



THE PRINCE BY NICOLA MACHIAVELLI

A BOOK REVIEW IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR (OB) PERSPECTIVE

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Executive Summary

"The Prince" offers a calculating common sense approach to maintaining the rule and preservation of principalities. Machiavelli distinguishes between hereditary principalities and new ones, citing advantages and disadvantages.

Machiavelli argues that opportunism is an impetus of change in rule: "...you have enemies in all those whom you have injured in seizing that principality, and you are not able to keep those friends who put you there because of your not being able to satisfy them in the way they expected..." Both the ruler and the ruled can be ruthless. We need not refer our attention to the past to notice this, for this conduct can also be found in business, where Machiavellianism figures that something akin to social Darwinism.

The treatise is a guide to actualizing an intention, and Machiavelli weighs the methods in achieving that intention. There are cold streaks in his discourse, some of which cut like a scythe into the soul of a pacifist reader. Machiavelli had an impressive insight into the political mechanisms of bygone regimes and dynasties, and he was equally gifted at analyzing and relaying the cause for victories and defeats of powerful historical figures.

The message and interpretation of Chapter XVII of "The Prince" is especially interesting, for here the author asks whether it is better to be loved than feared. Which trait will prove effective in dealing with governed subjects--cruelty or clemency? He examines what measures must be taken when cruelty rebounds and clemency fails, and provides anecdotes from history, concluding the chapter with a subjective verdict.

Machiavelli thought not only of how his work could benefit rule in Florence; in a visionary manner, he urged his contemporaries to purge from Italy the spread of barbarism. His final thoughts on the subject invoke the hope for national redemption. Of course, while the treatise is Machiavelli's best known work, it was not the most popular work during his lifetime. His comic "Mandragola" brought him fame as a writer, though he would have no doubt much preferred to become famous for "The Prince," since his greatest desire was to be re-instated as Florentine public officials.

"The Prince" is a detailed blueprint that highlights the nuances of persuasion and power, but the text of this early sixteenth-century document can be transferred into our age. Rulers decide for themselves whether it is best to be loved or feared, and that decision can make a real difference in our lives.

Niccolo Machiavelli remains one of the very few political thinkers of the past who continues to enjoy instant recognitions and wide readership in the present. Despite the five centuries that separate him from us, Machiavelli's name resonates in today's popular culture as much as in the halls of academe. Machiavellianism (or the variant Machiavellism) commonly denotes a set of dispositions associated with strategic thinking, self interest, deception, manipulation, and instrumental decision making. While moralists and preachers have long chafed against Machiavelli's conception of human conduct, psychologists and academic marketing scholars now derive important lessons about the foundations of human motivation and behavior from his writings. Machiavelli has lately been invoked as inspiration for mass-market books on subjects as varied as fashion, management, the ministry, gambling, gender roles, and international conflict.

The Prince

The first of Machiavelli's major writings from his period of political exile is also ultimately the one most often associated with his name: The Prince. Written during the latter part of 1532 (and perhaps early 1514), but only published posthumously in 1532, The Prince was composed in great haste by an author who was among other things, seeking to regain his status in the Florentine government. (Many who had held office under the Republic were quickly rehabilitated and returned to service under the Medici). In a letter to his friend and former colleague Francesco Vettori, dated 10 December 1513, Machiavelli describes his composition of a little book *De principibus* (referring to the original Latin title

of The Prince), which sets out "discuss what a principality is, how many different types there are, how they are gained, how they are held, why they are lost". Machiavelli denies that its main teachings are directly his own, but instead reflect his gleanings from a nightly imagined "conversation" among members of "the ancient courts of the men of old", who invite him to listen to their discourses and who even permit their guest "to ask them why they acted as they did, and out of kindness they respond."

It is commonplace and not entirely inaccurate, to say that Machiavelli wrote The Prince as a sort of extended job application, a resume in support his effort to rehabilitate himself politically. From first to last, he promises to reveal "hidden knowledge" about how its princely reader might learn to govern successfully (especially as a "new" ruler) that no other counselor would teach. We know from his letters that almost immediately after he was removed in 1512, and for the rest of this life, he engaged in non stop campaign to return to active service in Florentine government. The Prince may rightly be understood as one prong in this pursuit. Yet even after he had finished writing the main letter to Vettori, Machiavelli remained ambivalent about whether he should in fact present it to the ruling Medici house. Perhaps he was scared that his ideas were too novel, too extreme, for the audience he envisioned to appreciate.

Type of Principalities

All states, all powers, that have held and hold rule over men have been and are either republics or principalities. Principalities are either hereditary (Hereditary Principalities), in which the family has been long established, or they are new (Mixed Principalities). The new are either entirely new, as was Milan to Francesco Sforza, or they are, as it were, members annexed to the hereditary state of the prince who has acquired them, as was the kingdom of Naples to that of the king of Spain. Such dominions are thus acquired are either accustomed to live under a prince, to live in freedom; and are acquired either by the arms of the prince himself, or of others, or else by fortune or by ability.

Kingdom of Darius and Alexander

Considering the difficulties which men have had hold a newly acquired state, some might wonder, how, seeing that Alexander the Great became the master of Asia in a few years, and died whilst it was yet scarcely settled (whence it might appear reasonable that the whole empire would have rebelled), nevertheless his successors maintained themselves, and had to meet no other difficulty than that which arose among themselves from their own ambitions.

Principalities: Acquired by Arms and Ability

Let no one be surprised if, in speaking of entirely new principalities as I shall do, I adduce the highest examples both of prince and of state; because men, walking almost always in paths beaten by others, and following by imitation their deeds, are yet unable to keep entirely to the ways of others or attain to the power of those they imitate. A wise man ought always to follow the paths beaten by great men, and to imitate those who have been supreme, so that if his ability does not equal theirs, at least it will savour of it.

Principalities: Acquired by Good Fortunes

Concerning these two methods of rising to be a prince by ability or fortune, Machiavelli wishes to adduce two examples within our own recollection, and these are Francesco Sforza and Cesar Borgia. Francesco, by proper means and with great ability, from being a private person rose to be duke of Milan, and that which he had acquired with a thousand anxieties he kept with little trouble. On the other hand, Cesar Borgia, called by the people Duke Valentino, acquired his state during the ascendancy of his father, and on its decline he lost it, notwithstanding that he had taken every measure and done all that ought to be done by a wise and able man to fix firmly his roots in the states which the arms and fortunes of others had bestowed on him.

Principalities: Acquired by Wickedness

Agathocles, the Sicilian, became king of Syracuse not only from a private but from a low and abject position, this man, the son of a potter, through all the changes in his fortunes always led an infamous life. Nevertheless, he accompa-

nied his infamies with so much ability of mind and body that, having devoted himself to the military profession, he rose through its ranks to be praetor of Syracuse. Agathocles attacked the Carthaginians, reduced to extreme necessity, was compelled to come to terms with Agathocles, and, leaving Sicily to him. He was not content with this and again attacked Africa. A prince ought to live amongst his people in such a way that no unexpected circumstances, whether of good or evil, shall make him change.

Civil Principalities

A principality is created either by the people or by the nobles, accordingly as one or other of them has the opportunity; for the nobles, seeing they can not withstand the people, being to cry up the reputation of one of themselves, and they make him a prince, so that under his shadow they can give vent to their ambitions. The people, finding they can not resist the nobles, also cry up the reputation of one of them, and make him a prince so as to be defended by his authority. Therefore a wise prince ought to adopt such a course that his citizens will always in every sort and kind of circumstances have need of the state and of him, and then he will always find them faithful.

Ecclesiastical Principalities

It only remains now to speak of ecclesiastical principalities, touching which all difficulties are prior to getting possession, because they are acquired either by capacity or good fortune, and they can be held without either; for they are sustained by the ordinances or religion, which are so all-powerful, and of such a character that the principalities may be held no matter how their princes behave and live. But being upheld by powers, to which the human mind can not reach, I shall speak no more of them, because, being exalted and maintained by God, it would be the act of a presumptuous and rash man to discuss them.

SOLDIERY AND MERCENARIES

Machiavelli proposes the arms with which a prince defends his state are either his own, or they are mercenaries, auxiliaries, or mixed. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous; and if one holds his state based on these arms, he will stand neither firm nor safe; for they are disunited, ambitious and without discipline, unfaithful, valiant before friends, cowardly before enemies; they have neither the fear of God nor fidelity to men, and destruction is deferred only so long as the attack is; for in peace is robbed by them, and in war by the enemy.

Auxiliaries, which are the other useless arm, are employed when a prince is called in with his forces to aid and defend, as was done by Pope Julius in the most recent times; for he, having, in the enterprise against Ferrara, had poor proof of his mercenaries, turned to auxiliaries, and stipulated with Ferdinand, king of Spain, for his assistance with men and arms. These arms may be useful and good in themselves, but for him who calls them in they are always disadvantageous; for losing, one is undone, and winning, one is their captive.

PRINCE AND ART OF WAR

A prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole of art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from private station to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And first cause of losing it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art.

THINGS FOR WHICH PRINCES ARE PRAISED OR BLAMED

It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince towards subjects and friends. And as that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered presumptuous in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall depart from the methods of other people. But it being the intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

LIBERALITY AND MEANNESS

We have not seen great things done in our time except by those who have been considered mean; the rest have failed. Pope Julius II was assisted in reaching the papacy by a reputation for liberality, yet he did not strive after wards to keep it up, when he made war on the king of France; and he made many wars without imposing any extraordinary tax on his subjects, for he supplied his additional expenses out of his long thriftiness. The present king of Spain would not have undertaken or conquered in so many enterprises if he had been reputed liberal. A prince, therefore, provided that he has not to rob his subjects, that he can defend himself, that he does not become poor and abject, that he is not forced to become rapacious, ought to hold of little account a reputation for being mean, for it is one of those vices which will enable him to govern.

CRUELTY AND CLEMENCY

And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to avoid the imputation of cruelty, owing to new states being full of dangers. Hence Virgil, through the

mouth of Dido, excuses the inhumanity of her reign owing to its being new saying:

*Res dura, et regni novitas me talia cogunt
Moliri, et late fines custode tueri*

Nevertheless he ought to be slow to believe and to act, nor should he himself show fear, but proceed in a temperate manner with prudence and humanity, so that too much confidence may not make him incautious and too much distrust render him intolerable.

CONCERNING THE WAY IN WHICH PRINCES SHOULD KEEP FAITH

Every one admits how praiseworthy it is in a prince to keep faith, and to live with integrity and not with craft. Nevertheless our experience has been that those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word. For this reason, let a prince have the credit of conquering and holding his state, the means will always be considered honest, and he will be praised by everybody.

HATE AND DESPISE

He shall have succeeded he will have fulfilled his part, and he need not fear any danger in other reproaches. It makes him hated above all things, as I have said, to be rapacious, and to be a violator of the property and women of his subjects, from both of which he must abstain. And when neither their property nor honour is touched, the majority of men live content, and he has only to contend with the ambition of a few, whom he can curb with ease in many ways. It seems Machiavelli sufficient to take all those emperors who succeeded to the empire from Marcus the philosopher down to Maximinus; they were Marcus and his son Commodus, Pertinax, Julian, Severus and his son Antonius, Caracalla, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander and Maximinus.

PRINCE'S ACT: ADVANTAGEOUS OR HURTFUL

There never was a new prince who has disarmed his subjects; rather when he has found them disarmed he has always armed them, because, by arming them, those arms become yours, those men who were distrusted become faithful, and those who were faithful are kept so, and your subjects become your adherents. And whereas all subjects can not be armed, yet when those whom you do arm are benefited, the others can be handled more freely, and this difference in their treatment, which they quite understand, makes the former your dependents, and the latter, considering it to be necessary that those who have the most danger and service should have the most reward, excuse you. But when you disarm them, you at once offend them by showing that you distrust them, either for cowardice or for want of loyalty, and either of these opinions breeds hatred against you.

HOW A PRINCE MUST CONDUCT TO GAIN RENOWN

Nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as great enterprises and setting a fine example. We have in our time Ferdinand of Aragon, the present king of Spain. He can almost be called a new prince, because he has risen by fame and glory, from being an insignificant king to be the foremost king in Christendom; and if you will consider his deeds you will find them all great and some of them extraordinary. Under this same cloak he assailed Africa, he came down on Italy, he has finally attacked France; and thus his achievements and designs have always been great, and have kept the minds of his people in suspense and admiration and occupied with the issue of them. And his actions have arisen in such a way, one out of the other, that men have never been given time to work steadily against him.

A prince ought also to show himself a patron of ability, and to honour the proficient in every art. At the same time he should encourage his citizens to practice their callings peaceably, both in commerce and agriculture, and in every other following, so that one should not be deterred from improving his possessions for fear lest they be taken away from him or another from opening up trade for fear of taxes; but the prince ought to offer rewards to whoever wishes to do these things and designs in any way to honour his city or state.

Further, he ought to entertain the people with festivals and spectacles at convenient seasons of the year; and as every city is divided into guilds or into societies, he ought to hold such bodies in esteem, and associate with them sometimes, and show himself an example of courtesy and liberality; nevertheless, always maintaining the majesty of his rank, for this he must never consent to abate in anything.

SECRETARIES OF PRINCE

The choice of servants is of no little importance to a prince, and they are good or not according to the discrimination of the prince. And the first opinion which one forms of a prince, and of his understanding, is by observing the men he has around him; and when they are capable and faithful he may always be considered wise, because he has known how to recognize the capable and to keep them faithful. But when they are otherwise one can not form a good opinion of him, for the prime error which he made was in choosing them.

HOW FLATTERS SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Machiavelli brings home a vital point in the life of a prince, for it is a danger from which princes are with difficulty preserved, unless they are very careful and discriminating. It is that of flatters, of whom courts are full, because men are so self-complacent in their own affairs, and in a way so deceived in them, that they are preserved with difficulty from this pest, and if they wish to defend themselves they run danger of falling into contempt. Because there is no other way of guarding oneself from flatterers except letting men understand that to tell you truth does not offend you; but when every one may tell you the truth, respect for you abates. Therefore a wise prince ought to hold a third course by choosing the wise men in his state, and giving them the only liberty of speaking the truth to him.

FORTUNE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

Machiavelli was well aware how many men have had, and still have the opinion that the affairs of the world are in such wise governed by fortune and by God that men with their wisdom can not direct them and that no one can ever help them; and because of this they would have us believe that it is not necessary to labour much in affairs, but to let chance govern them. Thus opinion has been more credited in our times because of the great changes in affairs which have been seen, and may still be seen, every day beyond all human conjecture. Some times pondering over this, I am I some degree inclined to their opinion. Nevertheless, not to extinguish our free will, Machiavelli says it to be true that Fortune is the arbiter of one half of our actions, but that she still leaves us to direct the other half, or perhaps a little less.

STRENGTHS OF THE PRINCE

It was state of moral feeling among the Italians of those times that they must seek for the real explanation of what seems most mysterious in the life and writings of this remarkable man. The subject matter of the book influence Italians both politically and metaphysically. The books explain the political scenario of Italy with specific attention to the life of the rulers or princes. The book depicts each and every aspect of the rulers and also portrays ethical guidelines before a prince for his ruling.

This book takes all references from the history and concurrent political scenarios of Italy. It analyses the ruling style of many renowned rulers of ancient Italy and Europe. It proves the mistakes done by rulers of the past and henceforth posing an example of dos and don'ts for the rulers of the then Italy.

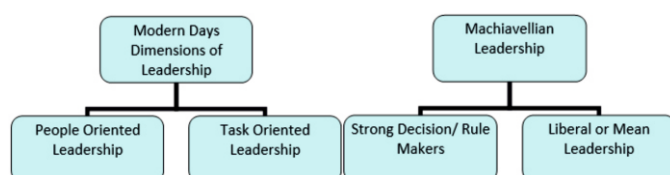
Interpreting the book in the concurrent perspective of corporate world it reveals the way leadership was developed. It also focuses on the aspects of fair and foul leadership. The king was considered as leaders and how they behave is how the perspective of the leadership was formed.

WEAKNESS OF THE PRINCE

If considered in the perspective of 16th century the book has hardly any minuses. But in the perspective of the context of the book it may be said that the whole expressions are in the context of a kings only. The classic does not highlight the personality of a local leader. The leaders are not always the political rulers. The attitudes are expressed in the form of the principalities that lead to vagueness. Besides the book goes much beyond the personality or attitude of a king to that of the environment and royal apparel. These expressions depict more politics than the attitude of the kings. However, the concept of leadership is best defined in the then context.

LEADERSHIP: DRAWING ANALOGY IN ORGANISATIONAL BEHEBOURPERSPECTIVE**Modern Concepts of Leadership V/s Machiavellian Leadership**

Modern management expresses "leadership is a process of striving propel willingly towards certain common goals. The leadership process involves three main elements, the leader, followers and situation. The leadership functions of these three elements. ON the contrary Machiavellian leadership concepts express the decision taking power and least involvement of the followers.

Dimensions of Leadership: Modern Days and Machiavellian Concept

Leadership in modern corporate world is strongly defined set of rules and execution. It is the concept of making things happens with the collaboration of others. Leaders are subjected to the views of others and accountable to all the complications.

Unlike modern day's leadership, Machiavellian leadership defines the strong and arrogant personality of a leader where the leaders take strong and mean decision which is impossible on others. Leaders of kings of that period no more in concern with the views of the subjects.

PARTICIPATION TYPE (Modern Day)**SELLING TYPE (Modern Day)****DELEGATING TYPE (Modern Day / Machiavellian)****TELLING TYPE (Modern Day / Machiavellian)**

The above mentioned matrix of the people orientation of a leader has some relevance with the Machiavelli's leadership concept. No doubt all the leaders of the Machiavellians time have the maximum weight of delegation. They delegate the rules and impose them and some of the leader's type are liberal and may be given some weight for the Telling type. Modern concept of the leadership like leaders need to be visionary in some sense true to the Machiavellian concept. The Kings have a vision to win and conquer and some sense to have the welfare of the subjects.

Advanced Applications

Behavioral scientists have developed a Machiavellian test basing on the principalities to test the morality of leaders. This test ensures the immoral or amoral attitude of leaders. All the principalities depicted in the book are used to measure the morality of a leader.

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, The Prince remains as a great classic of our time. Besides its focus on the leadership, the book presents a vivid picture of the politics of the then time and remains a close-to heart book for all the political thinkers of the centuries. In the present world where the concepts of leadership is widely acclaimed, more research need to be undertaken to bring forth more applied concepts out of this classic.