

Political Organizations and Organizational Politics: Reintegrating Organization Science into the Study of Political Actors and Institutions

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Doing politics almost always means working in an organization. Collective political actors (parties, legislatures, firms, unions, churches, etc.) entail communication, decision-making, authority, and conflict. All organizations evince tremendous variation in how they structure and manage internal politics, which affects organizational output, performance, and survival. Other major political science concepts ("leader", "elite") are ill-defined without real attention to organizational structure, culture, internal functioning and change. Nevertheless, political science is insufficiently integrated into organizational science. In this paper, we show that current political science neglects the serious study of political organizations and organizational politics. We take examples from the study of political parties, churches, and labor unions to argue for more explicit engagement with organization science. Such interaction would add clarity, theoretical perspectives, and new empirical tools while also contributing to other disciplines with important insights from the systematic study of human political interactions.

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