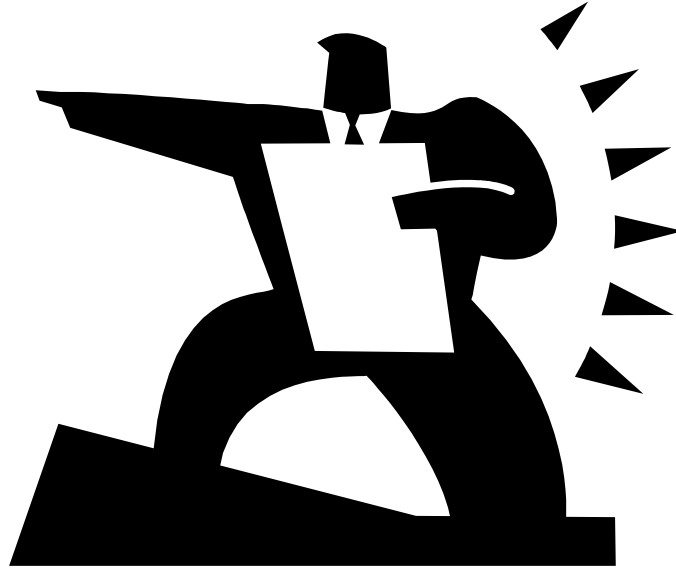# Assignment 1:
Applying Contrasting Perspectives of Leading to Practice.

Q.   Choose one current and one historical approach to leading, and compare and contrast what these perspectives contribute to your understanding of leading. Use specific examples from your own workplace(s) to illustrate (2500 words).

Student Name:	Lexmilian de Mello
Student Number:	1013 7844
Day & Time of Tutorial:	Tuesday, 17:30
Lecturer Name:	Matthew Bambach
Due Date:	24th March 2009
Word Count:	2535 (3200)

Declaration: "I certify that I can provide a copy of the attached assignment if required" - "I certify that the attached assignment is my own work and that all material drawn from other sources has been fully acknowledged"

Signed: …………………………………..   **Dated:** …24th March 2009...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"Leading is a subjective matter, and indeed it depends on the perspective and situation it is to take place in."

There are strong discrepancies in management methods of old in contrast to modern ways. There is growing recognition of the importance of leader's emotional resonance with others, which in turn lead to a vast proliferation of new leadership methods each suited to their own locale. The growing recognition that leadership development involves more than developing individual leaders has led to a proactive breakthrough that may indeed benefit subordinates as well. Work/life balance issues, leadership competencies, and thoughtful consideration (or lack thereof) are important aspects to be tackled in old and newer leading approaches. Globalization, technology, returns on investment (ROI), alongside new ways of thinking all shape are crucial factors in the transitional change from methods of old to new.

The scope of leadership types is varied, and factors that have influenced leadership styles through the ages include; local culture, geographical location, recognition of previous ideals as well as acceptance of newly developed doctrines. The main focus of this paper is to focus on Machiavelli's doctrines (and doctrines of old) in order to contrast it with a more modern way of leadership.

OLD APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

Traditionally, leadership studies went alongside with studies of the elites in society, i.e.: aristocratic, cultural, financial, military, political elites. It was seen that in order to properly analyze leadership, it was essential to consider it as an art form, this for which some people had an inbuilt genius. It was conceived that the majority of us could only engage in admiring post-game analyses. Leadership used to be thought of as a process – one based on influence skills, and traditionally the leader has always been on top of the hierarchy.

Niccolo Machiavelli was an educated Italian diplomat born in the year 1469. His famous work, titled, 'The Prince', described leadership elements under the guise of a 'realist political theory' that was suited to the time. His distrust for 'mercenaries' is exemplary of his beliefs that power can be more easily maintained if indeed a loyal bond exists between the 'leader' and his subordinates. The unifying theme in *The Prince* and the *Disorsi* was that both elements of force and

Figure 1: Niccolo Machievelli

prudence, combined, are the key pre-requisites for pure might in governments around the world. Applying this view to the micro scale it can be seen that Machiavelli indeed preaches that pure obedience in a team can only ever be truly reached by imposing sheer will onto the subjects so that they effectively maintain focus on the task(s) at hand without deviating from what is desired.

Machiavelli does not entirely dismiss morality; instead he defines morality as in the criteria for acceptable cruel action, thus putting a fundamental break between political realism and idealism.

Machiavellian thought became a misnomer in describing someone who deceives and manipulates others for gain. To that effect, it became apparent that leaders preaching *Machiavellian* thought should mislead team members

when there is no other recourse to keep them on track. Although not proactive, it has retained popularity as an uncouth means towards success.

Machiavelli's chapter XVII, in *The Prince* dictates that 'every prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel' – this again shows that the façade of being something that you are not is an essential element for leadership in the Machiavellian school of thought. To Machiavelli gone are the benefits from ethical behavior, and indeed leading is a ruthless war game, where at the top the primary concern is the elite's well being, or hence, the leader.

The Prince strongly encourages the employment of subordinates who are altruistically biased, for when they are not then their interests lie more for themselves which could impact the prince's goals (Grint, p64) – the just mentioned is in reference to advisers.

The most important analysis to be taken in consideration of Machiavelli's work, in my opinion, is that the prince (aka: leader), must be able to adapt his course of actions to that of nature. This is also highlighted in the metaphors of being 'half-man, half-beast' and the consideration of blind fortune itself (Chapters XVIII & XXV).

"For Machiavelli, winning was the aim and moral issues were framed in the context of winning (the end justifies the means in the extreme version). Fear, image enhancement, disorganizing the enemy, creating alliances, bravery, and the use of religion, culture and technology to control followers or subdue nature were means available to 'princes'."– Bambach (2009)

The revival of interest in Machiavelli's work in the 19th & 20th century is remarkable.

THE ETHICS BEHIND MACHIAVELLI

Machiavelli argued that leadership was simply a tool for influence. He gave creed that it mattered not whether leadership be ethical or unethical, servant or power controlled, in order to independently achieve effectiveness and hence success. It is worthy of notion that the unethical leader always treats people as instruments and never as long lasting ends – totalitarians like Hitler, Mao,

> **Did you know?**
>
> On July 18, 1979, on the fifth day of his "presidency" of Iraq, Saddam Hussein held a meeting of more than 300 Baath Party senior personnel. The discovery of a "plot" to overthrow the new regime was revealed, and one of the alleged "instigators"—returned from the torture chamber and promised his life—"confessed" the details. Some 66 individuals were arrested on the spot, and were executed some 2 weeks later. Saddam asked the others to volunteer for service on the firing squads; the confessed "instigator" was executed as an Israeli spy—as distinguished from participation in the plot (Windsor, 2008).

Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, as well as Saddam Hussein, can give useful leadership techniques for those that may opt for the unethical approach.

Machiavelli's stated reason for drastically changing the foundation of where ethics was is that otherwise one would achieve ruin rather than preservation. Bear in mind that at those troubled times corruption was rampart, and in some instances the concept that it be better to live by the sword sometimes flourished.

Machiavelli presents himself as the ultimate realist in a world populated mainly by naïve and inexperienced people. It is no surprise that the public would denounce him as the enemy of morality, when in fact all Machiavelli was doing was adapting to the optimum principles of leadership that were possible at the time!

CURRENT APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

Nowadays, effective leadership is mainly viewed as a central point to organization success, and more importance has been placed on leadership design than ever before.

Today, leadership is defined as the process that engenders and hence is the result of relationships, this in contrast to the view that leadership is defined by leader's actions. Relationships focus on the interactions of both collaborators and leaders instead of focusing on only the competencies of the leaders. Leadership development practices based on the paradigm of *good honest relations* are more difficult to implement and design than those of Machiavelli's. However, it is more socially accepted than the latter and hence implementation may in fact see long lasting results.

In order to make leadership more systemic (of or pertaining to a system) is to make sure it involves more than just training. It is essential that an array of experiences be felt in a *meaningful integrated* way – this so that the leader fully grasps all concepts and scenarios whilst retaining flexibility. Leadership development efforts and initiatives must be ongoing, not a single program or event (McCrimmon, 2008).

Today a larger focus is placed on relating the organization's particular strategy, and business model, in a way so as to achieve leadership competency.

In order to graphically illustrate a current leadership model we may examine a simplified version of the *functional leadership model*. The model says that the leadership function meets needs in areas:
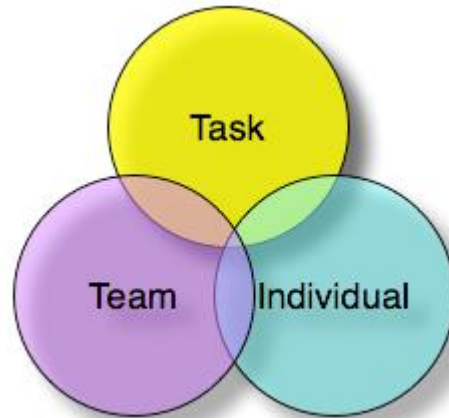
Figure 2: Functional Leadership Model

The three areas correspond to Venn Diagrams, and are derived from John Adair's "three circles", this of which has been used successfully in the British military.

The functional leadership model places less emphasis on who has been formally assigned a leadership role and rather concentrates on how an organization is being led. This allows the analysis to spend less time looking at the person who has formally assigned authority and instead focus on how the leadership function is actually taking place.

The underlying theme to be noticed is that nowadays there is an emphasis to integrate all skills in an effort to homogenize and diversify talents so that the enterprise is better prepared for any *force majeure* that may occur. By establishing relations between all segments within the company potential conflict is also avoided, and better sentiments are constructed which in turn facilitates leading.

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP MOVEMENT

Businesses don't thrive because of ethical leadership and not in spite of it. The embodiment of character virtues in businesses paves the way for values

for decision making. If a leader conducts itself with honesty and a sense of fair play it won't be vulnerable to competition and losses to its customer base.

A case study where this is apparent can be seen in the choices *Johnson & Johnson* made in 1982 – this when it was determined that its extra strength Tylenol was laced with cyanide. The CEO, James Burke, took an ethical stand that the commitment to its customers should stand above shareholder commitments and hence profit. James backed up J&J's value standing by positioning the company on a 31 million bottle recall that cost the company more than one hundred million dollars. Over the long run this move boosted consumer confidence and sustained brand loyalty.

Table 1: (Henry, 2009)

Ethical Leadership Traits
1. Purpose Driven
2. Courage of Conviction
3. Whole Person Approach
4. Empowerment
5. Succession Planning
6. Emotional Intelligence

Teams and leaders should devote quality time in order to discuss the above traits in relation to their environment so as to design a personalized game plan that is practical. The above model will add value to the process of performance management where value centered leadership is an organizational success trait. In all, Ethical leadership will create a playing field that cares about its employees in a holistic healing manner. In such an organization, as stated, employees will willingly and proudly take care of business and processes whilst realizing fulfillment and facilitating leadership roles for the leader. By leading with *your soul* a collective sense of kinship flourishes leading towards the greater good for all participants. This leads to business growth, corporate stability and sustainability, financial profits and marketplace loyalty. Such an organization will be an exemplary member of our civil society, and a market leader engaged in business.

MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP MOVEMENT

Today's leadership models fixate on being educated on a multicultural level. Multicultural leadership encourages an adaptable and inclusive style that culminates empowerment in order to achieve the optimum set of abilities out of the best in our diverse workforce and also to fashion a worldwide sense of community with all participants. It brings to efficacy a wide spectrum of people to actively contribute, engage, and to tap their unseen potential. This is why making sure that the entire workplace has a culturally inclusive leadership paved way to becoming one of the most important decisions a leader can make in this globalized world.

For a multicultural movement to take place it first must be established that a history lesson is needed, and then that history needs to expand onto a multicultural form. Today we aim for people to learn and work together, no matter what their nationality – no two people come from the exact same background.

In a multicultural leadership, one step towards minimizing conflict is encouraging people to view each other as relatives (Bordas, 2009). By viewing other members of society as relatives this would wade out the likelihoods for war and fighting, instead a more proactive approach would develop in which the participants would seek resolutions to their problems. Multicultural leadership and ethics would imbue a spirit to coexist in order to benefit the company through greater understanding and cooperation.

A culture accepting of spirituality is essential for leadership to thrive when present with religious subordinates. A focus on organizational vision is essential nowadays, i.e.: Almost every organization has a promise or motto that is meant to inspire employees. It should be noted that the vision should represent beliefs and attitudes of all your employees.

"If we can achieve this, the world will be a better place – to work in, to live in, and to bequeath to our children and to future generations." – Juana Bordas

COMMON FACTORS

Our historical approach, and current approach, to leadership does generate some key similarities. Common traits, as dictated by McCrimmon (2009), needed for leadership from past to new include:

- "Intelligence.
- Personality traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability.
- Motives such as the need for power and achievement.
- Social skills such as social and emotional intelligence."

The above is not an exhaustive list, and it should be noted that leadership, being reinvented in the 21st century, now holds to a greater stature more noble traits. For example, the courage to challenge, alongside a drive to improve the world around and outside the leader's circle of influence, are becoming all the more prominent (i.e.: Martin Luther King, Jr and Mahatma Gandhi), this where the focus is on the wide target audience.

Leadership Trivia:

More than 80 per cent of CEOs surveyed in the 2003 Hewitt's Best Employer study stated that their organization's ability to succeed would be impacted by three things: acquiring and retaining talent, *quality of leadership*, and organizational culture (Bashinsky, 2004).

THE FUTURE & TECHNOLOGY

There are six major trends that will have a major role in our future understanding and practice of leadership development and leadership. The following critical role changing contexts play an effect on leadership development:

1. "Leadership competencies will still matter;
2. Globalization/internationalization of leadership concepts, constructs, and development methods;
3. The role of technology;
4. Increasing interest in the integrity and character of leaders;
5. Pressure to demonstrate return on investment;
6. New ways of thinking about the nature of leadership and leadership development." (Hermez-Broome et al, 2004)

It should be noted that the technology revolution has changed organizational life. Telecommunications systems, automated deliveries, and etcetera, have changed the way that knowledge and information are accessed and disseminated and facilitated the means in which people communicate with each other. This most certainly will have profound implications on how "effective leadership will look like as well as how to use technology effectively in leadership development" (Hermez-Broome et al, 2004).

What should be kept in mind is that future leadership depends on complex knowledge and innovation from all team members and mayhap stakeholders too. 21st century leadership is not dependent on position. Leadership now means promoting a better way. This is an ACT not a role. Front line employees can show leadership without even being seen as informal leaders in the sense of taking charge informally of the group.

The demands of virtual social worlds lay path to characteristics of organizational leadership models. In these virtual worlds it is common practice for teams of characters from around the globe to gather and address challenges as well as focus on collaborative success in nonhierarchical ways that usually require taking risks with quick decisions whilst having access to incomplete information.

CONCLUSION

Traditional leadership is debilitating – aspiring leaders are constantly competing to overthrow the leader and it remains the leader's job to intimidate all his subordinates into place. The more submissive are also afraid to challenge their leader for fear of disapproval and hence a proactive environment is not established.

Ethnocentricity is commonly accepted in the historical approach to leadership. Ethnocentricity acts as an impediment for most leaders as they are unable to flourish when present with different subordinates whose culture may differ.

The current view of leadership is used so as to remarkably implement a process whereupon anyone with good ideas, who in turn are capable of persuading others to follow, displays leadership regardless of their hierarchical status. This implies charisma (∞E.I.), persistence, bravado, control, and locus of influence are all key attributes for the attainment of leadership status.

The attached 'appendix' provides a key categorization, and contrast, between historical and modern perspectives of leadership.

However, it should be noted, that different leadership styles suit different environments, and indeed a ruthless approach can at times be the best manner of which to handle an organization environment.

APPENDIX

MY PERTINENT PERSPECTIVE

Machiavelli's 'survival tips'

- Constantly expand.
- Build on 'roots'.
- Give an impression of being ethical and moral.
- Control (can use the fear factor and should!).
- Impose your will influentially.

Sun Tzu's key modern context aspects

- Force corporate takeovers when you are to gain from them.
- Maintain a strategic intelligence agency.
- Fool other corporations by using false strategic leaks.

Observation by Plato

- Philosophers/sages should abstain from powerful positions lest they can feign ignorance when time requires, or lest they be spin-doctors.

Vilfredo Pareto

- Power and control is essential as most people are useless and selfish interests are human nature.
- The main leadership traits in order of importance are; charisma, decisiveness, persuasiveness, responsibility, and technical skills.

Modern day approaches varies a lot, and indeed differ mostly depending on the technical level that the leadership model is to tackle. Below are two examples of current approaches to leading (of many):

Figure 3: KSA leadership model – Web Site:
http://www.knowledgeskillsattitude.co.uk/lead_dev.shtml

Figure 5: Obsidian approach - Web Site:
http://www.obsidian.co.uk/leadership.php

REFERENCES

Ambler, W. (2008). Machiavellianism. *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society – From Gale Virtual Library*. Vol. 3. p1309-1310.

Bashinsky, A. (2004). Leadership, culture and employee engagement: do CEOs and executives actually get it? *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society – Human Resources Magazine*. p.3

Bordas, J. (2009). White men and women can't lead (everyone): eight ways to practice multicultural leadership.(COMMENTARY). *Public Management – From Search Me! Management*, p.3(4).

Gowing, M., K., Morris, D., M., Adler, S., Gold, M. (2008). The next generation of leadership assessments: some case studies. *Public Personnel Management – From Search Me! Management*, p.435(21).

Grint, K. (1997). *Leadership – 'Classical, Contemporary, and Critical Approaches'*, Great Britain: Oxford.

Henry, K. (2009). Leading with your soul: "the Comprehensive Ethical Leadership Model[TM] shows you how to create an ethical workplace that will lead to sustainability for your company.(ANNUAL CONFERENCE TOPIC)". *Strategic Finance – From Search Me! Management*, p.44(7).

Hermez-Broome, & G., Hughes, R., L. (2004). Leadership development: past, present, and future. *Human Resource Planning – From Search Me! Management*, p.24(9).

Leadership Theories: A 20th Century History [n.d.]. Retrieved February, 2009, from the Infinite Futures Web site: http://www.infinitefutures.com/essays/publichealth/leadershiphtml/tsld002.htm

McCrimmon, M. [n.d.]. Leadersdirect, Retrieved February, 2009, from the
　　　　Leadersdirect Web site: http://www.leadersdirect.com/futurelead.html

McCrimmon, M. [n.d.]. Leadersdirect thinking, Retrieved February, 2009, from
　　　　the Leadersdirect Web site:
　　　　http://www.leadersdirect.net/articles/707/1/Leadership-Traits-Three-
　　　　Perspectives/Page1.html

Windsor, D. (2008). Leadership. *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society
　　　　– From Gale Virtual Library*. Vol. 3. p1266-1274.