

Essay on chesty puller v. richard nixon leadership

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



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Introduction

Different leadership adapts different leadership styles. The leadership styles which are mainly determined by the personality traits can either make them a good or a poor leader. Richard Nixon and Chesty Puller were both leaders in their own jurisdiction. However, the styles each one of them chose and the execution of their leadership capabilities is what sets them apart. Despite them being leaders in different fields their actions as leaders is comparable hence the distinction of good and poor leader.

Essay

Psychologists today have tried to link personality traits with leadership skills. The recent development is aimed to help analyze how personality traits of a person affect his/ her choice of leadership style (Greenstein, 2004). The leadership style one adapts can either break or make a leader especially in political leadership. The moral element which is embedded in the personality of a person can either make one a good or a bad leader (Greenstein, 2004). Leaders have been classified according to the leadership style they employ.

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From the recent leadership classification of leadership styles Richard Nixon falls under the example of a synthesizer (Greenstein, 2004). Leaders who have been classified as synthesizers can be very capable at some point for they know how to influence those around them to support their course. The flaw of this kind of leaders is their emotional detachment which might be a plus at some point but most of the times end up making them less sympathetic to those around them. In fact Nixon has been regarded as an introvert who lacked charm and humor to relate to people (Greenstein, 2004). Puller on the other hand like the great leader he is knew how to utilize the synthesizer character to his advantage. He managed to influence those around his support his great insights and visions (Quintrall, 1998).

Puller was a great leader for he was intelligent and was very insightful when it came to finding solutions to problems. He was a leader of great vision and strategy and unlike Nixon he used the synthesizer trait to win favor from his superiors and juniors. He is regarded as the man of the people as he sympathizes with those he lead by giving them positive reinforcement when the going gets tough (Quintrall, 1998).

Laver and Mathews (2008) highlights the characteristics of a great leader especially in military field. They study the relationship between military training and the resultant leader such schooling gives. In their book they consider Pullers leadership as based in team work. His style is considered to be charismatic a style though hard to execute turned out to be a success for Puller. They add that many leaders often shy away from charismatic leadership for they believe is something which can only be acquired at an early age. They say that Puller deviates from this notion since his charisma

was learnt through his connection with his subordinates and his lead from the front style. We can therefore say that Puller's success in leadership had nothing to do with his childhood but is an on job learning experience (Laver and Mathews, 2008).

The learning ability of a warriors is what determines whether one becomes a potential leader or not in the marine discipline. However, learned ability is not enough but has to be combined with innate abilities to survive in the battle field (Laver and Mathews, 2008). Experience is very vital in marine leadership and only a wise man learns from experience (Laver and Mathews, 2008). Nixon and Puller shared this leadership trait (experience) but Nixon seemed to learn from others rather than from experience hence his down fall. His experience at Duke College when he led a few of his friends to break into the exam office to check their results did nothing to prevent him from committing a future similar incident (Couturier, 2010). If he was wise enough he could have learnt that though shameful act went unnoticed it was unlikely to escape the public when he was a public figure. Puller on the other hand was keen to learnt past experience is his and of his predecessors so as to avoid similar situations during his leadership. He is known to keep a pocket book on Gaelic wars where he greatly borrowed insightful leadership tactics (Quintrall, 1998).

The definition of the term leadership has always been problematic. However, Greenstein (2004) quotes Burns (1978) working definition in relation to politics. He says that leadership is whereby a person mobilizes followers who hold mutual goals in social, political and economic aspect and leading them democratically towards that goal. The leaders have s sole responsibility to

lead the followers to the identified and his/her effectiveness is measurement on the achievement of that goal. The American people must have had faith in Richard Nixon leadership otherwise why did they elect him vice-president and president twice making him the only person in American political history to do so? (Couturier, 2010) . Chesty Puller was also able to it in marine leadership for his superiors believed in him. The only difference between these two people is how their used the powers bestowed upon them by their followers in executing the leadership duties. Both leaders had great leadership traits such as courage, communication skills and were ambitious nature; however how each of them employed the traits set them apart by making one a great leader (Puller) and other one a poor leader (Nixon) (Couturier, 2010, Quintrall, 1998).

Weakness of Nixon leadership

Nixon could have been a great leader were it not for some weaknesses which were self destructive and led to his downfall. Historians have centered his leadership flaws on Watergate scandal (Couturier, 2010). His shortcomings as a chief executive is what created a situation where the bizarre Watergate incident would happen bringing with it disastrous consequences.

Couturier (2010) attributes Nixon demise to his quirky nature. This nature enabled him to succeed by overcoming barriers along the presidential path; however, it brought resentment and hatred among many a situation which was partially responsible for his downfall. Couturier, (2010) says a great leader should capitalize on interpersonal relationships which Nixon unfortunately lacked. Due to this he resorted to ruthlessness to get ahead in the political career. This quirky nature created a dysfunctional government

which leaned more on the extreme.

His insecure nature made him demand loyalty from his cabinet and he formed a clique for he could not trust many people. Thus distrust and the ruthless way in which he dealt with his opponents created a division in the white house where a feeling of us versus them was hatched (Couturier, 2010). The division gained him many enemies who would do anything to plot his downfall. Most historians think Nixon was a paranoia otherwise why he could he keep a list of enemies and further still why did he continue to deny his involvement to the Watergate hotel break in scandal? (Couturier, 2010). If he were a great leader he could have accepted his mistakes when the Watergate scandals threatened his presidency. (Couturier, 2010) says if only he took this humble avenue he could have gained sympathy of his supporters. (Couturier, 2010) quotes Gerald Ford comments on Nixon that his greatest shortcoming in the Watergate scandal was his pride. His pride and stubborn made his courageous nature to be viewed negatively. His believe that every crisis was temporary and could be resolved if one became adamant in his stand made him undermine the consequences of his denial (Couturier, 2010). A to be great leader one is sometimes required to admit his/her mistakes but Nixon saw this as a weakness which was a great underestimation.

Conclusion

Despite his widely documented shortcomings Richard Nixon should also be commended for the good job he did. He might not earn the title as a role model of good leadership but I feel it is important to highlight some of the good points in his leadership. For the three decades that he participated in

America politics he helped shape the political landscape in several ways. Some of his character is positive and can be compared to that is leaders such as Chesty Puller who are considered as good leaders. Nixon on his part was ambitious, had visions, was experienced, was a great communicator and was full of courage (Couturier, 2010). His only difference might the degree with which each of the leaders applied the above traits. Nixon failure may have been because he pushed his luck too far by either going overboard or below board on the above character traits (Couturier, 2010).

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