

GAA GAMES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



Alternative organising

A case exemplar of leadership & kinship in a large organisation

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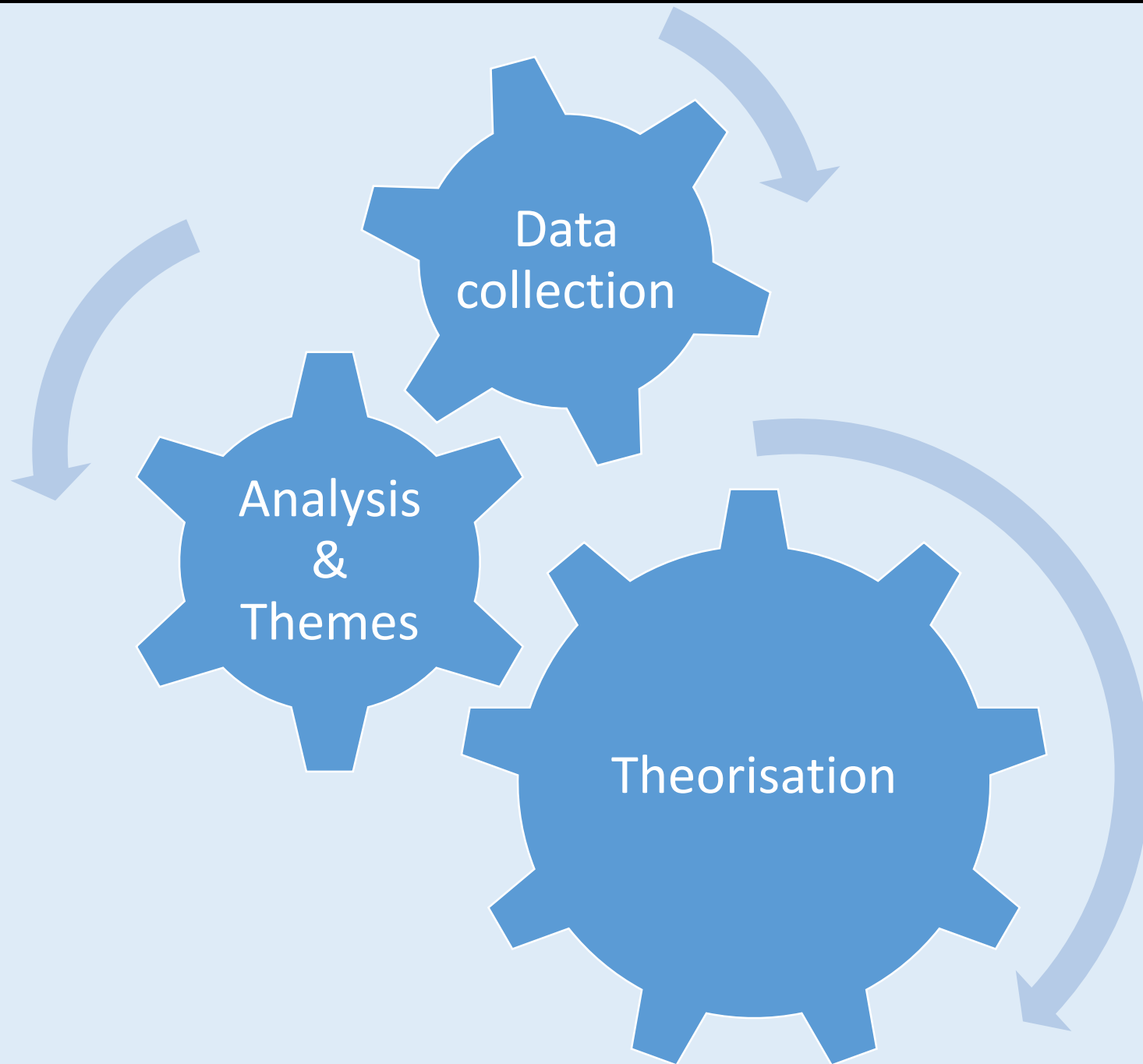
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Pathways into the work:

- Bowling alone
- Our core audience is outside the GAA
 - Explaining such an intriguing and important organisation internationally
- Against the ethnography tradition in Ireland
 - Outsiders (Arensberg and Kimball, 1941)
- Excited to see if the work scans with the GAA



Method and Methodology

Commenced in 2014 (3 yrs)

Inductive study on leadership in the GAA

Interpretivist|phenomenological orientation

Storytelling interviews (lived personal histories of GAA leaders)

20 Club leaders (requisite variety)

5 GAA leaders (Presidents+)

5 Professional-specialist leaders

2 Adjunct-community leaders



| Event | Activity |
|--|---|
| I-Fest; RTE-GAA-Go conference, Boston September, 2014 | Presented early research proposal "A study of club leadership in Gaelic games: understanding the practices, processes and passions of grass-roots Leadership." |
| GAA Games Development Conference, Dublin January, 2015 | Early data presentation "A study of club leadership in Gaelic games: understanding the practices, processes and passions of grass-roots Leadership." |
| Anthropological Association of Ireland Conference, Cork March, 2015 | Paper presentation "Kinship in GAA club leadership." |
| Irish Academy of Management, Galway September, 2015 | Paper presentation "The persistence of kinship in understanding leadership: Reflections on practice in a community, volunteer-led organisation." |
| WIT Business School Annual Postgraduate Review | Presentation to internal panel of academic staff July 17 th 2015 |
| Economy and Society Summer School Blackwater Castle, Co. Cork, Ireland. | Participant May 11-15 th 2015 |
| Club Leadership Development Programme launch, Croke Park Dublin. | The first of the Practical contributions January 11th 2016 |
| European Group for Organizational Studies, Naples July, 2016 | Paper presentation "Leadership against management: The magic of leaderships and the logic of management." |
| Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism, Uppsala July, 2016 | Paper presentation "Homo Famiglia: A study of the family in and around the organisation." |
| British Academy of Management, Newcastle University, United Kingdom September 2016 | Paper presentation "Back to the hoary auld game of defining management: Management as critique and management is critique" |

Analysis- engagement- reflection cycle





Towards contribution

4 papers in development (theoretical engine)

- **Bunk/debunk in Mgt:** trace the evolution of mgt (bunk=Taylor/Fayol/Weber; debunk=(human relations~CMS). GAA avoids the lacquer of critique (Latour on critique)
- **Leadership against Mgt:** use GAA as a site where there is leadership but no management; explore the ontology of management as modernity and leadership as pre-modern (relying on Szakolczai)
- **Family in organisation:** explore kinship in organisation where care, persistence, harmony trump progress and winning (relying on Kavanagh to argue family is a white space; and classic anthropology on kinship)
- **Alternative Organisation:** GAA as a case exemplar against techno-rational bureaucracy. Attempt to position bureaucracy as a political religion (after Voegelin)

Management as bunk, human relations as debunking & critical performativity as rebunking



- GAA as a place of simple management where neither debunking nor rebunking is afoot
- Highlights the ruddy usefulness of the simple, more elemental and less contested form of management - we struggle to find much of use from late management theory
- Club managers have the gallivanting entitlement to lead in an unfettered way – not the self-limiting, self-doubt equivocation that emerges as an ethos from the contemporary management curriculum
- Club managers have complete clarity of vision and purpose; a telos of persistence and survival, over winning and materialism; and ethos of care for their community

Homo Famiglia:

A study of the family in and around the organisation

- Family in organisation studies constitutes a 'white space' (after Kavanagh, 2013)
- Goes beyond ownership or interaction - excavating two distinctions that emerge in the weaving of family and organisational life in these clubs
 1. Family impose, inscribing and underwriting burdens, duties and responsibilities for organisational perseverance; a movement that conserves an organisations vernacular ethos, echoing through generations of family and organisational life
 2. Family in and around organisations approach the failures, mishaps and contentions that emerge in organisation life with an ethos of care, harmony and recovery
- Family marches to a different rhythm than contemporary, large-scale bureaucratic organisations
- The ethos of care, the instinct to calm things down, put a lid on things, resist breaches and absorb complexities, paradoxes and dichotomies that is the very stuff of family; can infuse the organisations that host, negotiate and are made by families

On Contribution



Theory

- Add to understanding of the limits of management
- Rehabilitate a classic understanding of leadership
- Introduce family/kinship to organisation studies
- Identify and describe a new organisational form

Practice

- Normative value of the alternative case
- Perhaps explain the GAA to itself (**today's work**)
- Fortify & encourage it against 'ordinary' mimetic impulse

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large stadium with a green field, surrounded by a dense urban environment. The stadium is the central focus, with its tiered seating and surrounding infrastructure visible. The city streets and buildings are tightly packed around the stadium, creating a complex urban grid. The overall tone is somewhat muted and greyish, suggesting an overcast day or a specific artistic filter.

Thank you