

# Machiavelli – Relevance in daily Life

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Niccolo Machiavelli 1469 – 1527 Florence

# Machiavelli

## Social realities and Ethics

### Acquiring and retaining power



*Pick battles big enough to matter  
but small enough to win*

*“It is **better to be feared than loved**,  
if you cannot be both”* Machiavelli

*“A ruler **cannot be virtuous** - It is a  
dangerous and unrealistic premise”*

*Machiavelli*

# Machiavelli – Relevance in Daily Life – Globally - Historically

**Pragmatism** - Based on relative, practical rather than theoretical considerations.  
(John Dewey; John Rorty)

**Realism** – reflect social reality  
Kautalya's '*Arthashastra*' 380 BC (India)  
Sun Zsu - '*Art of War*' 544 BC (China)

**Cynical**- self-interest; distrustful of human sincerity or integrity

**Thomas Hobbes** (Leviathan)

**Nietzsche** (Will to be the master)



# Niccolò Machiavelli – backgrounder

## 1469 – 1527 Florence

Renaissance period ... **Borgia** Popes (corrupt underhanded)

*The man behind the myth; abusive childhood; his chaotic love life; political triumphs and an eventual fall from grace*

*.... and to the dungeons of prison*

### Italian diplomat and writer

Author, philosopher and historian who lived during the Renaissance. He is best known for his political treatise '**The Prince**', written around 1513.

***End justifies means - A study of Power dynamics***



# The Prince

*A Manual to gain and retain power*

*(Subjective social ontology?)*

Strategies and tactics changeable

as circumstances demand

.....Adaptability and flexibility



There is always an **alternate way** of every **problem.**

**Need for Power is a human (social) convention throughout history - A house of cards**

Murky plots in the corridors of power

Be it in **Politics large scale**

**OR**

Politics in **Familial or Societal hierarchies**



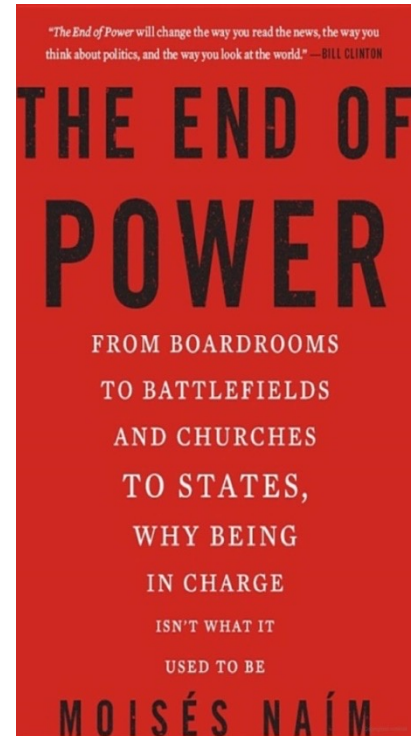
# Machiavelli – **Relevance in daily Life**

## **Levers of Power**

### **‘The End of Power’ -**

From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States – **Moises Naim** (renowned journalist)

- 1. Economic*
- 2. Military / Authority / Muscle*
- 3. Laws Code – Regulations*
- 4. Politics*
- 5. Media*
- 6. Organized Institutions*



# Machiavelli – **Relevance in daily Life**

## **Levers of Power**

### **1/Economics** - *Follow the money....*

*Money pays the bills ...*

*Influence and Dominate Markets*

*Profiting tools - Examples*



**Anti competitive, Price fixing, coercion, collusion, exclusion** (Canada Bread)

**SWOTS** on competition (Strategic planning) \*

**Monopolies** (East India Co; DeBeers; Microsoft and Windows)

**Corruption** (E.g. Greenbelt ...Land grab )

**Money manipulates ...Political levers such as Legislation and Policies**

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## **Levers of Power**

### **2/ Army / Military Muscle - Police / Junta**

*Spheres of influence - Use of force - Global power dynamics Protection rackets in Africa. Private armies – Change of regimes*



*Asymmetric warfare – Al Qaeda cost U.S .Govt 3.3 trillion!!!*

*Cyberwars - Hackers (technology)*

*Foreign attacks*

*Cheap technology / Drones / homegrown terrorism*

# Machiavelli – **Relevance in daily Life**

## **Levers of Power**

### **3/ Laws Codes – Regulations - Is law just?**

#### ***In Economy***

*Laws - Licensing, trademarks, patents, zoning*

*Exclusivity agreements / Long term contracts / special discounts / Bail outs*

***Innovators dilemma*** – *a disincentive to innovate as new products will undermine their existing ones (hold until existing patents run out)*

***OR*** *not implementing innovation because not scalable*

***Rules of Politics*** – *E g U.N .– Only 5 in Security Council*

*Bend rules to suit Partisan Judiciary / Social nets / Taxes / Education / Health – Vote rigging – Gerrymandering \*\**

***Unequal application of Laws in society*** – *‘driving while black’*



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## **Levers of Power**

### **4/ Politics**

*Gain and retain power*

*Whatever the power structure – Anarchy  
(failed states Somalia)/ Theocracy (Iran) /  
Monarchy (Saudi) / Oligarchy / Aristocracy /  
Republic / Democratic / Socialistic/  
Communist representation*

***“Politics is the gentle art of getting votes  
from the poor .....and campaign funds from the rich,  
by promising to protect each from the other.”  
— Oscar Ameringer***



# Machiavelli – **Relevance in daily Life**

## **Levers of Power**

### **4/ Politics contd...**

***Democracy - Policies and Governance***

***Donors \$\$ dependency a major weakness***

### ***Tactics***

*Vote getting (buying / rigging)*

*Money & Connections*

*Super PACS (Political Action Committees)*

*Delay / Divide / Deflect / Deny*

*Political spin and influence using media*



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## **Levers of Power**

### **5/ Media - Pitch – Spin to sway opinions**

***Advertising & Propaganda & Manipulations***

***Biased – controlled by the powerful media barons***

***Social media - Mis and Dis information***

***Sell bad news ... for ratings and subsequent profits***

***- Fear sells .... Humans 'doom scan'***

***Soft power such as Hollywood, Streaming & Social  
media formulate seductive ideas and trends***



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## **Levers of Power**

### **6/ Organized Social Institutions also partake**

#### **Fear as a weapon (binary options)**

*Class / Caste systems*

*Alternate lifestyles (LGBTQ) (Other Minorities)*

*DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)*

*Religious divides – **fear of the other***

#### **Extremes**

*Fanatical and passion aroused 'wars' 'jihad' 9/11*

*Historical - Treaty of Tordesillas Pope ordained  
Spain & Portugal divide up South America.*



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## Question of How?

### Means of Exertion of power



- **Influence** (*Charisma, Rhetoric, bypass or bend regulations special loans subsidies*)\*\*\*
- **Persuasion** (*tax breaks loans subsidies*)
- **Authority** *Force (threats, Jail Regime changes selective sanctions)*
- **Coercion** *Bailouts (too big to fail)  
(Surveillance Isolation)*

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**Means of Exertion of power** - *Question of How?*

**E g Coercive Persuasion - Divide and Conquer/ Rule**



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*Means of Exertion of power*



*Question of How?*

***Coercion*** - *FBI techniques of gaining converts*

***M I C E***

***M*** = Money

***I*** = Ideology

***C*** = Compromise (honey traps)

***E*** = Ego

Machiavelli – Relevance in daily Life –

**Pragmatism – Realism – Cynical?**

*Fine line between healthy ambition and selfish greed*

***Machiavelli very relevant today***

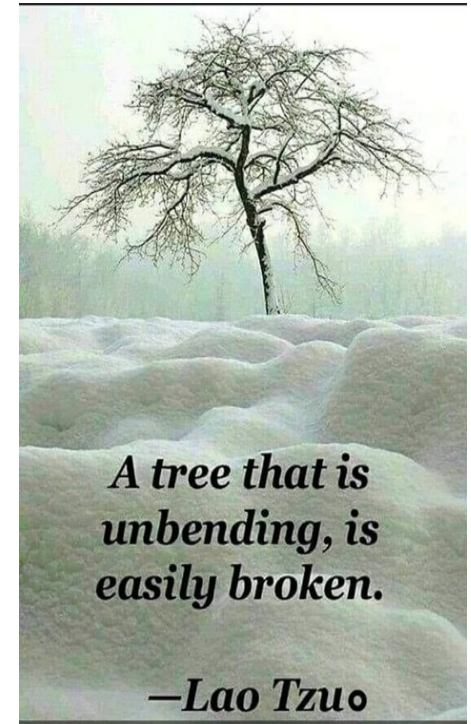
***He outlined human need for acquire and retain power ... pragmatically***

***Power-play is ‘alive and kicking’  
historically and globally***

***Universal - Countries Corporations Societies***

***‘History repeats and rhymes’***

***We all partake in so many ways \****



Machiavelli – Relevance in daily Life –

**Pragmatism – Realism – Cynical?**

*Fine line between healthy ambition and selfish greed*

***Machiavelli very relevant today***

***Despite being written centuries ago,  
Machiavelli's insights into power, human  
nature, and political strategy remain  
relevant today.***



## **Machiavelli** – Relevance in daily Life

*Then of course ...*

*... there are  
idealist points of  
view*

***Being able to see  
both sides of the  
coin – Wisdom??***



# Discussion / Questions

