

Analysis of niccolo machiavelli's book the prince: a still relevant cheat sheet f...

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Introduction

Nocolo Machiavelli's book *The Prince* was published in 1532, five years later of his death. He left noteworthy facts and tips about leadership qualities one should possess who was given a responsibility to rule some land or territory and for someone who was given a lead for a managerial position. The content he wrote in his book reflected the experiences he tasted during several roles he played in his life including being a senior diplomat, commander and also a traitor for the country he served. This book was written as a sort of advice for the kings and politicians recommending a long list of cunning schemes to sustain their front running position. Moreover, this advice was found to be helpful yet unethical for sustaining a monarchy and for general politicians of his time. It has been known widely how *The Prince* attempts to separate power from ethics, and that having good character is not sufficient for leadership, people may find it harsh but Machiavelli was a crystal-clear realist who understood the art of limitations and use of power. His writings are now considered an important fragment of European art and literature also being studied around the globe for educational and practical purpose displaying how a leader can perform effectively, labelled as a 16th-century political treatise providing guidance on today's competitive environment.

When considering the modern politics on several leadership platforms, this book has been working as a hideous cheat sheet for the ones who don't care about the consequences. This book is a must-read for the CEOs and Managers who are in a need of coming up with strategies and tactics to have

a leading or competitive edge over their employees, as there are nuggets of wisdom hidden inside this book for several situations. There are aspects of Machiavelli's teachings that are certainly controversial and should be viewed in the light of historical context. Below are some of the cunning yet influential advises in a managerial context given by Machiavelli being implemented and practiced by several project managers or leaders as a great helping tool for their management capabilities,

It is not titles that honour men, but men that honour titles

This statement proves how much anyone has to work hard in proving himself as the deserved one for the level he is currently working on. This advice from Machiavelli was to someone who is supposed to be getting promoted to lead something bigger than himself. A leader cannot maintain his prominent role unless he is too lazy to work hard for it. When looking at the evil side of Machiavelli's proposition of sustaining leadership, one must go as far as he can to maintain his image among the people he's surrounded with.

(Anderson, n. d.)

Distrust Mercenaries and Auxiliaries

This suggestion from Machiavelli is completely applicable and close to the truth in 21st century. You would understand more clearly if you have been appointed as a leading manager for some project and you've been supplied with a team of externals to lead, the externals might not perform that swiftly than the internals who are more loyal to you and the firm they are working for. It's a proven fact of how using an external force for help or management

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has always led to disastrous conditions for a project and its managers.

Although, most of the context in Machiavelli's *The Prince* should be discarded because of the unethical advice in usage of power or for attainment of power is wrong. But this droplet of wisdom is clearly very helpful and fruitful when implemented in project management strategies. (Peeters, n. d.)

It's better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both

In project management, the idea of having fear for the project leader might be much more beneficial when it comes to the outcomes. Machiavelli recommended how a ruler should be polite and loved by his people but also, he must be feared by the same people or his monarch will soon be eaten up by his own people. Same goes with a project management strategies where a manager having a kind appearance with strict methodology of getting his work done is preferred than a manager who is either way too polite with his team or always behaves strictly. Only the one sustains who works with moderation in between politeness and being strict with his team at the same time. (Ratner, n. d.)

The end justifies the means

The above written line is quoted by Machiavelli, he explains how nobody cares for what you went through to achieve your current position you are at now, everybody cares about is what you own right now. So, if you need to get your hands dirty to achieve what you desire, you're most welcome to do it. This statement explains what most of the content in Machiavelli's book is

about, these cunning and selfish statements are what kept his writings unexplored by thousands.

Somehow, Machiavelli's work has been more perceived in making grand strategies for politics and diplomacy, but this work was generated back in the 16th century and this not the world we live in today. Obama, being one of the successful presidents in the history of USA was recommended to read the price in order to understand the tactics and monopolies of politics to complete his tenure as a president. This recommendation shows the value The Price carries of sustaining a certain leading position. But at the same time, this book only carries the dark path to success for only Princes and Kings to justify their glory and survival. Using Machiavelli's content to justify the use of immoral means to achieve those ends is completely wrong in terms of the politics in today's society. (Davis, n. d.)

Pros

Machiavellianism, preferring reality over idealism to solve real problems makes this book more debatable as it is bringing a transformation in the political world of position management. People have died making this world a more livable and ideal place but the current situation of this modern world looks more disturbing than the previous ones. So maybe, up to some context, Machiavelli, founded solution to the modern political theory. On the other hand, as a writer, Machiavelli also warned us about the tactics people could use to when looking for their interest. These warnings might be helpful to come up with more defensive and stronger strategies to look out for competitors. Sometimes, you actually can take an advantage over your

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opponents by losing control of your moral values, this is helpful in getting rid of the cheap tactics the rivals make. Machiavelli wrote all these advices because he thought these was necessary, realizing your mistakes might be the only solution to get back to your place inside your market. (Anon., n. d.)

Cons

The Prince can be a thorough guide for people who are having bad intentions of over taking your position inside the market, providing a step by step philosophical guide in ruining their competitors business with immoral approaches. A person reading his writings may have dealt through a harsh personal background regarding family or work, persuading him to hurt somebody physically or mentally to achieve what he might have never received from the society. (Anon., n. d.)

Problems and Dangers

Machiavelli didn't only advise the conversion of idealism into realism, he explained each and every step to be taken thoroughly, in this modern political environment where everyone is trying to defeat their competitors, this book full of philosophical wisdom might get in the wrong hands and the wrong interpretation of it might lead to huge disasters like murders. About the quote of preferring fearfulness over mercy, this modern world has left the practice of being feared way past behind. Nothing can be conquered here by fear but politeness seems to be the answer. Taking an example, in a competitive market where two same products are competing with same pace cannot blackmail their competitors to leave but with leveraging dialogues

between the two parties might help them come with a better strategy together to rule the entire market. Machiavelli suggest leaders to be double faced, which might when realized, raise anger among their audience worsening the situation than the hypothetical situation leader assumed by being honest.

The neglecting fate of the Prince shows why some of the utopian societies built in this world preferred realism over idealism, one cannot bend reality over an ideal hypothetical place. In my opinion, what Machiavelli wrote was advice for a practical action that was maybe the only way he saw at his time. Although, it can be used in a really evil way, what determines it is who is applying these advices and in which context, more than the advices itself.