The dual dynamics of policy advisory systems: The impact of externalization and politicization on policy advice

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Abstract

The concept of ''policy advisory systems'' was introduced by Halligan in 1995 as a way to characterize and analyze the multiple sources of policy advice utilized by governments in policy-making processes. The concept has proved useful and has influenced thinking about both the nature of policy work in different advisory venues, as well as how these systems work and change over time. This article sets out existing models of policy advisory systems based on Halligan's original thinking on the subject which emphasize the significance of location or proximity to authoritative decision-makers as a key facet of advisory system influence. It assesses how advisory systems have changed as a result of the dual effects of the increased use of external consultants and others sources of advice – 'externalization' – and the increased use of partisan-political advice inside government itself – 'politicization'. It is argued that these twin dynamics have blurred traditionally sharp distinctions between both the content of inside and outside sources of advice and between the technical and political dimensions of policy formulation, ultimately affecting where influence in advisory systems lies.
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1. Introduction

Past examinations of policy advice typically focused on specific sets of policy advisory actors and attempted to assess their influence in isolation from the activities of other actors. This was true of such early works as Meltsner's pathbreaking work on policy analysts working in government (1975, 1976, 1979) as well as more recent efforts to examine the influence of, for example, think tanks or lobbyists (Nelson & Yackee, 2012; Wells, 2012). While such studies provide very useful information on the nature and activities of these key policy actors, they do not address their interactive or synergistic effects as parts of the policy advice system of actors striving to affect government decisions and policy outcomes.

Such 'policy advisory systems' arise in almost every instance of decision-making whereby governments receive advice not just from professional analysts in their employ or from outside groups, but also from a range of other actors, from think tanks and lobbyists, but also from partisan political advisors, scientific, technical and legal experts, and many others both inside and outside of government (Craft & Howlett, 2012; Plowden, 1987). How such these systems are structured and affect policy-making, along with understanding which actors exercise influence within them and why, are questions which have motivated their initial elaboration and application (Seymour-Ure, 1987).

Accurately describing and understanding the nature of these advice systems is important for comparative policy and public administration and management research. Empirical studies of the supply of policy advice in countries such as

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the U.K. (Page & Jenkins, 2005), Australia (Weller & Stevens, 1998); New Zealand (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Pat, 1996); the Netherlands (Hoppe & Jeliazkova, 2006), France (Rochet, 2004), Germany (Fleischer, 2009), and Canada (Howlett & Newman, 2010) reveal important differences in the sourcing and configuration of advisory actors and influence in policy formulation in those countries (see also Glynn, Cunningham, & Flanagan, 2003; Mayer, Bots, & Daalen, 2004).

Despite a growing body of case studies, however, it remains the situation that little is known about many important facets of advisory system behavior. The non-governmental components of policy advisory systems in most countries, for example, remains understudied (Hird, 2005); except to note differentiated patterns of influence and capability in various countries (Abelson, 2007; Cross, 2007; McGann & Johnson, 2005; Murray, 2007; Smith, 1977; Stone & Denham, 2004; Stritch, 2007). The situation is even more acute for the consultant industry or so-called ''invisible public service'' (Boston, 1994; Howlett & Migone, 2013; Speers, 2007). The articles in this special issue address many of these gaps in knowledge on these subjects.

An especially important issue, however, beyond description and classification, pertains to policy advisory system *dynamics*. That is, not only is it important to know how advisory systems operate in specific sectors and jurisdictions and who exercizes influence within them, but also how these actors and their relationships change over time (Aberbach & Rockman, 1989; Preston & t'Hart, 1999).

This question has not been addressed at all in the existing literature on advisory systems and is the central focus of the articles in this special issue. Two specific dimensions of change are highlighted here: ''*externalization*'' or the extent to which actors outside government exercize influence; and ''*politicization*'', or the extent to which partisan-political aspects of policy advice have displaced non-partisan public sector sources of policy advice. These concepts are further specified below.

2. Externalization and the prevailing insider-outsider orthodoxy in advisory system studies

In general, existing conceptual models of policy advisory systems associate different levels of influence with the location of advisors either inside or outside government (Wilson, 2006). This line of thinking underlay early efforts to classify the various components of advice-giving as a kind of marketplace for policy ideas and information. Most often, this was seen as comprising three separate locational components: a supply of policy advice, its demand on the part of decision-makers, and a set of brokers whose role was to match supply and demand in any given conjuncture (Clark & Jones, 1999; Lindquist, 1998; Maloney, Jordan, & McLaughlin, 1994; March, Toke, Befrage, Tepe, & McGough, 2009).

In these models the members of advice systems are typically arrayed into two or three general 'sets' or 'communities' (Dunn, 1980; Sundquist, 1978). The first set of actors are those 'proximate decision makers' who act as consumers of policy analysis and advice. These are actors with the authority to make policy decisions, including cabinets and executives as well as parliaments, legislatures and congresses, and senior administrators and officials delegated decision-making powers by those other bodies. The second set is composed of 'knowledge producers' located in academia, statistical agencies and research institutes for example, which provide the basic scientific, economic and social scientific data upon which analyses are often based and decisions made. The third set common in many studies are 'knowledge brokers' who serve as intermediaries between the knowledge generators and proximate decision makers, and who repackage data and information into usable form (Lindvall, 2009). Brokers may include permanent specialized research staff inside government, temporary equivalents in commissions and task forces, and non-governmental specialists associated with think tanks and interest groups among others. Although sometimes ignored in earlier 'two community' models. Brokers have been found to undertake key functions in formulation processes given their ability to 'translate' research results into useable forms of knowledge; that is, policy alternatives and the rationales for their selection to be consumed by decision-makers (Lindvall, 2009; Phipps & Morton, 2013; Verschuere, 2009).

Halligan (1995) sought to improve on these early models by adding the dimension of 'government control' alongside location as a key variable affecting advisory system structure and actor influence (see Table 1). This approach is based on assumptions and a core proposition that requires explicitly acknowledgment. On a basic level the 'public service' supply is compartmentalized or set off from other 'internal to government' sources. This is due to that component's centrality as the main unit of analysis in Halligan's review of the trends impacting public sector advisory practices.

Table 1
Locational model of policy advice system.

Location	Government control	
	High	Low
Public service	Senior departmental policy advisers Central agency advisers/strategic policy unit	Statutory appointments in public service

Internal to government	Political advisory systems
	Temporary advisory policy units
	  Ministers offices
	  First ministers offices
	Parliaments (e.g. a House of commons)
		Permanent advisory policy units
		Statutory authorities
		Legislatures (e.g., U.S. congress)

External	Private sector/NGOS on contract Community organizations subject to government Federal international organizations	Trade unions, interest groups community groups Confederal international communities/organizations

Source: Reproduced from (Halligan, 1995).

The core proposition advanced in such models, however, is that only some actors – be they internal or external - are able to influence policy-making and not others. This is because governments, generally, are assumed to be able to more readily exercise control over internal actors than external ones so that, prima facie, internal actors would exercize an inordinate amount of influence over the content of decisions vis a vis that exercized by external actors. As such, the model remains rooted in traditional insider-outsider logic.

This priority accorded to internal actors has however been challenged in recent years by factors such as increased participatory efforts and the use of external consultants and commissions to provide policy advice. This has led to the general notion that much policy advice in the contemporary period, unlike in the past, has been 'externalized'' (Bevir & Rhodes, 2001; Bevir, Rhodes, & Weller, 2003; Howlett & Lindquist, 2004; Mayer et al., 2004). Studies in a range of countries have noted the increasingly porous nature of governments, with a plurality of policy advice suppliers outside government providing input and advisory services. This includes not only 'traditional' professional public service and political advisors in government, but also non-governmental actors in NGOs, think tanks, and less formal or professional forms of advice from colleagues, friends and relatives and members of the public and political parties, among others (Dobuzinskis, Howlett, & Laycock, 2007; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2007; Maley, 2000). This dispersed advisory capacity combines technical knowledge and political viewpoints in ways that differ from the way advice was thought to be generated, and conceived of, in early thinking on advisory systems based on producer-broker-consumer or autonomy-control considerations.

Following Prince (2007), the contrasting elements of the traditional and contemporary ideal-type models of advice-giving are set out in Table 2 below. The shifts in the nature of state-societal or governance relations and decision-making authority and responsiveness set out in Table 2 have important consequences for thinking about the nature of influence in policy formulation and policy advisory activities.

As noted above, older models relied on a kind of hierarchical or 'vertical' policy advice process in which inside advisors had more influence than outside ones. The emergence of a more pluralized advice giving landscape than had previously existed has challenged any traditional monopoly of policy advice once held by the public service (Page, 2007, 2010; Radin, 2000; Weller & Rhodes, 2001). That is, as authors such as Radin (2000), Prince (2007) and Parsons (2004) among others have argued, the well known 'speaking truth to power' model of policy advice developed in the 1970s (Wildavsky, 1979) has given way in many policy-making circumstances to a more fluid, pluralized, and polycentric advice-giving reality (Parsons, 2004; Prince, 2007).

Professional policy analysts, for example, are now employed not only by government departments and agencies but also by advisory system members external to government, serving as potentially significant sources of substantive or procedural policy advisory content used by policy makers to support existing policy positions or as sources of new advice. For example, private sector consultants perform such tasks as do experts in think tanks, universities, and political parties. All of these may, to varying degrees, be quite capable of providing specific suggestions about factors such as the costs and administrative modalities of specific policy alternatives (Bertelli & Wenger, 2009; Boston et al., 1996; McGann & Sabatini, 2011; Rhodes, Paul t'Hart, & Mirko, 2007).

Table 2
Two idealized models of policy advising.

Elements	Speaking truth to power of ministers	Sharing truths with multiple actors of influence
Focus of policy making	Departmental hierarchy and vertical portfolios	Interdepartmental and horizontal management of issues with external networks and policy communities
Background of Senior Career Officials	Knowledgeable executives with policy-sector expertise and history	Generalist managers with expertise in decision processes and systems
Locus of policy processes	Relatively self-contained within government, supplemented with advisory councils and Royal commissions	Open to outside groups, research institutes, think-tanks, consultants, pollsters, and virtual centers
Minister/deputy minister relations	Strong partnership in preparing proposals with ministers, trusting and taking policy advice largely from officials	Shared partnership with ministers drawing ideas from officials, aides, consultants, lobbyists, think-tanks, media
Nature of policy advice	Candid and confident advice to ministers given in a neutral and detached manner Neutral Competence	Relatively more guarded advice given to ministers by officials in a more compliant or preordained fashion Responsive competence
Public profile of officials	Generally anonymous	More visible to groups, parliamentarians, and media
Roles of officials in policy processes	Confidential advisors inside government and neutral observers outside government Offering guidance to government decision makers	Active participants in policy discussions inside and outside government Managing policy networks and perhaps building capacity of client groups

Source: Reproduced from Prince (2007:179).

Supply and demand rationales have been advanced to explain this externalization dynamic documented in some advisory systems and are explored in this special issue. These explanations include the hypothesis that externalization is a byproduct of attempts by elected officials to secure greater political control and responsiveness over the administration. This involves, among other techniques, the increasing use of exogenous sources of policy advice to weaken a perceived public sector policy advisory monopoly (Dahlström, Peters, & Pierre, 2011; Peters & Pierre, 2004; Weller & Rhodes, 2001). Other analysts contend that globalization and the rise of so-called 'wicked' policy problems have reduced the perceived capability of the public sector to respond to contemporary policy challenges, thus prompting a decline in demand for advice from that source and a concomitant increase in demand for advice from non-governmental sources (Peters & Savoie, 2000). From a supply side perspective it has also been argued that successive public sector reforms have eroded the public sector's capacity to provide timely policy advice (Painter & Pierre, 2005). Or, as some have alleged, there is simply a greater exogenous supply resulting in a more competitive 'marketplace' for policy advice (Boston, 1994; Tiernan, 2011).

The practical implications of such changes in advisory system structure and behavior are obvious. As Anderson (1996) argued, for example, in the contemporary period "a healthy policy-research community outside government can (now) play a vital role in enriching public understanding and debate of policy issues" and can serve as a natural complement to policy capacity within government. This is a view which can be contrasted with Halligan's (1995) earlier admonition that:

> The conventional wisdom appears to be that a good advice system should consist of at least three basic elements within government: a stable and reliable in-house advisory service provided by professional pubic servants; political advice for the minister from a specialized political unit (generally the minister's office); and the availability of at least one third-opinion option from a specialized or central policy unit, which might be one of the main central agencies (p. 162)

3. Politicization: Adding the content dimension to locational models of policy advisory systems

Recent examinations of several components of policy advisory systems such as political parties (Cross, 2007), the media (Murray, 2007) and partisan appointees (Connaughton, 2010a,b; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2010; OECD, 2011) have

also suggested a second dynamic at work which has undermined traditional models of policy advisory systems: ''*politicization*''. That is, it is also the case that many advisors both internal and external to thinking about, and governments, both today and in past years, provide political advice to decision-makers ranging from personal opinion and experience about public opinion and key stakeholder group attitudes and beliefs to explicit partisan electoral advice.

This kind of advice has always been provided by prominent traditional inside actors such as political advisors attached to elected officials and political parties (Connaughton, 2010a,b; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2007; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008; Leal & Hess, 2004), as well as stemming from the public consultation and stakeholder interventions prominent in contemporary governance (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005; Pierre, 1998). Non-governmental sources of policy advice such as think tanks have also become recognized agents of politicization given their potential partisan alignment, and their use by governments to generate support for existing policy preferences or political policy agendas (McGann & Johnson, 2005; Rich, 2004)

Peters and Pierre (2004) rightly point out the lack of specificity often associated with the application of the notion of politicization. They suggest that at its most basic, ''the politicization of the civil service involves the substitution of political criteria for merit-based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards, and disciplining of members of the public service'' (Peters & Pierre, 2004:2). Others have sought to further refine politicization by linking it to specific types of to policy processes and advisory activity (Mulgan, 2007). Following Eichbaum and Shaw (2008) we adopt the notion of 'administrative politicization'. That is, ''an intervention that offends against the principles and conventions associated with a professional and impartial civil service'' (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008).

The growing body of literature on this subject points to the need to incorporate more detailed and nuanced analysis of shifts in the content of policy advice to location-based models of advisory systems (Peters & Barker, 1993). As we have seen, early thinking about the nature of policy advice often contrasted 'political' or partisan-ideological, value-based advice with more 'objective' or 'technical' advice and usually stressed the importance of the latter while ignoring or downplaying the former (Radin, 2000). Policy schools purporting to train professional policy advisors in government, for example, typically provided instruction only on a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques that analysts were expected to use in providing technical advice to decision makers about optimal strategies and outcomes to pursue in the resolution of public problems, downplaying or ignoring political or value-laden issues and concerns (Irwin, 2003; MacRae & Wilde, 1976; Patton & Sawicki, 1993; Weimer & Vining, 2004).

This 'positivist' or 'modern' approach to policy analysis dominated the field for decades (Radin, 2000) and pre-supposed a sharp division between governmental advisors armed with technical knowledge and expertise and non-governmental actors with only non-technical skills and knowledge.[1] As Weller (1987:149) noted long ago, such divisions along administrative and political lines are typical in early thinking related to advice giving, since, as noted above, ''by 'policy' is usually meant technical and professional alternatives or the outcomes of 'objective' or 'rational' analysis. 'Political' is (then) taken to refer to consideration of the likely electoral or media consequences of a course of action. The former is seen as substantive while the other is often regarded as more self-interested''.

Although often implicit, such a 'political' vs 'technical' advisory dichotomy often underlay early locational models of policy advisory systems with advice assumed to become more technical as it moved closer to proximate decision-makers. In the contemporary era, however, the overlapping or juxtaposition of content and location is no longer justified, if it ever was.[2]

The OECD for example has repeatedly found that political advisors in a range of countries are important sources of policy advice and have become established features of advisory systems (OECD, 2007, 2011). Additional studies have also pointed to the important role 'political' advisers can play in the brokerage, coordination, and integration of

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[1] The extent to which this information is used and to what extent it can be considered 'objective' and 'expert' is, of course, a continuing controversy in the policy sciences. See for example Rein and White (1977a, 1977b) and Lindblom and Cohen (1979) and the very similar arguments made 20–25 years later in Shulock (1999) and Adams (2004).

[2] Not only governance studies, but studies of the behavior of specific advisory system actors such as appointed partisan political advisers, for example, have highlighted the irrelevance of these older political vs. administrative distinctions. Early efforts like Walter (1986) confirmed that these kinds of policy advisers often extended advice on policy options and 'paid attention' to the policy agenda, acting as policy 'mobilizers' in the face of policy vacuum or playing a 'catalyst' role in activating a policy process (Walter, 1986:152–154). Later scholars such as Dunn (1997:78–93), too, found that ''political'' advisers played a role in shaping policy through overseeing the policy development process, providing direction, evaluation of policy proposals, and monitoring implementation.

various endogenous and exogenous sources of policy advice to decision makers (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2011; Gains & Stoker, 2011; LSE GV314 Group, 2012; Maley, 2011).

The extent to which this has occurred, however, varies by country and sector. Westminster systems, for example, pride themselves on retaining at least part of the traditional political-administrative dichotomy in policy advice in the form of conventions about civil service neutrality in the specific 'civil service bargain' (Hondeghem, 2011; Hood, 2002; Salomonsen & Knudsen, 2011). Even in this strong case, however, this convention has been eroded. In their study of New Zealand policy advice, for example, Eichbaum and Shaw (2008:343) conceptualize 'procedural' types of politicization that involve political advisor activity that is "intended to or has the effect of constraining the capacity of public servants to furnish ministers with (technical) advice in a free, frank, and fearless manner". This was manifested either when a 'political' adviser "intervenes in the relationship between a minister and his or her officials", or alternatively, due to the conduct of a political adviser that is intended to or which has the effect of "constraining the capacity of officials to tender frank, and fearless advice by intervening in the internal workings of a department" (Eichbaum and Shaw, 2008: 343). They also found many instances of 'substantive politicization', which dealt specifically with "an action intended to, or having the effect of coloring the substance of officials advice with partisan considerations" (Eichbaum and Shaw, 2008: 343–344).

4. A new research agenda: alternate models of advisory systems

The shift from the largely internal, technical, 'speaking truth' policy advising toward the diffuse and fragmented 'sharing of influence' approach paints a picture of contemporary policy advising practices that not only features the pronounced influence of external sources of advise, but the utilization and significance of both technical and political kinds of policy advice but in different degrees and measures in different jurisdictions. And these dual dynamics are linked with a third phenomena; that whatever policy advisory monopoly or hegemony was once held or exercized by professional public service and advisers within government in such systems is no longer assured, or necessarily even common in most.

Changes in contemporary governance arrangements thus speak to shifts in the patterns of policy advisory activity and interaction within advisory systems at both the political and administrative levels, both internally and externally. These are precisely the dynamics that should be taken into account when thinking about advisory systems and are examined in this special issue. Attention to such dynamics facilitates moving beyond a myopic focus exclusively on the effects of such shifts for public sector components and helps move thinking about advisory systems forward. While these supplies will likely remain fundamental to advisory systems, and normative questions regarding their function given such changes are important, a focus on broader systemic dynamics strengthens the comprehensiveness of the comparative analysis of policy work and advice that can be undertaken. Additionally, while the 'sharing truth with multiple actors of influence' model may characterize contemporary policy advisory practices in many jurisdictions, others, for example developing nations, may continue to operate under the 'speaking truth to power' or some hybrid form. This however only further supports a focus on the comparative analysis of the dynamic properties of such systems.

A third theme addressed by articles in this issue concerns structure the impact these two dynamics have on advice system. What does an advisory system look like that features external and political actors alongside internal and technical ones? Explicitly dealing with the content dimensions of policy advice, Connaughton (2010a, 2010b) suggested one possible route to this new mapping (see Fig. 1 below). Focusing her analysis on the activities of advisory actors, she highlighted two content-related dimensions but, significantly, *not* whether advice was partisan or administrative. Rather, whether it involved *substantive or procedural* policy formulation/implementation activities ranging from content-based policy advice activities to procedural policy "steering" or "communications" functions, which could be "technical/managerial" or "political" in nature.

Similarly Prasser, in his studies of Royal Commissions in Australia (2006a), and more generally concerning the nature of policy advice (2006b) also suggested that distinguishing between 'political' and 'non-political' content of policy advice is less insightful than distinguishing between the temporal nature of the advice provided. Here he distinguished between what he termed 'cold', typically long-term and proactive, and 'hot', or short-term and crisis driven, types of advice (see Table 3). Although he noted some overlaps between these categories and the old 'politics' vs. 'administration' divides, the general situation he describes is one in which neither partisan nor civil service actors has an exclusive monopoly of one type of advice.

Attention to the temporal, content, and process-based dimensions can be usefully applied to modeling contemporary advisory system structure and behavior. Together, spatial and temporal comparisons can be used to
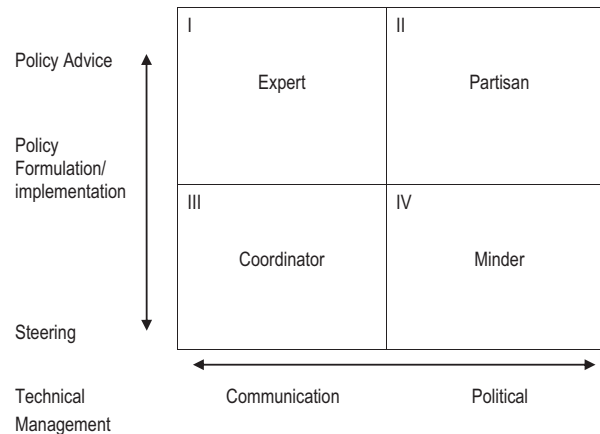
Fig. 1. Connaughton's configuration of advisor roles.

Table 3
Comparing "Cold" and "Hot" advice.

Long-term/anticipatory or "Cold" advice	Short-term/reactive or "Hot" advice
Information based	Relies on fragmented information, gossip
Research used	Opinion/ideologically based
Independent/neutral and problem solving	Partisan/biased and about winning
Long term	Short term
Proactive and anticipatory	Reactive/crisis driven
Strategic and wide range/systematic	Single issue
Idealistic	Pragmatic
Public interest focus	Electoral gain oriented
Open processes	Secret/deal making
Objective clarity	Ambiguity/overlapping
Seek propose best solution	Consensus solution

Source: Prasser (2006b).

differentiate between types of policy advice content in a way that is more useful than older locational models for the conceptualization of the activities of policy advice system actors.

One such possible mapping of advisory system actors based on these twin dimensions, for example, is contained in Table 4. This depiction sheds the spatial focus dominant in orthodox approaches in favor of distinctions based on the *content* of the advice itself. This does not preclude examinations of the point of origin of policy advice or descriptive mapping of the spatial distribution of supply, but shifts the attribution of influence in advisory systems to a congruence of the nature of the policy advice provided and the given issue, as opposed to determinations strictly based on the location or provenance of the advice proffered.

5. Overview of the articles in this special issue

Conceptualizing policy advice systematically, in terms of the configuration of the various constituent elements in any given jurisdiction or policy sector is useful for understanding how those parts interact in systems of advice and influence. Early advisory system modeling facilitated descriptively mapping the various supplies of policy advice along with implicit determinations of their influence in relation to their proximity and autonomy from government. These early models can be strengthened not only through additional focus on the content, or the substantive and procedural dimensions of policy advice, but also through focused attention on the dynamics of how advisory systems change. The articles in this special issue examine both these aspects of policy advisory system structure and behavior.

The articles go beyond this, however, in taking a dynamic approach to the subject. Such an approach, focusing on how advice-giving has changed over time, provides an even more useful conceptual frame to further enable understanding of advisory system activity and their impact on policy-making and policy outcomes.

Table 4
Policy advisory system members organized by policy content.

	Short-term/reactive	Long-term/anticipatory
Procedural	*"Pure" political and policy process advice* *Traditional* Political parties, parliaments and legislative committees (House of Commons, Congress); regulatory agencies; *As well as* Internal as well as external political advisers, interest groups; lobbyists; mid level public service policy analysts and policy managers; pollsters	*Medium to long-term policy steering advice* *Traditional* Deputy ministers, central agencies/executives; royal commissions; judicial bodies *As well as* Agencies, boards and commissions; crown corporations; international organizations (e.g. OECD; ILO, UN)
Substantive	*Short-term crisis and fire-fighting advice* *Traditional* Political peers (e.g. cabinet); executive office political staffs *As well as* Expanded ministerial/congressional political staffs; cabinet + cabinet committees; external crisis managers/consultants; political strategists; pollsters; community organizations/NGOs; lobbyists, media	*Evidence-based policy-making* *Traditional* Statistical agencies/department; senior departmental policy advisers; strategic policy unit; royal commissions *As well as* Think tanks; scientific & academic advisers; open data citizen engagement driven policy initiatives/web 2.0; blue ribbon panels

Source: Authors.

The articles in Part I of this issue are comprised of this general overview as well as an article by Arnost Vesely of Charles University in Prague examining in more detail the subjects of 'externalization' and 'politicization' raised here. These two conceptual works are followed in Part II by five case studies of the activities of key advisory system actors in different countries and sectors linked to these two phenomena.

In her work, Ellen Fobe of the University of Leuven examines the rise of experts groups in Belgium who have come to rival inside actors in their influence on policy advice and policy-making. Her study focuses on the activities and influence of commissions of experts in areas such as education and provides the first interview and survey results detailing their growth, membership and role.

In her contribution, Julia Metz of the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) reports on the results of work undertaken by the research group on 'position formation in the EU Commission' which has studied the nature of advice in the central branches of the European Union government as it has evolved in recent years. She again finds evidence of both externalization and politicization trends and traces their impact through the workings of the Commission government.

This is followed by an article by Karthik Nachiappan of the United Nations Development Programme China who examines the rapid rise of think tanks in China in recent years. This important development reflects an increasing trend toward the use of external advice by Chinese governments but, interestingly, in the effort to offset what is viewed as excessive politicization of advice from internal actors.

Andrea Migone and Michael Howlett from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore then look at the situation in Canada, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom with respect to the very murky world of 'the hidden public service' of policy consultants. They note the data problems which until only very recently have plagued the study of these important external actors and provide some estimates of their size and increasing significance as policy advisors.

Finally Jonathan Craft, from the University of Toronto, examines the situation in Canada with respect to 'professional' political advisors in government or 'political staffers' as they are known there. The different functions played by staffers in brokering policy advice, bridging the gaps between the administration and elected officials and various other sources of policy advice are set out and the influence of staffers vis a vis more traditional actors in the Canadian policy advisory system discussed.

Taken together these studies move forward the discussion and understanding of policy advice systems under pressure from the dual dynamics of externalization and politicization. While more country and sectoral case studies are required before any definitive conclusions can be drawn about the nature of such systems in contemporary

government and governance, these studies go a long way toward improving on existing models and incorporating the latest data and insights into their evaluation and analysis.

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