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The Duality of Machiavellianism in Regard to Modern Political Philosophy

by

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Abstract

The principles of human nature and a realist system of governance irrevocably clash in Niccolò Machiavelli's most profound works despite his personal convictions remaining seemingly steadfast. Yet, the term 'Machiavellian' reflects a relatively one-sided delineation of ideas proposed by the early modern political philosopher. His principles on constructing and maintaining absolute power through corruption, immorality, provocation of fear, coercion, and a general natural human depravity are far more often associated with his legacy on modern politics. However, many alternative principles of republicanism, self-governance, popular sovereignty, and balance of power have a significant presence in his career. Many scholars view the American Founding to be in stark contrast with his most prominent, rather, his most radical theories; when in reality, the Founders utilized both ends of thought to shape a new republic. The following research analyzes the relationship between Machiavelli's principles relative to the tyrannical nature of government evident in *The Prince* as they are utilized by Founders guiding the avoidance of limitless power, while the ideas proposed through *Discourses* conversely form the very foundation from which American Constitutionalism originates. The hypothesis presupposes, despite the overwhelming disparity in attributing Machiavelli's contributions, his oppositions of principality are of equal relevance to modern politics and in their influence on the American Founding period. The subsequent conclusion presents Machiavelli as perhaps the most influential modern theorist; bringing together two vastly contradictory schools of thought indicative of the successes and failures of empires of the past to form an incredibly robust guide to governance.

Introduction

Modern political philosophy finds its origins with the rise and impact of profound philosophers such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Principles of political thought, however, can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome with contributions from philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Augustine, and beyond setting the precedent of political classicism. Niccolò Machiavelli, similar to Karl Marx, stands out in modern history as a cultivator of a more radical set of ideas. Machiavelli, who has been referred to as "The Father" of modern political philosophy, finds his infamy with his treatise *Il Principe*. Being his most popular work, *The Prince*, carves Machiavelli's name into politics as a symbol of depravity and deceit. When referencing American Founding principles, there is little correlation drawn between his early proposals of an authoritative entity necessarily corrupted with power. However, Machiavelli, being a loyal servant to the Florentine Republic, displayed a patriotic career adverse to his amoralist propositions. His personal convictions and system of values, seemingly complex and unidentifiable when solely considering his radical treatise, were not far from the attitudes of the Founders when taking a broader look at Machiavelli himself. Through his *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli unraveled the antithesis of everything his name stands for today. The great American Founding process serves as the pinnacle symbol of duality of thought, where both Machiavelli's darkest ideas and his most optimistic realities have a place.

Research Question and Hypothesis

This research paper seeks to answer how Machiavelli's two most profound works - *The Prince* and *Discourses* – have produced a seemingly dichotomous impact on modern political philosophy and theory, yet remained consistent on the principles of human nature and natural law. The subsequent hypothesis concludes Machiavellian philosophy of thought, as it is perceived today, has been founded disproportionately on the more extremist ideas of *The Prince*, with many American Founding principles discerned as being formulated in opposition to Machiavelli's most depraved theories; however, there is considerable alignment with his alternate principles of republicanism and realism often ignored.

Research Methodology

The research practices utilized in this study seek to identify and analyze, not solely the empirical rate in occurrence of divergent Machiavellian concepts of political philosophy, as they translate to the American Founding process but, instead, rely on a more qualitative approach in examining the validity of individualized notions pertaining to what principles are to be appropriately categorized under such a term; especially as evidenced during the Founding period. An in-depth observation of Machiavelli's career along with his leading literature is applied in correlation to contrive a better sense of his legacy in the field. Although his underlying incentives and personal tenets can only be objectively realized by Machiavelli himself, the research attempts to paint a more holistic picture of how such internal institutions expound upon his work and its subsequent impact on the world. The paradoxical nature of Machiavelli's work is representative of the independent variable in the study, while the dependent variable is delineated

by the proportionality of impact between his most prominent principles. The American Founding period is established as the comparative vacuum in which impact is being gauged. Although the successive methodology is chiefly qualitative in nature, some quantitative considerations are incorporated in support of the overall analysis. The two primary pieces of literature reviewed will be *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*; however, several other relevant works are briefly referenced where applicable.

Modern Principality

The interpretations and inspirations stemming from Machiavelli's earliest political treatise are vital in the sense of philosophical impact on the modern world, but do not adequately illustrate the undertones of his work or the intended consequence of such propositions. To gain an accurate understanding of 'Machiavellianism,' one must consider the context of the time and circumstances under which Machiavelli constructed his 1513 presentation of principality. Niccolò Machiavelli, being an absolute product of the revolving door that was 16th century Italian political power, formulated many of his theories and personal philosophies upon the failures he had directly witnessed in Florence throughout his life. From the very beginning of his political career, Machiavelli was a dutiful servant of a republican Florence; however, following his brief imprisonment by the Medici family, Machiavelli seemed to temporarily alter his devotions out of self-preservation. In Machiavelli's *Letter to Francesco Vettori* (1513),[1] he describes his ultimate distaste for political exile and announces, for the first time, his drafting of *The Prince*. Machiavelli's strategic political motivations in appealing to the Medici family were evident, and explain his seemingly uncharacteristic shift to the promotion of power through practicality in his attempt to gain favor with the political elite and restore his occupation as a career statesman.

In examining the inconsistencies present throughout Machiavelli's literary career, his most profound emphasis on realism as it pertains to achieving and maintaining centralized political power through principality stands with the publication of *The Prince* as the solitary display of virtuous immorality. While he preserves similar principles of human nature, state of nature, fortune, and necessity throughout his cultivations, *The Prince* resides in its own category, as it suggests monarchical and autocratic power superior to the institutions of republicanism as the ideal system of modern political authority. In a system of principality, the power of civil exploitation is the greatest stimulus for stability. It is better aligned with the self-serving nature of man to centralize power to one source rather than letting it lie with the people in a republic; therefore, minimizing the cynical tendencies of man to one decision-maker supposedly acting in the interest of the state. The pragmatic application of an aristocracy not only mitigates the flawed nature of man, but offers expedited decision making without the constraints of a partisan process. It is necessary princes prioritize realism and practicality over morality and idealist delusion to maintain order in statehood.

Machiavelli's devotion to fear as one of the most controllable mechanisms of power is evident throughout the entirety of his depraved treatise. Power, to Machiavelli, seemed to be the most substantial interest for a system of authority in 1513 – not in limiting its power for the good of civil virtue, but in expanding the faculties of a principality so that he may dictate what is just.

[1] William J. Connell, "New Light on Machiavelli's Letter to Vettori, 10 December 1513," (2011): 93-127.

Human nature, under the stringency of absolute power is contained – the only way to correct the majority's overwhelmingly "corrupt"[2] nature is through mirroring moral ambiguity in a principality so that the interest of retaining power ultimately aligns with the interest of the state. The common man's simplicity makes him easily controllable as long as he is not knowingly "oppressed"[3] and his fortune aligns with his perceived necessity.[4] Therefore, it is the duty of a leader to abandon personal faithfulness,[5] morality, compassion, ethics, mercy, and religion so that he may correct the erratic behavior of fortune and emanate his own manufactured virtue onto his state. Although none of these qualities are necessary, or even possible, to uphold as the figure of authority, they must be remembered in their usefulness of swaying the hearts of civil society. The invaluable use of fear in safeguarding power along with Machiavelli's view of the common man's need to be wholly governed due to his own destructive nature are most evident in his analysis of "whether it is better [for a ruler] to be loved than feared":

> The answer is that one would want to be both the one and the other, but because it is difficult to join them together, if one has to do without one of the two, it is much safer to be feared than loved. For the following may be said generally about men: that they are ungrateful, changeable, pretenders and dissemblers, avoiders of dangers, and desirous of gain, and while you do them good they are wholly yours, offering you their blood, their property, their life, and their children, as I said above, when the need is far off, but when it comes close to you they revolt. And that prince who has founded himself wholly on their words, because he finds himself naked of other preparations, is ruined. For the friendships that are acquired at a price, and not with greatness and nobility of spirit, are paid for but they are not owned, and at their expiration they cannot be used. Men exhibit less caution in attacking one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared, since love is held in place by a bond of obligation that, because men are wretched, is broken at every opportunity for utility to oneself, but fear is held in place by fright of punishment that never abandons you.[6]

Despite fear being a condition of immeasurable usefulness, a leader must distinguish between being feared and being despised – as one is a valuable tool and the other is a catalyst for ruin. Machiavelli calls upon the cruelness of Roman leaders Commodus, Maximinus, Severus, etc. to serve as a warning against barbarism that is neither concealed nor serving a greater purpose.[7] Controlling the "ambitions of the few"[8] must be delicately balanced with abstaining from unnecessary greed of the property and honor that keeps men happy. When a government overtly strips away general contentment, it commits a grave error in maintaining the willingness of deceit: "a prince can never secure himself against the people when they are hostile, since there are too many."[9] With the ends justifying the means, a principality should strive to be well-regarded by his people only because it provides him with stability. The grand theme of

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[2] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince: With Related Documents*, Second edition., ed. and trans. William J. Connell (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 98.

[3] Ibid., 68.

[4] Ibid., 117.

[5] Ibid., 92.

[6] Ibid., 89.

[7] Ibid., 97-103.

[8] Ibid., 94.

[9] Ibid., 67.

consequentialism therefore supposes it is advisable to avoid being despised through a policy of deception, but a healthy fear should be fostered in the name of sustained control.

A Modern Republic

If *The Prince* can be described as a guide to aristocracy, Machiavelli's *Discourses* can alternatively be viewed as a guide to future republics. The model of ancient Rome serves Machiavelli's classical analysis of republican virtue well in his chronological comparison pitting the present against the past. While many of the same themes are present in his later work, Machiavelli's analysis and conclusions differ greatly. The use of fear, for example, is considered vital in a republic, not as an authoritative mechanism of control, but as a source of civil unity and respect for institutional legislation. Where unrecoverable injuries are required to "eliminate"[10] anyone who opposes a prince and inspire great fear of retaliation, a republic requires the avoidance of prolonged fear amongst commoners:

> Another thing which greatly hurts government is to keep alive bitter feelings in men's minds by often renewed attacks on individuals, […] we see how hurtful it is for a prince or commonwealth to keep the minds of their subjects in constant alarm and suspense by continually renewed punishments and violence. And, in truth, no course can be more pernicious. For men who are in fear for their safety will seize on every opportunity for securing themselves against the dangers which surround them, and will grow at once more daring, and less scrupulous in resorting to new courses.[11]

Although a republic does not utilize fear in the sense that a prince must, Machiavelli nevertheless acknowledges its necessity in unifying a state against an "external enemy"[12] so that unnecessary internal conflict and factions do not arise out of idleness. Likewise, fear of committing errors whilst in the pursuit of liberty within an uncorrupted republic can "prolong the duration of its free institutions" as well as preserve an "excessive passion" for liberty after its acquisition.[13]

Additionally, the idea of fortune and human nature needing to be counteracted by some form of institutional virtue has a significant role in a republic. The "principal impulses" of man, when left alone, will lead to the downfall of a republic: "men never behave well unless compelled, and that whenever they are free to act as they please, and are under no restraint everything falls at once into confusion and disorder."[14] Whereas principality calls for the reinforcement of centralized power to produce virtue where it is naturally absent, a republic instills virtue into every viable facet of its institutional structure. In direct opposition to *The Prince*, Machiavelli presupposes the reality "all men are [inherently] bad"[15] can only be remedied through the implementation of institutions and laws approved through a republic system as measures against dishonest ambitions of government and in the protection of civic virtue from domestic corruption. The flawed nature of man cannot be corrected through the

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[10] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 43.

[11] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, ed. and trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter E. Bondanella (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 152, EBSCO Online Collection.

[12] Ibid., 267.

[13] Ibid., 112.

[14] Ibid., 37.

[15] Ibid.

'goodness' of select men of nobility or authority; rather, although institutions cannot exist as inherently 'good' nor 'evil', they can provide necessary insurance as an alternative to fully entrusting virtue to self-accountability. An initial source of goodness is required from men alone to apply institutional virtue to new systems, but once they're foundations are set, the laws of a republic are better keepers of virtue than even the men who created them. However, Machiavelli's early treatise mocked republican systems as foolishly idyllic due to the limitations of political constraints that eventually inspire factionalism and internal decay. Internal divisions and public disunion are accordingly identified as the greatest threats to a republic in *Discourses* as well.[16]

So, if both major treatises incorporate synonymous theory with different applications, the question arises – which philosophy is truly 'Machiavellian'? The idea that *The Prince* and *Discourses* are not mutually exclusive has been proposed by a handful of scholars, the most popular perhaps being Gabriele Pedullà with his *Machiavelli in Tumult*.[17] Regardless of the surface-level parallels, these two works are systematically incompatible in both the contextually important criteria of analysis and in their overall tone. Pedullà suggests Machiavelli's first treatise offers a guide of conditions necessary after a revolutionary or transitional event to offset the initial instability associated with the founding phase of a new state. In this theory, a principality serves as a stabilizing force – a founder – during the genesis of statehood. A republic can only come into existence after stability and order have been secured by a morally unrestrained ruler; then, and only then, can the principles of republicanism take root. However, not only does Machiavelli's most utilized State of reference (Rome) depart from these conditions with its 'principality' founding based on mythology and its republic-turned-empire, but the context and thought behind the two works differ exponentially more than they align. Not only was significantly more time, effort, reflection, and personality put into *Discourses*; Machiavelli's thoughts on principality, as mentioned previously, were drastically clouded by Florentine instability and Machiavelli's own personal disillusionments at the time.

If the practice of assuming held any credible weight of clarification, it would be a much safer assumption to designate the proposals of *The Prince* as satirical or perhaps advisories born out of mere situational conviction than to dismiss Machiavelli's views of a republic as solely the best product of a principality. This contention once again provokes the dilemma: intentions do not equate impact. Regardless of perceived compatibility or exclusivity, the objective certainty with which each treatise has been historically conceptualized is clear – *The Prince* serves as an inspiration for tyrants while *Discourses* ignites a love for civil liberty. Given this analysis, the question worth asking no longer concerns how Machiavelli wrote two incredibly dissimilar pieces in a relatively short span of time with the same convincing authority – since any such attempted answer has been proven vain – nor does significance rest on the immeasurability of overall influence. The focus now shifts to evaluating the most perplexing question yet: despite both forums of thought holding substantial leverage over the formation of the single most significant republic since the fall of Rome, how, in the same breath of history, has Machiavelli been revered as a tyrant but forgotten as a pioneer?

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[16] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 51.

[17] Gabriele Pedullà, *Machiavelli in Tumult: The Discourses on Livy and the Origins of Political Conflictualism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), Cambridge EBA.

A New Republic Under God

To best understand the inherent duality in application of political theory as it relates to the enduring perceptions of Machiavellianism, it is essential to first isolate specific Machiavellian principles within a singular event to identify proportionality. As the American Founding period can be broken down into distinct phases beginning with revolution and ending with a new form of government, so can the application of Machiavellian theory. Machiavelli's predictions surrounding the creation of a new system are evident through his analysis of self-acquired principalities: "One has to appreciate that there is nothing more difficult to realize, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage, than to take the lead in introducing new orders."[18] Although he is discussing autocracy, the implications remain the same for a republic. Transitioning from British imperial rule to a mixed government required a strategic analysis of past systems of classical republicanism against modern systems to construct an ideal system of mixed incorporation. Despite the broad educational and philosophical variance amongst the men tasked with this endeavor, something Machiavelli would have undoubtedly detested based on the principles of *The Prince*, a republic reflective of his most prominent ideas was born.

Institutional virtue, as it is hailed throughout *Discourses*, takes center stage during the Founding process. The Founders understood the need for preserved virtue in the same sense as Machiavelli. Perhaps due to his influence over Enlightenment theorists or his direct impact on the Founders themselves, did Machiavelli's realist outlook on human nature shine through. The Founders realized the necessity for an objectively defined 'law of the land' as a reliable means to instill virtue after revolutionizing away from British rule and common law doctrine. If virtue was not solidified in the very foundations of America's new system of government, it would be destined to repeat the failures of past republics. John Adams, specifically, displayed an admiration for Machiavelli's philosophical revelations of the past as they relate to modern politics, as he designated him "'restorer of true politics'"[19] and specifically cites him and his "modes" and "orders" in *A Defence of the Constitution of Government of the United States of America*.[20] Machiavelli's assessment that men, when left to their own collective means, always favor corruption and power over honorable commitments to those they rule was fresh in the minds of Founders after gaining independence from the exploitation of the Crown. The ease with which power is stripped from the people in systems lacking institutionalized virtue is evidenced nowhere more than it is in *The Prince*. Machiavelli describes two opposing "humors" where "the people desire to be neither commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire both to command and to oppress the people."[21] *Discourses* takes this warning a step further by recommending a remedy originating from the virtue of founders themselves: "They who lay the foundations of a State and furnish it with laws must, as is shown by all who have treated of civil government, and by examples of which history is full, assume that 'all men are bad, and will always, when they have free field, give loose to their evil inclinations."[22]

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[18] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 54.

[19] C. Bradley. Thompson, "John Adams's Machiavellian Moment," *The Review of Politics 57*, no. 3 (1995): 398. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1408595.

[20] John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America By John Adams, LL.D. and a Member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Boston, [One Line from Pope]* (Philadelphia: Printed for Hall and Sellers; J. Crukshank; and Young and M'Culloch), 1787.

[21] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 66.

[22] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 37.

The Founders carefully drafted documents denoting sovereignty to favor the limitation of centralized power in a way such that the reality of tyranny revealed by *The Prince* would not easily prevail. The splitting of power, whether it be enumerated, reserved, or concurrent, was given particular attention under Constitutional provision so that the new republic would not fall victim to a leader similar to the prince Machiavelli so cynically described. Following the model of the Roman Republic's senate, consuls, and tribunes, which served as Machiavelli's chief point of reference on the matter,[23] the United States was constructed upon a similar system of checks and balances through branches separated by their express duties and powers over one another; which most effectively blocks the acquisition of unlimited power and diminished civic sovereignty in a republic. The Founders also acknowledged the importance of bearing arms; as a militia unarmed has no means of preventing tyranny. Machiavelli devoted much attention to the necessity of a state to have well-armed and trained citizens in defending a republic from outside threats: "a good militia is the foundation of all States;"[24] however, he does not expressly relate bearing arms to a protectionary measure against government. A certain clarity can then be arrived upon when combining Machiavelli's statements of tyranny as a viable cause for revolt among those who love freedom with his counterpoint cautioning a prince of the dangers of an armed citizenry when he himself is unarmed: "it is not reasonable that a man who is armed should willingly obey a man who is unarmed."[25] Although the concept is being applied in protection of a ruler, the causality is equally as true when the statement is reversed – why should a citizenry who either lacks arms or has had them stripped away trust its government to continue to act in its best interest and without oppression if those in power are still armed?

Religion, even for the most secular founder Jefferson, was an important institution necessary for the health and longevity of a republic. Along with religion being examined by major Founding documents, the national pledge, which came much later but remained consistent with the virtue envisioned by the Founders, states, "One Nation under God"[26] as a means to signify the encouragement of religion in civil affairs. To Machiavelli, however, religious entities at the time of the Renaissance were corrupt and incredibly politicized. Although he often voiced the need for a principality to disregard religion and avoid a faith in divine providence by pursuing secular strategies and immoral pragmatism, he concedes the need for a religious presence in any prosperous state or system. Machiavelli's ideal role for religion in a republic was its performance as a social tool promoting civic virtue and unity through morality. Machiavelli admires religion as "essential to the maintenance of civil society"[27] and beneficial in keeping men "good," "uniting the people," and disciplining men in the presence of arms.[28] Due to the Catholic Church acting as, in essence, a theocracy over 16th century Italy, Machiavelli was an avid believer religion had to be systematically removed from the functions of politics, while the Founders believed the problem of republic decay would be amplified if politics were allowed a place in religion. Religious freedom as well as the separation of church and state, in the sense that the state should have no place in the proceedings of the church, was embedded by James Madison in the foundations of the new republic under the "Establishment Clause" of the First

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[23] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 126.
[24] Ibid., 423.
[25] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 83.
[26] *U.S. Code 4* (2013), § 4.
[27] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 64.
[28] Ibid., 65.

Amendment.[29] Although these founding principles less closely mirror Machiavellian thought, they're rationale can be traced to his analysis of religion as a potential source of political failure if not properly structured so that the state does not favor or oppress one religion or faction above another and produce for itself unnecessary enemies.

Perhaps Machiavelli's most important warning to the Founders comes from the dangers within the very makeup of a republic. Machiavelli understood factions could arise under both a prince and a republic, with no state being immune to division. To Machiavelli, internal division under a republic exists as a source of inevitable decline, as "there is nothing so likely to corrupt its citizens and sow dissension among them."[30] Many American Founders held a similar belief that a two-party political system would pry on the vulnerabilities of democratic institutions and erode any semblance of uniformity within civic statehood. Washington warns the young Republic of this danger of "frightful despotism" in his "Farewell Address;" stating the likelihood of political factions "to become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government."[31] Almost a century after the founding of the new republic, Lincoln referenced Scripture in his address to the Senate that would later become known as his "House Divided Speech."[32] Lincoln, in confronting the disunion brought about by the discord sewn between the North and South over slavery, specifically, but also state sovereignty, referenced Scripture; "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25, New International Version). Ultimately, Machiavelli's dynamic analysis of the unreconcilable damage to both a republic and a principality that internal fissures cause served as one of the greatest foundational concerns to the American Republic and as a particularly insightful systematic contribution to modern political thought.

The Machiavellian Legacy

The research thus far has demonstrated not only the ambivalence of Machiavellian thought through the dominant concepts within his bibliographical collection, but also displays the almost paradoxical presence of even his most converse theories in the raising of an American republic. In spite of Machiavelli's principles on republicanism and other notions consistent with American liberty and constitutionalism equaling, if not exceeding, the prominence of his adverse principles on despotism in the modern system, it seems as though the Italian philosopher has inherited a reputation of incredulous disproportion amongst anyone educated enough to have retained preconceived familiarity with his name.

'Machiavellian,' as it is understood in present terms, is commonly defined as: "using smart but often dishonest methods that deceive people so that you can win power or control."[33] 'Machiavellianism,' as it is defined in a context more reflective of the American Founding

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[29] U.S. Constitution, amend. I.

[30] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 411.

[31] George Washington, "Farewell Address to the People of the United States" (September 19, 1796), U.S. Senate Historical Office, 12-13. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1784-1800/washington-farewell.

[32] Abraham Lincoln, "House Divided Speech" (speech, Springfield, IL, June 16, 1858), The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/.

[33] Cambridge English Dictionary, s.v. "Machiavellian," accessed December 13, 2023, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/.

period, is described: "The principles of Machiavel, or practice in conformity to them; politically cunning and artifice, intended to favor arbitrary power."[34] Psychology, pop-culture, and philosophical references to the term all prioritize significantly the tones popularly associated with *The Prince*. This selective application to current dialect has triggered a phenomenon of warped societal interpretations that, given enough time, may lead to the complete erosion of Machiavelli's most enlightened and revolutionary ideas on modern politics. Even scholars well-versed in the contributions of Machiavelli, seem to elevate the more radical theories in their analyses. Notwithstanding the fact that the ideology criticized in Machiavelli's evaluation of principality is relatively insignificant compared to the considerable devotion with which his later works were written, the overall precedent he set through historical analysis being widely skewed, misrepresented, and devalued projects a concerning future for contemporary society. To systematically neglect such a prominent theorist and the lessons presented throughout the great majority of his works, solely on the premature assumption that his most popular publication signifies the extent of contribution, undermines the resilience of political academia and destines ignorance of thought to repeat past failures so clearly and ironically cautioned against. Machiavelli adamantly asserts the value in lessons of the past in *Discourses*:

> Any one comparing the present with the past will soon perceive that in all cities and in all nations there prevail the same desires and passions as always have prevailed; for which reason it should be an easy matter for him who carefully examines past events, to foresee those which are about to happen in any republic, and to apply such remedies as the ancients have used in like cases; or finding none which have been used by them, to strike out new ones, such as they might have used in similar circumstances. But these lessons being neglected or not understood by readers, or, if understood by them, being unknown to rulers, it follows that the same disorders are common to all times.[35]

As soon as the people become blind to the innate nature of the institutions and authorities they are being governed by, and without a familiarity with the histories from which their current realities have been produced, is when they allow themselves to surrender their power. Ignorance, when given the necessary tools of avoidance, should not be confused with falling victim to deception. As Machiavelli warns: people actively will themselves to be deceived by those who so readily seek to deceive.

Conclusion

The above research, when considered in its totality, supports the assessment that despite the philosophical term 'Machiavellian' being generalized to denote human deviance and deceitful policy detached from morality, his contributions had an overwhelmingly direct influence on modern republicanism and other key American Founding principles. His writings held substantial tenancy in the minds of Founding Fathers such as Jefferson, Madison, and Adams. Additionally, his thoughts on philosophy, state of nature, and civic government influenced popular Enlightenment authors Locke, Rousseau, and Montesquieu and drew further emphasis to the underlying reasoning of these authors in the eyes of the Founders. Expanding on the ideas of the past, Machiavelli bridged the gap between the ancient philosophical concepts of the Romans and

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[34] *Webster's American 1828 Dictionary of the English Language*, compact ed., s.v. "Machiavelian."
[35] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 137.

Greeks with modern politics by assigning weight independent of random fortune to past political successes and failures; defining, for the first time in modern history, the causal pattern between philosophical principles and accompanying political events and performances.

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