

Machiavelli's "The Prince" Simulation

To create a simulation to represent Machiavelli's view he expressed in "The Prince," the Social Science Simulation, Rebellion, from Netlogo was modified to encapture Machiavelli's view. Originally, Rebellion was a simulation that simulated a government's relationship with its citizens' rebellion. Their rebellion depended on the cops density, citizen density, the radius of the cops that they could effect, and the legitimacy of the government. The simulation was a perfect candidate to abstract from since the simulation was based off a type of hierarchy and took into consideration the possible hardships of the citizens that effect the government legitimacy, creating a more realistic simulation overall. In addition, the Rebellion simulation composed an easy to follow visualization with basic shapes representing the cops and citizens.

To the Social Science Simulation, the Rebellion, manipulation, generosity, and clemency features were added to reflect the ideas Machiavelli presents. To begin with, Machiavelli stated that a successful man "must be a great liar and hypocrite" (Machiavelli 5). To fit this, the manipulation feature is set in between a balance between 0.45 and 0.90 as the better liar and hypocrite, the more successful the prince will be. However, a limit is placed to ensure the prince is never always manipulative because when the prince has them, but "exercise them all the time," they become "harmful" (Machiavelli 4) In addition, Machiavelli claimed that a Prince has to be generous "otherwise, his soldiers would desert him," however, generosity is risky because the prince is either spending "his own money or that of his subjects" (Machiavelli 1). To keep this strict balance, a small boundary set between 0.4 to 0.6 so the prince is not spending too much or too little that his people will rebel. Lastly, Machiavelli suggested that every prince should prefer to be considered merciful rather than cruel," but to be wary because "when danger is close at hand, they will turn against you" for people are not concerned with offending those they love (Machiavelli 2-3). Similarly to the two other features, the clemency feature has boundaries between 0 and 0.65 to ensure the prince is being feared, but not hated. However, according to Machiavelli, a prince "cannot possibly exercise all those virtues" that are considered as good (Machiavelli 6). To compensate, a sum of the two good traits, generosity and clemency, minus the negative trait, manipulation, cannot be greater than the threshold. If it is overwhelmed, then the people will revolt because of the unrealisticness.

As a result, the three traits, manipulation, generosity, and clemency, cannot break their respected boundaries, 0.45 to 0.9, 0.4 to 0.6, and 0 to 0.65, or the citizens will rebel. In addition, the "good" traits cannot overwhelm the bad traits or a rebellion will occur. Within the modified Rebellion simulation, a perfect balance has to be made within the three characteristics for the citizens to peacefully coexist.