

"Niccolo Machiavelli"

Machiavelli's Theory of Power Politics:

Introduction:

Niccolo Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy, in 1469. He was an Italian diplomat and political philosopher during the Renaissance Period. His best known book *The Prince*, written in 1513, which focuses on acquiring and maintaining power political powers.

Core Principles of Machiavellian Politics:

(1) Realism Over Idealism:

Machiavelli is often described as the father of political realism, he focused on understanding and describing politics as it is, rather than how it ought to be. In his book "The Prince" he argues that successful rulers do not act according to religious or moral principles, but according to the demand of the power and necessity.

"A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good."

(- The Prince)

He believed that rulers must be prepared to do evil when necessary, using fear, violence, and manipulation as tools to achieve political objectives.

Modern Relevance:

Leaders today in democracies or autocracies still balance power and ethics.

(2) Human Nature:

Machiavelli has a pessimistic view of human nature. He believed people are self-interested, ungrateful, deceitful and motivated by fear more than love or duty. He argued that a ruler must never rely on people's loyalty or moral behaviour. Even, the prince must be cunning and strong.

"Men are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, they shun danger and are greedy for profit." (-The Prince)

He believed that,

"It is better to be feared than loved, if one cannot be both."

(3) Virtù and Fortuna

He emphasizes that a successful ruler is one who use his virtù to master fortuna.

Virtù: It is the ability of a leader to shape circumstances in his favor and act boldly and effectively.

Fortuna: Luck that can be helpful or destructive like a wild river

He believed that fortune controls about half of human affairs, the other half is within our control through calculation, action and boldness.

"Fortuna if you control"

He emphasizes and circumstances

"I have argued that the

Example:

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- Bid
- fle

(4) The

His information results

"In the Prince"

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"Fortune is a Women... it is necessary,
if you wish to master her, to
conquer her by force"
(The Prince)

He emphasized that rulers must adjust to fortune
and circumstances that is a lesson for all eras

"I hold it be true that Fortune is the
arbiter of one-half our actions, but
that she still leaves us to direct
the other half."

(The Prince)

Example:

- Putin's shifting tactics in Ukraine
- Biden's policy reversals show Machiavellian flexibility

(4) The Ends Justify the Means:

His infamous arguments that successful rule depends on
results, not methods, applies to all political system

"In the action of all men, and especially of
princes... one judges by the result."

(The Prince)

He believed that a leader's reputation for strength
and success is more important than their
adherence to religious or moral codes

He also believed that state is not a means
to an end state is an end itself and end
justifies every mean.

An immoral action for the state gain is justified

Example:

In 1860, American president Abraham Lincoln, fought against 11 states of America to preserve the United state, and over 6 lac deaths, making deadliest war in US history. His immoral action was justified because he took that step for state.

(5) Primitive Strike:

Machiavelli believed that waiting for enemies to grow strong was foolish. If a ruler saw danger coming, he should act quickly and aggressively, even before the threat becomes serious.

"In Politics, one must foresee distant evils and deal with them at once."
(-The Prince)

He thought about attacking first to avoid future danger.

c) Balance of Power:

He believed that the ruler should pay close attention to the power of other state. If a neighbour is getting too strong, it's smart to support their enemies or rivals to keep things balanced. Or to support weak state for balance.

In his book Discourses on Livy, he said,

"A prince should always act to prevent another power from becoming dominant, even if it means siding with a former enemy."

So, in his view stopping one group from becoming too strong, helps to protect our own state.

7) Military Strength:

He argued that a ruler's ability to maintain power and protect the state depends on military strength. He believed internal, citizen-based armies or national army were more loyal, disciplined and effective than untrusted mercenaries and auxiliaries.

"Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous... they are disunited, ambitious, undisciplined, and faithless."

(The Prince).

For him military power was directly linked to political authority. A prince who cannot defend his territory will quickly lose respect and control.

In his book Discourses on Livy, he said that

a republic must train its citizen for war.

Further, he mentioned in his book "The Prince",

"Where there are good arms, There
must be good laws"
(The Prince)

Strong armies mean support good governance, not
just war.