a house using flimsy concrete components. A house with a weak foundation would collapse quickly since it is unable to endure any disasters. The populace will not rebel against an army that they clearly perceive as nearly untouchable. A powerful army can compel its subjects to abide by the rules set forth by the prince. The prince can thus keep up his hold on the state's authority.

Niccolò Machiavelli believes that those who can sustain themselves through their own means are capable of raising an army big enough to fight anyone who tries to attack them, whether they have a lot of money or a lot of troops (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) [28]. A state's involvement in war is inevitable. A state must thus constantly be ready for these inevitable situations. It is always possible for the prince to win if his army is larger than the invader's. As part of the unified force, an army's main duty is to engage in timely and persistent land warfare. To meet the expectations made of it, the army must provide forces that are prepared, skilled, and equipped (ADP, 2019) [3]. The military must adhere to the directives of the prince. The primary focus of an army is to address threats that can jeopardize the state and undermine the prince's governance. Moreover, the function of an army within a state is to safeguard its honor

and uphold the authority of the sovereign.

Additionally, Machiavelli argues that it is preferable to assemble an army made up of the prince's own people. For a prince, losing a battle with his own people is preferable to winning one with outside forces because the latter isn't truly a victory (Machiavelli N., 1532/1981, p. 48) ^[26]. Engaging in combat with the prince's own subjects is preferable to confronting foreign mercenaries, as victory is more rewarding when achieved by the state's populace. Foreign mercenaries are engaged in combat for the prince solely due to their contractual obligations. Consequently, victory lacks glory and is insipid. The victory achieved through the employment of foreign mercenaries appears illustrious, as these mercenaries fight just for financial gain rather than personal honor. They possess no further allure or justification for retaining the field beyond a mere token compensation. Mercenaries are indifferent to the prince's potential downfall.

The sole concern of the mercenaries is the preservation of their own honor. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are ineffective and perilous; reliance on such forces undermines the stability and security of one's state, as they are fragmented, ambitious, undisciplined, and untrustworthy (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 57) ^[28]. The prince should not place his reliance in foreign mercenaries if he is to maintain his political authority. If a prince possesses a well-structured army comprised of his own countrymen, he is unlikely to face ruin, as both internal dissent and external invasion are uncertain. Machiavelli condemns mercenary armies and advocates for a citizen militia associated with civic virtue. Machiavelli asserts that the establishment of a citizen army is among the paramount accomplishments for any sovereign. A prince would be foolish to engage in warfare without the backing of his state's populace, as this could incite rebellion and unrest, leading to disorder inside his kingdom (Colish, 2014) ^[12].

Sustaining Political Power through Fulfilling the Prince's Duty to his Army

Niccolò Machiavelli did not identify the army as the exclusive foundation of a state and its prince. Machiavelli also emphasizes the prince's obligation to the military. The prince, as the architect of the state, must also cultivate discipline to fortify his political basis.

A prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they lost their states. And the first cause of your losing it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 69) ^[28].

Machiavelli suggests that a prince should master the art of discipline. In a way, a prince should prioritize preserving his position of authority. A prince should have the mental capacity to manage conflict. The foundations required for a monarch to endure must be provided for the prince. The prince's obligation to the army is one of these pillars. The

troops should not see the prince as weak since that will make them lose faith in him. The army will not believe the prince's orders if they consider he is not a capable leader. The prince's reign will end if the army stops believing in him. As a result, the prince needs to understand weapons and warfare.

A prince who does not understand the art of war will not be respected by his soldiers nor can rely on him (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 70) ^[28]. Machiavelli's ideal ruler should possess the intellectual acumen to strategize and orchestrate military campaigns. The prince's understanding of warfare will serve as the strategic blueprint for his army. It is indeed accurate and effective that one of Machiavelli's methods for sustaining political power is through knowledge. In support of Machiavelli's assertion, Plato argues that a ruler must be educated and possess the qualities and wisdom requisite for governing a state. Plato stated, "Wisdom belongs to the ruler, courage to the soldiers, and temperance to the producing class (Mercado, 2006) ^[32]."

By acquiring information, the prince becomes acquainted with his land and is more equipped to defend it. The acquisition of knowledge is essential for governing a state. With information, the prince can formulate a defense strategy for his state and design a war plan. War and violence are unavoidable. A threat to a state is inherently unpredictable. Consequently, the prince must consistently ready himself for any invasion or danger. Like a philosopher king who possesses wisdom and knowledge (Cropsey, 1897) ^[14], the prince can be an efficient ruler. All of these can only be done if the prince has a conditioned mind that is ready whenever circumstances arise. As part of disciplining the mind of the prince, Machiavelli suggests that:

To exercise the intellect of the prince, he should read histories, and study there the actions of illustrious men, to see how they have borne themselves in war, to examine the causes of their victories and defeat so as to avoid the latter and imitate the former; and above all do as an illustrious man did (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 71) ^[28].

It is true that knowledge is power. Knowledge lifts man through possessing power. A power capable of altering the trajectory of existence. Through knowledge, individuals acquire the ability to discern and dictate their actions. The prince must be able to impose laws strategically without any hesitations. As Jean Bodin has stated, "Law is nothing else than the command of the sovereign (Allen, 1960) ^[4]." Nothing can be acted unless it is known (Cañete, 2023). If wisdom is misapplied, the prince will face destruction. Consequently, the prince must cultivate discipline to refine his governance ability and sustain his kingship.

Sustaining Political Power through Being Generous

Every government, every political right and duty, is thus a means to an end, and must be justified by its relation (George, 1966). A prince must guide his acts towards an end. The prince must constantly act in his own safety and glory, free from any obstacles. The prince's actions are excellent in that they will have an impact on his ability to hold onto his political authority. The prince must use any means required to sustain his control of the state, including cruelty and kindness toward his subjects.

Generosity is one of the attributes that a prince needs to have. Individual men make up the citizens. Society emerges from the needs and aspirations of human nature itself (Koritansky, 2023) ^[24]. Therefore, in order for the citizens to exist, the prince must provide for their needs. Nevertheless, man is a finite creature. Man is unable to control all of the evil the prince has done to him. Man will turn to revolt if he is unable to control his evil. Therefore, by being generous to his people, the prince should be able to sustain his political position. One way to show that you are a good leader is to be generous. As the promotion of the appropriate conditions of life in both the economic and the cultural sphere is, then, the purpose of the state (Bigongiari, 1969) ^[9]. As a result, leadership is in operation. To be generous, one must act morally in order to be loved. If the people adore the king, then sustainable leadership is possible. It is important to carefully plan the prince's generosity to avoid burdening the populace with excessive taxes or embezzling funds from the government's coffers and distributing it to the people (Machiavelli N., 1532/1935) ^[25].

In order to guarantee the allegiance of his military, the prince should also show them extra kindness. It should be mentioned that an army can easily topple a ruler if they are not treated decently because they have arms and weapons.

The prince ought to entertain the people with festivals and spectacles. And as every city is divided into guilds or into societies, he ought to hold such bodies in esteem, and associate with them sometimes, and show himself an example of courtesy and liberality; nevertheless, always maintaining the majesty of his rank (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014) ^[28].

Exhibiting generosity while upholding the prince's authority is a method through which the citizens will come to value the prince. Recognition that the prince is attentive to the needs of the citizens. Civil society remains essential as it acquires and manages the temporal or material resources necessary for human existence, which can serve as instruments to enhance the good of the soul (Cropsey, 1897) ^[14]. In this manner, the populace will come to appreciate and honor the prince's power. Should the prince earn the esteem of his subjects, he will find it facile to sustain his political authority. Hence, Machiavelli, like St. Thomas Aquinas, suggests that monarchy is a system in which a single individual predominates, while others are inherently designed to submit, necessitating that the monarch possesses an inherent superiority in virtue (Bigongiari, 1969) ^[9].

Sustaining Political Power through Being Feared

It would seem that fear hinders action. For action is hindered chiefly by a disturbance in the reason, which directs action (Aquinas, 1981, p. 775) ^[6]. The prince must instill fear in his subjects in every move he takes. Fear-induced disruption will prevent residents from resisting. The populace will come to appreciate the prince's authority in this way. One of the best attributes a prince should have is compassion. However, being overly sympathetic will result in abuse and disdain. The populace won't be taught to respect the prince's power. Being feared for being harsh is more humane than a leader whose overly caring behavior causes chaos in the streets, muggings, and murders that hurt everyone (Machiavelli N., 1532/1981, p. 65) ^[26]. Therefore, sustaining political power requires being feared.

Because their fear prevents them from making their own decisions, instilling dread in the populace will bring the prince fame. A number of subjective factors, including fear, want, and resentment, can restrict and take away one's freedom (Moga, 1995) ^[33]. In order to sustain his political authority, the prince is free to enact laws that restrict the citizens' freedoms. This raises the following question:

Whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 79) ^[28].

Love and fear cannot co-exist together because they are different. If someone are in a state of dread, they cannot experience love. In a state of love, one cannot simultaneously exist in a state of fear. It seems inconceivable that they simultaneously experience both dread and love (Andrews, 2023) ^[5]. They vary in that fear is linked to solicitude, whereas love is linked to affection. If a prince instills terror, the populace will not love him. Furthermore, if the populace loves a royal, they cannot be afraid. The prince can therefore only decide on what he believes to be the finest option.

In the event that his subjects love him, the prince will fail. A prince must presume that every individual who makes up the society has an innate tendency to occasionally be nice or bad. Like how Thomas Hobbes posits that man is a wolf. This gives men the ability to hurt one another in order to fulfill their needs. Hobbes thus argues that man must submit to the sovereign's will. He states that, "I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, in this condition that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner (Coplestone, 1959) ^[13]." Man might be able to keep society peaceful by establishing a covenant with the sovereign. The agreements of men make up the commonwealth as an artificial entity.

Instead of governing in an idealized world where men act in a certain way, the prince must govern in the real world with men as they are (Gardner, 2009) ^[18]. The prince governs in a state where humanity is inherently flawed; so, he must do essential actions to sustain his regime. It is appropriate that fear should be established in the minds of residents to prevent conflict throughout governance. Excessive compassion from the prince for his subjects may lead to the exploitation of his authority by the citizens. The residents can exhibit both virtuous and malevolent behaviors at times. It is reasonable to presume that each individual among them is unfavorable. As what Machiavelli has stated, "This is to be asserted in general of men that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you everything (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 79) ^[28]."

In addition to this, the famous quote that says "prevention is better than cure" can somehow summarize the conclusion why Machiavelli suggests that it is better for a ruler to be feared than loved. Prevention in the context that rebellion is unlikely to occur due to the prince's respect among the populace. If a rebellion occurs, it would be difficult for a prince to sustain his political authority. Consequently, terror is essential for the prince to preserve his political authority.

As the ultimate objective of the State is an infinite good, the State must inherently hold sovereignty in this absolute manner; otherwise, it would contradict itself by acknowledging that its goal is unachievable. He concluded that every State must possess a recognized legal sovereign with absolute authority (Allen, 1960) [4].

The ruler must instill dread not only in his populace but also in his troops. An army that lacks respect for the prince is likely to disregard his commands. However, if an army fears the prince, it will adhere to his commands. Nonetheless, although a sovereign cannot anticipate evoking affection through instilling fear, he must refrain from inciting hatred. Experiencing fear is indeed reconcilable with the absence of hatred. (Machiavelli N., 1532/1981, p. 66) [26].

Nevertheless, the important thing that must be noted here is that the prince must know how to manipulate his citizens. To supplement Machiavelli's claim, Lawrence Torcello in his journal entitled "*Why Tyranny could be the Inevitable Outcome of Democracy*" said that, "power belonged to anyone who could harness the collective will of the citizens directly by appealing to their emotions rather than using evidence and facts to change their minds (Torcello, 2019) [39]." In the pursuit of power, the aspiring ruler must evoke emotion. To resonate with particular men's emotions, the aspiring ruler must address their vulnerabilities. In this manner, the individual men will yield their will to the aspiring ruler. The consent of individuals will enable the ruler to sustain his political authority. The submission of the will assumes an authority to govern.

Sustaining Political Power through Avoiding Hatred

A ruler must avoid any behavior that will push his people to hate him or hold him in contempt.

It makes him contemptible to be considered fickle, frivolous, effeminate, mean-spirited, irresolute, from all of which a prince should guard himself as from a rock; and he should endeavor to show in his actions greatness, courage, gravity, and fortitude; and in his private dealings with his subjects let him show that his judgments are irrevocable, and maintain himself in such reputation that no one can hope either to deceive him or to get around him (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 88) [28].

The traits that will prevent a prince from being despised are the good deeds he must perform for his subjects. The negative actions demonstrate a prince's incapacity to govern the state. It is essential that the prince be as tough as a rock. Thus his kingship is untouchable and unassailable without hatred. The prince will be prone to being manipulated by others around him if he has negative attitudes. The prince is manipulated by those around him because of deceit. The subject does not treat other individuals as persons in such acts of manipulating them (Moga, 1995) [33]. The prince is not regarded by those around him as an authoritative ruler. Instead, the army and populace view the prince as a weak and incompetent leader. The army and populace will dislike and hate their ruler if they discover that he is as soft as cotton.

Another thing to note on avoiding hatred is that the prince must protect his people, avoid interfering in their private lives, and must not take their properties (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 80) [28]. Man is also a creature who has dignity

and honor. Man has rights in exercising what he wants to will. No man should be regarded by another as a mere possession; or used as a mere instrument, or treated as a mere obstacle to another's satisfaction (George D., 1966) [19]. Therefore, in order to win the respect of all citizens, the prince must uphold their rights. The prince will find it simple to hold onto his political authority if he enjoys the respect of both his army and citizens. Thus, as Aristotle posits, man can adapt his nature in a polis or city-state (Barker, 1962) [8].

One example of a prince who was successful in his role as king is Marcus Aurelius. Because the populace preferred peace and the military favored the warlike prince, it was difficult to satisfy both groups. But Marcus possessed many virtues which made him respected, he always kept both orders in their places while he lived, and was neither hated nor despised (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 92) [28]. Henceforth, sustaining political power requires appropriate acts that honor the people and army. The city provides an environment in which the individual can achieve the proper telos of a man; and this, as we have learned from the Ethics, consists in the enjoyment of happiness in the exercise of the intellectual and moral virtues (Bambrough, 1963) [7]. This way, a ruler who wishes to prolong and sustain his reign can withstand the effects of fortuna.

Sustaining Political Power through Avoiding Neutrality

States will inevitably clash in politics. Therefore, if the prince wants to keep his political position, Machiavelli does not think that neutrality is necessary. A prince is respected if he is either a true friend or an enemy, that is to say, he declares himself in favor of one party against the other; which of course will always be more advantageous than standing neutral (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 107) [28]. Neutrality assumes that the prince is not a reliable ally. The other party will not back the prince in his future undertakings if they perceive him as a neutral leader. For instance, when two kids are fighting, they might each ask their mother to step in and help resolve the conflict. Their mother is aware that the older, stronger, and more resourceful one will inevitably win if she doesn't step in. The outcome will inevitably be the same if she actively steps in and helps or hinders them both equally. In other words, the decision to remain neutral, according to the terms of our present definition, would amount to a decision to allow the naturally stronger child to prevail (Montefiore, 1975) [34].

Hence, rather than remaining neutral, it is preferable for a prince to state which party he is willing to support. If the prince expresses his support for a party, it is a win-win situation for both him and his ally. However, the prince should decide which party is stronger before announcing which one he wants to support. If the prince will not side with the stronger party, the prince will regret that he was being neutral in choosing who to support. If the prince do not declare himself, he will fall as prey to the victorious conqueror (Machiavelli N., 1532/1935) [25]. The victorious conqueror does not want an untrustworthy friend because he cannot trust someone who cannot support him in his trial. Similar to the one who loses, the loser will not harbor the prince because he did not willingly, sword in hand, court his fate (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 108) [28]. Therefore, in order to sustain his political authority, the prince should take a side and avoid being neutral.

The opposing side will recognize the prince as a reliable ally and feel obligated to him when deciding whom to defend and assist. The amount owed is determined by the cost of the obligation. The prince will win favor by having his buddy repay the debts, which will benefit his kingdom. The ruler must understand that every political system tends to favor a particular idea of what is right (Iwasa, 2010) [23]. The prince's personal safety must be the focus of this good. The prince's collapse will begin if he fails to recognize that his acts are not intended to maintain his political position.

Sustaining Political Power through Choosing Ministers

As a ruler, the prince is unable to control every system in the state. The rationale behind his need for ministers to assist him in overseeing these state structures. The prince's employees are known as ministers. They are crucial in establishing and sustaining the prince's kingship. The rationale for why a prince's choice of ministers is so important. The prince will ultimately fail if he does not exercise caution in selecting his ministers, as they are crucial to preserving the prince's political authority. If the prince has loyal ministers, the people will applaud him because the prince can recognize the ministers' abilities to support his authority. If the prince has mistakenly chosen the wrong ministers, the citizens will criticize him (Machiavelli N., *The Prince*, 1532/2009) [27]. According to Machiavelli, "To keep his servant honest, the prince should honor him, do him kindness, and let him see that he cannot stand alone (Machiavelli N., 1532/2014, p. 112) [28]."

By demonstrating their dependence on the prince, the ministers will come to understand that their survival depends on the prince. They will honor the prince and show loyalty to him if they have come to the conclusion that the prince is essential to their survival. The ministers will never be good ministers, and the prince should not trust them if he observes that they are more concerned with themselves than with him (Machiavelli N., 1532/2009) [27]. The ministers must consistently prioritize the prince's interests. The prince's priorities involve maintaining and sustaining his own glory and that of the state. Consequently, the ministers ought to prioritize these significant issues over their personal concerns.

Should the prince observe that his ministers are loyal, he will place his trust in them. Trust is crucial for sustaining the connection between the prince and his ministers. The prince may effortlessly sustain his political authority through trust. The ministers will rely on their ruler to bestow honor upon them for assisting in the management of his political goals. Should the prince betray the faith of his devoted ministers, it will be the start of his downfall. Machiavelli's political theory teaches an aspiring ruler to be brave, wise, cunning, and deceptive in order to manipulate the threats given by fortuna. The threats given by fortuna are power struggles that may oppose your political interests.

Conclusion

Every individual aspires to sustain a superior position within society. To sustain prominence, an individual must possess a distinctive position that serves as a hallmark of exceptionalism. The position can only be attained if an individual possesses the means and authority to do it. Consequently, the consolidation of political authority is essential for sustainability of state governance. To attain

political power, one must contemplate Niccolò Machiavelli's political theory.

The ways that were suggested by Machiavelli may have been immoral. It is immoral to the point that Machiavelli's book was banned by Pope Paul IV for publication (Chadwick, 2023) [11]. On the other hand, Machiavelli did not consider malevolence as the only means but he considers benevolence also. Nevertheless, Machiavelli considered his views essential and efficacious for a ruler seeking to sustain political power. Machiavelli is primarily concerned with the consequences of the Prince's actions. Disregarding moral and immoral considerations, every action undertaken by the Prince that is considered essential is defensible. Thus, the end justifies the means. Therefore, it is only through virtù the prince can sustain his political power.

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