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MARKETING LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT

Communicating
Responsiveness,
Leadership
and Credibility

Edward Elder



Palgrave Studies in Political Marketing
and Management

Series Editor

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Edward Elder

Marketing Leadership in Government

Communicating Responsiveness, Leadership
and Credibility

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macmillan

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Palgrave Studies in Political Marketing and Management
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Resolving the Listening versus Leadership Dilemma

Abstract This chapter outlines the changing relationship between political elites and the public. It outlines the challenges of political office contemporary leaders face in trying to both listen to the public to stay popular and make sound decisions to stay effective. This chapter does this to argue that effective communication is the key to balancing these two broad, yet sometimes contradictory, requirements of governing leadership. It will highlight how governing leaders' communication is moving away from traditional, one-dimensional, selling and issue pushing and towards contemporary, multi-dimensional, relationship building. Therefore, this chapter will highlight a new model for governing leaders' communication.

Keywords Communication • Market-orientation • John Key • Barack Obama • Public opinion

INTRODUCTION

Political communication strategies continually evolve. One of the key factors in this evolution is the changing relationship between the public and political elites in Western society. The public have become less loyal to particular political parties and demand more from their elected officials than a shared ideological vision. Therefore, political elites are increasingly adopting a market-orientation, which includes greater responsiveness to

public demand in the evaluation and alteration of their overall product and brand. This is especially true for party leaders, who are often symbolic of this product and brand. However, governing leaders are faced with difficult decisions and constraints not present during their attempt to gain office. Such challenges hinder the preservation of the qualities associated with market-oriented behaviour. This can negatively affect the public's perception of not only the leader, but the government as a whole. The added challenges and restrictions of government often leave them less able to listen, adapt, and seem in touch with public demands. But the public do not expect governing leaders to follow the public whim. They expect governing leaders to show true leadership around difficult and polarising decisions. So there is a dichotomy; the public want governing leaders to lead while also being responsive to their criticisms, concerns, and overall demands. So what is the problem? Recent history shows that, once in office, governing leaders often revert to traditional communication strategies based on highlighting positives while disregarding or ignoring concern and criticism. This style of communication does not correlate with the responsiveness that is expected in contemporary political leaders.

Over the last decade, however, possible resolutions to this issue have become apparent, with governing leaders changing the way they communicate with the public to highlight how they are listening to the public, even when they do not follow public demand. This book highlights how contemporary governing leaders have used, and could further use, a new style of communication strategy in an attempt to alleviate the public image problems caused by the challenges of office through a new model, the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model.

THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL ELITES AND THE PUBLIC

Over the last half century, the public's unequivocal allegiance to political parties has diminished. Until the late 1960s, the consistency of social structures such as religion, family, as well as socio-economic and regional positioning strongly influenced personal and political identity in many Western democracies. Most voters held a strong ideological affinity towards a particular political party. As a result, conventional wisdom was that politicians' electoral success was based on their ability to sell policies designed around their traditional ideological beliefs and principles (Buchanan, 2001: 362–5). Since the late 1960s, however, the influence of

these social structures has declined, which has contributed to the declining attachment many citizens have towards particular political parties (Norris, 2005). Voters are now more influenced by political parties' positions on an ever-changing list of key issues and the performance and personality of candidates than their broad ideological beliefs. If a party or candidate does not sufficiently satisfy voter demand, they will likely take their vote elsewhere (Delacourt, 2013).

POLITICAL MARKETING AND THE MARKET-ORIENTATION

Therefore, political parties are increasingly applying commercial marketing concepts, strategies, and techniques to achieve their goals (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). This practice is seen in a number of areas including, but not exclusive to, e-marketing (see Williams & Gulati, 2014), internal marketing (see Pettit, 2012), and branding (see Cosgrove, 2007). Political strategy, which looks at how political actors design and enact product qualities in an effort to reach particular strategic end goals, is a cornerstone of political marketing. One of the major strategic theories is the market-orientation. Broadly speaking, a market-orientation involves political actors creating or adjusting their product, such as their policies, internal structures, and leaders, to better correlate with, rather than try and create, voter demand (Lilleker & Negrine, 2006: 33). Numerous models outline what market-oriented behaviour looks like, including those by Newman (1994: 32), Ormrod (2005: 4), and Lees-Marshment (2001: 30–41).¹ While there are differences of opinion around the specifics of what a market-orientation is, the general consensus is that a market-orientation involves being in touch, interested in, and responsive to the views and concerns of the public. This involves conducting market intelligence and developing policies and positions accordingly. It also involves being able to demonstrate this through behaviour (Lees-Marshment, 2008: 525). This does not mean blindly following public opinion. Rather, the market-orientation emphasises the need to make sure that the public voice is listened to and respected from the beginning of the product development process (Mortimore & Gill, 2010: 258). But there are many other factors that need to be taken into consideration during this process including different stakeholders, the long-term costs and benefits, the need for consistency, as well as party history and ideology. Many political parties and candidates that have adopted a market-orientation have also enjoyed electoral success, including US President Bill Clinton (Newman, 1994), the

Tony Blair-led UK Labour Party (Bartle, 2002), the Stephen Harper-led Canadian Conservative Party (Turcotte, 2011) and the Helen Clark-led New Zealand Labour Party (Rudd, 2005).²

THE CHALLENGES OF GOVERNMENT

Politicians should continue with a market-orientated strategy once in government to maintain public trust in their brand (Scammell, 1999: 728) while allowing them to keep their ear to the ground and adapt accordingly (Lees-Marshment, 2009a). This is especially important for governing leaders such as Presidents and Prime Ministers, who, as a key symbol of the government brand, need to embody a market-orientation both strategically and in communication (Helms, 2008: 42–3). But in office, these leaders face difficult decisions and constraints that hinder the preservation of a market-orientation and a positive public image. Being in government means leaders have to take action rather than just talk about action in the hypothetical. They are privy to information not available to the public and the opposition (Hamilton, 2001) and need to look at the long-term effect of their decisions, even if they are unpopular in the short term (Cohen, 1997: 15). This limits what they can do, say, and change about their own image, policy agenda, and overall product (Ormrod, 2006). Unforeseen circumstances such as economic recessions and natural disasters can also change a government's agenda, hindering their delivery on election promises (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005b: 25–6). But governing leaders also tend to become more remote in power, as incumbency, the work load, and time constraints do not encourage critical, self-reflective thinking (Lees-Marshment, 2009b; Norton, 1996: 235–7). In essence, the challenges of office make it hard for leaders to maintain one of the main qualities associated with a market-orientation, staying in touch with public opinion. This contributes to the decline in their reputation and positive public image. The realities of government also have an effect on the public's expectation of leaders. Despite the changing relationship between political elites and the public, there is still a public desire for true leadership (Gould, 2007: 21). When a party's product is transferred to government and the real effect they have on public life is more apparent, the public are less willing to accept a leader who follows the whim of public opinion. A lack of conviction shown by a governing leader can also result in a public image of lacking individual vision or a lack of clarity in what the government stands for (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005b: 26).

But making decisions that go against dominant public opinion, especially around salient issues, can damage a leader's public image (see Fielding, 2005: 32). In other words, voters desire political figures who will stick to their core beliefs while also being responsive to public opinion (Johns & Brandenburg, 2012). The ability to carefully navigate the public's desire for a leader who is in touch while also having strong conviction has historically been lacking, resulting in further public dissatisfaction with once market-oriented leaders. While a drop in support and a decline in governing leaders' public image are not new, recently these have occurred simultaneously with a decline in governments', and governing leaders', perceived qualities associated with having a market-orientation. As voters increasingly judge them on recent tangible offerings as well as personal performance the ability to appear in touch, competent, and credible becomes harder. For any leader of a party that enters office under a market-orientation the ability to appear in touch, in particular, has become even more important. The strategy is founded on gathering and respecting market intelligence. Therefore, the image of being out of touch can hurt one of the main foundations of the brand that got them into office (see Lees-Marshment, 2001: 86–93). This follows a general trend of political leaders in Western democracies over the past 25 years, gaining power under a market-orientation but losing their positive public image once in office.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

While numerous factors can play a role in governing leaders going against public opinion and seeming out of touch, the rhetoric governing leaders have used in such situations has also contributed to this reputation. This has included using communication strategies that adhere to a more traditional philosophy of governmental communication, which highlights positive attributes of the leader and their decisions while attempting to disregard or ignore concerns and criticisms (Blumler, Kavanagh, & Nossister, 1996). But now that leaders use political marketing so obviously to win power such rhetoric is less publically acceptable. This is compounded by the imagery of a governing leader which is very different to that of an opposition leader. Due to the requirements of the job, governing leaders are more often seen with other political and social elites at formal functions. The constant presentation of such visual communication can reinforce the idea that the governing leader is not close to the general public (Lees-Marshment, 2011: 90). When a leader does go against public

opinion, this type of verbal and visual communication can make a leader seem even more out of touch.

Therefore, communication is important to the viability of a market-orientation in government. Governing leaders have become central to political media coverage and, therefore, voters have become more susceptible to leadership effects (Buchanan, 2001). As public attachment to political parties' broader ideologies has diminished and they are more influenced by their assessment of the leaders' personal character (King, 2002), leaders are judged on more than just the decisions they make and the validity of their arguments. The way leaders make these arguments and interact with the public is just as important. Simply put, style is just as important as content (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999: 217).

Yet political marketing, especially around the concept of a market-orientation, has tended to focus on product strategy and design rather than how it can be communicated (see Niffenegger, 1989: 45–51; O’Cass, 1996; Posner, 1992). Where communication is examined, it is more often around candidates and parties trying to win elections (see Robinson, 2010; Schweiger & Adami, 1999). But political marketing needs to be applied differently to non-campaign communication (Newman, 1999: 110). Leaders who govern in a manner too similar to their electoral campaigning strategies hurt their ability to deliver and maintain the image of strong leadership. Furthermore, while the main goal of campaign communication is to motivate selected target markets to support the candidate with the clear short-term goal of winning an election, government communication often targets the greater public in supporting upcoming government decisions, with less explicit focus on the leader themselves (Spiller & Bergner, 2014: 56). The existing research does, however, highlight the importance of showing respect for concern and criticism rather than simply disregarding it. In other words, it highlights how governing leaders still need to show that they are responsive to, while making decisions that go against, public opinion—something early adopters of the market-orientation learnt in the latter stages of their time in office (see Promise, 2005; Scammell, 2007).

CONTEMPORARY MARKET-ORIENTED GOVERNING LEADERSHIP

The lessons learnt by market-oriented governing leaders in the 1990s and early 2000s should have been noted by their successors, contemporary market-oriented governing leaders, as they entered office. Contemporary

Table 1.1 Market-oriented governing leaders by era

<i>Country</i>	<i>Early</i>	<i>Contemporary</i>
Australia	John Howard (1996–2007)	Kevin Rudd (2007–2010, 2013) Julia Gillard (2010–2013) Tony Abbott (2013–2015) Malcolm Turnbull (2015–present)
Canada	–	Stephen Harper (2006–2015) Justin Trudeau (2015–present)
New Zealand	Helen Clark (1999–2008)	John Key (2008–present)
USA	Bill Clinton (1993–2001) George W. Bush (2001–2009)	Barack Obama (2009–present)
UK	Tony Blair (1997–2007) Gordon Brown (2007–2010) ³	David Cameron (2010–present)

Author's own compilation

market-oriented governing leaders have entered office on the back of market-oriented strategies since approximately 2006. In many countries, these leaders can be identified as second-generation market-oriented governing leaders as they are for the most part, but not exclusively, the second governing leader in their country to use a predominantly market-oriented strategy to win office. By this time, newly elected governing leaders should have been able to identify the challenges placed on their domestic and international predecessors' ability to maintain market-oriented behaviour once in office. Also, they should have been able to identify the weaknesses in their predecessors' communication once in office, altering their own communication strategies through traditional and increasingly popular e-communication channels (see Small, 2012) accordingly. Examples of contemporary market-oriented governing leaders from around the world can be seen in Table 1.1 above.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Governing leaders do not have to blindly follow public opinion to be perceived as in touch, as long as their communication suggests genuine and respectful acknowledgement of public concern. Such communication also allows governing leaders to show qualities associated with strong and decisive leadership. Therefore, this book will explore how contemporary mar-

ket-oriented governing leaders can overcome the typical trend of losing a market-orientation in power by following more effective communication strategies. It will show how new forms of communication can be used by market-oriented governing leaders to show the public that they still have the leadership qualities they entered office with, despite the challenges they face in power. It will do this by outlining a new model, the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, which highlights how leaders can communicate their market-oriented qualities in government.

METHODOLOGY

Designing the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model

The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model was originally developed through a grounded theory research method. Rather than establishing a rigid model before testing, the grounded theory method allowed the data collected to help continually shape the evolution of the model over the course of the research (Corbin & Holt, 2005). An initial framework was developed based on previous theoretical and case study literature in the fields of political marketing, political communication, and political leadership (see Goulding, 2002: 56). This framework was then tested using a collective case study method, where multiple case studies were considered in relation to each other to achieve a better understanding beyond the individual cases themselves (Stake, 1998: 89). These case studies will be outlined later in this chapter. The model was then altered in accordance to the findings from these case studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 75). This was done to create the most nuanced and refined final theory possible. However, the evolution of the model will not be outlined in this book. Rather, this book will outline the model, highlight, and evaluate it in action before outlining what this means.

Case Study

The case studies introduced later in this chapter came from the evaluation of 330 primary media texts. These texts included, for example, television and radio news broadcasts, televised town hall meetings, speeches, interviews on variety shows, press conferences, press releases, debates in the House of Representatives, and quotes in newspaper articles. The original

material was coded and categorised through the NVivo data coding programme using qualitative discourse and semiotic analysis. This was done to identify the messages expressed by the governing leaders and possible interpretations by receivers. Semiotic theory suggests that the meaning of communication is interpreted by a receiver through signs such as words, actions, and images. These signs consist of a signifier—the actual visual and verbal communications, and a signified—the concept the signifier refers to (see Robinson, 2006: 30–2). Whilst communication can be interpreted in numerous ways by the receiver (Rose, 2007) there is a range of literature that suggests how both verbal and visual communication is likely to be received by the audience (Campbell, 1983; De Landtsheer, De Vries, & Vertessen, 2008: 222–25; Pierce, 1993). These were taken into consideration when designing the model and evaluating the verbal and visual communication in the texts analysed.

Scope

This book explores a significant development in political marketing communication which previously had not been outlined in detail. While it examines how market-oriented governing leaders use communication strategies in an attempt to maintain a positive public image, attempting to actually prove the effect of their communication on their public image would require proof of partial causality (see Hosoya, 2001). This would be another question altogether and very difficult to answer, as there are numerous variables that can affect a particular outcome (A. Bennett & George, 2001: 152). Many variables can have an effect on a governing leader's public image including the state of the economy, changes in society, and the popularity and effectiveness of the opposition (Heppell, 2008). Whilst methodologies such as process tracing were considered as a means to trace the relationship between leadership communication and opinion (see Imai, Keele, Tingley, & Yamamoto, 2011), this research is focused on exploring new forms of political marketing communication rather than causes of public opinion.

Also, the research acknowledges but does not extensively analyse or critic uncontrollable aspects of communication, such as the way governing leaders are framed through editing in television news pieces. The influence and quality of political coverage by the media is another area of research in its own right (see W.L. Bennett & Entman, 2001; Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2003; Street, 2011: 101–130; Stromback & Kaid, 2008). Governing lead-

ers have very little control over how they are presented in uncontrolled media texts. Therefore, this book focuses on what the leader and their staff can control, such as their visual presentation, their speaking tone, and their choice of words and phrases. The goal was to pursue manageable but also methodologically sound, and thus appropriately detailed, analysis of communication.

THE MODEL: RESPONSIVENESS, LEADERSHIP, AND CREDIBILITY

The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model was designed on the back of theoretical literature, previous case studies, newly tested case studies, and practitioner interviews. The model outlines three main qualities contemporary governing leaders should promote that they have when trying to maintain a market-oriented image during the day-to-day operations of governing—responsiveness, leadership, and credibility. Promoting responsiveness involves using communication that shows a governing leader is in touch with the public as well as their opinions and concerns. This can be achieved by communicating that a governing leader is listening to the public, by showing a respectful acknowledgement of public opinion and by communicating an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public. Promoting leadership involves using communication that shows a governing leader has the necessary personal and professional tools to effectively do the job. This can be achieved through communicating leadership strength and competence. Finally, promoting credibility involves using communication to show that a governing leader genuinely believes in what they are doing and has personal attributes the public admire. This can be achieved through communicating honesty, authenticity, and relatability. There are a variety of verbal and visual cues, both subtle and more obvious, that can be used to achieve these communication goals and the broader qualities they help promote. The most common of these are highlighted in [Table 1.2](#) below. More depth on these qualities, goals, and the common ways to communicate these are presented in the following three chapters.

The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model is not a linear model, nor is it a checklist of rules governing leaders need to follow in their entirety. The suggestions in the right-hand column do not all need to be used in each piece of communication on each issue in each country. As will be outlined throughout this book, the context surrounding govern-

Table 1.2 The contemporary governing leaders' communication model

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Common ways to communicate</i>
Responsiveness	Communicate the governing leader is listening to the public	<i>Verbal</i> Start frequent communication early on in the decision-making process Maintain rhetoric encouraging public feedback and debate Retelling ordinary peoples' stories <i>Visual</i> Visual evidence of the leader with members of the public
	Communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism	<i>Respectfully explain</i> What the public are concerned about Why they have this concern Why the governing leader disagrees <i>Other verbal</i> Communicate potential solutions to public concerns
	Communicate an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public	<i>Verbal</i> Suggest togetherness, affinity or an understanding of the public Communicate end goals and aspirations that resonate with the public Show reflection on hard yet necessary decisions
Leadership	Communicate leadership strength	<i>Verbal</i> Communicate personal conviction Strong and authoritative tone of voice Use language cues associated with determination and strength Not attacking the Opposition <i>Visual</i> Squared shoulders Dark formal clothing Strong facial expressions Firm hand gestures In front of group/focal point of imagery
	Communicate leadership competence	<i>Verbal</i> Communicate delivery, the reasoning behind and the benefits of the decision Suggest relationship with members of other political parties, branches of government and stakeholder groups Discuss other potential options <i>Visual</i> Imagery of leader working constructively with other political elites

(continued)

Table 1.2 (continued)

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Common ways to communicate</i>
Credibility	Communicate honesty	<i>Verbal</i> Be open, honest, and encouraging of media and public questioning Communicate challenges to delivery Communicate drawbacks of decisions <i>Visual</i> Maintain reasonable eye contact with the audience Leaning forward
	Communicate authenticity and relatability	<i>Verbal</i> Communicate non-political personality Speak with a cadence that does not sound scripted <i>Visual</i> Open arms and hand gestures Lighter coloured, less formal clothing Smile

Author's own compilation



Fig. 1.1 Summary of change in communication (Author's own compilation)

ing leaders' communication, such as the medium they are communicating through and the type of issue being discussed, can influence what aspects of the model are emphasised in their strategies. Overall, the model provides a balance between being intellectually fruitful enough to add to the growing list of frameworks and models in the area of political marketing in

government, while also being broad enough to be universally applicable to maximise its potential use in research and in practice.

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THE MODEL?

But what makes these strategies different to those used by governing leaders since the introduction of mass communication? It is true that many aspects of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model are similar to those used by leaders for many decades (see Perlmutter, 1999). But it is important to include the most common traditional aspects of governing leaders' communication as they still have value in contemporary communication. The general messages being communicated by governing leaders today are similar to those found in traditional communication strategies, especially when leaders go against public opinion. However, how a point is communicated is just as important as the point itself. In other words, the difference in new communication strategies is how they present that information. How governing leaders balance defending their decisions with the increasing public demand for respectful responses to their criticism is at the heart of this difference. This is most obviously highlighted by the need to be more responsive and respectful of public criticism and concern. Furthermore, suggestions such as communicating an understanding of public hardships, showing reflection for hard yet necessary decisions, and communicating drawbacks of decisions all go against the broad traditional communication strategy of highlighting positives while ignoring or disregarding any concern or criticism. This change in how governing leaders deal with concern and criticism is highlighted by Fig. 1.1 above.

When merging the traditional communication suggestions with the newer ones, a contemporary governing leader should be able to present an overall image of being in touch, while also presenting an image of being strong, competent, and credible in a way the contemporary public demand.

THE CASE STUDIES

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will illustrate the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in practice through examples stemming from two contemporary governing leaders' communication. The two leaders in question are US President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key. These were information-oriented selections; selected on the basis of expectations about what would be found (Flyvbjerg, 2011:

307). More specifically, these two leaders were chosen due to their broad similarities but country-specific institutional differences. Both Key and Obama became governing leaders of Western democratic countries in 2008 on the back of market-oriented strategies. After becoming leader in 2006, John Key moved the New Zealand National Party closer to the middle of the political spectrum while branding himself as a typical kiwi guy (Lees-Marshment, J. 2009b). Obama, among other things, adapted his brand to correlate with the public desire for change (Spiller & Bergner, 2011), utilised an innovative campaign structure that responded to volunteer desires (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011), and explicitly highlighted his goal to be a listening leader (Wolvin, 2010: 924). At the same time, there are notable differences in the institutional make-up of these two countries, such as the administrative power governing leaders have in the policymaking process and the relationship the administrations have with the media, as will be discussed soon. Thus, by examining these two market-oriented governing leaders, we can see how the model has to be used in accordance with the national, political, and social context, giving us a more universal perspective on contemporary governments' strategic communication.

Each leader's communication is examined around two salient and polarising issues prevalent during their first terms in government. These issues are outlined below, including important background information that could affect each leader's public image as well as why these issues were important and polarising.

Barack Obama on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

While debate around the health-care reform has been a major topic in the USA for many decades, the issue's public saliency increased throughout the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries. The two leading candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, used the differences in their health-care reform plans to differentiate themselves from each other. Most notably, Clinton's plan included the individual mandate promoted by the Heritage Foundation while Obama's did not. This was something that Obama used against Clinton, claiming she was forcing people to buy health insurance even when they could not afford it. Obama argued that under his plan those who could afford health insurance would do willingly (see Kirsch, 2012: 85). After winning the Democratic nomination health-

care reform remained a cornerstone of Obama's campaign, with Obama ranking it third in his list of priorities if elected (C-Span, 2008). After taking office and having campaigned as the President who would bring bipartisanship to government (*Washington Post*, 2008), Obama announced in February 2009 his intention to work with Congress to develop a plan for health-care reform (whitehouse.gov, 2009). The goal of what would become the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, often referred to as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare, was to decrease the number of uninsured Americans, reduce the costs of health care, and decrease the stranglehold the larger drug and insurance companies had over the sector (Toner, 2007). However, in order to achieve universal eligibility regardless of health status, experts convinced Obama that the policy would require a community rating and, more notably, an individual mandate in order to avoid major increases in the cost of health insurance. Obama's position change on this aspect of the issue was problematic for his image, especially around delivery. By changing his position, Obama was accused of flip-flopping, not delivering on his pre-election promises and a defining difference between Clinton and himself (Cannon, 2010). Also, the inclusion of the individual mandate was used by the Republican leadership to threaten a filibuster on any health-care reform bill containing it, with the removal of the public option something Obama had to concede in order to get the bill passed through the Senate. As a leader who entered office on the back of the notion of looking for bipartisan support, including explicitly on this issue, the battle Obama had in getting enough support for the bill dented the bipartisan image he had developed prior to getting elected. Polling suggested significant public support for health-care reform in 2008. However, in 2009, when Obama changed his position on including an individual mandate, public opinion towards the legislation decreased (CNN, 2010). Detractors of the reforms argued that Obama's proposed change to the US health system was a government takeover of health care. Furthermore, in the context of an onset of an economic recession, there was concern around the cost to both the Government and the American public directly (Chait, 2012). For these reasons, communicating Obama's qualities associated with market-oriented behaviour on this issue was paramount.

Barack Obama on the Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009, commonly referred to as the Recovery Act or the Stimulus, was not a cornerstone of Obama's campaign in itself since both John McCain and he had supported the initial US\$700 billion put aside for recovery investment. However, due the severity of the global economic recession faced at the time, economic competence became a major talking point of both the Democratic primary and the Presidential election. Obama stated that dealing with the economic crisis would be his top priority if elected (C-Span, 2008). Furthermore, the Recovery Act became a consistently publically salient issue during Obama's first term in the White House due to the severity of the crisis (Grunwald, 2012: 256). Having allowed House and Senate committee leaders authorship of the bill prior to entering Office, Obama signed the bill into law less than a month after his inauguration in January 2009. The approximately US\$800 million Act focused on economic investment in order to save and create employment as quickly as possible through investment on, among others, education, energy, and infrastructure. Again, criticism came from certain members of Congress who claimed that the bill was used as an excuse to include expensive pet projects (Calabresi, 2009), while others pushed for further infrastructure spending and the expansion of housing tax credits (Stolberg, 2009). Public opinion on the Act was also divided (Newport, Jones, & Saad, 2010). Criticism from the political right suggested that the Act involved too much government intervention, arguing that lowering tax rates and reducing government bureaucracy would be more effective at producing long-term economic growth (Cato-Institute, 2009). Conversely, criticism from the political left argued the Act did not invest enough, arguing that in order to gain bipartisan support, the policy did not "even cover one third of the (spending) gap." ("Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman: Too Little Stimulus in Stimulus Plan," 2009). Due to the Act's public saliency, considered importance, and thus effect on the public perception of Obama, the President needed to show that he was dealing with the issue if he wanted to go into re-election confidently.

John Key on Increasing GST

One of the most polarising and salient issues during John Key's first term as New Zealand Prime Minister was the Government's decision to increase the rate of Goods and Services Tax (GST) from 12.5 % to 15 % in their

May 2010 budget. As part of a greater tax switch, the rise in GST was accompanied by a reduction in personal tax rates. But a TVNZ-Colmar Brunton poll released at the time of the decision showed that 69 % of people surveyed were against the increase, with 63 % of the people not believing they would be better off once the tax switch had been implemented (Espiner, 2010). GST had been a divisive topic in New Zealand since its introduction in 1986. As seen globally, critics argue that added value taxes like GST have a more pronounced impact on lower income earners who spend a larger percentage of their income on necessities (McTaggart, 2006). This was compounded as the decision was anticipated to increase the cost of living by 2.2 % on top of the Consumer Price Index already increasing over 2 % in the previous year (stats.govt.nz, 2010). The decision was particularly risky for a National Government due to their own recent history. Under previous leader Don Brash, the National Party had rebuilt its popularity based on a platform of perceived Māori privileges, wasteful spending, and the promotion for tax cuts. This platform had seen the National Party go from receiving less than 21 % of the party vote in the 2002 General Election to over 39 % in 2005. While the Party had moved closer to the economic centre and the economic outlook was worse than anticipated, Key still campaigned on the idea that he was confident a government he led would be able to cut taxes (Oliver, 2008). But Key had not indicated this would be accompanied by an increase in GST. As would be revealed during the issue's salient period in 2010, footage from the 2008 election campaign showed Key promising his government would not increase GST. So increasing taxes was not part of Key's pre-election agenda. As a result, Key risked losing his reputation as a leader who delivered what was expected of him and a National Government. Thus, John Key was challenged in maintaining the image of having the qualities associated with having a market-orientation.

*John Key on Repealing and Replacing
the Foreshore and Seabed Act*

Repealing and replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act was another salient issue during John Key's first term in office. The original Act had been passed in 2004 by the Labour Government which placed the Foreshore and Seabed in Crown ownership. It was a highly contentious and publically salient decision in its own right. Labour Minister Tariana Turia resigned from Parliament in protest of the Government's decision, formed the

Māori Party and successfully contested the resulting by-election for the Te Tai Hauauru electorate. Māori Iwi criticised the decision by claiming ownership of the area based on customary title, historical rights of occupation, and guarantees provided by the Treaty of Waitangi (“Retreat on Foreshore would Help National,” 2011). Concurrently, then-National Party Leader Don Brash led criticism arguing the Labour Government was still showing favouritisms towards Māori on this and other race-related issues. This resulted in an increase in support for the National Party from conservative voters (Joyce, 2007). However, as the Party moved closer to the ideological centre under Key, their position on indigenous rights issues had softened (see Tahana, 2008). After the election, the incoming National Government signed a confidence and supply agreement with the Māori Party, with a review of the Foreshore and Seabed Act being a provision of their agreement. This looked like a good strategic move by Key, who did not need the Māori Party’s support to form a government. However, the agreement promoted Key as a leader looking to form constructive relationships with other parties, something that had been a point of contention for the previous Labour Government. But as the specifics of the replacement bill became clearer, tensions between Key, the Māori Party leadership, and specifically Māori Party MP Hone Harawira became apparent around what customary title meant for property rights. But in March 2011, the Government replaced the Foreshore and Seabed Act with the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act. The new Act shifted the Foreshore and Seabed from Crown ownership into the public domain, thus allowing Māori Iwi and Hapu to claim customary title (Matunga, 2013). The decision was met with public criticism from both sides of the political spectrum. Many Māori groups argued that putting the area in the public domain still prevented Māori tribes from what they saw as their rightful claim to title. Other critics argued it alienated National’s conservative base and did not gain the widespread support from the greater, predominantly European, population Key himself said was a provision of repealing the original Act (see “Coastal Bill a ‘Disgrace’,” 2011). This was based on public concern about the potential for Māori tribes to stop non-Māori using the beach also surfaced (see “Retreat on Foreshore would Help National,” 2011). The challenges and polarising nature of this decision made it important for Key to show he was still in touch with the greater general public and had the leadership competence to deal with an unlikely coalition partner.

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

Along with the salient and polarising issues noted above, these two contemporary governing leaders were chosen for examination due to the key differences in their respective countries' political systems, the processes of governmental decision making, as well as the differences in the way governing leaders in these countries communicate with the public through the media. This was done in order to get a more universal perspective on the topic. These key differences are further explained below.

Administrative Difference: Level of Power

The most obvious difference in the governing leadership of the USA and New Zealand is that the first is a presidential republic with a constitution that entrenches three branches of government, while the latter is a constitutional monarchy with only one branch of government. With this separation of power, as well as less collective responsibility and voting down party lines, a US President has less power over federal government decisions than their New Zealand counterpart (see Miller, 2010: 103–298; Wilson, 2013). Therefore, a President's power in the decision-making process comes from their administrative ability to use persuasion to build political and public momentum for their legislative agenda (Denton, 1998: 179–256). This often results in decisions that include compromises with, and attachments from, members of congress in order to get the sufficient number of votes to get a bill passed into law (Spiller & Bergner, 2014: 56). Conversely, a New Zealand Prime Minister has substantial power over the details of Parliament's policy agenda due to the Westminster tradition of collective responsibility and voting down party lines (Buckley, 2006; Weir, 1999; Wright, 2000: 263–4). While compromise is sometimes needed in order to get minor party support for legislation, due to party unity in voting and the establishment of coalition agreements this is less of a factor. Therefore, the public expectations placed on these leaders to deliver on their policy and legislative agendas are different enough to change the way they need to communicate, as will be shown most obviously in Chap. 3.

Control Over Texts Used

There is also a noticeable difference in the way the governing leaders in these countries distribute information to, and through, media channels. In New Zealand, communication by the Prime Minister is overwhelmingly

produced by independent media outlets. This communication often comes in the form of shorter sound bites and interviews with journalists for television and radio news telecasts, as well as newspaper articles. In these texts, the Prime Minister's communication often comes from press conferences and answers given to reporters as they manoeuvre through the corridors of Parliament. As expert David Farrar notes, the level of access the New Zealand media have to the Prime Minister is unusually high.

One of (the major changes) is the near daily stand up... Once upon a time they were just photo ops. There was no media at all. Then it might sort of become "We'll give you one or two questions." Now it pretty much comes close to a full stand up every day. (David Farrar, pollster, former Executive Assistant to the Prime Minister, and former campaign manager. Interviewed by author, 13 March 2014)

But this structure means that the Prime Minister often does not have the chance to go into depth about issues, something that affects the scope of what they can say.

This is not as much of a problem for a US President. The US media do not have the same level of direct access to the President. Coverage of the President's communication often comes from speeches the President gives. While such formats often include a question period, the amount of control the White House has over the majority of communication in these formats is much higher than their New Zealand counterparts. This is seen most obviously in the fact that a majority of the communication found in uncontrolled media texts is either taken from or filmed next to material produced by the Obama Administration for publication on the [whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) website. As the Government has more control over the content, they have the ability to create longer texts. This enables the President to speak at greater length and, therefore, is able to broaden the scope of what they talk about around an issue compared to their New Zealand counterpart.

SUMMARY AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This chapter has outlined the decline in strong political partisanship based on shared ideological vision in Western societies. Over the last 25 years, political elites have increasingly adopted a market-orientation and have seen electoral success as a result. However, the realities of government hinder the preservation of a market-orientation in political office.

Importantly, these realities lead to governments increasingly being seen as out of touch as well as lacking leadership and credibility. This is especially true for governing leaders, who are often symbolic of this product and brand. Recent history shows that this is compounded by the use of traditional communication strategies based on highlighting positives while disregarding or ignoring public concern and criticism. This style of communication does not correlate with the responsiveness that is expected in contemporary political leaders. But governing leaders' communication is changing, with more emphasis placed on proving that they are listening to the public, even when they do not follow public demand. The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model highlights how this can be done. In essence, the model highlights how contemporary governing leaders have, and could further, use a new style of communication strategy in an attempt to alleviate the public image problems caused by the challenges of office.

With the help of expert opinion, the following three chapters of this book will outline the model in more detail. They will also outline the examination and evaluation of President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key's communication to see how effectively leaders are using contemporary market-oriented communication in government. Each of these chapters outlines both leaders' communication in relation to one of the three main qualities outlined in the model—responsiveness, leadership, and credibility. Finally, Chap. 5 will again highlight the model and the common themes evident over the course of the Chaps. 2, 3 and 4 that affect how the model is used in practice. It will finally advise practitioners and academics on the future of leadership communication in a market-oriented setting.

NOTES

1. For the updated version of the Lees-Marshment model, see Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005a: 221–6).
2. To see other examples, see Lees-Marshment, Strömbäck, and Rudd (2010) and Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005c).
3. While Gordon Brown became Prime Minister of the UK in 2007, he was strongly linked to the Government since Labour took office in 1997, both administratively as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and publically as one of the figureheads of the Government's overall image and communication.

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Responsiveness

Abstract This chapter outlines the three communication goals that governing leaders should target in order to promote their responsiveness—communicate they are listening to the public, communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism, and communicate an emotional bond between them and the public. It will examine how effectively US President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key used such communication during their first terms in political office against the Contemporary Governing Leaders’ Communication Model to better understand if and how these qualities were being promoted effectively by contemporary governing leaders, while simultaneously illustrating this part of the Contemporary Governing Leaders’ Communication Model in practice.

Keywords Listening • In touch • Respectful • Responsiveness

INTRODUCTION

As their relationship with political elites has evolved over time, the public are now less willing to blindly accept politicians justifying their decisions on the simply argument that they have the expertise, they have

the necessary information, and, therefore, they know best (Lilleker & Scullion, 2008: 1–2). Being in touch with public opinion is a key component of market-oriented behaviour and showing this through communication is vital to maintaining a positive public image. Therefore, governing leaders need to respectfully acknowledge prominent opposing viewpoints and public concerns, both from the broader public and from those with a vested interest (see Giasson, Lees-Marshment, & Marland, 2012; Hughes & Dann, 2009: 252). While it is not always possible to follow public opinion, respectfully acknowledging opposing viewpoints through communication helps governing leaders present an image of being in touch. In essence, it is important for governing leaders to show they have taken public views into consideration before making decisions, as highlighted by pollster David Farrar below.

I think being in touch is most important. I think that's what New Zealanders value the most is political leaders who they can relate to, who they feel understand what are the important issues for them... [Y]ou see this when governments start to fade, the common stuff commentators say is "they're falling out of touch"... And I think the key thing too is the ability to engage with the audience... Where... you make them feel as though you're talking with them, not to them. (David Farrar, pollster, former Executive Assistant to the Prime Minister, and former campaign manager. Interviewed by author, 13 March 2014)

This chapter outlines the three communication goals that governing leaders should target in order to promote their responsiveness quality. It will examine how effectively President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key used such communication against the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model. In doing so, we can better understand if and how these qualities were being promoted effectively, while simultaneously illustrating this part of the model in practice.

COMMUNICATING THE GOVERNING LEADER IS LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC

The easiest and most common way for governing leaders to show they are in touch with public opinion is through evidence that they are listening to the public. Proving that a governing leader is listening to the public can be done in a number of ways, including dialogue that

encourages public feedback and debate, retelling of ordinary people's stories as well as visual evidence of the leader with, and listening to, members of the public. The resulting stimulation and simulation of consultation may not have a direct effect on the outcome of an issue. But it does provide the public with the opportunity to air their concerns prior to a decision being finalised. In other words, it allows the public to get any frustrations out as soon as possible rather than, say, on election day (Scammell, 2007). Such communication also helps promote the idea that the governing leader is *discussing* the issue *with* the public rather than *selling* the issue *to* them (see Wring, Green, Mortimore, & Atkinson, 2007: 21).

*Starting Communication Early on in the Decision-Making
Process and Using Rhetoric Encouraging Public Feedback
and Debate*

Governing leaders can stimulate and simulate public consultation by starting communication on an issue well before a decision has been announced. This practice gives the public time to debate the issue in the public forum. This can be further stimulated with the use of explicit communication encouraging public debate as well as the use of implicit cues, such as rhetoric suggesting a final decision has not been made. Communication should not only start early, but be frequent. Without frequency, the issue can lose its public saliency until a final decision is more obvious. Furthermore, starting communication early can help governing leader set the agenda (Gibbons, 2004: 24).

Obama's communication on the issue of health-care reform exemplifies this. As mentioned in Chap. 1, Obama signalled his intent to pursue health care when running in the Democratic presidential primaries (see Conroy, 2007) and was a topic of debate throughout the campaign. Once in office, Obama announced to a joint session of Congress in February 2009 that he would begin working with them to construct a plan for health-care reform. In March, Obama convened a health-care summit at the White House to begin to formulate policy to deal with the issue. Obama opened the meeting by noting, "In this effort, every voice has to be heard. Every idea must be considered. Every option must be on the table." (whitehouse.gov, 2009r) While Obama's communication was directed at politicians, such communication still explicitly promoted the idea that a decision had not been finalised, thus helping promote public dialogue. More direct

promotion of public dialogue was seen throughout 2009 as the bill was going through the governmental decision-making process. This was done through Obama-hosted town hall meetings across the USA (see whitehouse.gov, 2009f), where Obama would answer questions and listen to suggestions and concerns from the audience while encouraging independent public meetings and public submissions to enhance the debate. As an issue that was publically salient before taking office, Obama had the ability to start communication on it early, which he continued throughout the decision-making process.

However, on the Recovery Act, Obama did not have the luxury to start communication comparably early prior to the decision being made due to the urgency surrounding the issue. While the broader issue had been discussed in the later part of the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama's explicit communication on the Recovery Act started in late November 2008, when the then President-Elect announced he had directed his economic team to come up with a recovery plan. Work on the bill started only two months before Obama was sworn in, which he signed into law less than a month into his presidency. In this communication from November 2008 Obama noted his intention to sign the plan soon after taking office, as shown below.

I have already directed my economic team to come up with an Economic Recovery Plan that will mean 2.5 million more jobs by January of 2011—a plan big enough to meet the challenges we face that I intend to sign soon after taking office. We'll be working out the details in the weeks ahead, but it will be a two-year, nationwide effort to jumpstart job creation in America and lay the foundation for a strong and growing economy. (ChangeDotGov, 2008)¹

Obama's communication suggested the specifics of the Act had not been finalised, most explicitly shown in the two underlined sections where Obama mentions the details of the plan are still being worked out. But these sections of the quote also suggested that the matter would be resolved quickly by the economic team. This suggested that only a few specific details needed to be finalised, thus indicating the issue was not up for public debate. But again, the context surrounding this issue needs to be taken into consideration. Obama highlighted the urgency of the issue and the need to take action to deal with the economic crisis, as shown below.

The need for us to act is now. It's never been more urgent... That's why I've moved quickly to work with my economic team and leaders of both parties on an American recovery and reinvestment plan that will immediately jump-start job creation and long-term growth. And I'm pleased that Congress has seen the urgency as well and is moving quickly to consider such a plan. (ChangeDotGov, 2009)

Obama's communication highlights why normal levels of public consultation was not permissible on this issue. This is most obviously seen in the underlined sections of the quote, where Obama used adverbs and adjectives that emphasised how time sensitive the situation was. While not an ideal scenario, in situations of such urgency, the importance of quick and decisive action is more important than deliberation (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005: 33). This difference in communication highlights the importance of context for how the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model is used, a theme that will be common through the next four chapters.

Different contexts also somewhat played a role in the difference in Key's early communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act and increasing the rate of the GST. Key did start communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act early into his premiership with a speech to Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament's Legislative Council Chamber at the State Opening of Parliament in December 2008,² 20 days after taking office. The relevant excerpt from this speech can be seen below.

In accordance with the Confidence and Supply agreement with the Māori Party, my Government will undertake a review of the Seabed and Foreshore legislation to ascertain whether it adequately maintains and enhances manawhenua... If repeal is necessary, it will ensure there is appropriate protection in place to ensure all New Zealanders enjoy access to the foreshore and seabed, through existing and potentially new legislation. (nzherald.co.nz, 2008)

This communication came 18 months prior to Key officially announcing the Foreshore and Seabed Act would be repealed and 27 months prior to the Marine and Coastal Area Act being passed. Key had the luxury of starting communication on this issue early as the review of the Foreshore and Seabed Act was part of the incoming National Government's confidence and supply agreement with the

Māori Party. Moreover, the underlined verbal cues in the communication above suggested a decision on the issue had not been made. Such verbal cues progressively suggested more certainty in a potential decision the closer Key's communication was to the decision being made. However, Key did not start explicitly communicating that the issue was no longer up for debate until after he had announced the repeal of the Foreshore and Seabed Act in June 2010. Furthermore, Key explicitly asked for public input on this issue on several occasions (see national.org.nz, 2010). By continually using language that suggested the issue was still open for debate, Key invited public discourse on the issue. This encouragement was further helped by Key's use of constant communication on this issue, which increased in regularity until the time the issue became truly salient.

But Key's communication on increasing GST was a more problematic in this area. Key was unable to start communication on this issue quite as early as it was not part of the Government's agenda until approximately six months into their first term in office. But Key's communication on the issue did start nine months prior to the policy being announced in the May 2010 budget and 14 months prior to it taking effect in October of that year. This communication came in an interview in August 2009, where Key suggested a decision had not been made, as seen below.

[A] working tax group... have been put together [a] view on what the tax system could or should look like in their view... they have been promoting this view that there would be greater sense to lift GST and reduce other taxes... The question is, is it a good idea? I don't know. It would depend on the entire package. (TV3, 2009)

Key's communication implied a raise GST was an option rather than a likely decision. This is best seen where Key questioned whether the suggested plan was a good idea, which both implied his own uncertainty and subtlety prompted the viewers to answer the question themselves. In other words, it implicitly encouraged public discourse on the issue. However, while this communication came well before the official announcement of the decision, Key's communication on this issue was scarcely seen until January 2010, which is highlighted below.

This year the Government will make significant changes to the New Zealand tax system. We will announce the details of these measures as part of the

budget in May... The Government is also carefully considering a modest increase in the rate of GST to no more than 15 per cent. (NZNats, 2010d)

While Key still insinuated a decision had not been made, the communication from this point forward suggested an increase in GST was likely. This is highlighted by the unlined verbal cues in the quote above, where Key noted significant changes would be made to the tax system while at the same time noting changes to GST were under careful consideration. Such communication suggested a decision had been made, with Key holding off communicating that decision until the release of the budget.

In essence, by starting communication early and using communication around this issue consistently, both Key and Obama were able to promote their listening qualities through the stimulation of public dialogue, at least on certain issues. Such communication can help soften any backlash to polarising decisions. This is not always possible, as the context surrounding the issue can hinder how far before a decision the governing leader can start public dialogue. However, as seen in Key's communication on raising GST, frequent communication needs to start as early as realistically possible. If it is not, the leader will have to imply a more solid stance on the issue by the time frequent communication starts.

Retelling Ordinary Peoples' Stories

Governing leaders can prove they are listening to the public by retelling the stories members of the public have told them about how the issue or decision has affected, or will affect, them. Such communication also allows the leader to use empirical examples to illustrate the need for action. In other words, such communication also gives validity to the points and arguments they make.

Obama's communication on both Obamacare and the Recovery Act exemplified this. In such communication, Obama would retell stories about people he had met, or received letters from, and how the issues surrounding these decisions affected them, as seen below.

I just met with Trapper Clark and Tom Sturtevant, who are the state of Maine's Small Business Owners of the Year. They started a company that manufactures aluminium trailers about four years ago with twenty employees. They've grown rapidly over the last few years, and that growth has been supported by a Recovery Act loan from the Small Business Administration.

They also got some fees waived. And today, they have 85 employees, are planning to add another 15 by the end of this year, and hope to add another 30 by the end of 2011. (whitehouse.gov, 2010h)

This type of communication by Obama again highlighted the fact that he had talked to, and more importantly listened to, members of the public about the issue. Through explicit examples, such communication reinforced the idea that Obama was in touch with the American public. Such communication also allowed Obama to use empirical examples to illustrate and give validity to the positive effect the Recovery Act was having on American people and the economy.

Key, on the other hand, did not use this type of communication at all. This was partly due to the type of media texts Key was predominantly communicating through. As noted in Chap. 1, the New Zealand Government has less influence in the creation and distribution of the Prime Minister's communication than their American counterparts. As a result, there are greater time constraints on their communication that hinder the depth and breadth of their communication. In essence, Key was not allowed the time to retell stories in the same way Obama was. However, these restrictions were not present in all of the texts Key communicated through. Key was given more time to communicate in texts such as radio and television interviews and in video journals. By using these, as well as potentially creating new, media texts to retell ordinary peoples' stories, Key would have been more effective at proving he was talking with the public about these issues while also aiding him in justifying his decisions.

Visual Evidence of the Leader with Members of the Public

The positive effects of verbal communication proving governing leaders are consulting with the public can be further emphasised through visual proof. However, as noted in the previous chapter, being in government often results in less visual evidence of leaders with the general public. Similarity between source and receiver enhances persuasion (Perloff, 1993: 146). Therefore, governing leaders need to make room for visual opportunities showing them consulting with, and listening to, members of the general public and vested interest groups. Such communication helps illustrate the leader's connection with, understanding of, and appreciation for the public (Robinson, 2009: 78–9). This can be done using *cinéma-vérité* spots that show the candidate in typical public settings interacting

with the public. In election campaigns, these spots are often scripted to ensure members of the public do not cause the politician embarrassment (McNair, 2011: 108). However, as highlighted by public relations expert Mark Blackham below, such communication is not always effective in showing the leader is listening.

[T]he authenticity has gone out of a lot of the set pieces. And there's a formula to it. You go to so and so factory, wear the yellow hat and your high vis jacket, talk to two workers who are standing by a machine and shake hands with the business owner and get a photo somewhere along the line. There's a consciousness to that, to the thought that it works. But it doesn't. It's shallow, the design is so obvious. (Mark Blackham, Director at Blackham PR and former New Zealand Government Press Secretary. Interviewed by author via Skype. 11 March 2014)

Therefore, such communication should be as unscripted and pre-managed as possible. While this increases the risk of public embarrassment and evidence of public dissatisfaction, evidence suggests that the embarrassment of confrontation may be beneficial in showing the leader is truly listening, while also helping promote the leader's authenticity (see Rawnsley, 2010).

Obama was somewhat effective at using such communication on both the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act, as seen by the many videos produced from town hall meetings Obama held. These town hall meetings often took place in large auditoriums or arenas where there was a visual disconnect between Obama and those in attendance. The most effective of these produced videos predominantly included visuals of Obama interacting with the audience in the same shots rather than relying on action/reaction cuts. This is best seen in a number of the backyard town hall meetings Obama hosted on both topics. The typical American backyard setting showed visual evidence of Obama having, as Obama's communication director Dan Pfeiffer noted, "An intimate conversation with middle class Americans" (quoted in Stolberg, 2010). For example, Obama hosted a backyard town hall in Falls Church Virginia specifically to talk about the upcoming health-care reforms taking effect (see whitehouse.gov, 2010a). The intimate interaction between Obama and the attendees was best illustrated in the visual cues at the beginning and end of the video. Obama entered the backyard through the backdoor of the house and introduced himself solely by his first name to the attendees as he shook their hands.

Also, after the meeting concluded, Obama stayed to talk to the attendees individually, without the microphones covering their conversations. The visual evidence of Obama not only interacting with attendees, but listening to them, helped Obama promote the idea that he was in touch with the public.

But not all the visual cues in these texts suggested Obama was actively listening. At times, Obama would seem inattentive to the audience member asking him a question or telling him a story. This included walking away from one attendee to sit in the shade far away from her as she told her health-care story, rather than waiting until she had finished. Also, on multiple occasions Obama would read notes handed to him by an assistant while supposedly listening to a question or story from a member of the audience (see whitehouse.gov, 2010d). Such visual cues can be interpreted as a lack of respect and attentiveness by Obama to the person talking to him. In such situations, it would have been better for Obama to either wait until the question was finished before reading the note, or politely ask the person to stop for a second so he could read the message.³

While not directly Obama's fault, production was also a minor issue in some of the videos of these backyard town halls. Most notably, four of the six backyard town hall meetings Obama hosted on the Recovery Act, filmed by and uploaded onto the White House website, mainly used close-up shots of Obama (see whitehouse.gov, 2010b). In doing so, the videos almost exclusively showed Obama without the members of the audience he was speaking to. Obama did answer questions from the people in attendance in the latter half of these events. However, the visual communication did not enhance the notion that Obama was connected to these people. This was a surprising visual strategy considering the purpose of these backyard town halls was to present Obama more intimately interacting with the American public in a typical American setting. So while a majority of the visual communication that showed Obama interacting with the public were coded overwhelmingly positively, small aspects of the texts hindered the presentation of such qualities.

This was an issue overall in Obama's communication on the Recovery Act. Because Obama's communication on this issue involved less public consultation Obama's speech-to-town-hall ratio significantly favoured speeches, at least in audio-visual material produced by the Administration. These speeches were often given at the sites of Recovery Act investment projects or at the White House itself. The texts normally presented Obama

standing at a podium alone, with fellow political elites, or with those in charge of the project receiving investment (see whitehouse.gov, 2009k). In other words, Obama was not explicitly seen with members of the general public. Such visual communication is somewhat understandable considering the context of this issue. But this also highlights the challenge office brings to visual communication of governing leaders noted in the previous chapter. Governing leaders need to engage in market-oriented communication even when decisions have been made. This means showing the leader is in touch, even in retrospect. Since much of the material analysed was controlled by the White House, they could have been more proactive in including footage of Obama talking to workers and audience members at the sites of these events where permitted. As it stands, the majority of communication produced presented Obama talking *to* the public, rather than *with* the public.

Such visual communication was even more lacking in Key's communication around both replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act and increasing GST. On replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, Key's visual communication predominantly centred on engagement with political elites and higher dignitaries (see TV One, 2010f). In essence, the visuals of Key on this issue reinforced the problem governing leaders commonly face. On increasing GST, only one explicit example of visual communication showing Key interacting with the public was found. One News featured a piece on Key visiting Northcote Grey Power to talk about the benefits senior citizens would receive from the tax switch the rise in GST was part of (see TV One, 2010b). The piece included shots of Key helping a Grey Power member with their camera as they took photos with him, fixing a pin onto a member's shirt as well as multiple shots of Key discussing the issue with members of the group. As super annuitants were a target audience for a key part of Key's communication around this issue, the images reinforced the notion that Key was in touch with this particular target demographic.

So while Obama's visual communication highlighting interactions with members of the public were not as effective as they could have been, Key's were close to non-existent. This again highlights the benefits Obama was afforded due to the White House having more control of the media content produced. If the New Zealand Government produced more content, applying a similar strategy to the one example seen above more often and to a broader audience, Key could have emphasised he was in touch with the public more effectively.

RESPECTFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PUBLIC CONCERNS AND CRITICISMS

To show that they are responsive to the public, governing leaders need to not only listen, but also show respectful acknowledgement of public criticisms and concerns (see Lilleker, 2006: 79–80). Such communication differs from traditional communication strategies that try to disregard or downplay such criticism. But empirical evidence highlights how much importance the public place on leaders not only listening, but respecting their opinions (Promise, 2005). There are a number of ways this can be communicated. However, unlike the other communication goals of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, the most effective suggestion for how to show respectful acknowledgement of public concern and criticism is relatively linear. The most effective way to show respect for criticism and concern is for the leader to outline what the public are concerned about, why the public have these concerns, and why the governing leader disagrees or what they are going to do to address the concern.

Key's communication on raising GST best exemplifies this. As noted in Chap. 1, one of the main criticisms of value added taxes like GST is that it is a regressive tax that impacts lower income earners more than higher income earners. In his communication on the issue in the months leading up to the announcement Key addressed this issue, as seen below.

A lot of people... describe GST as a regressive tax. In other words, those who earn the least suffer the most if there's a change in GST. Actually factually that's not correct. If you have a look at it, it's about as progressive as our normal tax system. Why?... in the amount of actual [money higher income earners] actually physically pay through GST they actually end up paying a lot more tax than the lower income New Zealander. (NZNats, 2010a)

Key noted the public concern, but did not dismiss it. Rather, Key outlined the opposing argument, implicitly acknowledging the argument, before explaining why he disagreed with it. Key even posed the question "*Why?*," putting himself in the oppositions position. But one aspect of this communication did hinder Key's ability to show respect for this criticism. Key noted that the regressive tax argument is "factually not correct." This communication suggests that his stance on the issue is not an opinion, but fact. Thus, Key's communication implied that those with a differing

opinion had the facts wrong. While only a small aspect of Key's communication, this could be seen throughout Key's communication about opposing viewpoints, as shown below.

I don't accept the argument that it's regressive, that it hurts lower income families and individuals more than higher income because in a nominal sense a higher income earner spends more, consumes more, and therefore pays nominally a lot more of the tax. And actually it's about as progressive as the rest of the tax system that we have..... I know it's a very conceptually difficult argument for people to understand because it runs counter intuitive to what you think. (Radio New Zealand, 2010a)

Key's rhetoric implied a stubborn response to the criticism, as is most explicitly shown in the first underlined part of the quote where he notes he does not accept the opposing argument. Furthermore, as highlighted by the second underlined part of the quote, the communication implied Key believed those who disagree with him were not smart enough to understand his point. So while Key's communication in this area on increasing GST best fits the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, smaller but consistent elements of his communication still hinted at a lack of respect for public criticism and concern.

Such communication was also somewhat seen in Key's communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. However, it was less explicit. As noted in Chap. 1, a prominent public concern around replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act was that Māori tribes would be able to stop non-Māori New Zealanders from using the beaches. Key's response to this concern is a good example of this non-explicit communication. In most cases, Key never explicitly addressed the fact that there were public concerns that Māori Iwi could stop non-Māori from using the land. But there was a consistent message throughout Key's communication that any new act that he would allow to pass would guarantee access to beaches for all New Zealanders, as shown below.

Likewise, the Māori Party recognises the public interest and concern of all New Zealanders to ensure that their usage of the foreshore and seabed is protected. (TVNZ, 2009)

Public access, and existing navigation and fishing rights, will be protected. (beehive.govt.nz, 2010)

Such communication did not suggest Key disrespected the public concern. However, the communication did not explicitly acknowledge the concern either. Such communication works best when it shows that the governing leader is listening to the public. By being so implicit about that detail, Key did not give himself the opportunity to show his listening qualities to the same degree as he did on increasing GST.

Obama was able to highlight such criticism and concern much more explicitly on a number of aspects of the Affordable Care Act, especially throughout mid-2009 when the issue was at its most salient. Again, this was due to the types of texts Obama was communicating about the issue through. Specifically, the White House-produced videos of town hall meetings included evidence of Obama showing respect for public concern directly. For example, one of the more prevalent concerns around Obama's proposed reforms was that it would result in a government takeover of health care. An example of Obama's response to questions from the audience about that concern can be seen below.

OBAMA: Good. Well, look, both are great questions. We've been sort of circling around your first question, the whole big brother fear. What kind of insurance, Chris, do you have right now? What kind of coverage do you have?

CHRIS (audience questioner): Blue Cross Blue Shield.

OBAMA: It's a Blue Cross Blue Shield. So if you're happy with your plan, as I said, you keep it. Now, there are some restrictions we want to place on insurers. Pre-existing conditions is a tool that has prevented a lot of people from either not being able to get insurance or, if they lose their job, they can't find insurance. We think those policies should end. So there are going to be some areas where we want to regulate the insurers a little more. (ABC, 2009, 24 June)

When questioned about a government takeover of health care, Obama acknowledged the value of the concern. In particular, the first two underlined parts of the quote show Obama acknowledged the validity of the concern before giving his answer to the question. He did not fully disagree with the substance of the concern—that government will get more involved in health care—but he explained why he felt certain changes needed to be made, as seen by the third underlined section of the quote. Obama's strategy did not correlate specifically with the suggested communication method outlined in the model. However, due to the fact that he

was being asked about the concern directly, he did not need to. This again highlights the importance of context to how the model is used. In particular, it highlights how the setting or location of the governing leader's communication can effect what they should and should not do to achieve these communication goals.

However, similar to Key's communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, Obama's communication on the Recovery Act was less explicit in respectfully responding to public criticism and concern. This can be seen in Obama's communication around one of the major criticisms of the Recovery Act, the criticism that it would add to the already large deficit the Government had. In his communication on this concern, Obama highlighted this concern and accepted the main premise, but, as seen in the quote below, he also failed to acknowledge that this was a common concern.

[W]e've inherited a trillion dollar deficit, which we must add to in the short term in order to jump-start our sick economy... Now, some fear we won't be able to effectively implement a plan of this size and scope, and I understand their scepticism. Washington hasn't set a very good example in recent years. (whitehouse.gov, 2009b)

Furthermore, Obama's communication in addressing such concerns could also be somewhat unconstructive. This can be seen in the second part of the quote above, where Obama showed that he understood public concern about the Government's ability to deliver. But Obama would justify this public concern by linking it back to their lack of faith in the previous administration rather than any aspect of his own leadership ability. This response was often used by Obama as a launching point to talk about his personal determination to deliver. In other words, Obama used the public's lack of faith in government delivery to promote his own personal strength rather than to acknowledge and respond to the concern itself.

For the most part both Key and Obama showed respect for public criticisms and concerns about the issues. When they were effective in using such communication, they did so in different ways. Again, this shows the importance of context to how the model is used. Such communication is vital in modern communication as the public demand a more respectful response to their concerns than in the past. While neither leader's communication in this area could be considered disrespectful, their communication could have been more effective more often.

COMMUNICATING AN EMOTIONAL BOND BETWEEN THE GOVERNING LEADER AND THE PUBLIC

Communicating an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public is one of numerous aspects of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model that achieves more than one communication goal and promotes more than one quality. Communicating an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public is important similarly to communicating credibility. Political communication needs to connect with the public on an emotional level as well as a logistical one (Edy, 2001). As the public feel less emotionally attached to political elites through broad ideological beliefs, governing leaders can substitute this with an emotional bond that connects similarities between the governing leader and the views of the public on specific issues.⁴ Showing an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public can be done in a number of ways, including using dialogue that suggests togetherness, affinity, and an understanding of the public, by suggesting that the governing leader shares the goals and understands the aspirations of the public (O'Shaughnessy, 1990: 5) as well as by showing reflection on hard yet necessary decisions.

Suggesting Togetherness, Affinity for, or an Understanding of the Public

One way to create and maintain this bond is through communication suggesting togetherness, affinity for, or an understanding of the public. This includes communication suggesting the leader needs the public's help to get things done as well as demonstrating an understanding of local history and ethos. The use of inclusive pronouns and other subtle language can also consistently reinforce a bond between the governing leader and the public (Robinson, 2006: 34–5). This includes the use of words such as “we,” “our,” and “us,” instead of words such as “me,” “my,” and “I.”

Again, due to the greater time permitted to him when communicating on issues, Obama was able to effectively communicate togetherness, affinity for, or an understanding of the public when discussing both the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act. On the Affordable Care Act, this is best seen in a common theme in Obama's closing remarks during speeches and town hall meetings. This theme suggested that, together,

Obama and the American people could deliver on health-care reform, as shown in the quote below.

OBAMA: So it goes to show you, and this is so important for young people, it goes to show you, one voice can change a room. And if a voice can change a room, it can change a city. And if it can change a city, it can change a state. If it can change a state, it can change a nation. If it can change a nation, it can change the world. We will change the world with your voice. We need the voices of young people to transform this nation to meet up to the meaning of its dream. I need your voice. So I want to know—are you fired up?

AUDIENCE: Fired up!

OBAMA: Ready to go?

AUDIENCE: Ready to go!

OBAMA: Fired up?

AUDIENCE: Fired up!

OBAMA: Ready to go?

AUDIENCE: Ready to go!

OBAMA: Let's go change the world. (whitehouse.gov, 2009n)

In such communication, Obama was able to elicit an inclusive quality by suggesting he needed the audience, in this case the young people at the University of Maryland, to help him get the job of passing health-care reform done. This can be seen most explicitly in the underlined sections of the quote, where Obama uses inclusive pronouns and emphasises the impact young people can have on political decision making. Obama used similar communication around the Recovery Act, where he promoted this connection by suggesting he needed the American people to help him get through the difficult period and return the country to economic prosperity. Again, this communication would often come in his closing remarks of a speech, press conference, or town hall meeting, an example of which can be seen below.

And that is exactly what I intend to do. But I cannot do it without you, the American people. As I've said many times, change in this country comes not from the top down, but from the bottom up. That's why I'm here today—because it will take all of us talking with one another and all of us working together to see our nation through this difficult time and bring about a brighter day. (whitehouse.gov, 2009q)

In both cases, this togetherness was more explicitly promoted through the use of inclusive pronouns, as underlined in the first quote above. This was even further promoted by the chant Obama and the audience shouted. A strategy Obama has commonly used in communication both in elections and during his time in office (see BarackObama.com, 2012).

Obama's togetherness and affinity with the public was further emphasised by his communication highlighting knowledge of the institution, town, city, or state he was speaking in. In such communication, Obama would highlight historical accomplishments relating to the area he was speaking in, as seen below.

From the very first railroads to the Interstate Highway System, our nation has always been built to compete. And you know, the history of Ohio is a testament to that. Nearly two centuries ago, our nation's first federally funded highway—the National Road—was extended across Ohio, bringing a generation of settlers west to this new frontier, and paving the way for the automobile that would transform our landscape. (whitehouse.gov, 2010f)

Such communication may not have directly suggested a connection between Obama and those consuming the final text. However, it did suggest a connection between Obama and the public within the text. This was further emphasised when Obama used verbal communication suggesting his eagerness to interact with members of the American public. Notably, a common theme of Obama's communication in backyard town halls was Obama beginning the session by noting how refreshing and important it was to get out of the White House and talk to the American people, as shown below.

This is really a casual setting, so I hope that we just open it up for a good conversation about where the country is at, where it's going, how folks are feeling down here in Richmond. I want to hear from you at least as much as you're hearing from me. I find this really useful to me because when you're in Washington all the time and you're in these battles, sometimes you're in what's called the bubble. And I'm always trying to do what I can to break out of it and be able to get back with folks and have a conversation. (whitehouse.gov, 2010c)

The quote above highlights the value Obama placed on interactions with the public. But such communication also highlighted the challenges of government. Obama specifically identified the bubble effect that can

come with the time restraints that accompany being President (and a governing leader globally). By highlighting his need to talk to the public to stay in touch, his need for them to be behind him, or by relating back to the local community, Obama more explicitly promoted the responsive quality. This explicitness was especially important in Obama's communication on the Recovery Act, where communication implying Obama's responsiveness was less common due to urgency under which this decision was made.

Due in part to the already noted communication restraints Key faced, his ability to explicitly communicate the same level of emotional attachment to the public was less evident. This was seen to a degree in his communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, as he was able to imply a somewhat united bond between New Zealand Europeans and Māori. For example, Key's broader verbal cues suggested a united New Zealand with shared values, as seen below.

[A]llowing Māori and the Crown alike to move forward to focus on the future... the Foreshore and Seabed issue needs to be resolved fairly and in every New Zealander's interest... the vast majority of New Zealanders, Māori and Pakeha, consider the Foreshore and Seabed to be a public space for all of us to share and enjoy... All New Zealanders can be confident that with continued goodwill we are getting close to a lasting solution that will put this long-standing issue behind us. (national.org.nz, 2010)

The five underlined sections of the quote highlight verbal cues that suggest the unity of the New Zealand people. Of particular note, Key used the term "us" to describe New Zealanders on two occasions, thus linking himself into this group. Such communication can be seen as an example of Key using communication to effectively suggest a connection with the audience.

But, while Key's more explicit communication suggested this unity, his more implicit communication did not. Small verbal cues throughout Key's communication on this issue implied a separation between Māori and non-Māori New Zealanders. This is understandable considering the division between certain members of both demographics on the issue. But these verbal cues implied Europeans (or, at least, non-Māori) were the norm, while Māori were the "other." These small verbal cues can be seen in how Key used terms such as "you," "us" or "we" when referring

to non-Māori, while using the term “Māori” when referring to Māori, as seen below.

I think that... New Zealanders want this position settled. And I think they will feel quite comfortable with what we’re doing. I think we’ve addressed all of the major concerns both from their perspective and others’ perspective. (Radio New Zealand, 2010c)

So those people who say just let sleeping dogs lie I think don’t really understand that, in fact, one day that dog is going to get up and bark, because they are not happy about the existing legislation. (TV One, 2010e)

Key’s communication implied a separation between the non-Māori norm and the Māori otherness, a common underlining trend seen in communication in New Zealand (Abel, 2013). As seen in the underlined sections of the first quote, Key separated the concerns of “New Zealanders” from the concerns of “others”—with the “other” implied being Māori. In the second quote, which includes an analogy Key used repeatedly in communication on this issue, Key referenced dogs as an analogy for angry Māori New Zealanders, as seen in the underlined sections of the quote. In essence, Key placed Māori into the category of “other” in both quotes. Such communication had the potential to create a disconnect between Key and the Māori segment of New Zealand, the group with a major vested interest in the issue, thus hindering the suggestion of unity.

Key was even less effective at suggesting togetherness, affinity for, or an understanding of the public in his communication on increasing GST. Again, due to the time constraints of the media texts he was communicating through, Key did not explicitly reinforce an emotional connection between himself and the public. This may also have been due to the issue type Key was communicating about. While Obama was able to encourage togetherness with the public around the Recovery Act due to the connected broader economic crisis, Key would have likely found it difficult to do so solely based on the more specific and technical economic change. The closest indicator of such communication was the constant, but very implicit, use of inclusive pronouns. But even these inclusive pronouns were often used in reference to Key and the National-led Government rather than Key and the New Zealand public.

Again, this shows the importance of the types of media texts and issues leaders communicate through and about in their ability to achieve certain communication goals. Obama was able to establish an emotional bond with the public by suggesting he needed help from them in order to deliver on health-care reform and to get through the tough economic period. This was even further promoted by the emotional chant Obama and the audience and through his knowledge of local history and traditions. Key's communication was less effective. Where present, Key's explicit communication in this area seems to imply unity between Māori and non-Māori. Yet Key's subtle communication sometimes hampered this. Such a result may affect Key's ability to gain or retain a positive connection with this group, thus hindering his ability to present himself as in touch.

Communicating End Goals That Resonate with the Public

Governing leaders need to reflect the values of the public and communicate a correlation between the wants and needs of the public and their own (Lilleker & Negrine, 2006: 49; O'Shaughnessy, 1990: 5). The most effective way governing leaders can do this is through communication outlining the desired end goals of a decision, end goals that resonate with the common goals of the general public or a vested interest group, as highlighted by public relations expert Mark Blackham.

[Y]ou... have to find some sort of argument which is going to resonate. And often that's not a factual argument necessarily, it could be emotional... I think you have to find the thing that resonates with people, something else they agree with. And then you link to that... [T]he trick is to say "right, so you don't like [B]. But you do like A. Well A is very similar to [B]. And because you like A, if you see B in the context of A you can understand why it does make sense." So that sort of connection to something they do know and already think is also a way of doing it. (Mark Blackham, Director at Blackham PR and former New Zealand Government Press Secretary. Interviewed by author via Skype. 11 March 2014)

Such communication again allows governing leaders to establish or maintain an emotional connection with the public while also allowing them to explain their decisions. If the public think the reasoning behind the decision is in line with goals they can relate to, even if they do not agree with the decision, they are more likely to accept and respect it (Wolvin,

2010). In other words, it allows the leader to say “you may not agree with this decision, but we are trying to reach the same end goal.”

Such communication is best illustrated in Obama’s communication on the Affordable Care Act. In such communication, Obama would often explicitly outline three clear goals of the Act, as can be seen below.

The plan I’m announcing tonight would meet three basic goals. It will provide more security and stability to those who have health insurance. It will provide insurance for those who don’t. And it will slow the growth of health care costs for our families, our businesses, and our government. (white-house.gov, 2009)

These broad goals should have resonated with the American public as they correlated with the common concerns voiced about the American health-care system. The goal to provide more security and stability should have resonated with those with health insurance due to the reputation insurance companies have for dropping health insurance carrier’s coverage for a variety of reasons (see Scott, 2014). The large number of people without health insurance should have related to Obama’s second goal, as they too would enjoy the security of having health insurance, a common issue in the USA (see DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2008: 19). Finally, communicating the goal of slowing the growth in cost of health care should have resonated with the American public for a couple of reasons. Firstly, this goal should have resonated with the public due to the fact that health-care costs for individuals, and especially small businesses, were increasing (Blank, 2012). Furthermore, by communicating the goal of slowing the growth of health-care costs for the government, Obama implies his focus is on fiscal responsibility. This is something that would resonate with the American people at a time when the US Government had a debt of \$14 trillion, the highest since 1945.

Obama was also effective at using such communication around the Recovery Act. Given the context surrounding the Act, it is not surprising Obama’s communication suggested his goal was to see the USA return to the economic prosperity of years passed and to build an economy for the twenty-first century that rewards hard work, as is highlighted in the quote below.

[T]hat’s why our goal is not just to rebound from this recession, but to start building an economy that works for all Americans. Where everyone who’s

looking for work can find a job. And not just a temporary job, but a permanent job that lasts from season to season. Where our stock market isn't only rising again, but our businesses are hiring again... And ultimately, that's the engine of our economy, businesses large and small getting back on their feet. And that's the focus of our efforts. (whitehouse.gov, 2009i)

Polling data indicated that the problems facing the American economy at the time were considered the most important national issue by most Americans (Jones, 2009). Therefore, Obama's goal of seeing the USA return to economic dominance was a goal that would have resonated with the American public at the time.

As will be outlined in more detail in the following chapter, much of Key's communication outlined the economic advantages that would stem from the larger changes to the tax system that the increase in GST was part of. Therefore, one of the trends in Key's communication on this issue was to highlight his goal of helping people become "better off," as seen in the quote below.

Now it's my expectation that the vast bulk of New Zealanders will be better off. And it's also my expectation that the country will be better off. (nzherald.co.nz, 2010)

This simple yet palatable goal communicated by Key was something the public could relate to in the context surrounding this communication. Although to a lesser extent, New Zealand had also been hit by the global economic recession in 2008, with most economic indicators not as strong as they had been previously. Thus, the broader issue of economic growth was considered an important issue by the public at the time (UMR, 2012). The broad simplicity of the goal outlined by Key also enabled its interpretation to be adaptable according to the audience. So, while the broad population may have interpreted Key's communication as highlighting the goal of greater economic stability, it also applied to young couples who John Key suggested would have an easier time getting a mortgage due to the tax cuts that the increase in GST funded. This strategy of using board simple goals was also used by Key around replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. On this issue Key continually reinforced the goal of creating fairness for Māori while also making sure all New Zealander's could enjoy the beach, as seen below.

(The Marine and Coast Area Act's) aim is to replace the Foreshore and Seabed legislation to correct some of what we think are fundamental errors in the existing legislation and to put a bit of fairness and equity back into the position while at the same time making sure that all New Zealander's can enjoy their right to go to the beach and do the things they've always done. (NZNats, 2010)

Since Key faced extensive time restraints in most of his communication, these goals were used as a substitute for communicating the explicit benefits of the reforms to the public. Considering the common concerns raised about these decisions, these goals should have resonated with the New Zealand public at the time.

So both Obama and Key were effective at using communication to promote the idea that they shared the goals of the general public and vested interest groups. This should have helped both leaders establish a connection, and trust, with the public. However, they communicated this information in different ways. Obama was able to be a lot more detailed in his communication around shared goals. As a result, he was able to be a lot more explicit. On the other hand, due to the restrictions he commonly faced, Key had to simplify his communication in this area. He did so effectively, in a way that would allow his goals to be palatable and transferable to different demographics and stakeholders. In achieving this, both leaders further explained the reasoning behind their decisions and, by establishing trust; the public were more likely to trust their plan of action, even if they were weary of how they planned to achieve it.

Showing Reflection on Hard Yet Necessary Decisions

While governing leaders have to make unpopular decisions that they believe are right, this does not mean they are always easy to make. Governing leaders' communication should therefore emphasise an understanding of the emotional pulse of the general public and the most affected, especially on important, difficult and controversial decisions (Lilleker, 2006: 79–80). Communicating an understanding of the hardships faced by members of the public around such decisions, along with the reasons why the leader chose the decision they did, can help show an empathetic and reflective side of the leader. Political consultant Frank Luntz has highlighted the

importance of such communication in relation to Mitt Romney's failed 2012 presidential bid.

[There] was [a] lack of empathy [from Mitt Romney in 2012]... the American people did not see Mick Romney as someone who understood their problems. He could solve them. But he didn't understand them... the language wasn't as effective... Mick Romney doesn't connect. The language that he uses isn't nearly as effective. (PolicyExchangeUK, 2012)

Again, such communication not only helps present the leader as more in touch with the public, but also helps present the practical reasoning behind why the leader made that difficult decision. Such communication would predominantly be used after the decision has been made, hence emphasising the reflective quality in the leader.

For the most part, both leaders failed to effectively show true reflection in their communication. While examples were present, they were rarely seen. For example, around the issue of increasing GST, Key used communication that suggested he understood that "times are tough" for most New Zealanders, as shown below.

So, yes, we are starting to turn things around, and we are actually narrowing that gap. But to mum and dad who are struggling to make ends meet I acknowledge their issues... But I'm not arguing that the economic conditions are easy. Nor would anyone else argue that they're easy out there. (TV3, 2010)

However, such communication was vague and few and far between. It also did more to emphasise the need for change than show reflection on the decision Key and his government made, as it fit in with the other themes of his communication strategy at the time. For example, Key communicating that "times are tough" fit well with his consistent communication around the potential benefits of economic growth to New Zealanders and his goal to help them become "better off." Key's communication of remorse stems from the poor economic climate of the time, rather than from an understanding of the difficulties stemming from his decision directly. So while such communication suggests Key had an understanding for the hardships the public faced, it did not show explicit reflection of his own actions.

Obama's communication on the Affordable Care Act was similar, where such communication was rare. For example, during his speech to the American Medical Association, Obama talked about the switch in the distribution of subsidies for doctors from "the quantity of care to the quality of care." Obama communicated he understood why doctors may prefer the system of subsidies the way it stood at the time, as shown below.

I recognize that it will be hard to make some of these changes if doctors feel like they're constantly looking over their shoulders for fear of lawsuits. I recognize that... I understand some doctors may feel the need to order more tests and treatments to avoid being legally vulnerable. That's a real issue. (UpTakeVideo, 2009)

Obama's speech to the American Medical Association was predominantly targeted at medical professionals, thus this communication showed an understanding for the potential struggles the target audience may have with the introduction of health-care reform, most explicitly shown by the underlined text in the quote where Obama used phrases that emphasised compassion and understanding. However, again, such communication was rarely seen and only applied to a tightly targeted audience. This style of communication may have been better presented in other texts intended to be received by broader segments of the American public.⁵ In doing so, Obama would have been better able to communicate the image of having considered the implications of his decision.

The issue where true reflection was seen most effectively was in Obama's communication on the Recovery Act. On this issue, Obama's communication suggested he had reflected on the difficulty of meeting his own pre-election expectations for economic growth, the political cost of this, how this had affected the public and how he might have done things differently, as seen in the quote below.

One would have been to explain to the American people that it was going to take a while for us to get out of this. I think even I did not realize the magnitude, because most economists didn't realize the magnitude of the recession until fairly far into it. Maybe two or three months into my presidency where we started realizing that we had lost four million jobs before I was even sworn in. And so I think people may not have been prepared for how long this was going to take and why we were going to have to make some very difficult decisions and choices. And I take responsibility for that,

because setting people's expectations is part of how you end up being able to respond well. (whitehouse.gov, 2011)

In this communication, Obama highlighted the error in his own judgement when evaluating the severity of the economic situation, as seen in the first underlined section of the quote. He suggested this had an effect on the public, that the lack of clarity on his part did not prepare the public for the severity of the situation, as seen in the second underlined section of the quote. Also, as seen in the final underlined section of the quote, Obama explicitly took responsibility for this misjudgement and the effect it had on the public. But such effective reflective communication was only seen from Obama approximately two years after the first initiatives of the Recovery Act were put into effect. Thus, Obama's hindsight perspective on the long-term effects of the issue were much clearer than both leaders' on the other issues, which took effect much closer to the end of their first term in office. Again, this shows the importance of context to how the model is used. This book only looks at Key and Obama's communication during their first terms in office. Such communication is more likely to be seen after the longer-term effects of a decision have become more apparent.

SUMMARY

Being in touch with the views and concerns of the general public is a key component of market-oriented behaviour. We cannot realistically expect governing leaders to follow public opinion on every issue. But governing leaders do not have to follow public opinion on every issue to stay connected. If they are responsive to the public's reaction around their decisions, they can prove they are still in touch. There are three main communication goals that governing leaders should try to achieve in order to promote their responsiveness to public opinion, criticism, and concern. Broadly speaking, governing leaders need to implicitly and explicitly reinforce the fact that they are listening to the public, respectfully acknowledge public concern and criticism as well as establish and maintain an emotional bond with the public. This chapter has outlined the most common and effective ways these goals can be achieved.

It has done so with the assistance of examples of these goals being achieved, or not achieved, in effective or ineffective ways by Prime Minister John Key and President Barack Obama. Neither leader's com-

munication completely matched the suggestions of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in the area of responsiveness, nor would it be realistic to expect their communication to do so. Broadly speaking, Obama's communication matched the model more than Key's. This was in large part due to the freedoms Obama enjoyed thanks to the greater influence the White House had over media production. These freedoms allowed Obama the opportunity to expand his communication past the most basic, issue-specific, information. He was able to talk about and around the issues, including retelling ordinary peoples' stories and suggesting togetherness and affinity for the general public. Such communication reinforced the idea that Obama was in touch with the American public while allowing him to illustrate and give validity to the points and arguments he made. These are things Key struggled to do since his government had less control of the texts he communicated through. In other words, Key was much more restricted, both visually and verbally, in what he could present. This was seen in the lack of evidence showing Key retelling ordinary peoples' stories, explicitly promoting an emotional bond between himself and the general public as well as visual evidence of the Prime Minister with members of the general public. But there were times where Key was able to use these restrictions to his advantage, such as his use of simple yet broadly appealing and adaptable goals that would resonate with different sections of the general public. Also, by explicitly highlighting the concerns the public had about the issues, why they had these concerns, as well as highlighting why he disagreed, Key was impressive in achieving the most effective goal for highlighting responsiveness—respectful acknowledgement of public criticism and concern.

So, while broadly speaking, Obama's communication matched the model better than Key's, both leaders were effective in communicating responsiveness when taking context into consideration. So, the findings of this chapter reinforce the importance of context in how the model is used. It shows that, with less time to explicitly communicate certain information, governing leaders need to be pickier in what techniques they use in order to promote the broader leadership qualities they want to public to see in them. But the chapter also highlights other contextual influences. For example, Obama's comparatively different style of language around early communication on the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act highlights the importance of issue type. More specifically, this comparative difference highlights how crises can alter the appropriate level of consultation governing leaders can, and should, promote.

This chapter also highlighted the importance of time to governing leaders' ability to seem reflective. Effective reflective communication was only seen in one of the case studies examined, Obama's communication around the Recovery Act, and was only found in communication approximately two years after the first initiatives of the Act were initiated. In other words, this chapter shows that leaders need to gain a long-term perspective on the effects of their decisions before they can be truly reflective.

Showing responsiveness through verbal and visual communication is vital in modern political communication. Such communication helps present to the public the idea that the issue is being *discussed with* them rather than *sold to* them. The public demand a more respectful response to their concerns than in the past. But governing leaders cannot follow public opinion on every issue. There are times where they need to lead. This is something that the public are aware of and expect from those they elect. But getting the balance between these two qualities is difficult. Therefore, the next chapter will highlight the second quality suggested in the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, leadership, and will examine the communication of both leaders in comparison to it. While, broadly speaking, the findings of this chapter suggest Obama more effectively used communication to promote his responsiveness than Key, Chap. 3 will highlight how this was not necessarily the case.

NOTES

1. Underlined sections of the quotes throughout this book were added by the book author to highlight certain important sections to be referenced in the analysis.
2. The speech was delivered by Governor General, Hon Anand Satyanand, PCNZM, QSO, on behalf of Prime Minister John Key.
3. The authenticity of Obama actively listening to the concerns and criticisms in these texts will be brought into question in Chap. 3.
4. This connection between the governing leader and the public on specific issues is different than the explicit connection between the leader's personal attributes/traits and the public—as seen in the credibility portion of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model.
5. The other example found of Obama being reflective around the Affordable Care Act is outlined under being *open, honest, and encouraging of media and public questioning* in Chap. 4, where Obama talked about his change in position on the individual mandate.

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Leadership

Abstract This chapter outlines the two communication goals governing leaders should target in order to promote their leadership quality—communicate leadership strength and communicate leadership competence. It will examine how effectively US President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key used such communication during their first terms in political office against the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model to better understand if and how these qualities were being promoted effectively by contemporary governing leaders, while simultaneously illustrating this part of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in practice.

Keywords Leadership • Strength • Conviction • Delivery • Competence

INTRODUCTION

While the importance of governing leaders presenting themselves as responsive has increased with the growth of market-oriented behaviour, the public still expect governing leaders to be able to lead. Former US

President Harry S. Truman famously had a sign on his Oval Office desk that stated “The Buck Stops Here.” This sign is indicative of the way governing leaders are seen by the public—the main person responsible for the decisions the government make, how they are implemented, and how well they work (Poguntke & Webb, 2005). With a declining reputation of leadership strength and competence being a major factor in the overall decline of a government’s public reputation (see Heppell, 2008: 582), governing leaders need to promote their leadership qualities in order to maintain a positive public image. By communicating leadership strength and competence, governing leaders are better positioned to maintain public trust in their ability to make decisions and then carry them out. This trust also has democratic benefits, as it gives governing leaders more room to enact bolder decisions with long-term benefits in the future (Canes-Wrone, Herron, & Shotts, 2001: 533; Fox & Shotts, 2009: 1226).

This chapter outlines the two communication goals governing leaders should target in order to promote their leadership quality. It will examine how effectively President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key used such communication so we can better understand if and how this quality was being promoted effectively, while simultaneously illustrating this section of the Contemporary Governing Leaders’ Communication Model in practice.

COMMUNICATING LEADERSHIP STRENGTH

In order to maintain public trust, governing leaders need to prove they have the leadership strength and conviction to make the appropriate decisions, even if they are tough to make and go against dominant public opinion. This is highlighted by Democratic strategist Peter Fenn, as seen below.

I think that when it comes to things like the economy or, as Democrats would put it, fighting for the middle class, that’s basically part and parcel of who they are and what they stand for. So when it comes to increasing the minimum wage... or doing things that really make a difference to working families that’s a place where our constituency or our followers expect us to be out front and leading. (Peter Fenn, Democratic Strategist and Adjunct Professor, George Washington University. Interviewed by author via Skype. 19 March 2014)

In other words, governing leaders need to show they have the *personal tools* to deal with issues and make decisive decisions. This does not mean promoting an image of stubbornness, where the leader suggests they are taking a course of action no matter what information they get (see Masciulli, Molchanov, & Knight, 2009: 3). Rather, especially around crises and polarising issues, this involves conveying the strength to go against public opinion if the leader feels it is appropriate. In other words, governing leaders need to show issue conviction. Governing leaders can communicate leadership strength in various ways, including communicating personal conviction, using a strong and authoritative tone of voice, and using subtle visual cues such as squared shoulders, firm hand gestures, and strong facial expressions.

Small Visual and Verbal Cues Associated with Leadership

One of the most effective yet subtle ways for governing leaders to promote leadership strength is through the use of small visual and verbal cues associated with the quality. These include cues such as facial expressions, dress, body language, tone of voice, as well as the use of specific words and phrases. Examples of these can be seen in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Visual and verbal signifiers of authority and leadership

<i>Type of verbal or visual cue</i>	<i>Examples of</i>
Clothes	Dark Formal
Posture	Stands straight Shoulders back and squared Firm hand gestures
Face	Head up Stern expressions
Tone of voice	Deep Talking with conviction
Rhetoric 1	Talking about conviction and determination Not attacking the opposition
Rhetoric 2 (words such as)	“Determined” “Guarantee” “Bottom line” “Achieve”

See Bruce (1992), Campbell (1983), Farwell (2012: 57–92), Masters & Sullivan (1989), and Robinson (2006: 35–6)

Author's own compilation

In communication on both the Recovery Act and the Affordable Care Act Obama's visual and verbal cues reinforced the image of leadership strength. In terms of rhetoric, Obama subtly promoted his leadership strength through his consistent use of strong adjectives. This was seen when Obama suggested a desire to deliver health-care reform and restore the USA back to economic stability and prosperity. For example, Obama would note he found it "unacceptable" to lead America into a future where the economy did not get past the recession. Obama would also note how he was "determined" and "committed" to see results for those Americans who did not have health care. Or, Obama would talk about how he "demanded" that those in Washington work hard to come up with solutions that would work to create more jobs and grow the economy. This determination was further empathised by Obama insinuating his own personal value in getting results as President, as seen in the quote below.

We've got to get past this petty bickering, the constant trivialization of politics, and focus on getting the job done... I didn't run for President to pass on our problems to the next generation, or the next President. I ran for President to solve these problems so that you've got a better shot in life... If I could get done what I think needs to get done in four years, even if it meant that I was only President for four years, I would rather be a good President taking on the tough issues for four years than a mediocre President for eight years. (whitehouse.gov, 2009p)

Obama's communication implied he had strong personal conviction that is determined to get results. This was most explicitly seen in the underlined sections of the quote, which all come under the theme of suggesting that Obama wanted to "get the job done." Furthermore, Obama communicated the importance of making tough decisions. He did so by suggesting that he would be willing to risk losing his own job if it meant doing the best thing for the USA. This implied his willingness to make unpopular decisions if necessary, again implying the personal conviction associated with leadership strength.

Such communication was reinforced by Obama's tone of voice. While naturally deep, Obama's charisma and control over the emotional range and intensity in his voice allowed him to make points effectively (Frenkel, 2011). More specially, through most of any given speech, Obama would end his sentences with downward inflections, implying the gravity and seriousness he felt towards the issue. However, when highlighting his

determination, especially at the end of speeches such as in the quote from College Park, MA, noted in the previous chapter, Obama infused a Martin Luther King-like level of passion into his speech through an upward inflection at the end of sentences that suggested determination.

These verbal cues were reinforced by Obama's visual nuances. Again, Obama's natural charisma allowed him to convey a commanding presence in front of an audience. This could best be seen during speeches Obama gave in both political and public settings. During such speeches, Obama would stand in front of the audience with a stern look in his eyes which reinforced his determination. Obama appeared to scan the room as he addressed it, signifying confidence.¹ Obama would use hand gestures such as a near-closed fist, pressing his thumb and index figure together (see whitehouse.gov, 2009c), or shake his finger upwards as to not point directly at the audience (see whitehouse.gov, 2009d). Obama's body language was usually broad, without being frozen in one position, to emphasise authority and strength. During audience applause, Obama would often pause, turn his head to the left, look up slightly, and present a stoic expression on his face (see whitehouse.gov, 2009g). In doing so, Obama implicitly showed strength and toughness in his ability to not have an overly emotional reaction to the applause while still acknowledging it.

Key was not as effective as Obama at using smaller visual and verbal cues to emphasise leadership strength in communication on either increasing the rate of GST or replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. More specifically, in this area, Key's communication showed an effective use of verbal rhetoric accompanied by an overall poor use of both non-rhetoric verbal and visual cues. For example, on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, Key effectively used subtle choices in wording. When outlining the necessary rights that needed to be maintained in the new law, Key implied authority and conviction by highlighting the National Party's demands and reassurances on the final decision, as seen most obviously in the underlined sections of the quotes below.

The report makes it very clear that it's a birth right for access for people to the beach. I know that that was something that was an absolute bottom line for National. (TV One, 2009c)

The National Party has spelled out our bottom line, which is that the basic rights of New Zealanders' access to the foreshore and seabed would have to be preserved in any new legislation that might be proposed. (Trevett, 2009)

I think we have a sense of what expectations New Zealander's would have. And they have my absolute assurance that those expectations will be met. (Small, 2009)

By using language such as “bottom line” and “absolute assurance,” Key implied authority and conviction in his own personal strength. Furthermore, Key suggested personal conviction in line with the concerns of an important broad demographic, the general non-Māori New Zealand public.

Similarly, on raising GST, the most prominent way Key communicated such conviction was by detailing his interactions with the Tax Working Group who had advised him to increase GST in the first place, as seen in the quote below.

Some of the options discussed by the Tax Working Group are not favoured by the Government, for a variety of reasons, and will not be progressed... In particular, we will not be developing any proposals for a land tax, a comprehensive capital gains tax, or a risk-free return method (RFRM) for taxing residential investment properties... These decisions were taken after detailed consideration of the pros and cons... These new taxes are therefore off the table. (NZNats, 2010d)

While noting that he and his government took advice from the Tax Working Group on the issue, Key also highlighted where the Government did not follow their advice. In doing so, Key manoeuvred around one of the main conundrums market-oriented governing leaders normally face. Key showed personal conviction without suggesting he went against public opinion. Instead, the antagonism to Key's decision is represented by the Tax Working Group. In essence, such communication allowed Key the ability to say “no, I disagree,” and thus communicate strong personal conviction, without saying it directly to the general public.

However, this was not backed up by his non-rhetoric verbal communication. Key used a higher-pitched voice in a lot of his communication. This attribute did play into his image as a “typical kiwi,” which can help emphasise his image of being relatable.² However, Key's higher tone of voice hindered his ability to imply authority. This was further hindered by his friendly non-confrontational persona. In particular, Key had a tendency to be very friendly in interviews, even when dealing with aggressive interviewers. This was seen in Key's numerous interactions with Paul Henry on

the morning variety show *Breakfast*. For example, during the four minutes they spent discussing the possibility of repealing the Foreshore and Seabed Act on 19 January 2009, Key was cut off by Henry five times. The resulting interaction, compounded by the interrogatory style of questioning by Henry, made Key look as though he was on the back foot—unable to keep up with the stronger Henry. While Key's friendly nature was in line with the format of the show (outside of Henry's questioning), such communication could be interpreted as a sign of weak leadership by Key.

This lack of non-rhetoric verbal communication promoting leadership strength was compounded by a lack of visual cues that promoted this quality. The most detrimental tendency in Key's visual communication to promoting strong leadership was his tendency to slouch. Key's slouch was prominent enough to narrow Key's shoulders, and was often accompanied by Key looking down. This slouch was at times less avoidable and even warranted. Many of the lengthier pieces of Key's visual communication came through interviews on morning variety shows and in video journals. In such texts, Key's visual cues hindered the promotion of strong leadership. Key was often sitting in a more relaxed setting such as on a couch during interviews or at his desk during video journals. As a result, Key often sat with his back slouched and his shoulders narrowed, either leaning into the interviewer or into the camera. But if Key had tried to present strong leadership visual cues in these settings, it would have looked out of place and inauthentic.

But Key's more relaxed posture was also present in Key's communication throughout other types of visual communication. This included television news footage of Key, where he was often presented walking with his hands in his pockets while looking down. While each individual piece of such evidence was not visually prominent enough to stand out to the casual viewer, the subtle consistency of these cues had the lingering effect of hindering Key's ability to promote strong leadership.

So, in essence, Obama was more effective than Key at subtly using both verbal and visual cues to promote his leadership strength. This was in large part due to Obama's natural charisma, ability as an orator and, again, the type of texts he communicated through. While Key was able to show conviction through his rhetoric, his emphasis on maintaining his "typical kiwi" persona, along with the setting of the visual texts he communicated through, hindered his ability to promote strong leadership. As Key led potentially polarising issues into the public forum, greater

emphasis on promoting leadership strength would have been beneficial to gaining public trust.

COMMUNICATING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE

While leadership strength is important to highlighting a governing leader's ability to make decisions, leadership competence is important to highlighting governing leaders have the ability to implement decisions effectively. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is a difference between strong and stubborn leadership. Competence is often the difference between the two. Therefore, governing leaders need to communicate their competent leadership qualities. They need to show they have the *professional tools* to deal with issues and decisions. They can communicate this competence in various ways, including the use of communication highlighting delivery as well as highlighting the reasoning behind, and benefits of, the decisions they make. Leadership competence can also be highlighted through visual and verbal communication that shows the leader has a constructive and productive relationship with members of other political parties and stakeholders. They can also promote leadership competence by indicating that they have considered other potential options around decisions they have made.

Communicating Delivery, the Reasoning Behind, and the Benefits of the Decision

The most effective and common way governing leaders can show their leadership competence is by highlighting where they have delivered (or plan on delivering), the reasoning behind the decision, and the benefits the public should or have gained from this decision. Delivery communication can help with future expectation management and highlight how the leader has been effective in government (see Barber, 2007). This is fundamental to gaining public trust because, if the public believe that the governing leader is effective at delivering on their goals, they are likely to trust the governing leader will provide similar results in the future (Dermody & Hanmer-Lloyd, 2006: 104). Furthermore, communicating the conviction and determination to deliver can help promote governing leaders' strength. Such communication is normally accompanied by the communication outlining the problems governing leaders have or are trying to resolve as well as highlighting the potential or resulting benefits of the

decision. Such communication is also beneficial in directly and effectively justifying the decisions governing leaders have made. Such communication was highlighted by Frank Luntz in an interview with Policy Exchange Director Neil O'Brien, as shown below.

“Why, therefore, so that.” “Why” is fifty per cent, “therefore” is twenty per cent, “so that” is thirty per cent... Half the time you spend talking about the problem, what caused it, so you never let it happen again. Only twenty per cent of the time you talk about the solution—because, in the end, people don't really want to know the details. They just want to know you've got a plan of action. And three, the “so that.” That's the impact, how it's going to change your day to day lives. (PolicyExchangeUK, 2012)

Due to the wealth of information in this area around the four issues examined, the analysis in this section will be broken up into two more specific categories—*communicating delivery* and *communicating the reasoning behind, and the benefits of, the decision*.

Communicating Delivery

Around communicating delivery specifically, there was a major difference between Key and Obama's communication. This difference is most obviously seen in Obama's communication around the Affordable Care Act. Obama was effective at communicating delivery on this issue, but often did so before the Act was passed. Specifically, Obama would communicate his determination to see health-care reform passed, as highlighted in the quote below.

Well, the time for bickering is over. The time for games has passed. Now is the season for action. Now is when we must bring the best ideas of both parties together, and show the American people that we can still do what we were sent here to do. Now is the time to deliver on health care. Now is the time to deliver on health care. (whitehouse.gov, 2009l)

Such communication was often used by Obama in his final remarks during speeches and press conferences. In this communication, Obama would specifically talk about the desire to deliver on health care. Obama would communicate this message with a stern yet loud tone, which further implied the determination he felt. Such communication suggested Obama's leadership qualities in two specific ways. By communicating his determination to pass health-care reform, Obama implied personal conviction and

strength. Such determination is especially important in the context of the USA, where the President has less control in the governmental decision-making process. Also, the communication used by Obama suggested he was a leader who would do all he could to deliver on his promises, thus promoting honesty. Obama continued promoting his delivery on health care retrospectively. Obama often mentioned the Affordable Care Act and its resulting benefits in his Presidential Proclamations (see Obama, 2011) and speeches after the Act had been passed, as seen most obviously in the underlined sections of the quote below.

On the issues that matter, you don't have to take my word for it, you can take me at my record. Four years ago I delivered on my promise to pass health reform before the end of my first term. That's what we did. The Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. I actually like the name, because I do care. That's why we fought so hard to make it happen. (barackobama.com, 2012)

Once again, such communication highlighted Obama's commitment to the issue of health-care reform. Thus, generally speaking, this communication emphasised his personal conviction and strength. Also, by promoting the fact that he had delivered on his promise, Obama was able to present himself as a leader with competence.

While Obama had little opportunity to communicate delivery prior to the Recovery Act being passed, he was effective at communicating it in relation to the positive steps the economy was taking thanks in part to the decision. Furthermore, Obama often linked this to his time as President. This can be seen in the quote below.

The month that I was sworn in, we lost 750,000 jobs. Subsequently, we lost 600,000 jobs in each month after that. The stock market plunged; the country had lost trillions of dollars' worth of wealth. And people were talking about us possibly tipping into a Great Depression. And so we knew we had to act quickly, and we did. And as a consequence of the actions we took, not all of which were popular at the time, we were able to stabilize the financial system and get finance circulating again. We were able to stabilize the economy, stop just the complete bloodletting of jobs throughout the economy. And whereas we were losing 750,000 jobs every single month, we have now seen private sector job growth for seven consecutive months. Where we were contracting at a rate of 6 per cent per quarter, we're now growing once again. (whitehouse.gov, 2010i)

While Obama did not explicitly partner this delivery with himself as leader, he did imply it. Obama subtly implies this connection by including himself in the collective who put the policy in place, as shown by the numerous times Obama used the term “we,” as underlined above. More importantly, Obama implied his connection to the delivery by highlighting the difference in employment just prior to him taking office compared to after he took office. Such communication suggested that these goals were achieved under Obama’s watch, even if he did not directly associate the delivery with himself. Such communication by Obama promoted his competent leadership skills by implying his ability to deliver in tough situations.

Key, on the other hand, did not focus his communication on delivery around either increasing GST or replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, with only five examples found where Key explicitly talked about delivering on these issues. Where Key did specifically talk about delivering on these issues, it was predominantly a short side note of his intended message, as shown in the quote below.

Overall I’ve delivered a better result, I believe, for all New Zealanders. No one’s worse off. And the vast bulk of people are better off. (TV3, 2010)

As mentioned in the last chapter, a common theme in Key’s communication around increasing GST was that one of the main aims of the broader tax package was to achieve economic growth and help New Zealanders be better off. Thus, Key’s delivery communication fit into his broader communication strategy. But only two examples were found that showed Key explicitly highlighting how the change in the broader tax system was designed to help Key and his government deliver what he had described as a “driving goal” of the National Government’s economic growth (nzherald.co.nz, 2008). Further communication that more explicitly highlighted this fact would have helped Key promote his ability to deliver and highlight his economic competence. It would also have helped Key fight the potential muddying of the National Party brand, which had been based on being the party that lowered taxes since 2004.

Key’s lack of delivery communication around replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act is more understandable considering most of Key’s communication on this issue came prior to the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Area Act in March of 2011. As a result, there was very little chance for Key to communicate delivery retrospectively on this issue

before the research time frame cut off point of the 2011 General Election. However, more importantly, the lack of delivery communication by Key on this issue is understandable considering the decision was based on a Māori Party policy rather than one of their own. Highlighting delivery on this decision may have appealed to a small demographic with a vested interest, but not to the broader general public who, as will be highlighted soon, Key argued, would not be affected by the decision at all.

The differences in Obama and Key's communication of delivery highlight the importance of the governmental decision-making processes in each country. As Obama did not have the same level of influence over his government's policy agenda, he needed to communicate a determination to deliver prior to a decision being made. Again, this was more evident in Obama's communication on the Affordable Care Act due to how quickly the Recovery Act was passed. On both issues, Obama communicated delivery retrospectively with effect. Such communication was important for Obama to communicate during this period, as he had gained a growing reputation for not delivering results in office (Koffler, 2013). Delivery communication, both before and after decisions had been made, were not nearly as prevalent in Key's communication. Key should have done more to explicitly show delivery, especially around the broader benefits of the tax switch that increasing GST was part of. In doing so, Key would have been better positioned to promote his own economic competence and decrease the threat of the issue muddying National's brand. The lack of delivery communication by Key on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act was more understandable. This is due to the fact that the decision came later in Key's first term and was part of the Māori Party policy agenda rather than National's. Again, this shows the importance of context in deciding what aspects of the model are used in certain communication on certain issues.

Communicating the Reasoning Behind, and the Benefits of, the Decision

While delivery communication was lacking, Key was much more effective at communicating the reasoning behind and the benefits of both the increase of GST and the repeal of the Foreshore and Seabed Act. In his communication on raising GST, this was done in relation to the broader tax switch that the increase was part of, rather than specifically the increase in GST itself. This came in two forms. Firstly, a common theme in Key's communication of the benefits to New Zealanders of this change was the potential growth of the New Zealand economy, as seen in the quote below.

[The tax switch] will have a positive effect on economic growth, and therefore the living standards of New Zealanders, through the following routes—An increased incentive for people to work hard, increase their hours, develop their skills and develop new products and services, because they can keep more of the extra money they earn—Lower income tax rates, which will attract skilled people who are in demand all over the world to stay in or move to New Zealand—An increased incentive to save, because of the switch in taxation from income to consumption and by reducing tax rates on savings.—A lower headline company tax rate, which will encourage productive investment in New Zealand, thereby increasing productivity and raising wages.—And a more neutral tax system, which has less effect on people’s choices between different types of economic activities. (Key, 2010)

Key outlined some of the main benefits that would be seen from the anticipated economic growth to come from the change in the tax system. In the context of this specific example, Key was speaking to the Trans-Tasman Business Circle, so he communicated these benefits in relation to people working in the business management field. In other words, Key’s communication on the benefits of the change in policy was suited to the receiving market. Also, by emphasising the potential for economic growth, Key again emphasised the National Party’s reputation as the party that is strong in economic management (see UMR, 2012). Again, as noted earlier, this was important at a time when one of the National Party brand’s main foundations seemed inconsistent with the decision.

Also, Key would communicate the reasoning behind the decision by highlighting how the increase was done to accommodate other tax reductions to rectify an unfair element of the then-current tax system, as seen in the quote below.

At the moment we have a personal tax system which is not perfectly aligned and allows tax payers to undertake considerable structuring in their affairs. So, for instance, when the top personal rate is out of line with the trust rate people tend to filter their income and funnel their income, actually through their trusts. Now you might think that’s ok, but the net effect is there’s a lot of tax payers not paying their fair share. (NZNats, 2010a)

As an issue that would affect the majority of New Zealanders, addressing the issue of fairness was something apparent in the main argument against increasing GST—GST’s supposed disproportionate impact on lower income earners. Thus, by highlighting the lack of fairness in the tax

system as it stood, Key was better able to justify his decision and appeal to a broader demographic.

Key's reasoning behind, and the benefits of, replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act was a little more complex. Key did communicate the benefits of the decision as it related to indigenous Māori Iwi. In such communication, Key focused on the fact that the new law would allow Māori to test their customary title over certain areas, as seen in the quote below.

I think the Māori Party can get a real win here, and actually Māori New Zealanders can get a real win, and that is repeal the law, a movement away from full Crown ownership into public domain, and the ability to test their rights if they want to in the courts... And that's a big win. (3news.co.nz, 2010b)

However, while Key outlined the benefit of this decision for this smaller vested interest group, the main aim of Key's overall communication strategy in this area was to promote the idea that the decision would not affect the larger non-Māori demographic at all. This included consistent communication suggesting the proposed law changes would basically work for a majority of New Zealanders as they did under the Foreshore and Seabed Act, as can be seen most obviously in the underlined section of the quote below.

Well, in reality it will effectively be the same as it is today under the 2004 legislation, which will mean Iwi will have some rights in that area but New Zealander's will have universal rights to access the foreshore and seabed. (Radio New Zealand, 2010)

Against one of the prominent concerns voiced by the public about this issue, the risk of losing access to the beaches, the fact that nothing would change could be argued to be a benefit in itself. But this example once again shows that the context surrounding an issue plays a major role in how the model is used. In essence, in such situations, governing leaders would be best to deemphasise the impact of their decisions rather than highlight it.

At face value, it appears as though Obama also effectively highlighted the reasoning behind and benefits of the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act. Depending on the context of, and type of, text he was communicating through, Obama was able to communicate a portion or the full list of benefits he believed the American people would see as a result of

these decisions. For example, in his communication around the Affordable Care Act, Obama would often highlight the following benefits:

- Insurance companies will not be able to drop your coverage if you get too sick.
- If you lose your job, change your job, or move, you'll still be able to have coverage.
- Insurance will cover preventive care as well as sickness care.
- No insurance company will be allowed to deny you coverage because of a pre-existing medical condition.
- Better choice and affordability through a health insurance exchange.
- It will limit the amount your insurance company can force you to pay for your medical costs out of your own pocket.
- Stop money being wasted in federal health-care programs.
- Save \$100 billion in subsidies from insurance companies.
- Promote extensive care rather than expensive care.
- Eliminate money wasted in Medicare.
- Save seniors money on prescription drugs

Summarised from Barack Obama – Press Conference – Washington
D.C. – 22/07/2009
(*New York Times*, 2009)

In most cases, Obama communicated the benefits that would be seen by Middle America. But in texts targeted at particular segments of the population, Obama would adjust his communication to suit. He was especially effective at adjusting his communication to specific target markets around the Recovery Act. Due to the broad scope of the initiatives involved in the Recovery Act, communicating a consistent message about the benefits of the decision was more complicated. Obama dealt with this by communicating a few key broad themes of benefits from the Recovery Act, but adjusted the specific content of his communication in relation to the part of the Act or part of the country he was talking about, or to, at the time. Examples of such targeting can be seen in Table 3.2 below. In other words, Obama was effective in adjusting his communication on the benefits of these decisions for the receiving market. By continually communicating these benefits, Obama provided a clear understanding of why he is moving forward on these decisions.

However, in communication on both the Recovery Act and the Affordable Care Act, Obama used such communication proportionately too often. Obama explicitly talked about the reasoning behind and benefits

Table 3.2 Obama's targeted communication on the benefits of the Recovery Act

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Save and create jobs	In these last few months the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has saved or created nearly 150,000 jobs (including) jobs building solar panels and wind turbines, making homes and buildings more energy efficient... It's a project that took about half a year to complete (and) created 200 jobs. (quoted in Ball, 2009) The \$2 billion investment in clean energy will create 1,600 construction jobs, using mostly U.S.-made products at an Arizona plant... Two more solar power plants in Colorado and Indiana will create more than 2,000 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs. (quoted in Fargen, 2010)
Be globally competitive in the twenty-first century	We have to lay a new foundation for growth, a foundation that will strengthen our economy and help us compete in the 21 st century. And that's exactly what this budget begins to do. (whitehouse.gov, 2009a) That's why we'll invest in priorities like energy and education; health care and a new infrastructure that are necessary to keep us strong and competitive in the 21 st century. (whitehouse.gov, 2009c)
Cleaner and cheaper renewable energy	Building a robust clean energy sector is how we will create the jobs of the future... The Recovery Act awards I am announcing today will help close the clean energy gap that has grown between America and other nations while creating good jobs, reducing our carbon emissions and increasing our energy security. (whitehouse.gov, 2010e) We will modernize more than 75 per cent of federal buildings and improve the energy efficiency of two million American homes, saving consumers and taxpayers billions on our energy bills. (whitehouse.gov, 2009c)

Author's own compilation

of these decisions for approximately 26 % of all his communication on both issues in total. This does not include other communication, such as delivery communication, which further implied these benefits. Obama's tendency to communicate this information so frequently negatively affected the overall perception of the texts he communicated through. In other words, a text may show Obama interacting with members of the public, answering questions, and listening to their concerns. But these qualities were overshadowed by Obama's constant communication about the reasoning behind and benefits of the decisions.

This was especially glaring in texts designed to show that Obama was in touch with the public. Obama's overabundance of selling in communication on health-care reform was more glaringly obvious than in communication on the Recovery Act. This was partly due to the urgent nature of the Recovery Act decision. This was also due to the types of texts Obama communicated through. With Obama hosting proportionately more town hall meetings on the health-care reform issue, the overselling of the benefits stood out, as the form was designed to show Obama fielding and replying to questions from the audience. The backyard town hall Obama conducted in Falls Church, noted in the previous chapter, is a good example of this. The visual communication of the text highlighted Obama discussing and answering questions on health-care reform *with* members of Middle America *in* Middle America. However, when looking at the verbal communication of this event, the cues did not match this responsive quality. Broadly speaking, the town hall meeting started with Obama listening to the homeowner, Paul Brayshaw, talk about his struggles with the health-care system and how the reforms had and would help him. Secondly, Obama spoke to the audience about the aspects of the reforms that were about to take effect and how they would benefit Americans. The theme of which can best be summarised by Obama noting, "there are so many good things about this I might have forgotten one." (whitehouse.gov, 2010a) Thirdly, Obama called on people who had been preselected (Stolberg, 2010) to tell their stories about how the reforms had and would help them. Finally, Obama invited members of the audience to share their stories or ask questions. In doing so, all of these stories and questions were used by Obama as prompts to talk further about the benefits of the reforms. In essence, while the communication looked market-oriented, it was clearly not actually market-oriented. While Obama did interact with members of the public, it was for the most part only with those who agreed with him. In essence, the communication was hollow—it sold the idea that Obama was listening to Middle America about their concerns while actually attempting to sell Obama's health-care reforms to the public. In doing so, the actual rhetoric in the text was more reminiscent of what sales-oriented communication might look like—persuading the audience to believe the leader's point of view through market intelligence-influenced communication methods.

At face value, it would appear as though both Key and Obama used communication effectively to promote the reasoning behind and the benefits of the decisions they made. Indeed, Key was effective in highlighting

the economic benefits the broader general public and targeted vested interest groups would see resulting from the greater tax switch the increase in GST was a part of. This was important to maintaining the image of economic competence as the rise in GST went against one of the National Party brand's main foundations. Key did not use such communication as often when discussing replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, but likely with good reason. This example once again shows that the context surrounding an issue plays a major role in how the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model is used. At face value, Obama also effectively and continually reinforced the benefits of the Recovery Act and the Affordable Care Act through consistent themes yet targeted detail in communication. However, Obama used such communication proportionately too much. As a result, the overall theme of his communication was often "Obama selling his decision" rather than "Obama talking about the issues with the public," even in proportionately large number of texts designed to show Obama as responsive. It may have helped Obama to dedicate less time to selling the explicit benefits of the decision and dedicate more time communicating other aspects of his personal character. This may be as simple as using communication that relates the issue back to his personal life or seeking out more challenging questions as has been done by other leaders around the world (see Scammell, 2007). While doing so would mean less time selling the decisions, where he did use such communication it would have more impact.

Suggesting a Relationship with Members of Other Political Parties, Branches of Government and Stakeholder Groups

In many countries around the world, governing leaders need the support of members or entire other parties to develop and pass effective legislation. For example, as mentioned in Chap. 1, in the USA, congressmen do not vote strictly down party lines. Thus, the President needs to be able to work constructively with both Democrats and Republicans to get parts of their legislative agenda enacted into law. Even in proportional representational systems, major governing parties normally need to work with coalition partners in order to pass laws. Therefore, highlighting a strong and productive relationship with members from other political parties helps promote the idea that a governing leader has the skills needed to resolve policy issues and get decisions made. This can be done through explicit verbal communication of how the governing leader has worked with other

political groups. Similarly, this can be explicitly shown through visual evidence of the governing leader working with members of other parties to get the job done. It can be done more implicitly through subtle verbal communication, such as noting the parts of a new bill that were introduced by members of other parties. Also, visual communication such as the governing leader smiling and laughing with members of other parties can imply a good relationship between them.

As non-parliamentary stakeholders are an important part of the political process (see Ormrod, 2005), such communication can also be applied to highlight how governing leaders have a good working relationship with non-elected stakeholders such as interest groups and ministry officials. Such communication can help show the leader has the professional tools to get decisions made and implemented effectively. But it also helps show the leader is not stubborn, that they are willing to listen to a wide range of ideas in order to make the best decision possible. Thus, the ability to show a positive relationship with members of other political parties and non-elected stakeholders in order to produce results is an effective way to promote the idea that the governing leader has the skills required to hold their position of power.

Obama was effective in communicating his ability to work with Republicans in Congress, especially in the early stages of his presidency. Outside the reasons noted earlier, communicating such diplomacy was important for Obama given he had campaigned in 2008 on the idea that he would work constructively with Congress to end the partisan divide. Certain aspects of Obama's communication on the Recovery Act suggested he had a good working relationship with members of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party as well as other important stakeholders, as seen in the quote below.

It's the product of broad consultation and the recipient of broad support – from business leaders, unions, public interest groups, from the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, as well as the AFL-CIO. From Democrats and Republicans, mayors as well as governors. It's a rare thing in Washington for people with such diverse and different viewpoints to come together and support the same bill. And on behalf of our nation, I want to thank all of them for it. (whitehouse.gov, 2009 m)

Such communication suggested Obama had the ability to work with numerous stakeholders to get the decision made, thus highlighting his

administrative competence. Also, such communication highlighted Obama's willingness to listen to constructive ideas from multiple sources, no matter what political allegiance they had. It was particularly important given the urgency for a decision and the fact that Obama was unable to communicate such openness in regard to the broader public views before implementation.

Similarly, Obama was able to highlight positive aspects of his relationship with Republicans in Congress on the issue of health-care reform, despite increasing Republican opposition to the bill. This can best be seen in Obama's speech to Congress on the issue in September 2009, as highlighted in the quote below.

It's a plan that incorporates ideas from many of the people in this room tonight – Democrats and Republicans. And I will continue to seek common ground in the weeks ahead. If you come to me with a serious set of proposals, I will be there to listen. My door is always open... We will immediately offer low-cost coverage that will protect you against financial ruin if you become seriously ill. This was a good idea when Senator John McCain proposed it in the campaign, it's a good idea now, and we should all embrace it. (whitehouse.gov, 2009)

Obama communicated his willingness to listen and work with both Democrats and Republicans on the issue, best illustrated in his highlighting the aspect of the bill proposed by Republican John McCain. In the White House-produced video of the speech, as Obama promotes the quality of John McCain's proposal, the footage cuts to John McCain standing up and giving Obama a thumbs up. This was especially effective given John McCain had lost the Presidential election to Obama less than a year prior and thus was strongly symbolic of the Republican Party at the time. Such verbal and visual communication promoted the idea that Obama possessed strong administrative attributes. In essence, Obama communicated his ability to lead other politicians in a successful effort to effectively get decisions made. This was especially important for Obama due to the Republican opposition to the bill at the time.

Key, on the other hand, tried to show a good working relationship with other parties on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. Yet, despite concentrating plenty of his communication to this area early on, Key's communication did not promote the quality long term. Key's communication prior to his announcement of the repeal indicated he had a good

working relationship with members of the Māori Party. This was not surprising given a review of the Foreshore and Seabed Act was one of the major provisions in the Confidence and Supply agreement between National and the Māori Party which, in itself, had the strategic advantage of suggesting Key had a good working relationship across Parliament.³ Key's emphasis on this good working relationship between the two parties can be seen in the quote below.

The National-led Government recognises the concerns of the Māori Party around the Foreshore and Seabed Act... Our government takes pride in delivering on this part of the Confidence and Supply agreement between the two parties... It's an agreement that was intended to form the basis for an enduring and constructive relationship between our two parties. (Government, 2009)

In this particular piece of communication, Key's promotion of the good working relationship between National and the Māori Party is most explicitly seen in the four underlined sections. Such communication promoted Key's ability to work with other parties, listening to constructive ideas, no matter where they come from, to get a decision made. This was further emphasised by visual evidence of Key interacting with members of the Māori Party. This included visuals of Key and Māori Party co-leader Tariana Turia close to each other, interacting positively with each other at press conferences, Key listening to Tariana Turia as she spoke, and the two leaders kissing each other on the cheek as they said goodbye to each other (see 3news.co.nz, 2010a; TV One, 2009b). At this time, Key was able to promote both his competent administrative and listening qualities.⁴

However, by strongly emphasising this relationship during the first 18 months of communication on the issue, Key helped magnify the importance of disagreements between the two parties once the specifics around the replacement act started to become clear. In particular, there was disagreement between the two parties about what "customary title" meant for Māori ownership rights, as shown in the collection of quotes below.

TARIANA TURIA: Customary title and customary rights are property rights.

JOHN KEY: No not in the same way I guess we traditionally think about property rights because it's inalienable for sale. If they can't sell it. (TV One, 2010)

JOHN KEY: I want legislation which is enduring and which the majority of New Zealanders can support. I think we've got that about right and the fact Hone's not going to vote for it probably just confirms that. (Young, 2010)

Broadcast in succession, the first two quotes by Tariana Turia and Key, respectively, highlight the differing opinions the leaders had on the specifics of the then-proposed new law. This difference of opinion was one of two different elements over the course of 2010 that resulted in a noticeable riff between Key and the leaders of the Māori Party. Key's responded to such criticism by suggesting that the government would simply keep the law as it was if the Māori Party did not agree with National's preferred option (see Espiner, 2010), suggesting stubbornness. This stubbornness was further emphasised by Key's dismissal of Maori Party MP Hone Harawira announcing he would not vote for the new bill. As highlighted in the underlined section of the latter quote above, Key insinuated his assessment of the situation was based simply on a personal character judgement rather than the validity of Harawira's argument.

Both Key and Obama communicated their good working relationships with members of other political parties early on during their first terms in political office. However, around the Affordable Care Act and replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, as the realities of the final decisions became clearer both leaders found it harder to maintain this image. Obama tried to maintain this image by continually reinforcing the progress Republicans had contributed to in developing the bill. This did not lead to the long-term broader perception of a constructive relationship between Obama and the Republicans in Congress. However, this was due to reasons outside the scope of the research in this book. Key's communication on the disagreement with Māori Party leadership was indicative of the problems that arose over the course of this issue's time in the public eye, deteriorating as the specifics of the decision became more certain. Both cases are great illustrations of the effects of the realities of government.

SUMMARY

Despite the growing importance of being responsive, contemporary governance still requires true leadership. Governing leaders have great influence, both nationally and internationally, in a number of key political areas such as economic policy and military action. They are ultimately the main figure responsible for making the toughest and most important governmental decisions, as well as being the main person responsible for the

results these decisions deliver. Communicating leadership strength and competence better positions governing leaders to maintain public trust in their ability to make decisions and then carry them out. Democratically, it also subsequently gives them more room to make bold decisions with long-term benefits for society. This chapter has outlined the two communication goals that should be achieved by governing leaders to promote the leadership quality suggested in the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model—strength and competence. It has also outlined common ways these can be communicated.

Again, this chapter has highlighted how important context is to how the model is used. Notably, the differences in President Obama and Prime Minister Key's delivery communication highlight the importance of the governmental decision-making process in each country to how they should communicate. While Obama often used communication that highlighted his determination to get health-care reform passed into law, this was something Key did not have to emphasise as much due to his influence over the New Zealand Parliament's legislative agenda. But market-oriented communication needs to be proactive in order to fight off the degenerative tendencies of government, even in the early years. This includes being proactive in communicating delivery, an important aspect of political marketing in the age where the public demand tangible results in exchange for support. In essence, Key could have done more delivery communication in retrospect to decisions and the benefits society would see, especially around the broader benefits of the tax switch that increasing GST was part of. In doing so, Key would have been better positioned to promote his own economic competence and decrease the threat of the issue muddying National's brand.

This advice would have been less applicable for Key around his communication on repealing and replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. His lack of delivery communication on this issue, and the message that the decision would not affect most New Zealanders, was understandable considering the decision was based on Māori Party policy rather than National's. Not all governmental communication revolves around the policies governing leaders have introduced and the decisions they have made. They have to deal with and talk about, for example, private members bills, coalition partners' policy agendas, as well as a vast array of non-political typical issues. The context surrounding these issues—including how closely the governing leader wants to attach himself or herself to them, what the public expect from a decision's outcome as well as the popularity of issue—can affect how certain aspects of the model are used.

Both Key and Obama used communication to promote the reasoning behind and the benefits of the decisions they made. But Obama's high use of such communication resulted was an overall communication strategy that seemed too "traditional" in comparison to what the model suggests. This shows that, just like the leader themselves, governing leaders' communication needs to not only look market-oriented, but actually be market-oriented in order to be as effective as possible. Without governing leaders actually being market-oriented, the communication comes across as hollow.⁵ This also highlights the importance in not treating the model like a linear checklist. Obama ticked many of the boxes suggesting how the communication goals from the last two chapters can be achieved. But when examining each text as a whole, especially those designed to promote Obama as a listening leader, the overwhelming theme was Obama speaking *to* the public rather than speaking *with* them. Indeed, governing leaders need to adapt their strategy to better suit the goals of particular texts. This includes spending less time explicitly selling the reasoning behind, and the benefits of, their decisions. By building a stronger connection with the public through proportionately more communication on other areas of the model governing leaders' communication in this area will be more valuable when utilised. In short, governing leaders still need to explicitly sell decisions. But this selling will be more effective if such communication is rationed.

The findings from both Obama and Key's attempts to promote the idea that they had a good working relationship with members of other political parties highlights the impact the realities of government, and the realities associated with the specifics of government policy, can have. Obama tried to maintain the image of having a good working relationship with Congress, and specifically Republican congressmen and women, by continually reinforcing how politicians, experts, and invested parties had contributed to the Recovery Act and health-care reform. Key continually reinforced the positive working relationship between the National and Māori parties early in his tenure as Prime Minister through both explicit and implicit communication. But, as the realities of the final decisions became clearer, both leaders found it harder to maintain the image of having a good working relationship with these other political actors. The promotion of their respective desires to work constructively with other political actors prior to, and just after, becoming a governing leader ended up compounding this problem. By promoting their respective relationships early on, both leaders established hypothetical magnifying glasses on this aspect of their leadership. This highlights the fact that the realities of

government still play a role in governing leaders' communication strategies and governmental strategy as a whole. Governing leaders need to be able to adapt their communication to the changing political and social environment, including uncontrollable variables such as the actions and reactions of other political actors.

Finally, this chapter has highlighted how Obama was more effective than Key at subtly using both verbal and visual cues to promote his leadership strength. Key was able to show conviction through his rhetoric, but not through his tone of voice or through visual communication. But the subtle visual and verbal cues that promote leadership strength often contradict those that promote relatability. As will be highlighted in the next chapter, Key seemingly chose instead to maintain his "typical kiwi bloke" image than promote strong leadership through these subtle visual and verbal cues. As Key led potentially polarising issues into the public forum, greater emphasis on promoting leadership strength might have been beneficial to gaining public trust. But, at the same time, relatability is also a valuable yet often undervalued personal quality the public look for in political leaders. Therefore, the next chapter will highlight the third and final quality outlined in the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, credibility, and examine the communication of President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key around it.

NOTES

1. Obama actually moved his head from one side of the room to the other to read the two teleprompter screens stationed on either side of the podium. However, when watching the broadcast, these were not visible.
2. This will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter.
3. This was something that differentiated Key and National from the previous Labour Government, who had seen one coalition partner implode just prior to the 2002 General Election and then controversially made New Zealand First Leader Winston Peters the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Racing outside of Cabinet in 2005.
4. Such a working relationship was actually suggested in relation to all political parties in the New Zealand Parliament, yet not to the same level. This was most obviously seen when Key would talk about the possibility of having universal support throughout Parliament for a proposed replacement act. However, as Labour publically came out against the replacement bill, this did not last.
5. A misconception in the early stages of this research was that it would look to see how leaders who were not in touch with the public could suggest they were.

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Credibility

Abstract This chapter outlines the two communication goals governing leaders should target in order to promote their credibility—communicate honesty as well as communicate authenticity and relatability. It will examine how effectively US President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key used such communication during their first terms in political office against the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model to better understand if and how these qualities were being promoted effectively by contemporary governing leaders, while simultaneously illustrating this part of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in practice.

Keywords Personality/non-political personality • Authenticity • Relatability • Honesty

INTRODUCTION

While prior research on leadership and the maintenance of a market-orientation in government has predominantly focused on the dilemma between listening and leadership, it is also vital for governing leaders to promote their own personal credibility in order to maintain a positive public image. This is because, as their connection with political parties'

broader ideological traditions decline, the public's evaluation of political actors is increasingly based on personal character (Rosenberg, Kahn, & Thuy, 1991: 346). Furthermore, with the growing importance of e-marketing and new media, through both the mediums and secondary coverage of them, the importance of relationship building with the public has become more important (Jackson & Lilleker, 2014). The importance of trust and relationship building cannot be undervalued, as argued by Democratic strategist Peter Fenn.

I think it's absolutely critical... for a leader to be viewed as honest and having integrity... if a leader is viewed as dishonest and corrupt... it becomes a very difficult road for them to actually get anything done... if voters think that you're playing them, if they think you're not telling the truth, if they think you're hiding something you're in real trouble. (Peter Fenn, Democratic Strategist and Adjunct Professor, George Washington University. Interviewed by author via Skype. 19 March 2014)

Broadly speaking, promoting this quality can be achieved through two broad communication goals, communicating honesty as well as communicating authenticity and relatability. This chapter outlines these two communication goals governing leaders should target in order to promote their credibility. It will examine and evaluate how effectively President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key used such communication so we can better understand if and how this quality was being promoted effectively, while simultaneously illustrating this aspect of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in practice.

COMMUNICATING HONESTY

With a market-orientation promoting a closer link between political elites and the public, it is important for governing leaders to communicate they are genuine in their intentions (Canes-Wrone et al., 2001). This can be promoted in a number of ways, such as communicating the short-term drawbacks of decisions, explaining the challenges of office and delivery as well as more nuanced cues such as maintaining eye contact with the camera or the audience in front of them. By communicating such qualities, governing leaders better position themselves to maintain public trust. As already mentioned, by gaining public trust, governing leaders are more effective in justifying their decisions while giving themselves more room to

pursue future bold agendas. The importance of honesty is highlighted by former Mayor of Waitakere City Bob Harvey in the quote below.

I think honesty is of paramount importance. If you are totally honest... and do not betray that trust the chances are you will get re-elected... If you lie... or have memory losses... you will in fact lose the respect of the public... If you betray that then your message will become corrosive. In other words, you will lose the power that has been vested in you by the voters. (Sir Bob Harvey, Former Mayor of Waitakere. Interviewed by author in person. 11 March 2014)

Being Open, Honest, and Encouraging of Media and Public Questioning

Media trainers emphasise the importance of telling the truth (Comrie, 2006: 183), with dishonesty around controversies being a major degenerative tendency in the downfall of many long-serving governments (Heppell, 2008). The importance of this is highlighted by crisis manager Judy Smith, who argues that “you’ve got to tell the truth... it’s going to come out anyway. So what’s the point in hiding it?... [W]hen we apologise, and we’re sincere about it, then people will be willing to give you a second chance. But you really can’t BS about it.” (Stewart, 2012) The most effective way for governing leaders to imply honesty is by being open, honest, and encouraging of media and public questioning. This includes giving open answers to open questions, answering the question directly as well as maintaining open body language and engaged expressions. Such communication can signify confidence in the leaders’ grasp of the issues, thus helping maintain their image of competence. Furthermore, such rapport with journalists can vicariously be decoded by the public as a sign that the leader is being open, honest, and friendly with them as well, thus helping maintain the leader’s emotional connection with the public.

Such honesty is especially important around changes in issue position and around scandals. In politics, a change in position on an issue can be criticised as a sign of weakness, dishonesty, flip-flopping, or a lack of conviction (Johnson, 2007: 66). This is even truer in government, where the realities of the job make stability paramount. Therefore, governing leaders need to communicate any change in position on an issue while explaining why they felt this change was needed. Such communication gives the

public a better understanding of the constraints and realities leaders face. Furthermore, by being open and honest about controversies early, governing leaders give themselves a better chance at gaining some control over how the issue is portrayed. This limits the potential for the issue to be unrealistically portrayed by the media and the opposition (Edwards, 2009: 19). Furthermore, it allows the public to gain trust in the governing leader for being honest in a situation where traditionally it has not been expected.

Both Key and Obama were somewhat effective in communicating openness and honesty while being encouraging of media and public questioning. However, how effective they were was dependent on context. Key's communication on replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act suggested he was open to media questioning. Key did not do this so much through rhetoric, but through his visual response to questions. Subtly, but consistently, this came in the form of smiles in reaction to the questions. For example, during an interview with Paul Henry on *Breakfast* (TV One, 2009), Key's facial expressions consistently suggested he was more than happy to answer the questions asked. When Henry asked Key if Māori would be able to ban people from using beaches, Key reacted by smiling, leaning forward, and perking his eyebrows. Such happy facial gestures and body movement in response to such questioning implied Key's willingness to answer the questions on the issue, especially around common concerns. However, again, the format of the text Key was answering questions through played a part in how he responded to questioning. Such visual cues were more evident in the less formal context of shows such as *Breakfast* and *Sunrise*. During questioning in more formal settings, such as press conferences, Key's visual cues did not imply the same level of openness to questioning. In these texts, Key would often have a much more perturbed look on his face as he answered questions (nzherald.co.nz, 2009). Furthermore, Key's tone of voice during these press conferences was noticeably different than in his other communication. A difference in his tone of voice would be expected, considering the more formal setting. But, rather than seeming deeper or more subdued, Key's tone of voice was sharper and his rhetoric was less detailed. Such cues implied Key was hesitant to be completely forthcoming about the details around the questions being asked.

Key's ineffectiveness at seeming open and honest of media questioning was even more evident in his communication around increasing the rate of GST. Key was able to use verbal and visual cues that could be seen

as subtle but consistent evidence of his willingness to answer questions. For example, on three occasions during his interview on the Radio New Zealand show *Checkpoint* on 9 February 2010, Key noted, after being asked a question, that it was “an interesting question” or “a legitimate debate to raise.” (Radio New Zealand, 2010a) However, such communication is evident in almost any politicians’ response to media questioning, even if they obviously do not want to answer the question. Rather, such communication is seen as a sign of politicians gathering their thoughts while formulating an answer. Furthermore, where visual communication was present when Key was questioned about increasing GST, Key’s visual cues can best be described as signifying apathy. This was most noticeable in Key’s tendency to look down at his notes while being asked questions during press conferences. Key’s image of apathy towards questioning was further reinforced by the visual acts of him taking deep breaths or sighing before answering.

While most of Key’s visual and verbal cues around questioning of the increase in GST were simply ineffective, his communication on one particular aspect of the issue risked hindering his credibility. As noted in Chap. 1, video evidence suggested Key was going back on a pre-election statement by increasing GST and, not surprisingly, this was used by certain journalists and the Opposition as evidence that Key had flip-flopped. A majority of Key’s response to this criticism did more to hinder his image of credibility than help it. Key tried to use semantics to suggest that, in actuality, he had not gone back on what he had said prior to taking office, as seen in the quote below.

The question was, “would I be required to raise GST to cover deficits?” And the answer to that question is, no we won’t. (New Zealand Herald, 2010)

Key suggested that National was not increasing GST for the reasons suggested to him when asked about it prior to taking office. Thus, Key argued, he had not changed his position. In essence, Key’s communication about the controversy suggested he was attempting to use technicalities to cover up his change in position. This implied Key was being dishonest. This implication was further justified by Key’s use of visual communication when questioned on the issue by the Opposition about the video evidence. Key’s reaction to this questioning included the development of a smirk as he looked down and away from the people he was responding to (see beehive.govt.nz, 2010). As reporter Jane Clifton of the *Dominion*

Post noted at the time, “Alas, when someone who is really not relaxed tries grimly to fake it, the result looks rather like someone who has taken a sleeping pill and is trying to fight it. The famous prime ministerial grin developed a distinct wobble.” (Clifton, 2010)

By trying to use semantics to argue he had not changed his stance, Key only added to any public feeling that he had already been dishonest in changing his position on the issue (Armstrong, 2010). Being open and honest about the change in political stance, as well as the reason why, would likely have been received more positively by the public, helping make him seem honest in an area where his honesty was challenged. Indeed, in a limited number of cases Key’s rhetoric seemed much more honest in justifying this change in stance, as evident in the quote below.

I can also say that prior to the advice of the Tax Working Group increases in GST, as well as changes to the taxation of property, were not on the Government’s radar. On that basis, if I were asked directly about raising GST, in good faith I would have said no... the basic point is that if someone had directly asked me I would have said no, because that was never considered at the time. (parliament.co.nz, 2010)

Key also gave a similar response on the Radio New Zealand show *Checkpoint* only four days prior (Radio New Zealand, 2010b). If Key had focused on this kind of response to the issue, rather than trying to get around the change in his position through semantics, the issue may not have been turned into as large a controversy.

As noted in Chap. 1, Obama also changed his position on an aspect of an issue, the individual mandate aspect of the Affordable Care Act. However, its importance to Obama’s overall brand was much greater. By agreeing to include the individual mandate to the Affordable Care Act, Obama had changed his position on a key differentiator between himself and Hillary Clinton from the Democratic primaries in 2008. But Obama did much better than Key at being open about his change in position. Most notably, when questioned on the matter, Obama acknowledged his change in stance by noting why he originally believed the individual mandate was not needed. He also outlined what he learnt that made him change his mind. This is best illustrated in the quote below.

During the campaign I was opposed to this idea [of an individual mandate] because my general attitude was the reason people don't have health insur-

ance is not because they don't want it, but because they *can't* afford it. And if you make it affordable, then they will come. I've been persuaded that there are enough young uninsured people who are cheap to cover, but are opting out. To make sure that those folks are part of the overall pool is the best way to make sure that all of our premiums go down. I am now in favour of some sort of individual mandate as long as there's a hardship exemption. If somebody truly just can't afford health insurance even with the subsidies that the government is now providing, we don't want to double penalize them. We want to phase this in, in a way that we have time to make sure that coverage is actually affordable before we're saying to people "go out and get it." (CBS, 2011)

By explicitly communicating why he changed his position, and the provisions of this change, Obama's motivation for the change were not left as open to negative interpretation. Such communication also implied Obama's reflective qualities, something severely lacking in a majority of both his and Key's communication. In essence, Obama was willing to give full answers to the questions asked of him around his proposed health-care reform, even when asked challenging questions. Obama was able to convey strength in the face of an aggressive interviewer, while also being open and honest about the fact that he had indeed changed his position on the issue.

Also, Obama was more effective than Key at promoting the idea that he was open to *public* questioning. Again, this was in large part due to the large number of town hall meetings Obama conducted on the Recovery Act and especially the Affordable Care Act. These meetings gave Obama the opportunity to interact with members of the public. In such settings, Obama showed encouragement of public questioning in a number of ways. This included noting appreciation for a question before answering, admittedly in a similar manner to Key that was criticised earlier, but also by asking if he had answered the audience member's question adequately and thanking the person for the question again afterwards. Such simple verbal cues implied Obama's willingness to answer the questions that were asked to him. More explicitly, Obama often started the question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions of town hall meetings by noting he wanted to hear from people who disagreed with him, as highlighted below.

If I hear only from people who agree with me I'm going to actively ask some folks who are concerned about health care, give them a chance to ask their questions. Because I think we've got to make sure that we get out... surface

some of the debates and concerns that people have. Some of them are legitimate. (whitehouse.gov, 2009g)

Obama's rhetoric encouraging challenging questions from critics ties into the respect for criticism and concern in Chap. 2. Obama's communication suggested he was actively willing to be open and honest about the issue. This encouragement of challenging questions was rarely taken up by the audience. This is not surprising considering that a majority of people who attended these events were seemingly Obama supporters, resulting in the questions being used by Obama as prompts to reinforce the points he had made in his pre-Q&A speech. However, this cannot be blamed on Obama. While he did not receive many challenging questions from the public in such texts, his explicit invitation for such questions did reinforce the notion that Obama was open, honest, and inviting of public questioning.

So, again, while both Key and Obama used communication somewhat effectively to communicate openness and honesty while being encouraging of media and public questioning, how effective they were was dependent on context. Importantly, both Key and Obama found themselves in situations where they felt they needed to change their position on an issue. How they dealt with criticism about this was very different. Key was not as open to media or the Opposition questioning about his change in position on the issue. In using semantics to try and suggest he had not changed his position, Key risked hurting his perceived credibility. Obama's strategy around his change in position on the individual mandate not only allowed him to justify his decision, but allowed him to promote his reflective qualities as well. In essence, Obama's strategy in this area runs counter to the traditional communication strategy of trying to disregard criticisms, as seen used by Key. Also, Obama's use of longer media texts such as televised town halls allowed him to show openness to, and encouragement of, public questioning. He was able to do this more explicitly than Key, as Key had very little opportunity to directly interact with the public in media texts. Again, as suggested in Chap. 2, it would be wise for Key to create more opportunities to be seen with members of the public and answering their questions. Doing so would help promote Key's willingness to be open and honest about issues while also presenting him as in touch.

Maintaining Reasonable Eye Contact with the Audience: Video Journals, Intimacy, and Trust

Another effective way for governing leaders to subtly imply their honesty as well as their authenticity and relatability is through maintaining reasonable eye contact with either the audience in front of them or with those watching the text (through eye contact with the camera). Eye contact has been found to have a number of positive implications, such as suggesting honesty, security, and competence (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012: 436). Also, as a majority of the public do not come into direct contact with governing leaders, actual or simulated eye contact can mimic the intimacy of one-on-one conversations (Robinson, 2010: 148). Such eye contact is not always possible. In particular, in non-campaign communication, the types of texts that give governing leaders the chance to look directly into a camera when speaking are far fewer than in campaign advertising. Eye contact with the in-text audience is not as effective at promoting authenticity, intimacy, and trust as eye contact with the text viewer via the camera. However, in most circumstances, eye contact with the camera is either impossible or would seem out of place. Also, certain situations make it necessary for governing leaders to read speeches, especially in a job where miscommunication can have major real-world implications. This hinders governing leaders' ability to make eye contact even with the audience in front of them and thus, where possible, should be avoided.

In the texts that permitted it, Key was effective at maintaining eye contact with the audience or camera. These visual signifiers can best be seen in the visual depiction of Key during his video journal entries (see [NZNats 2010e](#)). As with most video journals on YouTube, Key was able to simulate a one-on-one conversation with the viewer by maintaining constant eye contact with the camera. This was also implied through Key's eye level, which was in direct line with the camera. Such positioning has been found to imply a more favourable response to politicians by suggesting they are neither talking down to or up at, but with, the audience (McNair, 2003: 36). Similarly, Key was often filmed in a medium close-up shot, framing Key's head and cutting off around mid-chest. These shots visually simulated closeness between Key and the viewer. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Key's subtle visual cues normally did not signify leadership strength, but did signify relatability. Key's visual communication in these video journals is a good example of this, where the intimacy

created by this close eye contact was enhanced by Key's positioning and posture. These video journals predominantly presented Key sitting at his office desk, leaning forward with his elbows on his desk, thus narrowing his shoulders. While such posture did not help Key's promotion of leadership strength, it did imply a less formal and inviting conversation. In other words, such posturing helped Key promote an image of genuineness as a signifier for honesty.

Such eye contact was present throughout most of Key's communication, although to a lesser degree. In most texts, Key's eye contact was with the person within the text he was talking with. While not as effective at creating the intimacy seen in video journals, this visual cue still implied honesty. The only communication where Key lost almost all eye contact with the in-text audience and the camera was when he delivered speeches at press conferences and to Parliament. These instances normally related to official announcements around an issue. Therefore, it is understandable that Key would use pre-written speeches. That said, Key's ability to imply the same level of sincerity was hindered as he looked down at his notes (see TV One, 2010d).

As more of Obama's communication came in the form of speeches, town hall meetings, and press conferences than Key's, it is not surprising that he used pre-written speeches more often in texts that included a visual component. However, especially in his communication on the Affordable Care Act, Obama was able to do so without projecting the negative visual communication traits that normally result from reading speeches. This was because Obama was often able to read his speeches from teleprompters—two clear screens positioned, normally off camera, diagonally to the left and right in front of him. As a result, Obama was able to read from speeches while still simulating eye contact with the in-text audience. In other words, as Obama moved his focus from one teleprompter to the other the visual cues suggested to the viewer that Obama was scanning the audience, as highlighted in the previous chapter. Thus, not only was Obama able to imply personal strength through this technique, but also a connection with the audience within the text.

Obama too used video journals that created a more intimate feeling. While the practice of weekly addresses by the US President dated back to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Obama had introduced the video component during his transition into office. However, Obama was not as effective as Key at using these video journals to simulate intimacy. While it appeared as though Key was prompting himself using subject bullet points in his video

journals, Obama clearly read full speeches. This hindered Obama's ability to mimic eye contact as effectively. He either constantly shifted his eyes from the camera to slightly off camera and back again (The White House, 2009) or he continually looked slightly off camera (ChangeDotGov, 2008). As a result, Obama's ability to elicit a connection and trust with the viewer was hindered. Furthermore, as the communication was more obviously pre-planned, the subtle cues that could have influenced the public perception of Obama's authenticity, and thus trustability, were also hindered.

One element that hindered both leaders' ability to simulate intimacy through such video journals' visual was the use of post-production editing. More specifically, video journals from both leaders included shot cuts, once or multiple times, during individual video journal entries (see NZNats, 2010b; UpTakeVideo, 2009). In Key's video journals, this was seen in the form of slow dissolve cuts, where it was clear the editors had linked two clips together. In Obama's video journals, this was seen even more obviously, and startlingly, in the form of a quick shot change—as the shot would change from a medium close-up to a close-up. Such editing emphasised the manufactured nature of the texts, thus hindering the ability to simulate a conversation with the viewer. Furthermore, the edits emphasised the lack of authenticity in both leaders' rhetoric. It implied that the videos were designed in order to sell the message they were communicating rather than discuss the issue with the public.

In essence, both leaders were somewhat effective at maintaining eye contact with the audience in front of them, simulating eye contact with the viewer via the camera or, on most occasions, simulating eye contact with the in-text audience through the placement of teleprompters. Certain circumstances made it hard for either leader to maintain eye contact with either set of audiences. This was usually due to their reliance on written speeches in front of them, which hindered the implied intimacy and authenticity of certain texts. This intimacy was also broken in texts where simulating a one-on-one conversation is a prominent goal of its production, where the reliance on editing emphasised how pre-planned Key and Obama's communication was. So, a lot of what hindered both leaders' ability to maintain eye contact was the use of speeches. This links into the first communication suggestion in the next section, where the use of speeches also affected both leaders' ability to speak with a cadence that did not sound scripted.

COMMUNICATING AUTHENTICITY AND RELATABILITY

As already noted, with the public's connection to political parties' broader ideological traditions declining, their evaluations of political actors is increasingly based on personal character (Newman, 2001). In a sense, the ideological link between the elected officials and the public has slowly been replaced by a link based on shared or admired positions on issues and goals (see Chap. 2) as well as shared and admired personality traits. So, governing leaders need to promote their own positive personality traits in order to establish this connection. To do this, governing leaders need to present themselves as relatable. But communicating authenticity is also important to emphasising governing leaders' genuineness. In other words, promoting authenticity allows governing leaders to present not only their arguments about the issues and decisions as honest, but also present themselves as honest. The importance of authenticity is noted by public relations expert Mark Blackham below.

I think [you have to] stick with what comes naturally... don't say things that you normally wouldn't. So I think the language of what is natural to you is the best. The trouble is that many politicians don't actually know what comes natural to them anymore... They don't have a natural core, so it's hard to express it... You do try and... say the things that you think are going to be acceptable to the group you want to impress... But... you can see it straight away... If you don't normally talk like that or think like that then it's readily apparent... It's not natural, it's artificial. So basically the advice is to stick with what comes naturally. (Mark Blackham, Director at Blackham PR and former New Zealand Government Press Secretary. Interviewed by author via Skype. 11 March 2014)

Governing leaders can communicate authenticity and relatability in a number of ways. The most effective way this can be done is through promoting the governing leaders' non-political personality. But it can also be done through speaking with a cadence that does not sound scripted, wearing lighter coloured less formal clothing, and using open arm and hand gestures.

Speaking in a Cadence That Does Not Sound Scripted

As noted earlier in this chapter, there are many situations where governing leaders need to read from speeches. The level of detail that can be explained

and the ability to avoid costly gaffs and errors are both heightened when using speeches. However, along with being a hindrance to maintaining eye contact, reading extensively from speeches also hinders the readers' ability to speak at their natural cadence. In other words, without reading extensively from speeches, governing leaders heighten their ability to present variation in their emotional tone, affording them a better chance to connect with the public (Bruce, 1992: 40–1, 73). Sounding unscripted is also beneficial as it makes communication seem less processed—as though it is less carefully manipulated in order to sell a particular message.

Since Key's government did not have as much control of most of the texts Key communicated through, he did not use pre-written speeches often. As a result, Key was somewhat effective at sounding unscripted in most of his communication on both increasing GST and replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. While Key's tone of voice is unusually light for a governing leader in Western society, which hindered his ability to promote strong leadership, this quality did help Key seem relatable within the New Zealand context. In particular, Key's tone of voice allowed him to extenuate his common New Zealand accent. Key would also occasionally either speak grammatically incorrectly or muddle his words. An example of this can be seen below, where Key stumbles over the first part of his sentence twice.

There is, there are, there well may be a way through this which is more acceptable to the Māori Party than the current law. (TV3, 2009)

While such communication can be interpreted as Key being flustered or as a subtle signifier of leadership incompetence, this kind of muddling was rare enough for that to be an unlikely interpretation. By slightly stumbling over his words in such a manner, Key implied his communication was less rehearsed. Thus, broadly speaking, Key's communication implied authenticity while also being relatable.

But this was somewhat nullified when Key used repetitive rhetoric on both issues. One of the main benefits of not reading from speeches should be the ability to use verbal cues, both in tone and in rhetoric, that indicate authenticity. Despite not using speeches, Key's communication sometimes lacked the authenticity not using speeches should have afforded him. There were a number of trends in the phrasing he would use to explain certain points. In other words, Key communicated the same points in many texts with almost the same rhetoric. This was clearly seen in

Key's communication around explaining what the public domain option meant when discussing replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. This is illustrated in the two quotes below, where Key used the same example to communicate the same point twice in approximately 45 minutes.

So the way to think about it is like the Continental Shelf. You don't get up in the morning thinking "who owns the continental shelf?" It's... held in this public domain. (TV One, 2010a)

And if you think about it, think about it like the Continental Shelf. No one gets up in the morning and says "who owns the continental shelf?" Actually, it's owned in the public domain. (TV3, 2010)

Having a consistent message is understandable and, indeed, encouraged, as it allows for greater clarity in communication (Fenn, 2014). That said, what made Key's repetitive style of communication detrimental was the fact that these common phrases were often communicated by Key as if he was reading them from a pre-written speech. But Key did not possess the verbal range to make this pre-planned communication come across as authentic and original. Rather, even hearing such statements once, it came across as pre-planned. Key's tone of voice would become noticeably flatter, with less inflection at the beginning and ending of his sentences. The gap between his words and sentences also became smaller, with less muddling and pauses for thinking. In other words, Key's verbal cues implied he knew exactly what he was going to say before he said it. As a result, when Key used these common phrases and analogies, his communication promoted the inauthentic qualities normally seen in the few occasions he read pre-written speeches.

Conversely, Obama was able to maintain his natural cadence and emotional inflections in his speaking patterns when using teleprompters. Thus, despite reading from a speech, Obama's communication did not come across as pre-planned, manipulated, and thus inauthentic—as you would expect from such communication. In other words, Obama's communication came across as sincere and authentic when teleprompters were used than may actually have been the case. But Obama used such teleprompters in his communication on the Affordable Care Act more than on the Recovery Act, where Obama relied more heavily on written speeches in front of him. There were two probable reasons for this. As mentioned in Chap. 2, proportionately more of Obama's communication on the Recovery Act came through regular speeches than in town

halls. As a number of these speeches were given at venues where large-scale speeches are probably rare (i.e. large construction sites), the ability to set up teleprompters was a less realistic option. So, Obama read speeches directly in front of him instead. Also, as will be mentioned in more detail in the next section of this chapter, it would appear from Obama's overall communication strategy around the Recovery Act that he was focusing more on communicating detailed logistical information, as opposed to less detailed emotive communication, when compared to his communication on the Affordable Care Act. By relying more heavily on notes, Obama was able to present more complex information about this large-scale issue than would have otherwise been possible (whitehouse.gov, 2009j). However, in doing so, Obama's tone of voice became noticeably flatter, thus lacking the emotion his communication normally conveyed. The use of such pre-written speeches also visually hindered his ability to convey the same level of sincerity and relatability that eye contact would have afforded him. In essence, Obama's heavy reliance on speeches hindered his ability to convey authenticity and relatability through his verbal and visual communication in his discussion of the Recovery Act.

Both Key and Obama were only somewhat effective at speaking in a cadence that did not sound scripted. For the most part, Key did not use pre-written speeches and utilised this to accentuate his New Zealand accent in a way that made him seem more authentic and relatable. However, aspects of Key's communication made his communication appear more pre-rehearsed than Obama's. This was partly due to Obama's natural charisma. But it was also due to Obama using teleprompters where they were not glaringly obvious.¹ While having a long-term consistent message is encouraged, Key's use of near identical phrases and analogies hindered his presentation of talking authentically. By varying the way he communicated the same message across different texts more, such as using different analogies to make the same point, Key may have been better able to promote his authentic qualities while still maintaining a consistent message. When Obama did use regular pre-written speeches, seen more often in his communication on the Recovery Act than the Affordable Care Act, Obama too was unable to maintain a cadence that did not sound scripted.

Communicating Their Non-political Personalities

With the public more influenced by their own assessments of politicians' characters, there is a positive correlation between candidates showing their non-political personality during election campaigning and success (Newman, 2001). This is something that should be continued by governing leaders in office, as the importance of an emotive connection cannot be underplayed (Marcus, 2003). Governing leaders should provide some level of personal information, not related to their political position, in their communication of issues and decisions (Lilleker, 2006: 60, 80). Showing part of their personality can help make governing leaders seem more accessible. In other words, such communication can help in fighting the perception that the leader is detached and out of touch (Street, 2004). Furthermore, similar to retelling ordinary people's stories, such communication connects real-world examples to the issue being discussed, thus giving it more legitimacy. The ability to communicate such traits during issue-specific communication outside election campaigns is a lot more limited, as they are promoting an issue rather than the leader and their party. However, it is still possible. Such communication may include talking about friends' and family members' reactions to the issue and the dialogue around it, talking about how the decision affects them, or by communicating past personal events that have helped shape the leader's opinion on the issue.

Such communication may also be more appropriate when talking about the issues through traditionally non-political media texts, such as late-night talk shows. Presenting the issue in a less formal setting allows governing leaders to seem less robotic (see Promise, 2005). The importance of such communication was reaffirmed by Democratic Strategist Peter Fenn, as outlined below.

Bill Clinton... went on the Arsenio Hall Show to play his saxophone to get to a certain group of people. President Obama a couple of weeks ago went on a funny show with Zack Galifianakis, "Between the Ferns." It's now [got] fifteen million hits [as of] last week. And that was of course to encourage people [to] sign up for Obamacare. But in the past that would have been quite a bizarre thing for a president to do. They may have thought it was demeaning. "Why would you put yourself in that position, in kind of a wacky situation? You could get burned." But nowadays people who are making these decisions ... use non-traditional media to reach targeted audiences. (Peter Fenn, Democratic Strategist and Adjunct

Professor, George Washington University. Interviewed by author via Skype. 19 March 2014)

Obama was much more effective than Key at presenting his non-political personality through his communication on both the Recovery Act and especially the Affordable Care Act. Again, this was in large part due to the time allowances Obama had thanks to the types of texts he was predominantly communicating through. This was most commonly seen when Obama would link the issue back to his own life. For example, Obama would explain how the problems in the US health-care system had put even more burden on his mother when she was battling cancer, as seen in the quote below.

As I've mentioned before during the course of the campaign, my mother passed away from ovarian cancer a little over a decade ago. And in the last weeks of her life, when she was coming to grips with her own mortality and showing extraordinary courage just to get through each day, she was spending too much time worrying about whether her health insurance would cover her bills. So I know what it's like to see a loved one who is suffering, but also having to deal with a broken health care system. I know that pain is shared by millions of Americans all across this country. (whitehouse.gov, 2009h)

Similarly, on the issue of the Recovery Act, Obama directly related the issue of Recovery Act investment to his non-political personality. Obama would relate the goal of improvement in the economy back to the luxury he and his wife had, despite coming from average families, when they were growing up, as seen below.

And my wife and I, we came out of hardworking families who didn't have a lot. But because the economy was growing, because there was an emphasis on what was good for the middle class, we were able to get a great education. We were able to get scholarships. Michelle's dad worked as a blue-collar worker, but just on that one salary he was able to provide for his family and make sure that they always had enough and the kids had opportunities. (whitehouse.gov, 2010)

By relating the issues back to his own life, Obama better presented himself as more than just a politician, thus making him seem more relatable, while lending validity to the points he was making. In essence, such

communication should have helped Obama build greater public trust in him and the decisions he was making, and thus a greater willingness to accept a polarising decision he made. Furthermore, by noting how the issue had directly affected him, the audience more likely to feel as though they more gaining a better understanding of Obama as a real person, rather than simply a distant political figure. Such communication helped Obama seem more relatable, thus potentially providing an emotional connection between Obama and the public.

That being said, such information was much less evident in Obama's communication around the Recovery Act than on the Affordable Care Act. As mentioned, Obama's overall communication strategy around the Recovery Act was a lot more detail-oriented than around the Affordable Care Act. As such, it would have been harder for Obama to connect the information back to his own personal experiences. More importantly, Obama seemed to concentrate more on presenting himself as a competent leader than as a relatable figure throughout his communication on this issue. As a result, overall Obama's communication incorporated more informative cues than emotive ones. This may have been especially prudent considering the urgency and magnitude of the issue.

On the other hand, Key was ineffective at highlighting his non-political personality explicitly throughout his communication on both raising GST and replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act. Key was only able to communicate his non-political personality through morning variety shows such as *Breakfast* and *Sunrise*, where such communication did not directly relate to the issues themselves. Rather, such communication was normally present before and after Key discussed the issue on these shows. This was normally in the form of friendly banter about less political aspects of Key's life or society such as going to his high school reunion, discussing how a New Zealand sports team had played on that weekend or the fact that he had broken his arm during a Chinese New Year celebration (see TV One, 2009). By communicating a story that directly affected him, the audience were better positioned to see Key as relatable rather than simply a political figure. However, such communication was rarely seen. Also, since he did not relate the actual issue back to himself, he was unable to base his own arguments on real-world evidence as effectively.

So Obama was much more effective than Key at promoting his non-political personality explicitly. Again, this difference in the leaders' communication was predominantly a result of the difference in the types of texts each leader communicated through. With more time to talk about

each issue, Obama was able to communicate more broadly about the topic. Therefore, while still focusing on issues-specific communication, Obama was able to appear more relatable while lending validity to the point he made, especially in his commutation on the Affordable Care Act. Key was not afforded these time allowances and his communication was therefore more focused on the specifics of the issues.

SUMMARY

While often overlooked or undervalued, being relatable is an important aspect of the public's judgement of political leaders in modern society. The emotional connection most people feel towards political actors is no longer based on broad ideological beliefs, but on similarity in beliefs on specific issues as well as relatable and admired personal qualities. In other words, as the public's evaluation of political actors is increasingly based on personal character, it is vital for governing leaders to promote their own personal credibility in order to maintain a positive public image and political office. Furthermore, by communicating credibility, governing leaders are better positioned to maintain public trust—allowing them to more effectively justify the decisions they make while creating room for future bold agendas. As several practitioners have noted (see Blackham, 2014; Fenn, 2014; Harvey, 2014), if they feel as though governing leaders are genuinely doing what they believe is right, the public will be more willing to accept decisions they personally disagree with. This chapter has outlined the two communication goals that governing leaders should target in order to promote the credibility quality suggested in the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model—honesty as well as authenticity and relatability. It has done this with the assistance of examples of these goals being achieved, or not achieved, in effective or ineffective ways by Prime Minister John Key and President Barack Obama.

Key and Obama's communication promoting credibility were vastly different. Both found themselves in situations where they felt they needed to change their position on an issue. However, they dealt with the resulting criticism very differently. Key was not as open to media or Opposition questioning about his change in position on increasing GST. By trying to use semantics to suggest he had not changed his position, Key risked hurting his perceived credibility. Obama's strategy around his change in position on the individual mandate not only allowed him to justify his decision, but also allowed him to promote his reflective qualities.

In essence, Obama's strategy in this area ran counter to the traditional communication strategy of trying to disregard criticism. Obama's openness was further emphasised through the use of longer texts, such as televised town hall meetings, that allowed him to show encouragement of public questioning. He was able to do this more explicitly than Key, as Key had very few opportunities to be seen directly interacting with the public. As mentioned in the last chapter, governing leaders need to be proactive through communication to promote their personal and professional qualities in order to fight off the degenerative tendencies of government. This includes being proactive in creating content showing them directly engaging with the public, as suggested in Chap. 2. Doing so would have helped promote Key's willingness to be open and honest about issues while also presenting him as in touch.

But, again, most of the differences in Key and Obama's communication around credibility highlight the importance of context to how the model is effectively used. For the most part, Obama was able to present himself as honest, authentic, and relatable through explicit communication due to the time allowances he had. In particular, Obama was able to promote his non-political personality on the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act by relating these issues back to his own personal experiences. Key was also able to present himself as authentic and particularly relatable, but did so through the effective use of subtle visual and verbal cues more consistently. This can be seen in the way Key spoke, his tone of voice, and his posture—at least outside the notable rehearsed analogies he used. These visual cues hindered Key's ability to communicate leadership strength. But Key seemingly chose to maintain his "typical kiwi" image through these cues instead—as they made him more relatable. This again highlights why the model is not a linear model, as the subtle visual and verbal cues that promote leadership often contradict those that promote relatability.

This can also be seen in the differences between Obama's communication strategies on the Recovery Act and the Affordable Care Act. While not ignored, Obama's more detail-oriented communication around the Recovery Act, which focused more on using pre-written speeches than talking *with* the public, showed he was more willing to sacrifice his authentic and relatable image in order to present himself as a strong and competent leader. This was wise, given the urgency of the issue called for strong and decisive leadership rather than a leader concentrating on being liked. These differences also highlight the importance of context to what aspects of the model should be emphasised.

In other words, governing leaders need to decide which qualities to emphasise, and which suggestions are most appropriate to promote them. This decision should be dependent on the issue type, the text they are communicating through and the main message they want to promote—among others. The next chapter will again highlight the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model. It will then outline the common themes evident over the course of these last three chapters that affect how the model is used, as well as advise academics and practitioners on the future of leadership communication in a market-oriented setting.

NOTE

1. In earlier versions of this research, the use of teleprompters was not even noticed by the author.

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Analysing and Advising Governing Leaders

Abstract This chapter highlights the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model and summarises how the communication of US President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key matched this model during their first terms in political office. The chapter also outlines the common contextual issues that have an effect on governing leaders' communication and how the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model is used in practice. This chapter also provides practical advice that could be used by practitioners to better develop future communication strategies for contemporary governing leaders before looking at the future of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model in research.

Keywords Context • Political practitioner • Political marketing research
• Communication advice

INTRODUCTION

Political communication strategies are continually evolving. But the challenges of political office have stayed the same. For a number of reasons, including unforeseen crises, more information and the need to deliver long-term societal benefits, governments have to make decisions that are polarising, go against public opinion, and at times go against their own

brand. This is especially true for governing leaders, who are often symbolic of their government's brand. As a result, the broader messages governing leaders communicate today are very similar to those communicated by the leaders of the past. But the relationship between political elites and the public has evolved. The public now demands more responsiveness from governing leaders if they wish to maintain their support. But governing leaders' ability to appear to be listening, while also being seen as competent and trustworthy, is harder in government than in opposition. Traditional defensive communication strategies further exacerbate this problem. So, while the broader messages remain the same, new communication strategies present this information differently, especially when leaders go against public opinion. How governing leaders balance defending their decisions with the increasing public demand for respectful responses to their criticisms and concerns is at the heart of this difference. When they merge relevant suggestions from traditional communication strategies with newer ones, governing leaders should be able to present an overall image of being in touch, strong, competent, and credible in a way the public demand.

This chapter will again highlight the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model. It will conclude the case studies by reflecting on the broader findings in President Barack Obama and Prime Minister John Key's communication. It will then more broadly outline the common contextual issues these findings have highlighted, such as issue type, text type, and timing. It will highlight how the model is not a linear checklist for governing leaders to use to better present each quality. Rather, this chapter will outline how these contextual issues effect the way the model is used. The chapter will then advise practitioners on best practices for the future of leadership communication in a market-oriented setting before looking at the future of market-oriented governing leaders' communication and the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model.

COMMUNICATING MARKET-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT: HOW IS IT DONE?

Strategic communication is a key part of maintaining a positive public image in government. Governing leaders can make hard yet necessary decisions, show true leadership, and deliver long-term results as long as their communication proves they have acknowledged and respected public opinion. But research into political marketing has tended to focus on election

communication (Schweiger & Adami, 1999). Political marketing needs to be applied differently to non-campaign communication as the goals and restrictions of issue-specific communication make it much harder to mobilise public support (Spiller & Bergner, 2014: 56). Indeed, the personal profile opportunities are not as readily available in the context of issue-specific communication as they are in more generalised election campaigning. Furthermore, such information, if too explicitly communicated, may be seen as disingenuous by the audience, especially in texts where it is not expected. This is the gap the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model fills (Table 5.1).

This model was built upon theoretical literature, previous case studies, newly tested case studies, and practitioner interviews. It was designed with the goal of balancing the need to be intellectually fruitful enough to add to the list of frameworks and models in the area of political marketing in

Table 5.1 The contemporary governing leaders' communication model

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Common ways to communicate</i>
Responsiveness	Communicate the governing leader is listening to the public	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start frequent communication early on in the decision-making process Maintain rhetoric encouraging public feedback and debate Retelling ordinary peoples' stories <p><i>Visual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual evidence of the leader with members of the public
	Communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism	<p><i>Respectfully explain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the public are concerned about? Why they have this concern? Why the governing leader disagrees? <p><i>Other verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate potential solutions to public concerns
	Communicate an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest togetherness, affinity, or an understanding of the public Communicate end goals and aspirations that resonate with the public Show reflection on hard yet necessary decisions

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Common ways to communicate</i>
Leadership	Communicate leadership strength	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <p>Communicate personal conviction Strong and authoritative tone of voice Use language cues associated with determination and strength Not attacking the opposition</p> <p><i>Visual</i></p> <p>Squared shoulders Dark formal clothing Strong facial expressions Firm hand gestures In front of group/focal point of imagery</p>
	Communicate leadership competence	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <p>Communicate delivery, the reasoning behind, and the benefits of the decision Suggest relationship with members of other political parties, branches of government and stakeholder groups Discuss other potential options</p> <p><i>Visual</i></p> <p>Imagery of leader working constructively with other political elites</p>
Credibility	Communicate honesty	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <p>Be open, honest, and encouraging of media and public questioning Communicate challenges to delivery Communicate drawbacks of decisions</p> <p><i>Visual</i></p> <p>Maintain reasonable eye contact with the audience Leaning forward</p>
	Communicate authenticity and relatability	<p><i>Verbal</i></p> <p>Communicate non-political personality Speak with a cadence that does not sound scripted</p> <p><i>Visual</i></p> <p>Open arms and hand gestures Lighter coloured, less formal clothing Smile</p>

government while being broad enough to maximise its potential future use. Most importantly, it addresses the increased public demand for leaders to acknowledge their beliefs and concerns as well as the increased public demand for leaders who they feel emotionally connected to.

REFLECTING ON JOHN KEY AND BARACK OBAMA'S COMMUNICATION

Neither President Barack Obama nor Prime Minister John Key's communication completely matched the model, nor would that be realistic to expect. But both utilised aspects of market-oriented communication strategies, just in different ways. This was mainly due to the implications of the different levels of control both governments had over the production of media texts.

John Key

Despite the limitations having less control over the production of texts placed on him, Prime Minister John Key was still able to utilise the most effective communication for promoting responsiveness. By using communication that suggested he knew what the public were concerned about, understood why they had those concerns, but also why he was taking the course of action he thought was right, Key was able to communicate a respectful acknowledgement of public concern and criticism. But the realities of government and his inability to use verbal and visual cues to communicate more broadly about issues hindered his ability to promote certain aspects of contemporary market-oriented governing leadership. In particular, this hindered his ability to explicitly communicate strong and competent leadership. Key tried to highlight his good working relationship with the Māori Party. But this only magnified their disagreements when the specifics of the proposed law became apparent. At this point, Key relied on traditional defensive communication fell back on traditional defensive communication strategies to combat the challenge he faced. Key instead focused on maintaining the image of being a "typical Kiwi" through subtle visual and verbal cues such as his tone of voice and his visual presentation. In essence, due to the limitations Key faced, he had to rely more on implying his own personal qualities through subtle cues as he was unable to talk more broadly around the issues. Given these limita-

tions, Key was effective, but not perfect, at promoting his market-oriented leadership in government.

Barack Obama

President Barack Obama's White House had more control over the production of media texts than their New Zealand counterparts. As a result, Obama was able to utilise the resulting time and visual allowances to more explicitly communicate his market-oriented qualities. This was seen in the way he was able to utilise communication such as retelling ordinary peoples' stories while presenting visual evidence of himself listening to members of the public that highlighted his responsiveness. This was also seen in his ability to relate the issues back to his own personal life to promote his own non-political personality. Obama was able to use his natural charisma and the settings of many of his speeches to highlight his leadership strength. This included his consistent use of strong facial expressions, hand gestures, broad and squared posture, and through his control over his vocal range. However, Obama also focused too much of his attention on communicating the reasoning behind, and the benefits of, his decisions. This was especially glaring in communication specifically designed to show Obama listening and responding to public opinion. In essence, Obama's communication often looked market-oriented. However, the overall feeling when watching his communication was that he was talking *to* the public rather than talking *with* them.

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE CONTEMPORARY GOVERNING LEADERS' COMMUNICATION MODEL IN PRACTICE

Some of the suggestions of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model contradict one another. For example, governing leaders would find it hard to wear both light casual clothing to look relatable and approachable while also wearing dark formal clothing to highlight leadership strength.¹ This is because the model is not linear, nor is it a checklist of rules governing leaders need to follow in their entirety. The context surrounding governing leaders' communication influences what aspects of the model are and should be emphasised in their overall communication strategies. For example, the way governing leaders should use verbal and visual communication when discussing recent military action during press conferences should

be very different than that used when discussing potential future changes to the education system on a late-night talk show. This section outlines the practical factors that affect the context surrounding governing leaders' communication on issues and how this affects how the model is used.

Text Type: Tone

The type of text a governing leader is communicating through influences what aspects of the model can and should be utilised. For example, the subtle visual and verbal cues governing leaders should present during a speech in front of a live audience should be very different to those they present when being interviewed on a late-night talk show. During a speech in front of a live audience, it is likely appropriate for governing leaders to use visual and verbal communication that emphasises leadership strength and conviction. This may include using a sterner tone of voice, firm hand gestures, and maintaining squared shoulders. However, to use such communication on a variety show would seem out of place and inauthentic. In such informal texts, it would likely be more appropriate for governing leaders to utilise visual and verbal communication that emphasises authenticity and relatability. This may include using a more casual language, maintaining a more relaxed posture and smiling. In other words, the text type should dictate the suitable overall tone of governing leaders' communication.

Text Type: Too Much Selling

The medium governing leaders are communicating through also has an impact on how much traditional, and explicit, selling of a decision is appropriate. It is understandable that governing leaders would want to promote the positive aspects of their past and future decisions. But in the contemporary political environment with increasing levels and avenues of public input—especially on polarising issues—persistently trying to sell the benefits of decisions can reduce the effectiveness of a piece of communication. It can suggest the leader is talking *at* the public rather than *with* them. This is especially true in texts specifically designed to show governing leaders are in touch with the public. In quotes for five-second sound bites, it is understandable for governing leaders to focus on issue-specific facts around justifying their decisions. However, by heavily relying on such communication in texts designed to show the leader is listening

and responsive to public opinion, governing leaders only exacerbate any public sentiment that they are out of touch. In other words, while communicating the reasoning behind, and benefits of, decisions is still a critical part of governing leaders' communication, the extent it is used needs to be adapted to the text they are using.

Medium Type: Breadth

The types of text governing leaders are communicating through also impacts the length of time they are able to talk for. For example, the amount of time governing leaders are able to talk for during a televised speech is usually far greater than when answering questions in a press scrum. As a result, the amount of detail governing leaders are able to go into in the former is much greater than the latter. The ratio of longer format texts to shorter format texts in a governing leader's overall communication strategy is normally determined by how much control their government has over the production of the texts they use. While the media will still use sound bite versions of what governing leaders say in longer speeches and town hall meetings, the government has more control over what aspects of the topics are discussed in those settings. In essence, with more control—the media come to the government for content; with less control—the government has to go to the media to produce content.

With these extra time allowances, governing leaders are better positioned to utilise verbal and visual communication that more explicitly highlights their market-oriented leadership qualities. This includes communication such as retelling ordinary peoples' stories, suggesting togetherness and affinity with the public, as well as connecting the issue back to governing leaders' own personal experiences. It also makes it easier for governing leaders to visually present themselves interacting with members of the public and working constructively with other politicians. When governing leaders don't have as much control over the content created, they are more limited in how explicitly they can promote their market-oriented leadership qualities. With less control, governing leaders are more reliant on subtle visual and verbal cues to emphasise their own personal qualities, as they will have less opportunity to relay anything other than the basic issue-specific information. For governing leaders in this situation, the ability to present broader, non-issue-specific, communication will come through the occasional lengthier interview on a variety or radio show,

through online video journals, or through speeches to government. But most of these formats do not have the circulation of the shorter media text sound bites. In essence, the control governing leaders have over content, and the affect this has on the breadth of their communication, plays a major role in how explicit their communication of personal qualities can realistically be.

Issue Type

The communication around different issue types, such as economic, national security, and environmental issues, are normally used in very different social climates. What the greater public holds important and thus gravitate to around different issue types is therefore very different. Broadly speaking, on an issue like extending child benefits, the public are likely to be more receptive to a governing leader's authenticity and relatability. Therefore, governing leaders would be wise to emphasise their non-political personality so they can show, for example, they too understand the struggles of parenting. When dealing with an issue like a recent terrorist attack, the public are more likely to be receptive to a governing leader's strength and determination. Therefore, it would be wise for governing leaders to emphasise their determination and conviction in order to show that they will not buckle under the pressure and fight to make sure such action is less frequent. On the other hand, on an issue like reducing the national deficit, the public are likely to be more receptive to leadership competence. Therefore, governing leaders should emphasise their knowledge of the subject, the options available, and why they made a particular decision. Governing leaders also need to take into consideration how much of a vested interest they have in the issue.

Governmental communication involves more than just talking about your particular party's policy agenda. Other topics include, but are certainly not exclusive to, private members bills, coalition partner's proposals, as well as topical non-political subjects. This influences how a governing leader may discuss the issue. So, for example, if a decision is being made as part of a coalition agreement with a minor party, the governing leader may want to downplay the likely impact of the decision on the general population. This is especially likely when the coalition partner claims to serve a smaller niche demographic. In other words, certain aspects of governing leaders' qualities need to be emphasised, yet not exclusively, depending on the issue type.

Timing and Certainty

The amount of time prior to or after an official decision has been made also impacts governing leaders' communication strategies. Broadly speaking, governing leaders need to imply more certainty in their decision the closer their communication is to the decision being made. When a governing leader starts communication on an issue, they are more likely to have the freedom to suggest uncertainty in which action, if any, they will take. Such communication shows they have more room to manoeuvre and the verbal cues used often subtly promote public debate and dialogue. However, governing leaders are not afforded this luxury as the announcement of a decision approaches. At this time, governing leaders need to show more certainty in what option they will take. This is done to condition the public to what they are going to do, thus avoiding the public shock that could fuel or worsen public backlash. Governing leaders also need to do this so that the public do not think they are indecisive or weak.

But the trap governing leaders commonly fall into is that they accompany this change in their own certainty with communication suggesting they are less open to criticism. In other words, they become more dismissive of opposing viewpoints from politicians, the media, and the public (see [UpTakeVideo, 2009](#)). Thus, while governing leaders' communication tends to be responsive early on, such communication is normally less evident leading up to and just after a decision has been made. But this trend in governing leaders' communication is one of the main problems with traditional communication strategies. These strategies tend to make governing leaders appear stubborn and hinder their ability to appear in touch. Governing leaders need to proactively engage in market-oriented communication even when decisions have been made. In other words, they need to take steps to justify what they have done in a market-oriented way. This means showing they are in touch, even in retrospect. So while they need to show more certainty in their own beliefs, they still need to encourage feedback and debate, especially on polarising issues that could have lingering effects.

Timing: Reflection

That said, over time, governing leaders are gradually able to show they are reflective of their decisions. It is hard for a governing leader to be reflective around all areas of their decision just after a decision has been made. Around this time, they should be able to show reflection around the decision-making process—what they wanted to do, any concessions

they had to make and, of course, respectfully acknowledge public opinion. However, they are less able to be truly reflective of the consequences of their decisions as real results, both positive and negative, take time. When such reflection is communicated too close to a decision, it can rightly appear inauthentic. At this point, such communication is not used to highlight governing leaders being truly reflective of the consequences of their decisions. Rather, this communication is used to highlight the public's concerns and struggles that they are addressing with a decision. In other words, their communication does not truly highlight that governing leaders are aware of the effects their decisions have made.

Governing leaders need to wait to see the real consequences of their decisions before extensively reflecting on them. They can also show reflection on whether expectations for real change were met as a result of their decisions. At this point, such reflection would be more authentic and thus strategically more effective. Showing such reflection on hard yet necessary decisions is something that goes against the traditional communication strategy of highlighting positives while disregarding and ignoring negatives. But it is a strategy that has been used effectively by long-term governing leaders who entered office with a market-orientation to rejuvenate their public image (see Scammell, 2007). While such communication may not be truly possible for years after a decision has been made, it would be strategically beneficial to start such communication before the leader experiences a decline in public popularity. The change in how governing leaders should communicate about an issue and decision over time is outlined in Fig. 5.1 below.

Decision-Making Influence

The most important broad administrative variable that determines how the model is used is how much influence governing leaders have in the decision-making process. With less influence, governing leaders' power

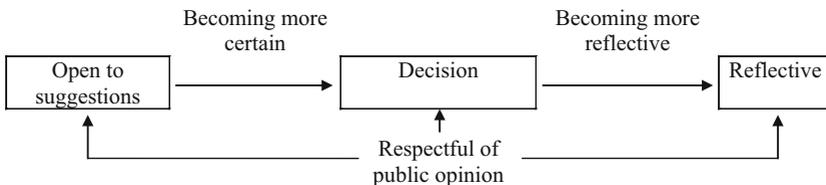


Fig. 5.1 The change in communication over time (Author's own compilation)

comes from their ability to use persuasion to build political and public momentum for their legislative agenda and effectively compromise with other politicians in order to get sufficient numbers to pass laws. Therefore, with less control, governing leaders should place more emphasis on communicating their ability to work with other politicians as well as their desire to deliver their preferred decision. Also, governing leaders with less control over the decision-making process will more likely need to take a concrete position on issues earlier in the decision-making process. This is because they have to build momentum for their legislative agenda, especially within the governmental system, earlier on. Promoting these qualities is still important for governing leaders with greater influence over the decision-making process. For example, compromise is still needed in proportional representational systems. However, when politicians predominantly vote down party lines and governments have established coalition agreements with other parties, this variable is far less volatile. In other words, the influence governing leaders have over the decision-making process affects the public expectations placed on them. Governing leaders' communication strategies need to take into account how important administrative competence and determination to deliver are.

Summary of Contextual Influences

The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model is not a linear model, nor is it a checklist of rules governing leaders need to follow in its entirety. Personal and professional judgement is still needed to determine what aspects of the model best fit each specific piece of communication. Judgement is also needed when determining the governing leader's overall communication strategy on the issue in relation to the broader context, such as issue type, the required urgency of the issue and the governing leader's influence over the production of texts and the decision-making process. In sum, how the suggestions are executed by a governing leader may depend on the social and political context they find themselves in, even though the broad suggestions themselves remain applicable across all contexts.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY GOVERNING LEADERS' COMMUNICATION MODEL IN PRACTICE

There are also a number of other trends in governing leaders' communication that need to be taken into consideration while looking at how the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model should be used.

Communicating More than One Quality at Once

As shown in Chaps. 2, 3, and 4, communication designed predominantly to highlight one communication goal or leadership quality can also help with others. For example, maintaining eye contact with the audience implies honesty, but it also helps establish a more intimate personal connection between the governing leader and the viewer through the simulation of a one-on-one conversation. Most importantly, the model was designed anticipating a dichotomy between the qualities of leading and being responsive due to the historical problems found in the existing literature (see Lees-Marshment & Lilleker, 2005). However, when used effectively, communication that emphasises governing leaders' responsiveness often enhances the perception of the qualities associated with competent leadership as well. In retrospect, this is logical. Governing leaders should show how they were listening without following public opinion. One of the key aspects of good governance is not stubbornly making decisions based solely on personal belief and conviction (Masciulli et al., 2009: 3). Therefore, governing leaders who show they have listened to other potential options, suggest they have not made a decision too quickly by starting communication early, can justify their decisions based on the real-world examples told to them by ordinary members of the public and can communicate end goals that resonate with the public are also able to highlight their own competence in justifying their decisions.

Leaders Can Show Personal Conviction Without Going Against the Greater Public

On a similar note, as seen when John Key outlined his interactions with the Tax Working Group on increasing the rate of GST, governing leaders do not have to go against dominant public opinion to show strong personal conviction. Governing leaders can show conviction by suggesting bottom lines that they have put forward in consultation with other political leaders and non-elected governmental stakeholders as well. In doing so, governing leaders do not risk seeming out of touch with the general public to the same degree.

Lack of Ideology

The goals of campaign communication and non-campaign communication are very different (Goldstein & Ridout, 2004: 208). So too are the

target audiences for campaign and government communication. While campaign communication is designed to mobilise specific target audiences to vote for a particular party and/or leader, non-campaign communication is designed to appeal to a much larger demographic, especially on salient issues that gain mainstream attention. Thus, communicating party ideology may alienate many members of the public. Rather, in order to show conviction, governing leaders need to show issue conviction, showing that they have beliefs around certain goals rather than around the broader ideologies they may still promote to some level during an election campaign. In essence, leaders need to avoid ideological communication, attempting to use other communication strategies to promote strength and conviction that do not include the same ideologically divisive cues.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This chapter has looked extensively at how the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model should be used when evaluating governing leaders' communication in different contextual situations. The model is prescriptive and highlights a number of areas where governing leaders could still improve their communication in promoting their responsiveness, their leadership, and their credibility. Based on these weaknesses, this section outlines eight recommendations that could be made to practitioners to more effectively communicate the qualities governing leaders are publically expected to have. Through Table 5.2, this section provides further practical advice to promote these qualities by outlining hypothetical examples of how a governing leader should, and should not, use communication around polarising issues.

Allocate Less Communication Time to "Selling" a Decision/ Policy/Position

The value of communication explicitly selling a particular decision or position on an issue is enhanced by promoting the other broader information around the issue. If the leader is trusted and seen as listening, the public are more likely to believe the leader when they actually do talk about the reasons why they made a decision. Communication strategies should evolve from a more one-dimensional selling-heavy philosophy to a more multi-dimensional strategy based on a relationship-building philosophy.

Trust Is Often the Key

Following on from that, communication that focuses on being a strong but listening leader is vital to maintaining a positive public image. However, in the modern age, the value of these qualities will be greatly reduced without the public feeling as though they can trust and relate to the leader. Even if the public disagrees with a leader, if they trust that the leader genuinely believes he or she is doing what is best, they will be more willing to accept a polarising decision.

Do Not Let Certainty Create Stubbornness

While governing leaders need to present more certainty in their stance on a decision the closer to its announcement, this does not mean leaders should become more defensive and dismissive of opposition viewpoints. Even after a decision has been made, they need to acknowledge and respect those with differing opinions when these are raised. While the issue may not appear as often in public dialogue, a polarising decision's lingering effects can still eventually contribute to a negative change in the public perception of the leader.

Be Reflective: But Later On

Governing leaders should also be willing to admit when decisions were not as effective as they wished and when there were unforeseen consequences. It is understandable that leaders would not want to give their opponents more ammunition to fire at them. However, by not admitting such negative elements, the leaders are likely to present themselves as out of touch and stubborn. In other words, to continue the analogy, the leader will shoot himself or herself as opposed to the opposition doing it. However, they should not do this too soon. Enough time needs to have past for long-term effects to sink in, while close enough that the decision does not negatively contribute to the leader's overall popularity.

Promote Personal Issue Conviction, Not Personal Ideological Conviction

Governing leaders are attempting to communicate with the public at large, not targeted groups like in an election campaign. Therefore, they should stay away from broader theory such as traditional party ethos and ideology in promoting their personal conviction and determination in

non-campaign communication. Conviction and determination is better shown when communicating more explicitly on the issue and the broader practical goals governing leaders are trying to achieve.

A Consistent Message Works Best with Varied Communication

It is important to have a clear message as a majority of the public do not actively consume political content to the level of those who are politically more active. That said, politicians should vary that way they explicitly communicate their underlying messages, especially over time. This will make the communication seem less micromanaged or spun, which in turn will help in gaining public trust.

Be Willing to Adapt to Change

That said, over the course of an issues saliency certain details can change. Sometimes aspects of an issue that were once strengths can turn into weaknesses. Sometimes the realities of the issue create variables the closer it comes to making a decision. Leaders need to be willing to change direction if need be. Stubbornly sticking to a strategy in the name of consistency can do more damage than good.

Invest in Content

Governments should not leave it up to the media to create multi-media content, nor should they only create content for platforms with limited circulation. Governments should invest in creating multi-media content that is bipartisan enough for it to use by outside media agencies without it seeming like political advertising. Such content could be related to multi-media versions of press releases without as much explicit bias. With more control over the content, governing leaders have greater flexibility in what they can say and what they can visually present.

Be Proactive: Think Long Term

The degenerative tendencies of long-serving governments often have a basis in the mistakes made during their first term. The impact of these mistakes is often unnoticeable as they go through the honeymoon period of their first term. However, as they become more vulnerable to public dissatisfaction, these issues are used later as evidence of unpopular traits in a government's

Table 5.2 The dos and don'ts of market-oriented governing leaders verbal communication

Responsiveness	What to say	What not to say
Communicate the governing leader is listening to the public	<p>We are looking into the possible benefits of changing the law on issue X. We are looking at possibly changing it to option C. But we are also looking at all potential options. I encourage you to talk with your friends and family about it. You can also send us feedback by emailing us at issueX@govt.country, sending letters to Government Buildings, 123 Government Ave, Country, or by checking the website www.issueX.govt.country for public meetings.</p> <p>I myself have been actively seeking your opinion. On my way here, I was talking to a young lady named Mary who works in the bakery just down the road here. She told me that the current system hinders her ability to do her job effectively. She told me this makes it difficult to make as much bread as possible. That's the sort of thing I hear all the time. That's why we want to make this change. I want to give every person in this country the opportunity to make bread or change tires or do whatever it is they do for a living without having to worry about issue X stopping them from fulfilling their potential</p>	<p>I can't give you any detail about any advice we might be getting on changing the law around issue X at this stage. But, generally speaking, my colleagues and I will be making a decision on the issue very soon. So I'll announce the final decision shortly and you will be able to see the detail then. Then people will see that we made the right decision.</p> <p>I don't feel we need to do any consultation on the matter as we have the statistics from the Department of Government. Plus governments have never consulted the public on such matters before. So I'm not quite sure why they expect us to consult them now. Despite the large public protest, we have the numbers that tell us we are making the right decision.</p>
Communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism	<p>A common concern that people have brought to my attention about this decision is that they are afraid it will stop them doing what they enjoy. And, quite frankly, it's understandable that some people feel this way considering that in the past similar decisions have resulted in people not being able to do what they enjoy.</p> <p>While these concerns are understandable, let me explain why we think this is the best decision/(or) let me explain how we are going to address this issue when we implement this decision.</p>	<p>There are fear mongers out there who are criticising this decision for their own personal gain. They are manipulating people who don't have all the information so it's hard for them to understand the complexities of the situation. There's also the rent-a-crowd, those who criticise this government no matter what we do, good or bad. They need to realise that it's too late in the process to think about their concerns. If it had been brought to our attention earlier, we may have been able to do something about them. But we didn't get any information from the Department of Government telling us the public felt that way so we didn't know. We simply followed their advice.</p>

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Responsiveness	What to say	What not to say
<p>Communicate an emotional bond between the governing leader and the public</p>	<p>It may not be the most popular decision this government has made. But we are taking this course of action for a number of reasons. We want to give the families of our country a better chance at having the freedom to live a more comfortable life. And we want to see our children get the best education possible. These are leaps forward I'm sure we can all agree are important.</p> <p>And these leaps forward will be reflective of the spirit of this great nation. We stand up for what we believe in. Our strength knows no boundaries. Together, we can show the world that we are here to make a mark.</p>	<p>Having grown up in a privileged part of the country and having had a very unconventional upbringing, I understand that my grasp of the hardships ordinary people feel is maybe not as great as some of my colleagues.</p> <p>I understand that the goals we were looking to achieve may have seemed insulting to ordinary people. But the public just needs to trust me that, as the head of this government, I knew what I was doing.</p>
<p>I personally wish we didn't have to make this decision. It was not an easy decision to make. I understand that people feel as though they are going to face challenges. We understand the costs that the country will face as a consequence. I didn't anticipate that we would have to make this decision at the same time as we faced a global recession. And maybe in the beginning I would have done things slightly differently if I had known what was going on. However, because of the long-term benefits this country will gain, we still needed to take action on issue X.</p>	<p>I personally wish we didn't have to make this decision. It was not an easy decision to make. I understand that people feel as though they are going to face challenges. We understand the costs that the country will face as a consequence. I didn't anticipate that we would have to make this decision at the same time as we faced a global recession. And maybe in the beginning I would have done things slightly differently if I had known what was going on. However, because of the long-term benefits this country will gain, we still needed to take action on issue X.</p>	<p>And that's really all I want to say on that issue. I'm not here to talk about that. The government made a decision. We knew what we wanted to do and so it was the right decision. People may be upset, but we should all just move on. There are more important things to talk about, like the great advances this government is making to issue Y.</p>

Leadership

Goal	What to say	What not to say
Communicate leadership strength	<p>This is something I truly believe in. I've heard the criticism and I've taken it on board. But I can't always do what the public want, that's unfortunately part of being effective in this job. It's hard. But this is one of those times where I have to do what I believe is right for the country in the long term.</p> <p>And that is exactly what I plan to do. Trust me when I say we understand what you expect from this us. I understand what you wanted this government to achieve for you in our first term. That's why we made those promises during the election and we are determined to drive forward to live up to those expectations and deliver for the people of this country. We will fight on to make sure this gets done. And, although not a popular decision, this is part of a larger plan to deliver on those election promises we made to you. You have my guarantee on that.</p>	<p>I don't have an opinion on the matter. But I really don't think the public want this to be done. So, despite expert advice, we have decided to do nothing and keep things as they are.</p> <p>We may be in a bit of a helpless situation on this matter. So it is time we just have to throw your hands up in the air and say "we can't win on this one." If we make a decision, the public are going to be angry and if we don't, we're not going to be able to deliver on our promise to balance the books. In other words, we have made a decision where we lose the least.</p>

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Leadership	What to say	What not to say
Communicate leadership competence	<p>As we promised during the campaign, this administration has addressed issue X. This was done because there were too many people who faced the problem of not being able to achieve their dreams. This was causing them to have to not feel fulfilled in their lives. And we have already seen that this decision has been beneficial in creating opportunities for people to get better, higher paying jobs that leave them and their families more comfortable and more flexible to live out their dreams. And we expect to see longer-term benefits as well, such as economic growth that will create further jobs for the working class and those who are unemployed.</p> <p>This was done in collaboration with members from all the political parties here today. I personally listened to ideas from people around this room, including the plan to go with option Y, from Opposition MP Jim Smith, which I know will help in achieving the goal of this plan. So I would like to take a moment to thank Jim for that.</p>	<p>I won't get into the details of that old policy now. Just trust me when I say we had our reasons, and it will benefit some in the long run.</p> <p>Our coalition partner tried to put roadblocks in front of us. But considering the personal problems their leader has with me right now, and their history of not doing what they should, that doesn't come as much of a surprise.</p> <p>I know the opposition sent my office information about potentially including option Z in the final decision. But we didn't look into that. Considering who it came from that clearly would have no basis in reality and I have far bigger things to deal with right now.</p>
<p>At the same time, some people suggested we go with option Z. This was a good idea in concept. However, going down that road would have meant we would not have been able to deal with issue Y later down the line. So we decided that was not the best option.</p>		

Credibility

Goal	What to say	What not to say
Communicate honesty	<p>Thank you for that question. I'm glad you asked it because it allows me to explain why we did this. It is true that prior to the last election we stressed we would not make a decision on X. However, with more access to information not available to us in opposition, such as the potential benefits decision X might have on the larger goal of helping people achieve their dreams, we have indeed had to change our position on the issue.</p> <p>It is true that the Minister of Generic Industries misled the public when he said that we were not considering changing our position on the issue and that the surplus was larger than we had expected. He has since come to me and apologised. He will be apologising to the public later today and we will be looking into the matter to see if any other action needs to be taken. Does that answer your question? Great.</p> <p>I know it can be hard to stand up and ask the hard questions, but I just want to stress that I want to hear from people who disagree with me as well. There are some really good questions that I feel need answering. I will make sure I answer them as explicitly as I can. But hold on to the microphone because, if I don't, tell me and I'll try to go a bit deeper.</p> <p>But it's not going to be easy to get this done. We have many different stakeholders to consider, along with the short-term drawbacks before we see any long-term benefits. This isn't going to happen overnight, especially considering our surplus is not as large as we were expecting.</p>	<p>I don't think I should talk about that too much right now. I don't really want to get into the negatives. What I want to talk about are the great things this government is doing for all members of the community. But if you send the question to my communications team they will send you an appropriate response some time.</p> <p>There are roadblocks. But trust me when I say they are not important and we will deal with them in due time. People will just need to wait.</p>

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Credibility	What to say	What not to say
Communicate authenticity and reliability	<p>It's funny because I was talking to my son Josh earlier today and he asked, "why are people saying negative things about you?" And I had to explain to him that not everyone agrees with me on every issue, but that I felt we needed to do something in order to let people achieve their goals. And that is why this issue is something that I care about so much. Because it has had an impact on my life. When I was 15 years old, I too had a dream that I wanted to fulfil. I saw Prime Minister Wilson stand up and give a speech on issue Q and I realised that I wanted to get into politics. And that's why I worked so hard over the next 30 years to get to this place where I can say I have done that. And by making this decision, I'm hoping that many other people can live their dream, just like I have been able to.</p>	<p>As I've mentioned in the past, I will not be talking about any aspect of my personal life with the public. They elected me to make decisions that are best for them, not to talk about my personal experiences. This isn't a reality television show. So let's just stick to talking about the issue I came here to talk about.</p>

Author's own compilation

brand. So, broadly speaking, governing leaders need to be proactive in creating communication strategies, and content, that will benefit their brand when it becomes more susceptible to the effects of media and public criticism.

COMMUNICATING MARKET-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT AND ITS FUTURE

This book helps solidify, acknowledge, and significantly expand our understanding of how leaders should communicate in government. It has explored pertinent and pressing communication issues relating to market-oriented behaviour that have come to surface since the beginning of the twenty-first century. While other studies have looked at this topic in similar ways, such as political marketing communication running up to an election, this study fills the gap in research on the political marketing communication in government. It therefore reaffirms the fact that campaign and non-campaign communication is vastly different. It shows how the issue-driven communication of non-campaign periods require leaders to use more subtle methods of self-promotion in order to maintain the positive public image they took office with. This is especially important in an era where leaders, and politicians in general, are involved in permanent campaigning (Norris, 2002; Steger, 1999)—where they have to be aware of what they say, how they say it, and how the public will view it. It looks at how governing leaders can use communication during the non-campaign period to illustrate their qualities commonly associated with market-oriented behaviour. It makes clear why entering office does not necessarily mean governments and governing leaders have to disregard market-oriented practices in the name of good governance. As has always been claimed by political marketing theorists, market-oriented behaviour is more than simply following public opinion. Rather, market-oriented behaviour involves being in touch with the shifting needs and concerns of the public—which is a similar, but not an identical, quality. Governing leaders still need to be strong yet reflective in their decision making. They can still show strength through conviction of their own beliefs—doing what they believe is right while also reflecting on the impact these decisions have on the public. In essence, this book demonstrates that governing leaders do not need to follow public opinion to convey that they have listened to it. Leaders can show personal conviction while also showing they are in touch with the public they claim to represent. By looking at *how* governing leaders should communicate their market-oriented quali-

ties, this book adds to the understanding of market-oriented behaviour in government by taking the communication aspect and putting a magnifying glass to it. It has also presented the findings in a clear applicable manner. Not only does this book highlight the problems facing leaders in power within a market-oriented environment, it suggests ways to resolve it. But the communication of a market-orientation in government is a very young area of study. The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model can be used in further research, as there is plenty that can still be examined in a number of areas, including the following.

Types of Issues

Broadly speaking, this book has looked at two types of issues, economic and social issues. More specifically, the case studies in this book have looked at issues around taxation, government investment, ownership rights, and public health. But there are a number of other issue types that encompass government and leadership decision making that are not looked at in depth. For example, the ability of governments to be open and honest with the public about issues of national security is quite difficult and restrained compared with most other issues around government decision making. The ability of governing leaders to be as forthcoming and explicit in their communication around such areas is likely to have a major impact on how they can present themselves, or how the public expected them to present themselves, especially around the quality of being in touch with public opinion. Thus, future research in such areas should further explain how the use of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model varies between issue types.

Time Frame

Also, this book has only looked at governing leaders' communication during their first term in office. Generally speaking, examination could go into governing leaders' communication around new issues in their second or third terms. The hypothetical examples under "what not to say" in Table 5.2 above, for instance, were influenced by Prime Minister John Key's communication around the signing the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement during his third term in office. More extensive and explicit investigation on such topics could help us better understand if and how governing leaders' market-oriented communication declines over time.

Future research could also extend analysis of one issue across multiple terms. In doing so, we could see how reflective these leaders truly became about their decisions as more time passed between their announcement and their impact on society and the governing leader's public image.

Country Focus

This book has looked at the communication of two contemporary market-oriented governing leaders. The difference in the political systems and the media landscape between these two countries had a profound influence on what each leader should, could, and could not communicate. This resulted in findings that gave us an understanding of what suggestions would work across vastly different political systems and cultural settings. How the suggestions are executed by a governing leader depend on the social and political context they find themselves in. However, there are other forms of government around the world with institutional and cultural differences which are likely to play a role in the how the governing leader uses the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model. For example, the expectations placed on leaders by the different political and cultural norms of different societies would be, by themselves, factors in how a leader chooses to present shared goals, shared affinities, and shared personal traits. The model could therefore be applied to other countries to explore any potential comparative differences.

Summary

Due to the youth of this area of research, there are still plenty of possibilities for future research. The research has created a reflective, grounded theoretical model for market-oriented governing leaders' communication that could be applied to a range of empirical data—including the same leaders' communication around these or different issues in their second or, in Key's case, third term. The model could also be used to test the communication of other governing leaders like the current British Prime Minister David Cameron or current Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. The model could be applied to female governing leaders such as current German Chancellor Angela Merkel to examine both the strategic and normative variables that affect women in power. Even more interesting would be to test it against the communication of Kevin Rudd during his

first tenure as Australian Prime Minister due to his severe drop in popularity in early 2010. Such research may bring about fresh ideas, suggestions, and findings that would highlight not only what leaders should do but what they should not do.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Political communication strategies continually evolve. This book has looked into the non-campaign communication of two market-oriented governing leaders in two different countries that have vastly different democratic political systems. Importantly, it has highlighted the need for a model that differs from those looking at campaign communication. In issue-specific communication, it is much harder to promote the personal qualities that the leader was perceived to have when they took office. The Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model highlighted in this book helps with that. It outlines the important aspects of governing leaders' credentials that need to be promoted in order for them to promote the qualities commonly associated with market-oriented behaviour such as, most importantly, being in touch, interested in, and responsive to the views and concerns of the public. Most importantly, this research has shown that a governing leader can promote both strong personal convictions while also highlighting the fact that they are still in touch with the public. This can even be done in situations where they go against public opinion.

As expected, neither President Barack Obama nor Prime Minister John Key's communication matched the model completely. It was not expected that they would. It is encouraging that contemporary governing leaders' communication is more reflective of their market-oriented qualities than their predecessors were. But there are some trends in older long-term market-oriented governing leaders' communication that these contemporary leaders did not learn from, at least not during their first terms in office. Contemporary market-oriented governing leaders have not moved as far away from traditional communication strategies as the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model would suggest is appropriate. But it is going to take more than one generation for market-oriented leaders to adopt and adapt to new communication strategies in government, just as it took political parties multiple decades to adopt and adapt to market-oriented strategies broadly to get into office. The difference being, of course, that many of these parties adapted to such practices without the challenges of office adding extra time, resource, and public pressures on

them. Political communication strategies continually evolve. Time will tell how they evolve from here.

NOTE

1. Although, Obama often started town hall meetings in a full darker-coloured three-piece suit. But once he had finished his speech and was inviting questions from the audience, Obama would often take his jacket off and roll up his sleeves to come across as more casual and approachable (see whitehouse.gov, 2009).

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