

Socrates and machiavelli

Sociology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Socrates and Machiavelli on Citizenship, Leadership and Authority Socrates and Machiavelli on Citizenship, Leadership and Authority Socrates and Machiavelli have distinct point of views when it comes to the arguments of citizenship, leadership, and authority. When it comes to leadership, Machiavelli believed that a good leader is risk taker, confident, and aggressive. He is flexible, can easily adjust to any situation, always on guard when it comes to his subordinates and does constant planning and preparation (Fuentes, 2008). In contrast, Socrates promoted a leader who builds and establishes rapport with his subordinates. A good leader for Socrates satisfies several roles through Socratic Method of leadership. He acts as a mentor, a follower, an instructor, a motivator and a peer (Tucker, 2007). With regards to authority, both Machiavelli and Socrates believed that power should rest to a limited number of individual since political wisdom is not distributed evenly across the population. Machiavelli also believed that authority and power are equal and power does not only belong to those who are morally good (plato. stanford. edu). Socratic Method defined an ideal citizen as an ideal questioner and a life-long-learner while Machiavelli promoted a republican model of citizenship. LEADERSHIP According to Machiavelli, a good leader has no room for weaknesses, thus, he should enhance and utilize virtues including risk taking, confidence and aggressiveness (Fuentes, 2008). This argument might not always be true since being a leader does not mean that one is invincible. A leader should always know the right time when to take risks and when to collect intelligent advices. With this, Socrates' argument has a different point of view. For him, a leader should co-work with his subordinates. Rather than fully depend on him, a leader should let his subordinates be independent. He can empower

<https://assignbuster.com/socrates-and-machiavelli/>

selected individuals to do minor decisions and thus, lessening his burden (Tucker, 2007). Machiavelli believed in strong political leadership founded on the concept of fear and system of coercion. A leader should do anything to ensure and sustain peace and order and do any measure to achieve security and stability. He should do constant planning and preparation wherein even in times of peace, he should not turn his mind from the study of war. He should always be on guard when it comes to his subordinates engaging in meaningful interactions among them in order to avoid problems that will later threaten the status of the organization (Fuentes, 2008). These arguments of Machiavelli may not hold for long. For one, fear is not a very good motivation for subordinates. As illustrated in history of several countries, system of coercion resulted to revolution and eventually overthrew those governments who imposed such system. Rather than being harsh and stiff, Socrates offered a different way to look at leadership. For him leaders and subordinates are on the same level, learning things from each other. As an instructor, a leader should assist his subordinates and train them accordingly. He should motivate people, employ critical thinking skills and interact with others (Tucker, 2007). AUTHORITY According to a common view among political philosophers, political power is only for those who have virtuous moral character or to those who behave according to the conventional standards of ethical goodness. However for Machiavelli, the difference between the legitimate and illegitimate use of power has no moral basis. Being good will not ensures one of power and being right is not sufficient to obtain and maintain political office. Thus, the only concern of a political ruler is the acquisition and maintenance of power. State of safety, security, and obedience among subordinates can be maintained through <https://assignbuster.com/socrates-and-machiavelli/>

proper application of power. Fear is preferred over affection as violence and deception over legality in order to maintain authority (plato. stanford. edu). These viewpoints of Machiavelli encourage bloodshed among citizens of a country. Rather than peace and order, a powerful but ruthless and unethical leader will give birth to rebellious citizens. Virtues define humanity. Thus, knowing and following what is morally acceptable for humans is essential to lead them. A similar perspective of Socrates supports this claim. According to him, rather than power intellectual virtues are the most valuable possessions that an individual should aim to have. CITIZENSHIP Machiavelli believed that citizenship, liberty and republicanism are developed autonomously by each other wherein the recognition of one is linked to being aware of the other. According to him, human beings work through choice or necessity, and necessity is the primary motivating force. Necessity will oblige people to do good, obey the law and work together. On the other hand, Socrates somehow gave a concrete example of an ideal citizen. According to him, a good citizen focuses his life on the perpetual pursuit of knowledge. He gave value to the essentiality of love and piety among each individual. For Socrates, good citizens value integrity, patriotism, political participation, piety, and unwavering obedience to the law. In general, fear, system of coercion, unethically powerful leader, and the likes are not ideal foundations of government, especially at modern times. Though too idealistic at some aspect, Socratic Method is preferable for it promotes empowerment and equality among people. References Ancient Greece. Socrates. Retrieved from on 27 March 2013. Critchley P. (2004). Machiavelli and the Citizen Ideal. Retrieved from on 27 March 2013. Fuentes C. (2008). On Leadership and Niccolo Machiavelli. Revista Actuari@ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <https://assignbuster.com/socrates-and-machiavelli/>

(2009). Niccolo Machiavelli. Retrieved from on 27 March 2013. Talisse R.
(2013). Socratic Citizenship. Retrieved from on 27 March 2013. Tucker M. A.
A. (2007) Leadership by Socratic Method. Air and Space Power Journal
Summer 2007. Villa D. (2001). Socratic Citizenship. Princeton University
Press.