Leadership Style

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The first reading assignments for this semester highlighted two diametrically opposed views of leadership. The first book, *The Prince* by Niccolo Machiavelli comes across as a harsh, uncaring way of ruling, whereas *The Art of Power* by Thich Nhat Hanh takes on a more laid back, inwardly focused, idea of leadership. Hanh teaches that true power comes from within, whereas in *The Prince*, Machiavelli poses the question of whether a prince should be loved or feared. As one reads these books, one cannot help to wonder which style of leadership is best for a leader to possess. In order to discuss modern day situations in which these leadership styles are demonstrated, it is important to have a more detailed understanding of these two leadership styles.

Machiavelli poses the question of whether it is better for leaders to be loved or feared. Connell (2005) states that Machiavelli was the first author to argue, “good government requires the skillful use of cruelty and deception to continually take what belongs to others” (p. 3). Machiavelli learned about leadership by looking at successful leaders from the past and identifying characteristics that would make good leaders. He states that princes should not be concerned with living virtuously but acting in such a manner. Ideally a prince should possess qualities such as courage, compassion, and faith that will in turn earn him praise. However Machiavelli goes on to state that since the prince’s first priority is to safeguard his kingdom, sometimes he needs to possess some characteristics such as cruelty and stubbornness that will earn condemnation. He may need these characteristics in order to protect his kingdom and people, and when acting in this manner benefits the majority of the people, it will not be seen as wrong.

Machiavelli ponders whether it is better for the prince to be loved or feared. He goes on to argue that it is good to have a balance between the two, however he realizes
that it is unlikely a leader could achieve this balance, therefore it is better to rule with fear. He advocates that fear is always the safer way to rule; because people can easily turn on the prince if he rules with love. Machiavelli realizes that the line between these two traits is very fine therefore it is important for the prince to avoid being hated. Furthermore, Machiavelli explains that fear gives a ruler firm control over his army, a necessary component in stabilizing power.

He also states that princes should choose their counsel wisely. He states that a if one sees the minister thinking more highly of himself than the prince and he seeks profit for himself he should not be trusted. Machiavelli states that there are three types of minds, “one that understands by itself, one that discerns what others understand, and another that does not understand both itself or others” (p. 112). He states that people possessing the first type of mind would be the best to have around the prince, the second mind type is an excellent choice in a counsel person, and if a person possesses the third type, they are useless (p. 112). Good rulers stay away from their subjects property and they tell people what they want to hear. Machiavelli states that it is not necessary for the prince to be compassionate, faithful, humane, honest, or religious, but it is necessary for him to seem to be these things. He states that when a prince has these qualities and they are observable, they are harmful. The prince needs to know when he can become these things in order to protect his kingdom. Machiavelli’s leadership style is behavioral based on the situation. The prince’s goal is to keep the power.

In contrast to Machiavelli’s view, Hanh writes in the Art of Power that true power comes from within. Being a Buddhist Zen master and peace activist, his views of power and leadership are diametrically opposite of Machiavelli’s. Hanh teaches that what people
are constantly seeking, wealth, fame, and fortune, is not what will give them power. Instead Hanh states that what one needs instead are the five spiritual powers, which are “faith, diligence, mindfulness, concentration, and insight” (p. 15). He shows readers how true power comes from happiness and that most people are not living up to their true potential because they do not know how to be happy in the present moment. We don’t know how to be happy because we are constantly looking outwards to external things to determine our happiness instead of inwardly where true happiness lies. Through Hanh’s writings one learns that what we are constantly seeking we already have, we just need to learn to harness this power within ourselves. Hanh believes that through people getting in touch with their own true selves, the world will be changed.

One could ask if either of these leadership styles better than the other. Each author teaches a leadership style that is useful for different circumstances. These two authors seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum and a blending of their ideas would provide a well-balanced leadership style. Modern day examples of the two styles of leadership will be discussed.

There are many modern day countries with rulers that have more Machiavellian type leadership skills than those portrayed by Hanh. We could look to countries like Iran, Iraq, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia to name a few that all have rulers who rule in a more Machiavellian manner than that portrayed by Hanh. In the last twenty years there have been people in these countries protesting and calling for change. In 1989 many people witnessed the massacre in Tiananmen Square where Chinese students were mourning the death of Hu Yaobang who had been a supporter of democracy. The government of China swiftly moved the military in to strike down these protesters. These
people were speaking out against the way things were and the government felt that in order to remain in control they needed to act swiftly. The deaths of the people and the subsequent arrests of protesters kept the fear level high among the people causing them not to speak out against the government, placing the people in the exact position the government desired.

Currently in Saudi Arabia punishment for crimes is swift. The King rules the country in an authoritative manner. To this day there are still public executions for rape and murder as well as people losing their hand for stealing. Many of their laws are built around the Quran, their holy book, and for an outsider their rules and actions are not democratic as people in the United States are used to seeing. These countries appear to rule by instilling fear in the people. If things are not done in the manner that the rulers have stated there are consequences.

In Russia before the fall of communism people lived in fear of the government heads and the KGB. People were fearful because they knew that if they spoke badly about the government and what they said was found out, they may be taken the next day. When the Berlin wall fell and West and East Berlin were once again one, the German work ethic was no longer seen in many of the East Berliners. These people had come to realize that they would get paid the same for doing the minimum amount of work as they would for working far and above the minimum. The people began to change and worked just to the minimum even though before the separation of Berlin they had been raised with a very different work ethic.
In all of the above-mentioned instances there was a high level of fear among the people toward the ruler. All of these countries had great armies that the head of the country controlled. As Machiavelli stated it is better.

Here in America we see people who are driven by what Hanh states is a very limited definition of power. People are driven by “wealth, professional success, fame, physical strength, military might, and political control” (Hanh, 2007, p. 1) which Hanh and Buddhists call cravings. People tend to look up to these people with wealth and fame and put them on a high pedestal, give them power and then we try to emulate these people’s lives. Hanh would say that this is not the best method. Striving for these cravings will not bring happiness. Recently we have seen what these cravings can do to people. Bernie Madoff, the former Nasdaq chairman and a highly respected investor, had wealth and fame. In his desire for power and to have more of it, he deceived people, taking their money and investing it in what has turned out to be a major scam. The ramifications of this scheme is widespread and people have all lost millions of dollars. We continue to see other aspects of this type of scheme with other companies and their CEOs. Government bail out plans are being given to companies to keep them afloat so the whole US economy does not come tumbling down when in fact the CEOs of these companies are luxurious places for meetings while their clients have lost millions of dollars and they are laying off employees. These people again are out for themselves, worrying about wealth, and fame. These instances demonstrate Hanh’s statement that “the desire for wealth is more important than health and happiness” (Hanh, 2007, p. 14).

A person who comes to mind that lived out the five spiritual powers discussed by Hanh was Mother Theresa. She was not motivated by worldly desires such as wealth,
fame, or fortune. She instead was a very faithful woman who displayed diligence, mindfulness, concentration, and insight in all she did. Mother Theresa lived out her faith daily, taking care of those less fortunate people in India while practicing mindfulness. She focused on the task at hand and did not think about the past or the future but was fully present in the moment, caring more for others than for herself.

Another person who may be seen as possessing more of a Hanh type leadership style than that described by Machiavelli is President Barak Obama. One reason for this may be his ability to unify people. Hanh states that teachers, parents, and politicians have the ability to awaken many people at once. This is exactly what we have seen with President Obama, he has awakened a whole new generation of people eager for change. Hanh states that in Buddhism the term bodhisattva is used to describe “someone who is awake, mindful, and motivated by a desire to help others wake up, be mindful, and be happy” (Hanh, 2007, p77). Hanh goes on to say that with the support of a community this practice can bring transformation, healing, joy, and happiness. These are traits that people are looking for and were portrayed well by President Obama with his message of change.

Living under a ruler from either one of these extremes would be very difficulty. An effective leader would need to be somewhere in the middle of these two ideas. No matter what extreme one comes from, Hanh makes the point that when people realize that they have the power within themselves for true happiness change can begin to occur in the world.

Nice essay, just a few technical things. 19.5 points.
References


Vincent Allen Rado. 4 May 2018 at 12:13. It is highly concerning that this individual is on the faculty. Mason Students: Join us for our Virtual Leadership Advocate Meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) at 7:30pm, we have something super fun and engaging planned. The LEAD Office and Contemporary Student Services are pleased to host this year’s Mason Leadership Summit at George Mason University, specifically designed for Mason students who identify as adult learners (25 years old and up) and students who identify as parents (any age). Participants will learn practical ways to further develop as leaders in multiple contexts (career, family, community, etc.), whether they have a formal leadership position or not. In addition, followers in congruent dyads with low authoritarian-benevolent leadership perceived higher levels of moral disengagement than those in congruent dyads with high authoritarian-benevolent leadership. Furthermore, high authoritarian-benevolent leadership had an indirect effect on follower UPB via moral disengagement. Theoretical and practical implications and future research directions are suggested. SERVANT LEADERSHIP. George Mason University (GMU) recently created an ambitious mission and goal statement. The university aspires to be a university for the world, creating globally contentious graduates, increasing the number of graduates and the services it provides to students (George Mason University, 2012). George Mason University is a diverse school and allowing an open enrollment will create a challenge in identifying consistent participant inputs. According to the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting, 42.2% of faculty in the Fall 2014 semester were female, with 57.8% male. Faculty were mostly white. Official leadership of George Mason University including executive council, president’s council, and board of visitors information. We are a progressive, diverse university and our leadership reflects that. We come from many different backgrounds, many different places, and each of us brings something different to the table. It is these very contrasts that allow us to look beyond the expected as we share the responsibility and commitment to ensure the success of our students in their academic goals, personal lives, careers, communities and whatever other endeavors they may choose to pursue. Optimum leadership style varies according to circumstances because of innate orientations and styles. Skill level. Teach people to determine the best style for themselves and what is best for those they work with. 7 The Leadership Challenge Kouzes Posner Practices of Exemplary Leadership page 8-14. ePortfolios for Leadership Identity Development with OSP: Some Very Preliminary Findings - George Mason University. dcambrid@gmu.edu. Lives We Lead. Three-year