Political Management: starting the conversation to scope the theory and practice of managing government and politics

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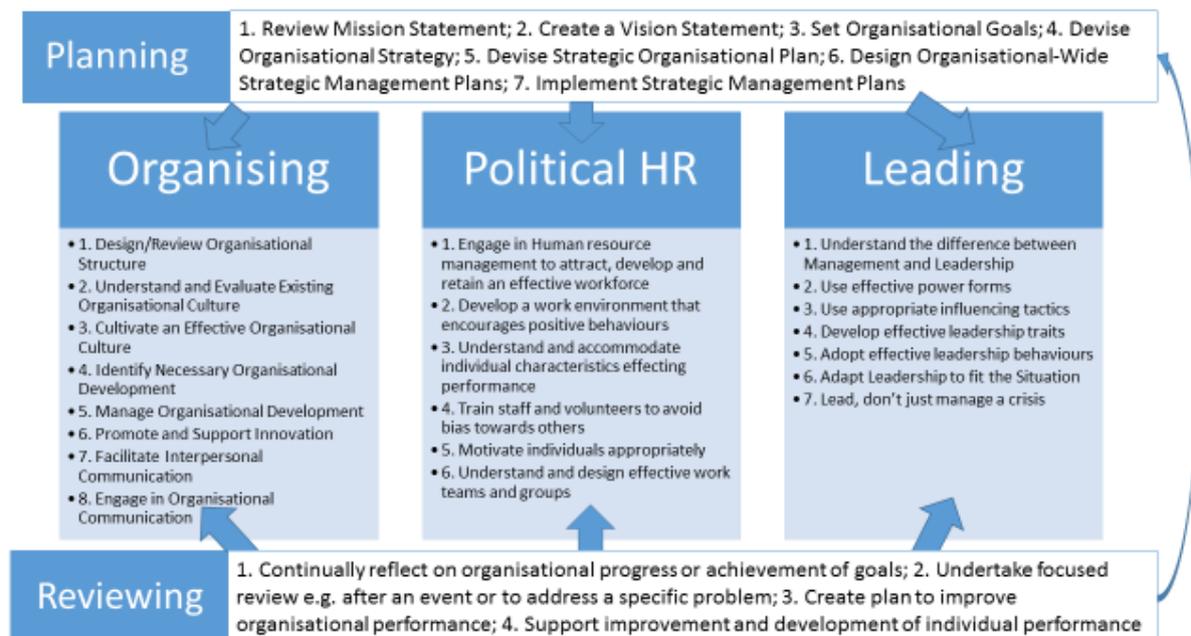Email j.lees-marshment@auckland.ac.nz www.lees-marshment.org

Abstract

Political management is very important – it affects the ability of political organisations and governments to achieve their goals and get things done. However there is a substantial and significant lack of research in the area, just as there is little or no training for those doing the managing in politics. Although political marketing scholarship is now well established, there is a dearth of work on political management, despite the two graduate schools in this area in Canada and the US adopting the management rather than the marketing focus as their title. Business concepts of management have potential relevance to help us understand how our political organisations are run in reality and reflect on the implications for governance, participation and democracy. This paper sets out initials ideas from a new research project, arguing that *political management involves planning, organising, HR, leading and reviewing of resources to achieve goals effectively.*

The paper also suggests there are 5 core areas of activity: Planning: Vision, goals, plans; Organising: structure, culture and communication; Political HR: recruitment, promotion, training; Leading: power, influence, adaptation and Reviewing: reflection and correction: see below.

Planning
1. Review Mission Statement; 2. Create a Vision Statement; 3. Set Organisational Goals; 4. Devise Organisational Strategy; 5. Devise Strategic Organisational Plan; 6. Design Organisational-Wide Strategic Management Plans; 7. Implement Strategic Management Plans

Organising
- 1. Design/Review Organisational Structure
- 2. Understand and Evaluate Existing Organisational Culture
- 3. Cultivate an Effective Organisational Culture
- 4. Identify Necessary Organisational Development
- 5. Manage Organisational Development
- 6. Promote and Support Innovation
- 7. Facilitate Interpersonal Communication
- 8. Engage in Organisational Communication

Political HR
- 1. Engage in Human resource management to attract, develop and retain an effective workforce
- 2. Develop a work environment that encourages positive behaviours
- 3. Understand and accommodate individual characteristics effecting performance
- 4. Train staff and volunteers to avoid bias towards others
- 5. Motivate individuals appropriately
- 6. Understand and design effective work teams and groups

Leading
- 1. Understand the difference between Management and Leadership
- 2. Use effective power forms
- 3. Use appropriate influencing tactics
- 4. Develop effective leadership traits
- 5. Adopt effective leadership behaviours
- 6. Adapt Leadership to fit the Situation
- 7. Lead, don't just manage a crisis

Reviewing
1. Continually reflect on organisational progress or achievement of goals; 2. Undertake focused review e.g. after an event or to address a specific problem; 3. Create plan to improve organisational performance; 4. Support improvement and development of individual performance

It thus seeks to begin a conversation about this new area of scholarship and profound area of practice.

Introduction

This paper is the first output from a new project scoping political management begun at the end of 2015 which will be carried out for several years, and thus presents early ideas about the nature of this area of practice and scholarship rather than present final conclusions. Although political marketing scholarship is now well established, there is a dearth of work on political management, despite the two graduate schools in this area in Canada and the US adopting the management rather than the marketing focus as their title. As with political marketing, business concepts of management have potential relevance to help us understand how our political organisations are run, how they might be managed more effectively, and reflect on the implications for governance, participation and democracy. This paper will therefore set out early thoughts about what political management might involve and how it might be understood and invite constructive comments so we might all further our understanding of this new area of political practice.

Why Do We Need Research On Political Management?

The Lack of Training for Political Managers

Imagine you are scheduled to be operated on for a brain tumour. But you find out at the last minute your surgeon has not been trained. Neither has their assistant: maybe they've studied the history of medicine but they don't know how to 'do' medicine and give the surgeon the right drill. Would you still go under the knife?

To say yes would be ridiculous yet we let ourselves be ruled every day by Ministers and Chief Executives, pay them a surgeon's salary, but don't train them in government management.[1] Politicians and their staff in campaigns, parties, government offices and departments don't just develop policy; they are in charge of million $ budgets, projects and 100s-1000s of staff.[2] An unqualified surgeon is bad enough; but untrained ministers and advisors decide on the policies and budgets for not just one operation, but every hospital, and every area of society. As the State Services Commission notes 'senior public servants that collectively lead the Public Service and run their departments have significant levels of responsibility. These are large and complex strategic leadership roles, often with large numbers of staff.'[3]

Comedian Tina Fey commented about the lack of professionalization and preparation in politics in the 2008 Vice Presidential Debate:

> 'Everybody was trying to prove how "down-home"…Politics and prostitution have to be the only jobs where inexperience is considered a virtue. In what other profession would you brag about not knowing stuff? "I'm not one of those fancy Harvard heart surgeons. I'm just an

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[1] In New Zealand, Ministers in Cabinet earn $281,881; MPs and Whips base salary is $171,137.Source Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Determination (No 2) 2015 http://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-nz/00FinanMPPSalary1/09942731ed416f7a63aed4b0c7e265b012ea1764. Average salary of chief executives of government departments and ministries was as of June 2015 $430,769. Pay ranged from $240,000 for The Ministry for Women; to $530,000 to $539,999 for Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and up to $629,000 for the Ministry of Education – see https://www.ssc.govt.nz/rem-senior-state-sector-staff-to-30june15. Median salary of a neuro surgeon said to be $295,000 (http://www.payscale.com/research/NZ/People_with_Jobs_as_Surgeons/Salary); see also http://www.imrmedical.com/new-zealand-salaries-tax for estimated specialist consultant wages of 150,000 – 215,000

[2] For example a government source notes that The Minister of Education is responsible for appropriations in the 2015/16 financial year totalling over 1,541 million – see http://www.budget.govt.nz/budget/pdfs/estimates/v2/est15-v2-educ.pdf; http://www.treasury.govt.nz/government/expenditure notes that the three largest areas of total Crown expenditure for the 2014/15 financial year were: Social security and welfare: $28.2 billion; Health: $14.7 billion and Education: $13.5 billion.

[3] Source https://www.ssc.govt.nz/ssw-pay.

unlicensed plumber with a dream and I'd like to cut your chest open." The crowd cheers.' (Fey 2011, 200-1)

Former UK advisor Dominic Cummings argued that ministers were completely unprepared to run government:
> "Most MPs have never been responsible for managing even a 100 people and they are suddenly put in charge of managing sometimes 10,000 people or more. They've never ever managed a budget of a million quid, and suddenly they are managing budgets of say 70 billion quid….and there are no training systems in Whitehall that can begin to cope with this.' (Cummings 2014a).

Comments from the New Zealand Prime Minister John Key backs this up. Key is a former highly successful businessman; good manager; and effective politician who continues to poll highly even in her third term of office and yet, as he commented recently:

> 'When I became Prime Minister I'd never been a Minister. I remember asking Tony Ryall – because he'd been a minister – basically what does a cabinet paper look like; how does the process work? I'd seen one obviously in the work we'd done but how does it all work? I'd just gone straight into being PM so that was a bit odd.' (Key 2016)

Problems in the practice of political management

A brief review media commentary on political management identifies a range potential problems in practice such as high staff turnover; over controlling leaders and/or chaos or over-lose management practices in Prime Minister's Offices. Australian PM Kevin Rudd great campaigner but chaotic micro-manager in government. It was said of Obama's early years in power that there was a 'remarkable lack of concern with managing the government, seeing the effective implementation of the laws as important as their passage' (Ornstein 2013). There were democratic implications in ruling on Duffy about problematic practice in political office:

> "The precision and planning of the exercise would make any military commander proud. However, in the context of a democratic society, the plotting as revealed in the emails can only be described as unacceptable." (Judge Charles Vaillancourt's)

The civil servant Dominic Cummings said there was problematic HR in UK civil service because "it promotes people who focus on being important, not getting important things done. And it ruthlessly weeds out people who are dissenters, who are mavericks, who have a different point of view...Failure is absolutely normal. It is not something to be avoided….and the HR system reinforces that…If we want serious government then we need fundamental changes in the way ministers and officials are selected, trained, paid, managed and held accountable.' (Cummings 2015)

The gap to fill in existing research and teaching on political management

Why is this the case? Well I would argue it is the lack of proper, dedicated research in political management. Government and politics is a management-free zone in theory as well as practice. There is no research identifying theories and best practice in political management.

Business management covers planning, organising, leading, controlling, manging and motivating people and organisational structure, design, culture and change. However, the two books and a few articles with political management in their title don't use management concepts; are about local government or economics. The two MAs that exist in political management and a recent review of the area[4] focus on campaigns and communication.[5] An analysis of the different topics in business

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[4] Johnson, Dennis (2016) 'Political Management' in *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication* edited by Gianpietro Mazzoleni et al (Wiley-Blackwell) http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc133/references

management and those taught at GWU/Carleton and chapters in the Handbook of Political Management revealed major gaps between what is considered management in business scholarship and what has been taught/written about in politics: see Figure 1.[6]

Figure 1: Comparison of Topics in Management for Business and Current Political Literature/Teaching

Management in Business	Political Management Routledge Handbook	Political Management at GWU	Political Management at Carleton
Definitions and Scope Efficiency and Effectiveness - Planning, Organising, Leading, and Controlling - Management Roles and Skills - Measuring Business and Managerial Performance **Management Planning and Strategy** Planning - Strategic Management **The Human Dimension** Behaviour - Motivation - Groups and Teams - Human Resource Management (HRM) - Leadership, Power, and Influence **The Organisational Dimension** Structure and Design - Culture - Change & Innovation - Communications: Interpersonal/Organisational	**The Field of Political Mangement** Political Consulting - Modern Political Campaigns - Pol Science - Pol Communications - Pol Marketing **American Campaigns and Elections** The Permanent Campaign - Pol Management and the Technological Revolution - Message Testing - New Media in Campaigns - Rise of Monster PACs - US Campaign Financing - Campaigning Online - Selling the President 2004 - Political Advertising Cost - Running for Office - The War of Ideas - The Religious Right **Campaigns Worldwide** TV Campaigning - Mobile Tech and Participation - Modern British Campaign - German Elections - Israeli Campaigns - Russian Campaigns - Australian Campaigns - Campaigns in the Phillipines - East Asian Campaigns: Taiwan - Mexican Campaigns **Lobbying, Advocacy, and Political Persuasion** Creation of US Lobbying Industry - Online Advocacy - Building Advocacy Consitituencies - Issue Advocacy - Military and Defense Lobbying - European Advocacy **Political Parties, Political Management, and Democracy** Campaign Consultants - Network Marketing - Market-Orientation in Govt. - Machiavellian Marketing - Ethics in Campaigning and Public Affairs - Winning over a Cynical Public	**General Topics** Fundamentals of Political Management - Applied Political Communications - Political Data and Analytics - Principled Political Leadership - Political Power & Practice **Advocacy Politics** Grassroots Engagement - Issues Management - Lobbying - International Lobbying - Budget Politics - Corporate Public Affairs - State & Intergovernmental Politics **Electoral Politics** Campaign Strategy - Managing Campaigns - Running for Office - National Campaign Dynamics - State and Local Campaigns - Targeting and Voter Contact - Campaigns Around the World **Applied Proficiencies** Rules, Laws, and Strategy - Digital Strategy - Fundraising and Budgeting - Speechcraft - Crisis Management - Audience Research - Opposition Research - Influencing the Media - Political Advertising - Digital Advertising and Action - Digital Content Creation - Maximising Social Media - Stereotypes and Political Strategy - Political Consulting	**Core Topics** Institutions and Governance - Strategic Communications - Political Management **Elective Topics** Polling and Opinion Research - Political Campaigns - Political Advocacy - Political Management and the Media - Political Marketing - Political Policy Landscape

Politicians and staffers are left to learn through working/volunteering in parties first or on the job, restricting representation to career politicians. Training offered by institutes, parliaments and business schools uses research on companies as that is all there is. Government serves everyone in society not a specific market, and is about social good not profit. We need proper research on managing politics.[7]

There are big gaps in academic understanding of political management, and important to address this. This research project therefore seeks to establish the conceptual architecture for a new field, producing the first book to explain what political management is – *Political Management: definitions and scope* - with research-informed concepts, empirical illustrations, and best practice advice.

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[6] Adapted from work completed by James Barrett, Summer Scholar under the supervision of Jennifer Lees-Marshment, The University of Auckland, 2015-6, by comparing topics in business management in his paper *What is Management? A Summary of Core Management Concepts* written during the scholarship and analysing Johnson, Dennis W. *Routledge Handbook of Political Management*. New York: Routledge, 2009 and "Political Management Course Listings." George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management. Accessed January 18 2016 <http://gspm.gwu.edu/political-management-course-listings> and "Program Information." Carleton University's Clayton H. Riddle Graduate Program in Political Management. Accessed January 18 2016 <https://carleton.ca/politicalmanagement/welcome-message/about/>

[7] See also 'The case for certified political managers' Campaigns and elections by Hon Mark R Kennedy September 19 2012 <http://www.campaignsandelections.com/magazine/us-edition/328547/the-case-for-certified-political-managers.thtml>

Political Management: tentative theory and examples

Methodology

Initial research for the new project has included a synthesis of the key concepts/theories business management from introductory texts; comparison of this and GWU/Carleton and Handbook of Pol Management; a skype discussion with Paul Wilson, political management at Carleton University and integration of empirical examples in recent media articles. Existing academic literature on politics using key words related to management has also been searched and identified over 1000 items, and these will be explored in the next stage. Below initial thoughts about the nature and scope of political management are presented.

Political Management: a definition

Political management is about managing resources available to achieve your goals. Leadership vision, the plans of party presidents, public opinion and political marketing may all influence deciding what those goals or aims are; but management is needed to actually get the things done to achieve them, whether it is delivering on policies in government, running a Prime Ministerial office effectively, leading a well-functioning campaign, or building a party organisation. Political management practitioners see it simply as "what they do" but it could be anything that involves the management of power/politics and related institutions/organisations (e.g. PM Harper's photographer helping to manage the image of politicians), and is about what works best in practice – what works/does not work well, what is useful/not effective, and what is good now or could be in the future.

In business, management is a highly expansive, multidisciplinary field that seeks to theorise and explain how best to achieve the objectives of a given organisation efficiently and effectively through planning, organising, leading, and controlling the organisation's resources (Kinicki and Williams 2013, 4-5). An early management scholar M.P. Follett defined it as 'the art of getting things done through people' (quoted by Kinicki and Williams, 2013 p. 4). It involves planning, organising, leading and controlling resources within an organisation; resources which include employees. In politics it can therefore be argued that management can also be used to achieve political and public goals: see Figure 2.

Figure 2. Definitions of Political Management in practice and research

	Political Management in practice	Political Management in research
Short	Political management involves planning, organising, HR, leading and reviewing of resources to achieve goals effectively.	Political management studies how political organisations use planning, organising, HR, leadership and reviewing of resources to achieve their goals effectively.
Long	Political management involves planning, organising, HR, leading and reviewing resources including people (politicians, staff, advisors and volunteers), organisational structure and funds (budget, donations) to achieve a range of political and public goals effectively.	Political management studies how political organisations use planning, organising, HR, leadership and reviewing of resources including people (politicians, staff, advisors and volunteers), organisational structure and funds (budget, donations) to achieve a range of political and public goals effectively.

Who are the Political Managers?

Initial thoughts on who managers may be in the political context are:

- Election campaign staff – i.e. campaign managers, activists, chief of staff (maybe more like first-line managers?).
- Party staff – i.e. party executives, party whips?
- Prime Ministers Offices – including PM's photographer
- Executive/Ministerial staff – i.e. chief of staff (manages overall office), executive directors, some junior staff, media/comms, policy, strategy advisors, parliamentary/issues management, legal assistants, in govt departments/ministries. Some 'neutral' civil servant and some political/partisan
- MPs staff - work with MPs on legislation, and in their electorate/riding/constituency
- Lower levels of government also – state/province, local government – i.e. councils, municipalities so council staff, councillor advisors etc
- Outside consultants – i.e. PR/crisis management people.

Informal discussions with academics and practitioners created this initial list of political practitioner titles used in politics and government currently:

Administrative assistant - Assistant secretary - Campaign director - Campaign manager - Campaign organiser - Campaign staff - Chief executive - Chief of staff - Civil servant - Communications advisor - Communications Officer - Community liaison officer - Community organiser - Constituency assistant - Constituent manager - Crisis management consultant - Data manager - Digital media organiser - Donor manager - Executive assistant - Executive director - Executive staff - Field director - Field organiser - Fundraiser coordinator - Fundraising manager - General secretary - Issues management assistant - Junior advisor - Legal assistant - Legislative assistant - Local organisers - Marketing adviser - Media advisor - Media Officer - Membership support – Minister - Ministerial advisor - Ministerial staff - Outreach Director - Parliamentary assistant - Party executive - Party professional - Party staff - Party whip - Policy advisor - Policy staff - Political advisor - Political consultant - Political strategist - Presidential staff - Press secretary - Prime Minister - Public relations officer - Public servant - Scheduling assistant - Senior private secretary - Special advisor - Special assistant - Staff director - State organiser - Strategy advisor - Volunteer

Not all of the staff in these positioners will be managers though but they might all be involved in political management

Where is Political Management carried out?

In business management, organisations are the main place where management takes place, and Clegg et al. (2011, 8) describe organisations as 'systematically arranged frameworks relating people, things, knowledge, and technologies in a design intended to achieve specific goals.' In politics, organisations involved in political management include government departments and offices, political parties and campaign teams such as Executive/Cabinet; Prime Ministerial Offices; Ministerial Offices; Government Departments or Ministries; Political Parties – both central and local offices; MPs Office; Parliament; Press Offices; Campaign Teams; Crisis Management Teams.

Some of these sit within each other, such as a press office within a political party; or Ministerial offices within a whole government department. Some will be permanent like Parliament; others such as a crisis management team may be brought together to manage specific incidents, whether it is a short term political scandal or a longer-term initiative like the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (http://cera.govt.nz/) in New Zealand that responds to an event albeit it working for a longer time period.

Three arenas of political management: government, parties and campaigns

In politics, given that we have elections to decide who gets to run government, there are also three core arenas of political management: government, parties and campaigns. Each has different natures in terms of permanency/time focus, who runs them, rules, goals and so on.

**5 core areas of activity in Political Management**

In business, management involves planning and strategy and managing performance. There are three main areas: Management Planning and strategy; The Human Dimension; and The Organisational Dimension. This research has considered these elements and adapted them to suit politics, changing to 5 distinct areas of activity or study:

1. **Planning:** creating a vision, setting organisational goals, creating a strategic plan to achieve them, and implementing it
2. **Organising:** developing best organisational structure, culture and communication that helps achieve goals
3. **Political HR** – recruitment, promotion, training of staff to get best out of them to help achieve organisational goals
4. **Leading** – using effective power and influencing behaviours to suit the situation and cope with crisis
5. **Reviewing** – reflecting on progress to achieve goals, creating plan to improve performance where needed

In business management, HR was combined with organisation in business but seemed very different/distinct to me in politics so here it is separated out.

Having explored the many different activities and concepts within business management, initial theorising suggests this is what political management is about in more detail, with Figure 3 suggesting a potential process of Political Management.

Figure 3: A Process of Political Management
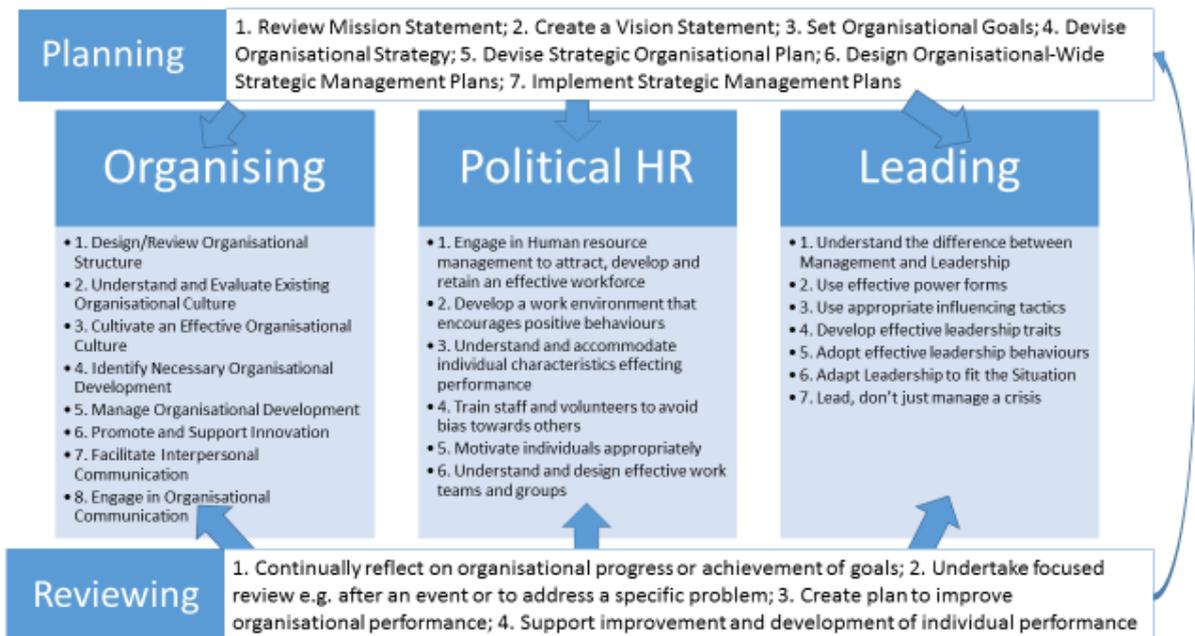
This will of course change as more research is conducted, but at the very least it gives us an idea of what it could involve – what to look for, what questions to ask, what to explore. It is clearly very different the former Handbook of Political Management, GWU and Carleton's teaching. It is also very different to the single course I myself teach on Political Management. But we can't change the teaching until there is the research to inform that teaching - students need something to read.

What is presented in Figure 3 is just a broad conceptual basis of topics. There is obviously a lot more research to do. Take, for example, organising, and look at numbers 3-7. These are very broad based statements:

- Cultivate an Effective Organisational Culture
- 4. Identify Necessary Organisational Development
- 5. Manage Organisational Development
- 6. Promote and Support Innovation
- 7. Facilitate Interpersonal Communication

Research is needed to determine what would an effective organisational culture be? How should organisational development be managed? How can innovation be best supported? And what helps facilitate interpersonal communication?

Business concepts to adapt

A review of business literature with politics in mind suggests a wide range of theories which might be relevant and adapted. A few examples that can be noted here include:

- Political Manager skills: technical (market research – pollster), human (people skills, chief of staff) and conceptual (strategic thinking, consultant)
- Organisational strategy: growth, stability, defence
- Organisational Structure: division of labour, chain of command, span of control, delegation, centralisation; horizontal and vertical design
- Organisational Life Cycle

There is no space to go into detail about them all here, but the titles show the type of topics/theories/aspects political management might cover. However, two that are particularly relevant to politics are organisational structure and organisational Decline

Collins' Silent Creep of Doom and Five Stages of Decline

This theory seems very pertinent to parties in power and their decline of responsiveness or market-orientation:

Stage 1: Hubris Born of Success –an organisation develops a level of arrogance and employees begin attributing overall organisational success to their superior qualities rather than the underlying elements that created said success. They get a feeling on entitlement. They forget why they were successful. And/or they forget that luck played a part in their success.

Stage 2: Undisciplined Pursuit of More –the pursuit of more of whatever is defined as success, such as growth. The organisation begins to over reach and makes undisciplined leaps into areas where they lack an advantage, leading them to ignore their core business

Stage 3: Denial of Risk and Peril –internal warning signs of decline increase, but managers explain them away through discounting negative data, amplifying positive data, and positively spinning ambiguous data. They might say it's not that bad after all, or blame external factors for problems without taking responsibility.

Stage 4: Grasping for Salvation – organisation goes in to sharp decline, leading managers to begin to make desperate leaps, such as trying bold but untested strategies, looking for a highly successful product, and trying to acquire a game-changing acquisition, or a charismatic visionary leader. Collins argues that instead leaders need to take 'calm, deliberative action'

Stage 5: Capitulation to Irrelevance or Death – firm is sold, allowed to slide in to bankruptcy, or left to fade in to insignificance. Accumulated setbacks erode financial strength and individual spirit; leaders might abandon all hope of building a great future

It is also relevant to parties in opposition who remain out of touch and lose supporters and votes over repeated election cycles. In the 2014 New Zealand election for example, after the result the Labour was very happy although they lost, and lost badly, because they didn't do as badly as feared! On

election night Labour party leader David Cunliffe said to his supporters 'you are amazing' and 'you should all be very proud.' He failed to take responsibility for the loss, talking about external factors instead as being to blame, and saying 'I believe I've performed credibly on the trail and the feedback I've had from around the party is that I retain the confidence of the party.' In comparison National leader John Key repeatedly talked of the need to avoid arrogance despite his party having won a strong third victory.

Mechanistic versus organic organisations

Another theory that seems relevant to media discussion of management styles in PM offices is mechanistic versus organic organisations. Mechanistic organisations are bureaucratic, with centralised authority; very clearly specified tasks, rigid rules; staff are very closely supervised/have to be obedient to superiors; and they work best in stable environments. Organic organisations are decentralised with fewer rules; tasks and role are flexible within group; internal communication is lateral, between people of different ranks; there is consultation not just orders or commands; value is placed on commitment to the goals rather than obedience; and they are more responsive to changing conditions. For example, Randwanski (2016) has suggested that Canadian PM Justin Trudeau has adopted a less controlling structure over ministers and staff with 'more fluid management practices of the Google era'; and more collaborative decision practice with all staff free to speak in a non-hierarchical culture.

Conclusion

It is clear from this initial exploration that political management is very important – it affects the ability of political organisations and governments to achieve their goals and get things done. However it is also clear that there is a substantial and significant lack of research in the area, just as there is little or no training for those doing the managing in politics. This paper has presented initial ideas about what political management might involve. Political management involves planning, organising, HR, leading and reviewing of resources to achieve goals effectively. There are 5 core areas of activity in Political Management: Planning: Vision, goals, plans; Organising: structure, culture and communication; Political HR: recruitment, promotion, training; Leading: power, influence, adaptation and Reviewing: reflection and correction.

There is obviously a lot more work to be done to go beyond this and identify what works/theories/best practice/is effective; options to consider; adapt business theories to politics just as did with political marketing; and we also need to discuss philosophical/ethical issues. The next step will be to integrate understanding from over a 1000 pieces of existing research that might be related to political management, before undertaking in-depth empirical research. The goal is to produce a ground breaking book laying out conceptual architecture – a researched informed understanding of how the world is, and how it might be – to inform best practice.

There is much work to be done, and it won't be easy work, but it is also clear that such work is very worthwhile and needed. And there will be plenty of hurdles to get over along the way. But in the words of President Obama, 'the longer I'm in this job, the more confident I am about the decisions I'm making and more knowledgeable about the responses I can expect….There's not much I have not seen at this point, and I know what to expect, and I can anticipate more than I did before' (quoted in Simmons 2015). Having researched political marketing for 20 years and been forced to get into many battles, I can anticipate the criticisms, the heated critique, and expect similar reactions got to when started work on political marketing such 'I don't like management'; 'it's just management jargon'; 'business is evil'; 'this is too radical and should never be done'; 'this is nothing new and has been done before' and other cross-disciplinary, rock hurling, comments. I also expect more serious issues in terms of the challenges of getting inside political offices and understanding what goes on behind closed doors. However, someone has to do this work - we are here to serve – and breaking new ground on political management research is a great way to provide valuable, impactful, research informed teaching and training that could profoundly improve the way our governments are run.

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