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Machiavellian Art of Political Manipulation: The Kenyan Experience

Mr. Kiunjuri Edward Irungu

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Machiavellian Art of Political Manipulation: The Kenyan Experience Mr. Kiunjuri Edward Irungu Since the advent of civil society, politicians have evolved various methods of acquiring and retaining power over the people. In discussing these methods, Aristotle, for example, noted that “the leader must cut off the heads of the largest poppies, destroy the proud and rid himself of outstanding men. He must employ spies, use women to report about men, ferment quarrels and keep the people busy and poor. He must show zeal in religion, but zeal combined with dignity and a certain reserve, which will save his piety from seeming artificial and insincere. He must bestow favours in person, but inflict punishment through the agency of the magistrates and the law courts. He has at all times to beware of assassins and especially of those who are willing to sacrifice their lives.” In the early days of human political history, these methods, it must be supposed, existed as isolated methods of manipulating people. It was Niccolo Machiavelli who organized them into a systematic art. It is this art as applied in Kenya that is the focus of this book. The book, however, delves deeper beyond simple Machiavellianism to illuminate other methods of scientific mind manipulation that have evolved following remarkable advances in human psychology and especially psychiatry. Indeed, the book sheds light on the development of knowledge in the field of psychology and sociology and provides profound insights into the social and psychological nature of man. Besides the scientific aspects, the book brightly illuminates the corridors of Kenya’s political history in the period shortly before independence in 1963 to 2002. It also provides a refreshing encounter with renowned philosophers, including Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell, as their ideas bear on the development of thought on the governance of mankind. The book is certainly a must read for students and players of Kenyan politics as well as lovers of Greek classics including The Odyssey and The Iliad.

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