

# Citizens, Leaders and the Common Good in a world of Necessity and Scarcity

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## **Citizens, leaders and the common good in a world of necessity and scarcity: Machiavellian lessons for Community-Based Natural Resource Management**

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**Abstract** In this article we investigate the value of and use Machiavelli's work for Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). We made a selection of five topics derived from literature on NRM and CBNRM: 1. Law and Policy, 2. Justice, 3. Participation, 4. Transparency and Management and 5. Leadership and Management. We use Machiavelli's work to analyze these topics and embed the results in a narrative intended to lead into the final conclusions, where the overarching theme of natural resource management for the common good is considered. Machiavelli's focus on practical realities, produce new, sometimes unsettling, insights. We conclude that this focus helps to understand the development and performance of management regimes and their consequences and that institutional design should be seen as an ongoing process, which requires a constant adaptation of these institutions.

**Key words:** Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Machiavelli, Law, Policy, Justice, Leadership

### **Introduction**

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), the renaissance writer and self-professed founder of modern political theory, drew upon his own observations as a Florentine diplomat and the insights of ancient writers to investigate the ideal role of the citizen in governance. Machiavelli highlighted both the necessity and risks of active citizen involvement in all aspects of governance. He has been successively vilified and glorified, claimed by the political left (Gramsci, Althusser) and right (Strauss, Mansfield). His ideas have been applied to a wide range of topics, from modern corporate leadership (Mansfield, 1989) to democracy (McCormick, 2011), military tactics (von Clausewitz, 1976),

diplomacy (Berridge et al, 2001), the role of fortune (Mansfield, 1996), the nature of power (Honohan, 2002) and human nature (Colish, 1971). In this article we investigate the value of his work for Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) includes many different practices like 'social and community forestry, community wildlife management, cooperative or co-management, buffer zone management, participatory multipurpose community projects, communal area management for indigenous resources, and others' (Kellert, Mehta, Ebbin, & Lichtenfeld, 2000). It can be seen as the result of a transition within natural resource management (NRM) to more participatory forms of governance (Clarke & Jupiter, 2010; Gruber, 2010; Gruber, 2011; Bixler & Taylor, 2012; Dyer et al., 2014; Reida & Faulknerb, 2014; Wong, 2013). As Gruber argues: 'CBNRM has evolved during the last two decades in response to the limitations of previous top-down resource management approaches, which were based primarily on a pure technical approach to natural resource management' (Gruber 2006). According to Armitage, quoted in Gruber (2006), CBNRM, 'requires some degree of devolution of decision-making power and authority over natural resources to communities and community-based organizations. [This approach] seeks to encourage better resource management outcomes with the full participation of communities and resource users in decision-making activities, and the incorporation of local institutions, customary practices, and knowledge systems in management, regulatory, and enforcement processes' (Armitage 2005). In addition Keller, et al. (2000) state that CBNRM resulted from 'a desire to link and reconcile the objectives of socioeconomic development and environmental conservation and protection. A tendency to defend and legitimize local and/or indigenous resource and property rights. A belief in the desirability of including traditional values and ecological knowledge in modern resource management'.

Scientific research on CBNRM and more in general on NRM has been approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Many of these address the institutional arrangements that communities develop in order to manage natural resources (Agrawal, 1999, Ostrom 1999, Quinn et al., 2007, Leach, Mearns, & Scoones, 1999). This focus on institutional evolution and design entails attention for the relations between people in and between different organizations (Sick, 2008; Natcher, 2005). Partly in response to problems associated with more hierarchical forms of management, pleas emerged for more participatory approaches (Parkins and Mitchell, 2005; Berkes, 2004; Fitzpack and Sinclair, 2003; Dyer et al., 2014). This shift has placed even more emphasis on the political dimension of natural resource management and on issues such as institutional design, leadership, transparency, knowledge/ power and justice (Thiele, 2003; Wootton, 1997; Manent, 1977).

Besides theoretical perspectives, the contemporary debates about CBNRM also encompass many different and related topics, and different articles present different selections of 'core' topics. Since what is recognized as a core topic within the CBNRM literature is arbitrary and not fixed once and for all we made our own selection of five topics from both the thematically focused and the theoretical work on CBNRM: 1. Law and Policy, 2. Justice, 3. Participation, 4. Transparency and Management and 5. Leadership and Management. This list is neither exclusive or definitive, other concepts could be included. The reason to make this selection is that we believe these CBNRM concepts could relatively easy be related to Machiavelli. Before we elaborate on each of these concepts we will first explicit and contextualize our use of Machiavelli.

### **Machiavelli for CBNRM**

While the 'Machiavellian problem', the notorious ambiguity associated with his rhetorical cunning and relentless wit, will not dissolve any day soon, we argue that a Machiavellian perspective on CBNRM has much to offer. Just as Machiavelli himself famously asserted that political communities have to revisit and re- examine their roots on a regular basis to avoid decay (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III, 8; 22), his own writings invite regular re- examination and have been yielding transformative insights to generations of scholars and practitioners (See Pocock, 1975; Honohan, 2002; McCormick, 2011 for overviews).

Because of his well- known neutral stance vis-a-vis different types of regimes (cf. Mansfield, 1996, p. 281), and his usually a- moral attitude, setting morality aside for the overriding purpose of political and community survival (de Grazia, 1989), it is logically impossible to derive a single recipe for perfect CBNRM. His insights, however can be useful for diverse players in the management game (Mansfield, 1989), each deploying different perspectives, and they are useful in different institutional settings (Berridge et al, 2001).

The impossibility of perfection is underlined by other ideas in his oeuvre: that the perfect state does not exist, that perfect laws and institutions are perfectly adaptable institutions and that people get tired of even the most efficient and just regimes (Viroli, 1998). With all the ambiguity and suspicion of perfection, the insistence on pragmatism, adaptability and 'effective truth' (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 15), Machiavelli's writings on closer inspection (cf. Mansfield, Strauss, McCormick and others) reveal principles and rules. What might look first as overly simplified and often contradictory rules, then as pseudo- structure in associative collages, later appears to be patterned more intricately and logically (Strauss, 1958; Mansfield, 1979, 1989, 1996; Fischer, 2000).

This paper draws upon an extensive reading of Machiavelli's work. Machiavelli himself said that *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513)) and *The Discourses on the first decade of Livy*

(Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515)) contained all he had to say. Yet, the later *Florentine Histories* (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527)) and to a lesser extent the *Art of War* (Machiavelli, 2004 (1521)) and his biography of Castruccio Castracani are rich and relevant enough to include them too. We consulted a collection of his letters (Machiavelli, 1988b), but did not scrutinize his theatrical works (mostly comedies) or the documents he produced as a civil servant.

*The Prince*, his most famous work, is a brief treatise instructing a prince or aspiring prince (leader) how to gain and maintain power and territory. In *The Prince* Machiavelli seems to prefer an authoritarian form of state, but the *Discourses*, probably written in about the same period (1513-17), reveal a preference for a republican (proto- democratic) regime with strong citizen participation (McCormick, 2011). In the *Art of War* (1521), a long dialogue, Machiavelli does not identify with one interlocutor, so his position regarding the ideas brought forth by the characters is not always clear, and it has to be distilled by analyzing the interplay of discourse within the *Art of War* and within his whole oeuvre (Mansfield, 1996). The *Florentine Histories* dissect the history of his hometown in the regional and international context, with lessons for many but no clear preference for one sort of rule. In each work, the relation between the different narrative and rhetorical forms is different (cf. Althusser, 2001; Strauss, 1958; De Grazia, 1989), but in each of them, the more general observations have to be discovered amidst a wealth of stories and examples, and tested against a series of apparent contradictions.

With regards to the secondary literature, we made a selection of Machiavelli scholarship that represents the major lines of interpretation, i.e. a tradition that can be characterized as historicist, emphasizing context and antecedent (Pocock, Viroli, de Grazia), and traditions that consider him part of an ongoing conversation on enduring themes in society. Some of these can be categorized as left (Althusser, Gramsci) or right (Strauss, Mansfield), but certainly not all of them. Comprehensiveness could not be strived for, rather a mapping of the landscape of interpretations, topically focused on concepts relevant to CBNRM.

### **Key topics and concepts**

We will now present a series of analyses of five key topics related to CBNRM, to good governance and active citizenship: 1. Law and Policy, 2. Justice, 3. Participation, 4. Transparency and 5. Leadership and Management. From these analyses we derive insights we consider relevant for present- day problems and discussions in CBNRM. Doing so, we intend to distinguish as carefully as possible the various contexts Machiavelli had to consider in choosing rhetorical forms from the core ideas he grappled with. We then interpret these ideas in the contemporary contexts of CBNRM. The analyses are embedded in a narrative intended to lead into the final conclusions, where the

overarching theme of CBNRM for the common good is considered. Whether directly or indirectly linked, many of these conclusions produce new, sometimes unsettling, insights.

### **1. Law and policy**

Law and policy and the manifold roles thereof are often explicitly and sometimes more subtly part of CBNRM and NRM studies (Pollard & Cousins, 2014; Rahman, Hickey, & Sarker, 2012; Mulale et al., 2014; Leach et al., 1999). As in much of the literature on policy and law, the possibilities and limits of implementation, the role of formal and informal institutions (Beunen, Knaap, & Biesbroek, 2009; Van Assche, Beunen, & Duineveld, 2014) and the successful and unsuccessful enforcements of policies and laws are highlighted. An example within the CBNRM literature where many of these issues are raised and illustrated is 'Law, custom and community-based natural resource management in Kubulau District' (Clarke & Jupiter, 2010). According to Clarke & Jupiter the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation in the context of their study area 'has been constrained by a lack of financial, technical and human resources, professional training (...) and public awareness of environmental laws. In practice, customary governance systems remain the primary mechanism for regulating the use of terrestrial and marine resources in many contemporary Pacific societies (...). Respect for customary law and institutions is an integral feature of most rural communities, where the overwhelming majority of disputes are resolved by customary means (...). In remote areas, daily life is almost entirely governed by custom and customary processes, and even where state institutions exist at the local level, they co-exist with customary institutions, resulting in 'legal pluralism', or the existence of multiple legal systems within one geographic area' (Clarke & Jupiter, 2010).

For Machiavelli these observations would not come as a surprise, since for him policies and law are neither naturally given or fixed entities that can be imposed from above. He famously omitted every reference to natural law or natural rights in his work (e.g. Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.2.15; Strauss, 1958; Mansfield, 1996; McCormick, 2011). He did not assume, like the Greeks, that a natural order in society gave natural rights to each group (Thiele, 2003), and neither did he assume, as in the later liberal- democratic tradition, that each individual was the bearer of a set of natural rights that had to be guaranteed by a government (Held, 2006). For Machiavelli order has to be made and remade in society (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.9.15-18), and maintaining a structured society, where everyone can work and prosper, requires force. Force can come in the form of laws and arms (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 12), with arms as all the powers that can enforce laws or keep order by means of the threat of violence (cf. Machiavelli, 1988b: nr 206). Laws, then, have to be remade regularly, enforced by means of arms (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.24), and sometimes broken by the leadership. Perfect laws are perfectly adapted laws, adapted to internal and external

environments, to the necessities of political and economic survival, and to the web of informal institutions that can uphold laws more easily without resorting to force.

CBNRM in this perspective can never be perfectly regulated and requires an ongoing adaptation (Quinn et al., 2007; Ostrom, 1999; Pollard & Cousins, 2014; Van Assche, Beunen, Smit, & Verschraegen, 2015). The management can therefore never be reduced to the mere application of laws and policies. For Machiavelli, laws do not maintain themselves, and laws governing resources are bound to be undermined by shifting alliances between actors (Sick, 2008). The laws themselves represent negotiated arrangements between stakeholders, and probably none of those stakeholders entirely identifies with the outcome (cf. Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): III.5; D III.42).

For Machiavelli, both internal and external environments are continuously changing, by design and because of Lady Fortune (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.37.5). Laws have to follow these changes. A clear understanding of change and if possible looking forward and planning for contingencies (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 25; D I.19.13), can make a big difference in the future of a community. In CBNRM, a clear understanding of the needs of the community and a precise mapping of resources can make a difference (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.1, Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): I.1). Protection and wise use of resources might not be perfectly enforceable, but a continuous communication on future needs and rights, a continuous reshuffling of plans (and associated policies) stands a much better chance against Lady Fortune and against the always present dangers of corruption (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.42; cf. Natcher et al, 2005).

When natural resources become scarcer, their increased value will feed corruption (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.6.30-36). The resources will make the community more vulnerable to outside players and they are likely to create internal divisions, either directly, by means of emerging patronage networks (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.5.20), or indirectly, by means of anticipated gains. The profits will foster corruption, undermining the regulatory framework and trust in government, and they render the definition of a common good more complicated, as the factions (new or old) perceive great gains if a common good is not considered (Ledeneva, 2005). As soon as factions (in the form of clans, parties, networks, or 'big men' and followers) arise, envisioning the common good becomes more difficult and factions are necessarily fostered by money flows (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II. 42; McLean, 2007; Collins, 2006). Hidden flows are more dangerous, since it is not clear how the money is affecting formal institutions (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II.41; Machiavelli, 2004 (1521): III; cf. Boix 2003; Bowles et al 2008). Laws are then more likely to be broken and new laws are more likely to be benefiting interest groups. For Machiavelli, it is therefore better to 'keep the state rich and the citizens poor' (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.37). Economic development is to be stimulated, because expansion, prosperity and stability are positively valued (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): II.2.44), but the fruits are to be kept close to the state, a state which in turn should be kept

close to the citizens. Furthermore, 'poverty' (the absence of great wealth) motivates human activity, cooperation and therefore economic development (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.3.6)

Natural resources are more difficult to manage than other 'products', since their necessity can create harsh competition and since they are more visible, inviting more direct corruption and leading more directly to the de-stabilization of society (Easterly, 2006). If things go wrong, and after a while they will, 'extraordinary measures' will be necessary, measures few are willing to take (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): 1.17.13). Under these circumstances, that will appear cyclically (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.2; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): V.1), strong leadership will need to be able to selectively use and ignore law and morality, as a precondition for the re-establishment of order (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 5; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): IV.1). Such order cannot be a blind authoritarian regime, as that would quickly collapse under popular resentment, and require too much effort to enforce its laws. A distribution and management of natural resources has to appear as just to the people, if compliance with the laws is expected (cf. Wilson, 2005; Verdery, 2003; Anderson, 1999).

## **2. Participation**

Based on an analysis of 23 research themes Gruber (2010) identified 12 organizational principles of CBNRM initiatives. The first and 'one of the most essential for successful CBNRM programs' principle according to him is public participation and mobilization. According to Gruber, a 'paradigm shift [is] required (...) to move from "getting people on your side" or selling them on your ideas (the lowest rung) to including local people in a substantive and meaningful manner, such as sharing decision-making authority (the higher rungs). (...) Public participation needs to occur at all stages of CBNRM initiative development and implementation including information gathering, consultation, decision making, initiating action, and evaluation (...). This "true public participation" includes stakeholders with programmatic, operational, scientific, and legal expertise through involvement that is open, inclusive, and fair (...). Effective public participation will empower citizens and involve all affected parties, including marginalized communities (...)' (Gruber, 2010, see e.g. Natcher, Davis, & Hickey, 2005 for a more critical account).

Machiavelli, can in part be used to argue in favor of public participation, but his view would have been different and contradict much of the optimism on participation, public involvement or public mobilization. For him the people are capable of recognizing truth, even where the leaders don't recognize it (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.4.10). Even in *The Prince*, Machiavelli asserts that republics (democracies) are the hardest to subject for a prince, since the freedom enjoyed in republics is most in tune with human nature and the memory of freedom will always render subjugation to someone else's rules more difficult (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 9). In the *Discourses*



and elsewhere, he intimates that the perfect prince is almost certainly a group, since the qualities that are supposed to be combined in one person are almost certainly too much to ask (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.20). He also argues that a prince who was successful under certain conditions, will probably repeat his recipe for success even when conditions are changed, and both vanity and the increasing rigidity of aging will cause a disaster for the community (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.9.11). Certain characters of leaders are also more suitable for certain conditions.

In other words, a republic, a democracy, is likely to be more sustainable, more stable, if it is more resilient to changing circumstances (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.46.8). This is the case simply because there are more different observations available to the leadership (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II 25). Both the laws and other ruling strategies can then be adjusted on a regular basis, and if the people remain vigilant, non-adaptation of the ruling group can bring a different group to power (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.12.8; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II 27; Machiavelli, 2003 (1520)).

Thus, a democracy, and certainly the form of participatory democracy Machiavelli seems to encourage in many places, involves all possible forms of active citizenship (McCormick, 2011; cf Putnam, 1993; Goodin, 2008). It enhances the adaptability and thus sustainability of the political community. It also enables a community to shift its definitions of the common good and of justifiable needs and distributions. It makes it easier to enforce laws, since the collective is more strongly represented in the leadership, and since chances are that laws passed in such systems will represent beliefs already held. In other words, participatory democracy tends to improve the fit between formal and informal institutions (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): II.19.9; Easterly, 2006; Young, 2006; Wilson, 2005).

It also tends to favor a distribution of resources that is perceived as fair and just, because the rules governing that distribution are the product of open deliberations incorporating already accepted beliefs and habits (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.58.30; Guinier, 1995). Such perception of fairness again increases the stability of the state by diminishing the causes of resentment and division (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 21). Also here, legality is not an overriding goal but a tool to serve different purposes. The law can stabilize a distribution deemed fair, but if the overriding goal of the leadership is political stability, it can also be forced to break the law or change it (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): II.13.8; Collins, 2006).

Participation for Machiavelli is not advisable in every form and he believes it cannot be full and complete. A democracy has to include forms of representation, for reasons of limited time and expertise on the part of the populace (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515) III.28.14), but also because there needs to be a curtain between rulers and ruled, even if that curtain can be drawn every moment (Mansfield, 1996). As said, the necessities of governing demand a space for deceit (Kluxen, 1949;

Rebhorn, 1988), for dissimulation, vice and unlawfulness (Langton, 1987), but that space cannot be visible to all. People often do not know what it takes to keep things going (Mansfield, 1989) and often they do not want to know, being wed to overly optimistic images of individual and community (Gerber, 1999). Citizens therefore, are required to remain vigilant and active, but the leadership is required to maintain a distance (Strauss, 1958). This tension, in Machiavelli's perspective, is productive, as it gives a space for the necessities of governing while creating a counter- pressure that can minimize the chance that this space becomes a hotbed for corruption and authoritarianism (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): IV.9).

All these remarks apply to CBNRM. Machiavelli does not prescribe the exact role of corporations, individuals and state in this, but would argue that whatever arrangement is chosen, one has to take care that the needs of the community are met and that it does not foster corruption undermining the institutions (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.58.33). Participatory resource governance or co-management, as advocated by many these days (Van Assche, 2011b; Berkes, 2009; Berghöfer, 2008; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Plummer and FitzGibbon, 2004), would be subjected to the same considerations. Some form of participation seems to be a requirement in a Machiavellian perspective, as decision- making entirely by corporations or bureaucrats will eventually produce a situation where resource distribution is perceived as unfair, as disregarding a common good (cf. Jensen-Lee, 2009; Jentoft, 2000). Participatory approaches can also reduce the need to break the law out of necessity for small actors, and they can improve the implementation of resource law because of a tightening fit between formal and informal institutions (cf. Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Ledeneva, 2005). Simultaneously, a *raison d'état* still exists and not all participants are either capable or willing to discern certain threats to the community and to adopt certain strategies to address them (Goodwin, 1998). Participatory forms of management for Machiavelli could not replace indirect government entirely, since they rely too much on a set of identifications with factions (and not the community) and since they create their own political arena, that over time will be marked by the same strategies and 'conspiracies' as the institutions of representative democracy (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): IV.15; c.f. Goodwin, 1998; Gerber, 1999).

The finite and necessary character of natural resources adds complexity to the participation issue in a Machiavellian perspective. We argue that, once scarcity of a necessary resource reaches a threshold, for Machiavelli it would have to be either taken over by the state, or regulated in such a way that the survival of the community is safeguarded. Property rights are shifting use arrangements (Jacobs, 1998; Verdery, 2003) and individuals and corporations for Machiavelli cannot be allowed to undermine the institutions or jeopardize the community by means of property, since it was the community that granted these rights in the first place (Ellickson, 1991; Jacobs, 1998). The threshold

for action, for Machiavelli, could either be a sufficient threat as perceived by the people (since not recognizing that would create internal tumult) or as perceived by the leadership (more objective according to Machiavelli). Scarcity capable of destabilizing the economy (and hence the political institutions) and the fear of such scarcity are politically equivalent and should be met with the same extraordinary measures. Just as the beginning of a new order requires unorthodox measures (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 5), the irrational fear of collapse can require these measures, including the taking of property and identification of scapegoats.

### **3. Justice**

Ideas and concepts of justice are core of the CBNRM literature and perhaps one could argue, the concept CBNRM by definition contains the notion of justice (cf. Brosius, Tsing, & Zerner, 1998), since it's the product of the normative assumption of inclusion. No surprise that the second of the 12 organizational principles of CBNRM initiatives, identified by Gruber (2010) is that of resources and equity, in other words: the question of justice. He argues that 'For community-based environmental programs to be effective, there must be clear linkages between natural resource protection and conservation and the recognition of local social and economic needs and livelihoods of the community members (...). This linkage should take into consideration equity, local needs, and sustainability (...). To promote equity, CBNRM initiatives should seek the fair distribution of benefits as well as the sharing of hardships for those who may be subject to limited access to resources and sanctions (...)' (Gruber, 2010).

If we describe natural resources as natural goods, as goods that have a value for many, then the issues of ownership and distributive justice loom large. If natural resources are part of the necessities of life for a community, then that necessity can, for Machiavelli, override all other concerns (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.12; Machiavelli, 2004 (1521): I). That includes dissolving property rights (see e.g. his discussion of a contested mine, Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): VII. 29) and it includes the possibility of spectacular deterrents and punishments for those who go against the community.

While Aristotle, the model for most Renaissance political and legal thinkers, disconnected distributive justice from political and criminal justice (Mansfield, 1996, p. 299), for Machiavelli, the different forms of justice were manifestations of one and the same justice, a justice that is seen as primarily a feature of a well- ordered society (Viroli, 1998; Strauss, 1958). If necessity requires to break laws or to take away privileges from some, that is excusable. Neither criminal justice nor distributive justice can be derived from natural law, and they can both be manipulated in the pursuit of the common good (Mansfield, 1989).

Since natural resources are naturally limited, their value is bound to increase with the growth of economies and populations. For Machiavelli that implies immediately that the question of ownership will become more politically fraught (cf. Verdery 2003; Jacobs, 1998). It means that acquiring some form of property rights will become a necessity for more communities, factions and individuals (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): II.2.46) and that a wide range of strategies will be deployed to obtain them (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.19.12; Ishihura & Pascual, 2009; Radin, 1996). These strategies will include legal, illegal and pseudo- legal ones, and morality will not play a role in the calculations of many actors. Machiavelli's tenet that one cannot discount what is for what ought to be (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 15) comes into play, and any actor who takes the order of formal institutions for granted will perish 'when surrounded by so many who are not virtuous' (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 15). Scarcity, then, forces realism, acuity and pragmatism, as it requires flexibility, since many players under pressure will act more quickly, less overtly, and less bound by laws (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.3.6; I.7.7).

Justice, then, will look different in times of scarcity, and upholding the law will be more difficult and sometimes less appropriate. Justice, under these conditions, will sometimes require popular justice, including the punishment of deviants, and on other occasions it will be a rhetorical varnish of calculating leaders (Plummer & FitzGibbon, 2004; Van Assche et al. 2011a). These leaders have to manipulate the feelings of justice of the populace, because the long- term stability of the institutions can only be guaranteed by (a group of) leaders who is willing to play dirty, who is willing to commit vices of various sorts, against the own citizens and the citizens of neighboring regimes (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 17).

Justice in one community can never be justice for other communities, since their interests will diverge, and the body politic of one can never coincide with that of another (Bernstein, 2005). Property rights and extraction rights in and for one community will not necessarily be respected in another one, since the rights will be subjected to different political calculations in each community (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.40.22). Outsider status has a political value and a political price, and ownership by outsiders is bound to become part of factional discussions. If it is not a topic, it is likely to become a topic; if it is not divisive, it is likely to become divisive.

Machiavelli himself loved his fatherland, but, as others have remarked earlier, that fatherland is sometimes Florence, sometimes Tuscany, or Italy, and on some occasions it seems to be Europe (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 24; Machiavelli, 1988b: nr 225; De Grazia, 1989; McLean, 2007). He gave advice to both authoritarian and democratic leaders and argued that the scale of governance, and the scale of social identification would have to shift upwards to diminish conflict. At the same time, conflict will never go away (Machiavelli, 1988b: nr 227; Krause, 2008; Geuss, 2008). Even if CBNRM can be subjected to a form of world governance, and a conjectured global justice, that justice

will be revised regularly, and new divisions will emerge at all scales (cf. Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): V.3; Parel, 1992). Thus, both the aspiration of world justice and governance, and the prediction of continuous strife and new divisions, can be labeled 'realistic', as emerging from his observations as a civil servant/ diplomat, and his reflections on ancient history and theory.

#### **4. Transparency**

Lockwood, et al. consider transparency to be one of eight principals of good governance within NRM. For them transparency '*refers to (a) the visibility of decision-making processes; (b) the clarity with which the reasoning behind decisions is communicated; and (c) the ready availability of relevant information about governance and performance in an organization. In general, all decisions about NRM priorities and investments should be accessible to stakeholders. Transparency is required in who has made a decision; the means by which it has been reached; and its justification.*' (Lockwood, et al., 2010, cf. Dyer et al., 2014) These normative assumptions that define transparency in this quote, are partly contradicted if we revisit this concept with Machiavelli in mind.

The intended and well- delineated ambiguities pertaining to the issue of participation in Machiavelli's work (cf. Mansfield, 1996), transfer to the topic of transparency. Indeed, just as vigilance and participation ought to be combined with representation, indirect government and executive decisions, so the political system needs to retain opaque spots against a counter-pressure of demands for transparency. These structural tensions are related, and according to Machiavelli they are productive, and preferably part of any institutional design (Strauss, 1958). Whereas Machiavelli clearly holds the opinions that power and money corrupt, and that corruption prefers the dark, he argues that full transparency is impossible and undesirable (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 17; Machiavelli, 2003 (1520)). Full transparency is impossible and undesirable not only in the relation between government and people, and between governments, but even between different departments and branches of government (Sick, 2008). Diplomacy is the prime example here (cf. Berridge et al., 2001), but for example also ministries of economics, environment and planning ought not to reveal everything to each other, and not too soon, since that would undermine the quality of their internal decision- making. Every aspect of government has an aspect of war, and thus requires judicious use of opacity and dissimulation (Machiavelli, 2004 (1521): IV; Machiavelli, 2003 (1520)).

At the same time, citizens, parties and corporations are expected to exert a counter-pressure, demanding openness in policy- making, law- making and law- enforcement (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III). If it is known which rules apply in which case, if one can expect rules to represent a reasonable compromise between interests and that these rules will be implemented, then trust in the institutions can grow and the structures and values of society can reproduce themselves in and

through these institutions (North, 2005). Transparency is the requirement here, as is vigilance. Machiavelli asks of citizens to trust and distrust the government, as he asks to alternate the roles of participant and observer (Bock et al 1990; cf. Anderson, 1999; Berkers, 2009). Trust is an asset for the ruler and the community, but distrust, in the form of vigilance, and the expectation of corruption, is a necessary accompaniment (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.53; cf. Fraser & Gerstle, 2005).

With regards to CBNRM, scarcity and perceived scarcity can be treated as the triggers for shifts in trust and transparency. In times of scarcity, the paradox of government will become more apparent, i.e. the simultaneous cry for transparency (as communal survival is at stake) and pragmatic pressure on the leadership to take actions that circumvent the legal order or go against the sensitivities of the public. The hard distinction between the logic of the ruler and the logic of the ruled (Langton, 1987; Luhmann, 1995) is felt harder under such circumstances (P17), and cannot be replaced by the distinction between private and public goods. What is private and public is likely to be redefined in a natural resource crisis (Easterly, 2006; Lazar, 2009). The roles of various actors, and the laws guiding their actions are likely to be modified (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): VIII.19; Berkers, 2009).

Times of abundance can be dangerous too, since the cries for transparency will be muted amidst general prosperity, and private control over natural resources can create fast wealth and can engender corruption quickly (Ostrom, 2005; Dawood, 2007). For Machiavelli, prosperity can breed laziness, as in diminished vigilance and participation, and laziness breeds internal corruption while inviting attacks from the outside (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.16; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527)). Neither internal nor external environments can be pacified or unified for a long time, for Machiavelli, so vigilance is always required (de Grazia, 1989; Viroli, 1990). New divisions, new ambitions, desires and envies will always show up (Backstrand, 2003), and for CBNRM that means new claims, new forces on rule- making and new causes of conflict (Machiavelli, 1988b: nr 227; Keen et al., 2005).

So, private and governmental actors are expected to monitor each other continuously, and are expected to develop a capacity for deciding whether to trust or distrust, since relying on either one of them too much invites destruction. This, we argue is an essential aspect of Machiavellian prudence. Individuals, corporations and governmental organizations with a role in CBNRM have to make similar decisions regarding trust and distrust, but the allocation of trust enables the reproduction of society, while the allocation of distrust prevents collapse. All these players, in their different roles, ought to push for transparency with the others (Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003), while maintaining a private space for decision- making. This is not a contradiction in practice or theory; it is a manifestation of political reality (and hence the reality of each community) as borne out of conflict (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): VII.1; Hulliung, 1983; Krause, 2008).

## **5. Leadership and management**

The many discourses on NRM and CBNRM by definition concern the issue of management. Leadership is often mentioned separately, as a subcategory of CBNRM, NRM or management in general (Gruber, 2010; Dyer et al., 2014; Matthews, 1990; Lockwood et al., 2010; Wong, 2013). Although we do not aim to provide an extensive literature review here, we believe a main distinction can be made within the CBNRM literature between a version of leadership in which ‘the leader’ rules top down, in a technocratic manner, directed at clearly delineated objectives, aiming to implement policies and plans and ideas on leadership in which leadership is considered to be adaptive, a form of co management, and a way of learning to adjust to new circumstances (Dyer et al., 2014; Gruber, 2010).

For Machiavelli, leadership is always management, management of impressions, passions and resources (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): III.1; Mansfield, 1989). A political reality is defined by the impression people have of the situation in the community and the role of the leadership, by the passions that are aroused by these impressions and in particular by the impressions of the leadership as managers of resource flows (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): VII.29; Mansfield, 1979; Radin, 1996). Managing resource flows is always politics if these resources are vital to the community, and political calculations cannot be excluded from the management (Dawood, 2007; Van Assche et al, 2011b). Resorting to a legal blindness of rule application or a bureaucratic blindness of optimums and objective needs does not solve anything (Miller, 2002; by contrast: McCann et al, 2005). It only creates an impression of a de-politicized space where de facto politics plays out in denser darkness (Ledeneva, 2005).

While Machiavelli never made the explicit distinction between legislature, judiciary and executive branches of government (Skinner, 1981), he can be seen as the first theorist of the executive (Mansfield, 1989, 1996), and the first theorist to underline the need for checks and balances (Thiele, 2003). Indeed, the structure of any government out to be such that no party can amass all power, he asserted (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515) and Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): throughout). Such structure also has the positive feature that more different perspectives can come to the surface (cf. Luhmann, 1995). The surfacing of difference enhances the quality of decisions and thus the adaptive capacities of government, and it reduces opacity and the need for conspiracy (Honig, 2007). In Machiavelli’s system, the structural checks and balances in government are part of a theory of productive conflict, where the pairs of transparency/opacity, trust/distrust, and participation/subjugation are continuously tested against each other by all actors.

Even so, good decisions, i.e. decisions furthering the common good and anticipating necessity (Mansfield, 1996), do not automatically arise from the this conflict- ridden interplay between actors. Good decisions are neither reducible to good laws (laws being too generic and rigid), nor to open discussions between various players (not necessarily eying the common good, not necessarily producing consensus with the necessary content). They often require an executive with autonomy, an executive (prince or group) that can act quickly and decisively if necessary (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 5; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II.14), that can maintain a distance from the people if necessary, and that can take audacious and radical decisions were the situation asks for it (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 24). In other words, leadership is necessary, with enough decision- space to allow for prudent and independent judgment.

Fear on both sides is required to make this work, according to Machiavelli, a fear of the leadership, capable to do seemingly irrational things in the common interest and a fear by the leader of the people, an anxiety to maintain public support in the longer run (Rebhorn, 1988; Langton, 1987). Managing the public is therefore a necessity for the leader, and restricting the leader, by means of term limits, laws, and institutional checks, is a necessity for the people (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.11.22; cf. Skocpol, 2004).

The management of natural resources, as a political endeavor, is also a management of people (Sick, 2008). In the management of resources, expertise in the discerning of future necessity and in the organization of efficient use and distribution has to be combined with the political arts. For Machiavelli, that means that resource extraction and distribution cannot be left entirely to private actors and that the public management of resources cannot be left entirely to bureaucratic and scientific experts (Scott, 1998; Miller, 2002). CBNRM for Machiavelli would have to include both careful planning and maintaining the ability to break the self- imposed policies (D. I. 33.2), both the careful maintenance of alliances and the ability to break them if necessary (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.38.2), both articulate communication strategies and the willingness to evade and hide (Garsten, 2006; Lazar, 2009).

All the vices that are expected to be available to the autonomous manager are not considered morally good, but merely excusable, as means to further the security, stability, prosperity and freedoms of the community (Viroli, 1998). In CBNRM, where distribution questions come to the fore, the issue of factions ignoring the common good, intent on diverting flows and bending rules, is of foremost importance (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): V.6). Managing resources is managing factions, observing them, understanding their modes and operations. Management of factions can consist of a mere application of laws, of attempts to bind factions to a common good defined in politics, and it can involve extraordinary measures or attempts to reconfigure faction interest to minimize damage to a common good (Lazar, 2009; Rebhorn, 1988).



Especially in the management of resources, Machiavelli's precept to start reasoning from how things actually work, not how they are supposed to work, is eminently useful. Necessities and opportunities reveal themselves in the moment, in the action (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): VI.13): 'When one acts, plans reveal themselves that, to one standing still, would always be hidden'.

The prudent manager realizes that factions and their corruptive tendencies will never go away, but that they can be managed (Rose- Ackerman, 1999; cf. Carlsson& Berkes, 2005). It is usually better to work with known factions than to spend precious resources to get rid of them; that will only create a vacuum that will be filled up by a new set of factions operating along lines that are less known, less predictable and thus risky (Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): II.17).

### **Conclusions**

Based on a comparison and evaluation of five case studies Kellert et al. conclude that there are quite some gaps between the promise, rhetoric, and reality of CBNRM (Kellert et al., 2000). Like us they do not undermine the relevance and importance of CBNRM, but they argue '*the evidence accumulated in the five case studies examined (...) suggests the reality often falls far short of the rhetoric and promise of C[B]NRM. The complexity of goals, interests, and organizational features of CNRM renders its implementation exceedingly difficult*' (Kellert et al., 2000).

Our reading Machiavelli could bring us to similar conclusions, yet they also deepen the understanding of why gaps exist between the promise, rhetoric and reality of CBNRM and moreover, there are some important constructive lessons for CBNRM that we can learn from Machiavelli's work. We can take from his work the focus on practical realities. This focus helps to understand the development and performance of management regimes and their social consequences. This would require more attention for issues like transparency, leadership and rule avoidance in the research on CBNRM. Secondly, we can learn from Machiavelli's work that institutional design should be seen as an ongoing process. The circumstances in which institutions are to function are likely to change sooner or later, requiring an adaptation of these institutions (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): III.9; Machiavelli, 1988A (1527); Machiavelli, 1988A (1527): throughout). Also under stable conditions the effects of institutions will probably erode, simply because people adapt their behavior, rendering the institutions less efficient or even useless after a while. How this is going to happen and when, can never be predicted, but it requires a permanent state of vigilance from all actors towards current institutions.

If we consider CBNRM as something touching upon the common good in a community, then Machiavelli would argue it is a matter of politics, and, as such, a matter requiring skills in the art of war (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 6; Machiavelli, 2004 (1521): I; Machiavelli, 2003 (1520)). Current

republics might have more substantial bureaucracies and expertise than early modern states (Martines, 1979), and their corporate structures and lobbies might be more developed (Mansfield, 1989), but Renaissance Tuscany and Classical Antiquity offered enough institutional development and variation for Machiavelli to grasp underlying principles that can still apply today (Gilbert, 1965; McLean, 2007). Resource management still is war, sometimes in the literal sense, but always in the wider sense intended by Machiavelli: the art of strategy and tactics, of persuasion and bullying, in other words, the mechanics of power (Garsten, 2006).

As many others have noticed (De Grazia, 1989; Viroli, 1998; Gramsci, 1958), Machiavelli never relinquishes the dream of a better society and in most of his writings that does seem to be a society that determines its own needs and goals, a society that builds on the passions of individuals, organizations and factions without giving in to the eroding tendencies that come together with these passions (Fishkin, 1997; Holmes, 1995; Krause, 2008). Power is both necessary and evil for Machiavelli and harnessing all forms of power available to society is helpful in maintaining order and expanding (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): II.2.45). Power is the fire one needs to play with. Managing natural resources, as finite necessities for the community, is playing with fire. It is a continuous and continuously perilous attempt to manage factions, individuals and organizations (e.g. corporations) who are likely following a logic that is detrimental to the common good.

Such common good cannot be determined once and for all by science (Miller, 2002), or in political consensus- building (Machiavelli, 1997 (ca 1515): I.22.6; Honig, 2007). Neither can it be imposed on society by a set of timeless perfect laws. Administrators cannot be left to their own devices in managing power/ knowledge, in implementing policies and enforcing laws (Machiavelli, 2005 (ca 1513): 22). The rules, knowledge and tacit agreements governing the distribution and management of natural resources are destined to shift on a regular basis, but autonomous yet contained executive leadership is needed to take decisions in the name of the community. While spectacular executions and conspiracy might be out of fashion, these concepts do point out that science, law, and established procedure are likely to be insufficient in CBNRM (cf. Mansfield, 1996; McCormick, 2011). This applies to the governmental actors, but it also applies to the management of the corporations involved in the natural resource game. Management on both sides of the private/ public divide has to keep the options open to deviate from established procedures if pursuing the goals of the whole is primary (cf. Brandsen et al., 2006; Short and Winter, 1998).

One could object that the practice or the ideal of CBNRM can replace the intricate power games of a Machiavellian democracy. Machiavelli would believe the opposite to be true. Not only has direct participation its obvious limitations, and not only can it easily be manipulated by both princes and opposition (Goodwin, 1998), one should also be aware that what we call participatory management tends to blur the responsibilities of all actors in a representative democracy (Van

Assche et al, 2011b; Bergkamp, 2002). As such, it offers more openings for strategy, and hampers the checks and balances that became accepted as part of politics.

An important lesson from Machiavelli is that a good natural resource regime will naturally transform itself. If resources become scarce, rules will be broken and rules and alliances will be modified. Expecting a final and stable formula for perfect management from science, law, economy or politics is either a soothing delusion for those believing in the possibility of a harmonious society, or the discourse of actors benefiting from this belief (Schwartzberg, 2007). The role of science, politics, law and economy in CBNRM will be different in each time and place, as will the influence of various actors on rules and regulations. For Machiavelli, however, politics holds a special place, since it should be a matter of politics to decide how politics is organized. The shifting resource management arrangements should be firmly placed within the realm of politics, with all the vigilance, deceit, and counter- pressures, but also with the enduring belief that a common good can be defined within politics, that it can be strived for, and that it is in the interest of both leaders and community to do so. CBNRM is a necessity, but its plans, policies and procedures, including increased citizen participation, cannot last eternally. They have to build and rebuild in continuous friction, scrutiny and agility.

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