

**Danny Williams: A Machiavellian Strategist?**  
**Re-examining *The Prince* in Applied Strategic Leadership**

Valérie Vézina  
PhD Candidate, Université du Québec à Montréal

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# **Danny Williams: A Machiavellian Strategist?**

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PhD Candidate, Université du Québec à Montréal  
valerie.vezina@gmail.com

### Abstract

Centuries ago, Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, outlined different skills to be an effective leader. Too often considered in a bad sense, a re-reading of Machiavelli can be very insightful in evaluating political leaders. In leadership studies, Machiavelli's work is often associated with strategic leadership. Based mostly on Machiavelli's principles and the strategic leadership literature, I will argue that current Newfoundland and Labrador's Premier, Danny Williams, since he held office in 2003, has been a strategic leader. Machiavellian towards the federal government, he has earned the love of his followers in his own Province. First, this paper will briefly outline Machiavelli's principles and summarize the literature and arguments on strategic leadership. Then, some of the most important "strategic" moves (including the ordering down of the Canadian flags, the walking out of Hebron discussions with big-oil firms, the 'Anything but Conservative' campaign) made by Premier Danny Williams will be evaluated from a Machiavellian perspective.

### Résumé

Dans son oeuvre magistrale du Prince, Machiavel offre ses conseils sur la manière et les moyens afin de devenir un bon prince. L'emploi de l'adjectif machiavélique a trop souvent pourtant une connotation péjorative. Une re-lecture de l'oeuvre de Machiavel peut toutefois s'avérer fort utile afin d'évaluer les leaders (politiques) d'aujourd'hui. En nous basant sur la littérature du leadership stratégique et les principes machiavéliques du Prince, nous avançons la thèse que Danny Williams, actuel premier ministre provincial de Terre-Neuve et Labrador, correspond pratiquement en tout point au leader stratégique tel qu'énoncé par Machiavel.

### Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

Machiavelli is often depicted as the founder of modern political science, even though Machiavelli never spoke of "political science" per se (Mansfield, 1981: 293). However, Machiavelli's writings have been influential in many modern sub-fields of political science. His morality (or lack thereof) has been analysed and studied by political philosophers. His Republicanism has been influential to the study of modern states by realists. However, one interpretation has influenced more than any others how Machiavelli is interpreted. Leo Strauss's *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (1958) has had profound effects on how Machiavelli is perceived by most people. In his introductory sentence, Strauss wrote: "We shall not shock anyone, we shall merely expose ourselves to good-natured or at any rate harmless ridicule, if we profess ourselves inclined to the old-fashioned and simple opinion according to which Machiavelli was a teacher of evil" (1958: 9). This opinion has deeply influenced the collective consciousness; merely anyone who is qualified as being Machiavellian is automatically associated with bad morality, even evilness.

In what follows, I will claim that a re-interpretation of Machiavelli's skills<sup>1</sup> to be a ruler, as outlined in *The Prince*, can be insightful to understand how strategic and effective political leaders, even in democratic regimes, use these strategies to advance the public good. The choice to focus exclusively on *The Prince* (and not *The Discourses* for example) is based on the fact that, like Bernard Crick (2003: 21), I believe that *The Prince* sets forth the requirements for personal achievements<sup>2</sup>, whereas *The Discourses* advance the idea of republican rule and its conditions. It should also be noted that my aim here is to show how a particular leader can effectively use Machiavellian strategies even in contemporary democratic regimes. Furthermore, due to space and time constraint, I did not want to elaborate into details two major works. To prove my thesis, I will proceed in two ways. First of all, based on Chapter XV to XXII of *The Prince*, I will adapt the skills presented by Machiavelli to the strategic leadership literature. Those chapters were chosen due to their clarity and exposure of clear strategic skills and actions a leader must have and do. In the second part, a case-study will be done in order to test my re-interpretation of Machiavellian<sup>3</sup> strategies. To do so, the main actions taken by Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, since he held office in 2003 will be presented. I will then conclude that Danny Williams has been strategic and effective in the use of (almost) every strategy outlined by Machiavelli to be a good leader.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars tend to have different translations of the word *virtú* used by Machiavelli. One French translation (Jacques Gohory & Prieur de Marcilly, 1962) left the Italian word as is, leaving the reader to his own interpretation. Others (Luigi Ricci, revised by E.R.P.Vincent, 1950) translated it as "virtues". I prefer to use skills. The word virtue seems to me too prescriptive, as something merely unattainable. Machiavelli's *virtú* were meant to give practical advices to princes to gain or maintain power.

<sup>2</sup> I will here have to disagree with Crick, his use of "personal rule" seems to me too restrictive and could lead to misleading conclusions of the thesis I advance here. Of course, I am aware that criticisms could be made by saying that Machiavellian skills can only lead to dictatorship and cannot apply to democracies. As the argument presented will make clearer, I hope readers will be convinced of the contrary.

<sup>3</sup> On purpose, I will tend, throughout this paper to use the adjective Machiavellian as often as possible. I ask the reader to "think outside the box" and to open his mind that another interpretation, despite Strauss's claim that Machiavelli was the "teacher of evil", is possible. My interpretation is not new; some authors (Mansfield, 1975) also made such claims.

<sup>4</sup> To adapt Machiavelli's language to today's reality, I will prefer to use the word "leader" to "prince." Therefore, the reader should be aware that any time Machiavelli is quoted, his use of the word *prince* should be interpreted as (political) leader.

## Re-interpreting Machiavelli: From 16th century Italy to Contemporary Strategic Leadership

In order to better grasp what Machiavelli is saying and today's implications for strategic leadership, I will examine each chapter of *The Prince* trying to make a contemporary sense of what Machiavelli was saying. This will allow us to identify the various skills and strategies found in *The Prince*.

At the beginning of Chapter XV<sup>5</sup>, Machiavelli wrote: "Now, it remains to be considered what should be the methods and principles of a prince in dealing with his subjects and allies" (2005: 53). The methods and principles he is outlining are to be of practical use. As he says: "Many writers have imagined republics and principalities that never been nor known to exist in reality. For there is such a distance between how one lives and how one ought to live, that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done achieves his downfall rather than this preservation" (2005: 53).<sup>6</sup> Machiavelli outlines the first principle as follow: "[...] it is necessary for a prince who wished to maintain himself to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity" (2005: 53). Unlike Strauss who associated "not to be good" with evil, I tend to think that Machiavelli was more grounded in reality as the previous quote suggests. For Machiavelli, the leader needs to be practical. He cannot follow what "ought to be done", but what must be done.<sup>7</sup> Applied to strategic leadership, this principle simply means that a leader might (and must) have a plan in mind of what *needs* to be done, but this does not necessarily correspond to what *ought* to be done. Circumstances (Machiavelli's *necessity*) will often mean that a strategic leader will have to adapt the initial plan otherwise he risks losing the confidence of his followers, or as Machiavelli would have say he will "[...] achieve[s] his downfall" (2005: 53). Dixit & Nalebuff, writing about strategic thinking, correctly point out that work, business, politics and even, social life is a constant stream of decisions (1991: 1). One needs to adapt, to look forward in order to be a good strategist (Dixit & Nalebuff, 1991: 1)<sup>8</sup>. A Machiavellian leader will therefore be an effective strategist if he is anchored in reality and seeks practical ends, not prescriptive ends.

In Chapter XVI, Machiavelli outlines another skill a leader needs to be able to rule; he has to be a miser: "Therefore —in order not to have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, and not to be forced to become rapacious— a prince must consider it of little account if he incurs the reputation of being a miser, for this is one of those vices that enables him to rule" (2005: 55). It would be lying to say that political leaders in our current democracies are misers. However, the general thinking among the people is that leaders are in power not to 'rob' them<sup>9</sup>, but to help them advance in their own personal achievements. Even Machiavelli recognized that centuries ago when he wrote: "For men are much more taken by present concerns than by those of the past, and when they discover

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<sup>5</sup> Unless complete bibliographical notes are mentioned, chapter numbers refer to *The Prince*.

<sup>6</sup> One could counter-argue that such a claim means that a modern interpretation of Machiavelli's thinking is impossible: his arguments being set forth for a particular time and particular place. Although this argument is appealing, it does not weight enough against the undoubted influence of Machiavelli's work in modern political science. I will therefore argue that Machiavelli's "principles and methods" can be adapted to any time and regime and can apply to all kinds of political leaders who want to be strategic.

<sup>7</sup> This is the reason why Machiavelli is depicted as the first modern political scientist.

<sup>8</sup> Note that a good strategist is defined by Dixit & Nalebuff as being effective at using strategic thinking defined as "the art of outdoing an adversary, knowing that the adversary is trying to do the same to you" (1991: ix).

<sup>9</sup> Some may argue that the various taxes paid by the citizens to the government are examples of 'robbery'. This argument is buyable, but saying so undermines the global picture of the strategist, of the good ruler who aims for the public good.

benefit in present things, they enjoy it and seek no more. In fact, they will seize every measure to defend the new prince so long as he is not neglectful of his duties" (2005: 82-83). Machiavelli's advice is to be not generous, because "[...] a prince must guard himself against being despised and hated. Generosity leads you both to one and to the other" (2005: 56). To avoid being generous, Machiavelli suggests that "spending the wealth of others does not lessen your reputation, but only adds to it. Only the spending of your own is what does harm you" (2005: 56). In the case of Canadian provincial politics, spending one's money could be associated with (over)spending the provincial budget, therefore putting one's province in much higher debt, which brings an extra burden on the people. This will be depicted by Machiavelli as dangerous for the leader and could bring hatred from the people.

In Chapter XVII, Machiavelli's advice is about the careful use (and balance) of cruelty and mercy. A Machiavellian leader "[...] must not worry about the infamy of being considered cruel when it is a matter of keeping his subjects united and loyal. With a very few examples of cruelty, he will prove more compassionate than those who, out of excessive mercy, permit disorders to continue from which arise murders and plundering, for these usually injure the entire community, while the executions ordered by the prince injure specific individuals" (2005: 57). Strategist writers say that "some of the strategies that are good for achieving these goals may not earn you the love of your defeated rivals" (Dixit & Nalebuff, 1991: 4). Threats (a response rule that punishes others who fail to cooperate with you) and warnings (informing others of the effects of their actions, therefore ensuring that they will carry on their promise) are 'cruel means' used by strategic leaders in many occasions in order to achieve their goals. Using a threat will not make you loved by your enemies, but will certainly be highly regarded by the people insofar as a leader has been successful in his use of cruelty. For example, let's say that a provincial leader threatens to do X if the federal government does not do Y in the time-frame Z. If after Z, the federal government does not do Y, the political leader will earn the faith and respect of his people if he actually does X. Of course, threats have to be carefully thought of. If a threat involves ruining or disadvantaging people, it could actually do the contrary: that is, it can make the leader lose his reputation and the respect of his people, to be hated by his people. As Machiavelli points out: "A prince must nevertheless make himself feared in such a way that he will avoid hatred, even if he does not acquire love; since one can very easily be feared and yet not hated. This will always be the case when he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects, and from their women" (2005: 58). It is thus important not to take away what belongs to the citizens in order to avoid to be hated.

The next skill examined by Machiavelli is the quality of keeping one's word. However, as Machiavelli points out, it is certainly good to keep one's word, but that does not guarantee success: "How praiseworthy it is for a prince to keep his word and to live with integrity and not by cunning, everyone knows. Nevertheless, one sees from experience in our times that the princes who have accomplished great deeds are those who have thought little about keeping faith and who have know how cunningly to manipulate men's minds; and in the end they have surpassed those who laid their foundations upon sincerity" (2005: 60). This opening paragraph of Chapter XVIII has a lot in it. Let's try to make an applicable and current sense of what Machiavelli is saying.

First of all, Machiavelli does not entirely undermine the fact that the leader should keep his word. He simply states that it should not be done so at all costs, for at the end it can cost the leader his "principality". Robert M. Grant has identified common elements in successful strategies. The first one is to have simple and consistent long-term goals (Grant, 2008: 7). To be consistent implies that once you have identified your objective, you will stick to it. Dixit & Nalebuff will agree that intransigence (leaving the other no other choice than to take it or

leave it) is one among many strategies that can be used (Dixit & Nalebuff, 1991: 14). Nevertheless, what Machiavelli is saying is that success is guaranteed if one is able to manipulate the other. Game theorists and strategic scholars could not agree more. As Dixit & Nalebuff says: "A strategic move is designed to alter the beliefs and actions of others in a direction favorable to yourself" (1991: 120). Riker says the following: "It is true that people win politically because they have induced other people to join them in alliances and coalitions. But the winners induce by more than rhetorical attraction. Typically they win because they have set up the situation in such a way that other people will want to join them or will feel forced by circumstances to join them—even without persuasion at all. And this is what heresthetic is all about: structuring the world so you can win" (1986: ix). Riker further adds that "the heresthician uses language to manipulate other people. He talks to them, asking them questions and telling them facts; he utters arguments, giving reasons for believing his arguments are true; and he describes social nature, importing to his description the exact twist that leads others to respond to nature as he wishes" (1986: x). Machiavelli would have agreed partly with Riker. Where Riker argues that manipulation is done only through the use of language, Machiavelli would also take into account the actions. Machiavelli concludes Chapter XVIII by saying that "[i]n the actions of all men and especially of princes, where there is no tribunal to which to appeal, one must consider the final result. Therefore, let a prince conquer and maintain the state, and his methods will always be judged honourable and praised by all. For ordinary people are always taken in by appearances and by the outcome of an event." (2005: 62). This had led many, including Strauss to say that the end justifies the means, no matter what one does, and most importantly how one does it, what is important is the final result. Machiavelli's claim has to be interpreted in a larger context; the final results are important for citizens, however, as Dixit & Nalebuff carefully advice, it is important to mix one's plays: "If you do the same all the time, the opposition will be able to counter you more effectively by concentrating its resources on the best response to your one strategy" (1991: 22). A strategic leader will be able to manipulate the issues, to sometimes be unpredictable to achieve the likely outcome of an event, of a goal and therefore to be praised by his followers.

In Chapter XIX, Machiavelli advises leaders to effectively manage internal affairs: "[...] a prince should not be too concerned about conspiracies when the people are well disposed toward him, but that when they are hostile and regard him with hatred, he must fear everything and everyone. Well-organized states and wise princes have taken great care not to drive the nobles to desperation and to satisfy the people and keep them contented, for this is of the most important matters that concerns a prince" (2005: 65). To bring back Machiavelli to present day democracies and to Canadian politics, it can be said that it is important for a provincial leader, even for the Prime Minister, to satisfy the people, to have control over internal affairs. In other words, if things internally (in a province or in the entire country) are stable and the people do not hate the leader (because he does not take away things they have, i.e. property, money, or the like); he has a better chance to be re-elected. When the people are satisfied with what a leader is doing, they tend to vote for him. When internal affairs get fuzzy, unclear and confusing, and people want it to change, they will more likely vote for the leader's opponent. In Canada, there is no restriction as to the number of mandates a Premier or a Prime Minister can hold office. Therefore, as long as the voters are contented with the leader's actions, they will vote him back into office. If they are dissatisfied, the same result is less likely.

Chapter XX may, at first sight seem to be of no interest for the present concern. Machiavelli talks about the importance of arming his subjects. As he mentions, "[...] there has never been a

time when a new prince disarmed his subjects. On the contrary, when he has found them unarmed, he has always armed them [...] But when you disarm them you begin to offend them. You show that you distrust them, either for cowardice or for lack of loyalty. And both of these opinions generate hatred against you" (2005: 72). Clearly, here Machiavelli is talking about the actual and real armament of its people. Nevertheless, my claim here is not to say that democracies should allow every citizen to be armed.<sup>10</sup> However, governments should allow oppositions and a wise leader has to listen to the divergent opinions. By allowing people to oppose you (through unions, public demonstrations or the like), by listening to your (internal) opponents' views, you can come out of the situation with allies. As Machiavelli points out: "[...] the prince will always easily win the support of those men who have been enemies at the beginning of the principality [...]" (2005: 74). Those strategies are to be employed in order to avoid being hated by the people, because "the best fortress that exists is not to be hated by the people" (Machiavelli, 2005: 75).

Another great skill a leader must possess is the ability to acquire esteem, which is the topic of Chapter XXI. For Machiavelli, "nothing makes a prince more esteemed than great undertakings and showing himself to be extraordinary" (2005: 76). This is to be done in different ways. First of all, Machiavelli argues for the importance of reward and punishment: "When the occasion arises that a person in public life performs some extraordinary act, be it good or evil, the prince should find a way of rewarding or punishing him that will provoke a great deal of discussion" (2005: 77). The implications of Machiavelli's argument for today's politicians are that a good leader must be able to give the credit of a good action to the person it goes to, and must be able to be 'truthful' to his people if someone has acted uncaringly to the set principles of the country. A strategic leader must also be able to get out of an uncomfortable situation created by a person or a situation. Dixit & Nalebuff will say that it is important to "never give a Sucker an Even Bet" (1991: 24). An effective strategic leader must be able to recognize and, praise or blame, the actions of a person, be it a deputy or a minister. Another way to make yourself esteemed by your followers is set up by Machiavelli in the following way: "A prince is also respected when he is a true friend and a true enemy: that is, when he declares himself to be on the side of one prince against another, without reserve" (2005: 77). Machiavelli's sentence can easily be tracked down in the strategic leadership literature. For Dixit & Nalebuff, this claim is associated with what they called an unconditional move; that is "a response rule in which you move first and your action is fixed" (1991: 127). In Grant, this can be associated to his idea that a strategy is "a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or an organization" (2008: 4). More broadly speaking, what Machiavelli is saying is that once you have identified your 'enemy' or your goal, you can pursue it, and it is important not to switch back and forth, this can be called policy/strategy coherence. Wall & Wall point out to the importance of having a sense of focus and direction (1997: 8).

In Chapter XXII, Machiavelli goes on the inner details of the selection of ministers. He says that "[t]he first thing one does to evaluate a ruler's prudence is to look at the men he has around him. When they are capable and loyal, one can always consider him wise, for he has known how to recognize their capacities and to keep them loyal; but when they are otherwise, one can always form a negative judgement of him, for the first error he makes is made in this selection" (Machiavelli, 2005: 79). In other words, it is important for a leader to be able to

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<sup>10</sup> There is much debate going on in Canada about the National Gun Registry. The current Conservative government wishes its abolition and, as of November 4th, 2009, a first vote at the House of Commons favouring this option was held. Future votes and debates will occur, but it is more likely that the Registry will be eliminated.

choose wisely his inner circle, especially if he is to take power. A leader must also be able to deny a deputy or minister of any responsibility if "he thinks more about himself than about you" (Machiavelli, 2005: 80). Adapted to Canada, a provincial or federal leader must be able to put the right person at the head of a ministry. However, if that person does not accomplish his task, is not liked by the people or the staff working with him, it is better for a leader to give the appointment to another more trustworthy person in order to maintain power and public support.

As it was previously shown, a leader must have different skills and strategies in order to maintain power. Let's summarize the various Machiavellian skills that are necessary to be a leader. For each skill presented, the strategy associated with it is underlined. A table will make the comprehension clearer.

**Table 1: Machiavellian Skills and Today's Strategies**

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Not to be good	- Adapt to circumstances (from what ought to be done to what must be done)
Be a miser	- Spend the money of others (being able to take the wealth from outside and spend it inside one's territory/province)
Be cruel	- Use threats - Do as you said if opponent does not compel to your demands
Keep one's word	- Goal coherence/consistency - Unpredictability in strategic moves
(Good) management of internal affairs	- Make people satisfied (by not taking what belongs to them)
Arming the people	- Allow opposition - Listen to the opponents (who will become your best allies)
Be esteemed	- Reward/Punish Good/Evil actions - Clearly identify your enemy/friend
Selection of ministers	- Select the ones that think of you (i.e., the party, the country/province) before they think of themselves - Do not be afraid to take away a title from someone who is not 'doing the job'

In the next section, I will test the strategies previously outlined to various actions taken by the current Newfoundland and Labrador's Premier, Danny Williams, since he held office in 2003.

## Danny Williams: A Machiavellian Strategist?

Before getting into a detailed analysis, let's first begin by outlining Danny Williams' most important biographical elements.<sup>11</sup> Those will be useful later in the analysis.

Danny Williams was born on August 4th, 1950, in St. John's, Newfoundland. He was born and raised after Confederation, in a period where the Province was struggling to find its place (as it is still trying to do as of today<sup>12</sup>) in Canada. He is the ninth Premier since Newfoundland and Labrador joined Confederation in 1949. He studied political science and economics at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Awarded the Rhodes scholarship in 1969, he received a degree in Arts in Law from Oxford University in England, and earned a Bachelor of Law degree from Dalhousie University. He is a founding partner of one of Newfoundland and Labrador's preeminent law firms and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1984. While pursuing his law degree, Premier Williams also led a consortium of business people seeking Newfoundland and Labrador's first cable television license. From 1975, he guided Cable Atlantic through acquisitions of systems throughout the region to become one of the largest communications companies in Atlantic Canada. Prior to entering political life, he sold his communications company in a multi-hundred million dollar transaction. Being a multi-millionaire, as a Premier, he gives his salary to charity organizations. As a preeminent and well-known businessman, he was able to get elected as the Conservative Leader in 2001 (then in the Opposition) and led the Conservatives to a majority in 2003.

Williams' life in wealth and success left him to think that his Province was able to accomplish the same success. Since he held office in 2003, Newfoundland and Labrador has experienced unprecedented economic growth and activity, a substantial reduction in the provincial debt, lower taxation rates, significantly increased benefits for the citizens of the province in the development of natural resources, and a progressive social agenda (poverty Reduction and student debt reform). His accomplishments are due to the sound application of strategies adapted from Machiavelli. Therefore, I will now proceed to examine each of the strategy previously outlined and in what sense Williams was successful (or not) in applying them.

**Adapt to circumstances.** Williams is often depicted as having "aggressive and unwavering negotiating style at outsiders" (Marland, 2007: 76). True enough, his declared war with the federal government, and especially since Stephen Harper is in power in Ottawa, has nothing of a "good boy". However, Williams has been able to adapt to circumstances. While promising, before being elected, to address the fiscal challenges that the Province is facing, his first year in office was nothing but fiscal conservatism (Marland, 2007: 76). Attempts to reform the crab licensing system, legislation to put back at work public servants without a pay raise saw his internal popularity declining. However, when harsh on outsiders, i.e. the federal government or any non-Newfoundland owned companies, his popularity went up<sup>13</sup>. Williams soon enough understood that when he was aggressive on outsiders, he will gain popularity, but that he could not do the same to his fellow citizens. This shows his capacity to adapt to circumstances and to avoid being hated by his people.

**Spend the money of others.** This is the area where Williams is certainly the most successful. So far so good for him, as he has been able to (re)negotiate the Atlantic Accord favourable to

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<sup>11</sup> The details of this short biography are based upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website: [on line] "Biography" <http://www.premier.gov.nl.ca/premier/bio.htm>, page accessed on November 4th, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> On a discussion about the Province's place in Confederation, one should read the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada: *Our Place in Canada*, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> On popularity data, please refer to: Marland, Alex. "The 2007 Provincial Election in Newfoundland and Labrador". *Canadian Political Science Review*, Vol 1(2) - December 2007, pp. 75-85.

the Province. The original Atlantic Accord, signed in 1985, was intended to make the provinces the main beneficiaries of offshore resources (Gatehouse, 2004: 27). However, since the Hibernia oil started flowing in 1997, this never happened. In late 2004 and early 2005, Williams was able to pressure enough the federal government, and Prime Minister Paul Martin, to create a 'new' "Atlantic Accord to compensate the province for lost revenues" (Marland, 2007: 76). In fact, he was able to extract a \$2-billion deal allowing the Province to keep both its offshore energy revenues and its equalization payments as a 'have-not' province. Furthermore, in 2007, he successfully negotiated with big-oil firms an ownership share and a royalty system in the development of the Hebron project. He was once again able to take money from other to the benefits of his own Province.

**Use threats. Do as you said.** Williams' negotiation of the Atlantic Accord with the federal government is a good example of the use of threats. Disappointed by discussions with the federal government about offshore revenues, Williams threatened that all Canadian flags would be removed from provincial government buildings if the federal government was not ready to fulfill his promise and to negotiate with the Province. On December 23rd, 2004, he said: "The federal government has turned its back on the people of this province and we will not accept less than what was committed to by the prime minister and to what we deserve" (CBC News, 2004.) and he ordered the removal of the Canadian flags. He never backed up from his position (and the flags did go down) and was able to negotiate a favourable deal for Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Goal coherence and consistency.** At first, Williams may seem anything but consistent. But his agenda is calculated and his policies are goal-oriented. For example, while negotiating the Hebron oil field development project, he almost risked to lose a multi-billion deal in order for the deal to go on his terms and demands, i.e. ownership share, royalty system, diminution of tax credits. In 2006, in his fight with Exxon Mobil and Chevron, though they walked away from negotiations, they finally agreed, more than a year later, to Williams' terms. As Campbell summarizes it: "When negotiations broke down last year [2006] and the oil companies left town, it seemed Williams had badly miscalculated. But if Big Oil was expecting their withdrawal to trigger a backlash against the Premier, they failed to understand how deeply his defiance resonates with Newfoundlanders. «Once we dug in and stated our position, that was it. We weren't moving.» [said Williams]" (Campbell, 2007: 62). Williams' position was clear at the beginning: he would not accept another 'bad deal', like the Churchill Falls one. As Memorial University Professor Stephen Tomblin points out, Williams is doing so [is positioning himself strongly against outsiders who will try to gain from his Province's natural resources], because he has an interest in doing so (Campbell, 2007: 62). His business background is also useful. When it comes to the economy, Williams actually knows what he is talking about (DeMont, 2003: 26). Therefore, Williams' goal has been pretty consistent since he held office: he wants his Province to have as much benefits as it can possibly have, either it be in negotiations with the federal government or oil companies.

**Unpredictability in strategic moves.** This strategy is harder to find in Williams. His attacks on the federal government are well-known and his goals, as previously said, are consistent. Where he is mostly unpredictable is in his next set of actions against the current federal Conservative government. His latest move was in the last federal elections, where he campaigned, for 'Anything but Conservatives'. Williams' campaign was due in part for Harper's refusal to enforce the Atlantic Accord deal stating that Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to receive equalization payments while maintaining its offshore resources revenues. The Tories were shut out in Newfoundland and Labrador, where none of the federal

candidates were elected (Moore, 2008). The message sent to the federal government was therefore clear: the Province will not elect Tories if Harper is unwilling to negotiate with Williams. Harper could have foreseen this move; however he kept hard lines toward the provincial Premier, allowing Williams to take this stand and to successfully campaign against Harper. Other unpredictable moves such as these are likely to happen in the future, at least as long as the Conservatives are in power in Ottawa.

**Make people satisfied.** At the beginning of his first term, Williams' management of internal affairs was less than good. His attempt at reforming the crab licensing and his legislation putting back public servants at work without pay raises did not give him a lot of support. However, those events were soon forgotten by Newfoundlanders. Williams' success in the battle over offshore oil revenues led him to an impressive win in 2007. Williams and his party won 44 out of the 48 seat available at the House of Assembly, receiving 69.5% of the vote (Elections Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007). The people from Newfoundland and Labrador are backing the Premier. Many authors (Gatehouse, 2004; Köhler, 2006; Marland, 2007) have pointed out that Williams is loved by his people. For sure, Williams knows how to rally people behind him when it comes to external affairs. By appealing the strength of his people to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place, by promoting (and succeeding) at making the local economy better, he was able to avoid being hated, a recommendation that Machiavelli makes throughout *The Prince*.

**Allow opposition. Listen to the opponents.** Internally, and especially since his second term, Williams does not face much opposition. As only four members in the House of Assembly can oppose his party policy, discussions are less than tense. Furthermore, the Liberal party, once dominating the provincial legislature, is in reconstruction. Williams' leadership style though has not allowed for much internal opposition.

This was not always so, internal oppositions were high at the beginning of his first term. It was less than clear that he would receive a second mandate. When public service workers went on strike and Williams forced an end to their strike, the provincial head of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Wayne Lucas, depicted him as a "miserable louse" (Gatehouse, 2004: 27). However, as Williams battled for the offshore oil revenues with the federal government, Lucas became one of Williams' best allies, saying that "he now back Williams 100 per cent and is even offering to mobilize union support across the country. «We all got to stand shoulder to shoulder to see if we can fix this [...] It's about our rightful place in Canada»." (Gatehouse, 2004: 27). Williams' greatest strength lies in his ability to bring his people all together to back him against 'outsiders'.

However, it can be argued that the lack of opposition in the House of Assembly is not serving the Province well. Williams will likely continue on his fight with the federal government, without much opposition coming out. Though he has been well-thought on his moves, it might be argued that he could become irrational in pursuing hard-lines or a "cold war" (Marland, 2007: 81) with the federal government. However, one must not forget Williams' business background that gave him strategic skills that have been so far successful. If the economy was to downfall and internal restrictions to happen, it is more likely that the people will oppose him. However, these events are unlikely to happen until the next re-election in 2011, allowing Williams to pursue his agenda.

**Reward/punish good/evil actions.** Among the things that could have led to Williams' downfall was the release of the Auditor General report on constituency allowances. The results were striking: "\$1.6 million in excess constituency allowance claims were questioned involving overpayments for (allegedly) faked invoices with a collusion scandal of current and

past MHAs [Members of the House of Assembly] and a public servant. Double billings and a secret bonus payment were uncovered" (Marland, 2007: 77). However, this scandal involved MHAs from all three provincial parties. Furthermore, Williams acted promptly; suspending members from ministerial offices, accepting (forcing?) resignations and ensuing criminal charges. Just a few months before the provincial elections, this could have led the Conservatives to lose the popular vote. But by punishing the evil actions of the members of his party involved in the scandal, Williams was able to circle the issue and make it a non-issue during the provincial campaign.

**Clearly identify your enemies.** Williams' enemies cannot be clearer. Anyone who wants to take something Newfoundland and Labrador has, without benefits for the Province, is at declared war with the Premier. Since Harper has been elected in Ottawa, he is Williams' main target. However, his negotiations with oil companies have proven that the Premier is ready to fight with anyone for the well-being of his Province, i.e. the public good.

Furthermore, the 2009 announcement of a proposed deal to sell the majority of New Brunswick's power assets to Quebec has lead Williams to have another enemy: Quebec and Jean Charest. This deal could interfere with Newfoundland and Labrador's Lower Churchill project to sell hydro to the USA via New Brunswick, instead of Quebec. However, Williams said that "[The Lower Churchill project] will be developed, and it will be developed on our terms, and as I've said before, over my dead body and I going to hand this over to Jean Charest and Quebec." (CBC News, 2009) Neighbouring Quebec can and is now an enemy for the Premier.

**Select the ones that think of you before they think of themselves.** Newfoundland's politics is often considered a one-man show. Williams is aware of these criticisms and at the swearing-in ceremony in 2007 he said he would like to see an increased role for the province's ministers (Canadian Press, 2007). However, he has been a wise selector of candidates, taking well-known and respected people in their communities to run for the Conservative party. To name a few: current Minister of Finance, Tom Marshall and Ross Wiseman, Minister of Business are among the ones that have been occupying various ministerial positions since they were elected. They have done so by remaining accessible to the public and by putting Newfoundland's interests first.

**Do not be afraid to take away a title from someone who is not 'doing the job'.** This strategy is best seen when Williams announced that MHA for Lake Melville John Hickey, was to "step aside from his duties as Minister of Transportation and Works and Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, pending further information on a review currently being done by the Auditor General (AG) into constituency allowances" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador - News Release , 2007). His Minister was not necessarily 'not doing the job', but he was in the midst of a scandal that could have been very costly for Williams. It took Williams a month to act so. The Report was released on December 5th, 2006 and his announcement was done on January 4th, 2007. This proves Williams capable of acting promptly and to 'get rid' of internal deficiencies if they are to be costly for him and his party.

As the previous discussion has shown, Danny Williams has been effective at using most of Machiavellian strategies in order to be loved by his people and to have Newfoundland and Labrador respected at the federal level. Although he fails in some (e.g. allowing opposition), he is able to maintain huge support from his people.

## Conclusion

This paper first started by a re-examination of Machiavelli's principles as outlined in *The Prince*. An adaptation of the skills and strategies mentioned in that famous writing to the strategic leadership literature outlined 13 strategies: 1) Adapt to circumstances, 2) Spend the money of others, 3) Use threats, 4) Do as you said, 5) Goal coherence/consistency, 6) Unpredictability in strategic moves, 7) Make people satisfied, 8) Allow opposition, 9) Listen to the opponents, 10) Reward/punish good/evil actions, 11) Clearly identify your enemies, 12) Select the ministers that think of you before they think of themselves, 13) Do not be afraid to take away a title if the person is not doing the job. The 13 strategies were tested against Danny Williams, current Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was shown that Williams was able to apply all the Machiavellian strategies, while avoiding what is the most important thing for Machiavelli: not to be hated by his people. Williams has been effective at strategic leadership and his Machiavellian strategies have not earned him an evil title. On the contrary, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Williams is considered a "Sun King" (Köhler, 2006: 17). Williams is thus a good example of an effective Machiavellian strategist, earning the respect of his people and aiming at the public good, which is the wealth of his Province.

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