1 | *Policy Advisory Systems*
An Introduction

High-quality policy advice remains essential for good governance in Westminster systems. However, the types of advice needed, who provides it, how and when have evolved dramatically in Canberra, Ottawa, Wellington and Whitehall. The public service role has been transformed as new advisory units have sprung up in and around government, while other long-standing units have been marginalised. Ministers have come under scrutiny for paying insufficient attention to their officials' best advice while focusing on the short term because of political and media pressures. In a contestable environment, public service advice can matter less and can be replaced by that of consultants, think tanks or political aides in ministers' offices. There are questions about public service capability and whether it is equipped to handle increasingly demanding contexts with fewer resources and ambivalent support. These are not easy questions to probe, and they are made more difficult by the considerable turbulence that has characterised the contemporary policy-making milieu. High-stakes trans-boundary policy challenges such as the global economic downturn, climate change, COVID-19, immigration and Brexit have commanded the attention of decision makers in addition to the enduring challenges of governing.

Policy advice is of course not only a matter of high-stakes policy issues but also an essential ingredient in more day-to-day policy matters at the heart of governing. Programs must be designed, regulations developed, services delivered, policy choices large and small made or postponed. These policy challenges are all unfolding in rather fluid, even chaotic political contexts. Stable two-party majoritarian governments have given way to more frequent coalition and minority governments in all four countries with implications for parliamentary exigencies and policy coalition building (Boston and Bullock, 2010; Hazell and Yong, 2012). The amplification of partisanship and the entrenchment of permanent campaigning have become common factors in the pathology of contemporary Westminster governments that

no longer concentrate on governing after winning elections but function in continuous election mode (Aucoin, 2012; Marland et al., 2018; Diamond, 2019).

More broadly, pressures for transparency, disclosure and 'open government' have become mainstays and formal government policies. In some cases, this leads to paradoxical situations where citizens and policy stakeholders are promised greater consultation and opportunities for participatory engagement but experience dated processes that favour established powerful voices or the invocation of cabinet confidence or state secrecy to mask government activity.

There have always been tensions like these in democratic politics and public administration – as well as world wars, economic crises and policy issues du jour, which have tested the resolve and capacity of governments to govern effectively. Many observers suggest the pace of contemporary governance has increased, with responses required immediately, raising questions about how much space is left for measured consideration and who has the capacity to undertake the considering. Some worry that advice is increasingly restricted to the inner circles, perhaps an inner cabinet, or, worse, a coterie of sycophantic advisers serving an autocratic prime minister (Savoie, 1999, 2008). Yet, as the charges of centralisation of power continue to be made, prime ministers and those at the centre complain about the lack of effective levers for responding to issues and too little influence over a fragmented system that requires infinite coordination. Prime ministers and ministers struggle to cope, let alone advance their agendas, given the byzantine nature of modern policy-making and the rough-and-tumble requirements of politics in a Web-enabled era (Tiernan and Weller, 2010; Dahlstrom et al., 2011; Marrando and Craft, 2017).

Studying Policy Advice 'Systems'

Practitioners and researchers have long recognised the complex ecology of advice that circulates around government and adjusts to the context within which governments govern (Dror, 1984; Plowden, 1987; Peters and Barker, 1993). The notion of a system has more meaning than a structure to those working within it. The public policy system is seen as 'a vast repository of knowledge for policy' that 'covers the relationships and flows of policy relevant knowledge and information among people, organisations and institutions that have policymaking roles

and responsibilities . . . Public policy is the outcome of a complex set of interactions among actors in the system' (IPAA, 2012, 20). These actors include ministers, government departments and agencies, businesses and business organisations, charities and foundations, universities and research institutes, NGOs, consultants and individual citizens. Policymaking occurs within 'a system, rather than a structure, with policy makers acting more as stewards and less as top-down controllers of sharply defined processes' (IPAA, 2012, vi).

The policy advisory system (PAS) has been conceived of as an interlocking set of actors and organisations that provide recommendations for action to policymakers (Halligan, 1995; Craft and Howlett, 2012). This definition has been extensively used, as it captures the plurality of suppliers along with contextual contingencies that may influence how governments navigate the advisory waters.

There are also some important limitations with this definition, which became clear as interviews were conducted with elites inside and outside of government, and in seeking to make sense of the changes that were readily apparent in the composition and operation of these systems. There is a presumption that there is a 'fit' or congruence – and interlocking – of advisory units and practices between the various bodies that engage in advisory activity. This is not invariably the case, as some advisers and advisory practices are in conflict, producing tensions between actors. A healthy tension contributes to dynamism, but it is also a key source of broader conflicts between political and public service elites and between evidence-based policymaking and decision-making based on the interests and values of communities, stakeholders or partisan calculations.

An alternative conception of PAS is of interlocked actors that vary between contexts: sectors, jurisdictions and over time. The important point is the existence of an identifiable system of policy advising that, to a greater or lesser extent, has some coherence and core, secondary and peripheral actors who provide various types of advisory inputs. This notion of a policy advising system has been extensively used in anglophone and European countries because of its value in analysing change (Hustedt and Veit, 2017; Veit, Hustedt and Bach, 2017; OECD, 2017).

Lastly, the notion of systems conjures up a logical and ordered state, similar to the point already made about the interlocking nature of advisory units. Some have pointed out this is misleading and favour alternative terms such as a 'network of advisory bodies' (OECD, 2017).

This is, however, an overly narrow reading of the original intent, which was to eschew the confines of individual advisers and practices and think *systematically* about advice. PAS is therefore conceived as an assemblage of advisory units and practices that exist at a given time with which governments and other actors engage for policy purposes. This captures a wider set of policy advisory work that allows for going beyond the closed deliberations of bureaucrats or prime minister's courts to reflect the push and pull of the demand and supply mediation of advice through various contexts (Savoie, 1999; Rhodes and Tiernan, 2014b; Veselý, 2017; Prince, 2018).

Thinking about advisory systems also blossomed on the cusp of big debates about how much power and influence the state really has any more and the fact that governance, often by semi-autonomous networks, has supplanted the command and control mode of government. The effect has been the decoupling of advisory systems from the dominance of the public service as a unit of analysis (Craft and Wilder, 2017), and shifts from government to governance suggest that the processes of aggregating and brokering community and interest-group aspirations require a different skill set (Mulgan, 2014). Advisory work is about problem definition and framing for the broader policy world, not only for authorised decision makers. It is also about making policy happen, not just figuring out which options are available. There are greater expectations for advisers to position themselves on policy problems and highlight solutions to motivate behaviour from non-governmental actors – firms, citizens, markets, international agencies – or other parts of government. This is not to undervalue government and the public service in particular, but to underscore the environmental reality that government policymakers are not the only audience for policy advice and that broader information wars are a reality of contemporary 'post-truth' Westminster worlds. Disinformation and spin are not new tactics (Hood, 2010; Perl et al., 2018). Several studies involving the four Westminster systems have touched upon issues flagged here but have not drawn on in-depth analysis of policy advice (e.g. Bakvis, 1997; Savoie, 2008; Rhodes, Wanna and Weller, 2009). This book seeks to extend the comparative analysis within a PAS framework to assess how Westminster policy advisory systems are adapting and how various advisers interact and seek to exert influence in policymaking and governance. The book builds on a range of recent developments in policy scholarship that

seek to understand actual patterns of policy analysis and influence and how they differ in jurisdictions with shared administrative traditions. The book is anchored by four key themes that guide the analysis:

1. The place of advisory work in the Westminster administrative tradition;
2. Structural and organisational trends in PAS;
3. Comparative analysis of advisory systems' stability and change over time;
4. Managing PAS and implications for policymaking and governance.

PAS and Westminster Traditions

While the previous section makes clear that government is not the only advisory game in town, there is still an important set of conditions and practices that shape how policy advice works in and around government. A first step in understanding context is to comprehend the governance arrangements that exist in a Westminster system. As detailed in Chapter 2, the Westminster administrative tradition is not a firm set of rules but rather a set of shared principles and practices, some more defined than others, which guide how politicians, public servants and others engage in advisory activity and exchanges. The examination of the four classic Westminster systems means that there are some important differences in how the PAS is organised and operates given broader choices about Westminster traditions and country-specific contexts and institutional designs.

The distinctive quality of the anglophone administrative tradition is that it both facilitates and constrains change, a combination that distinguishes it from other traditions and which has played an important role in the modernisation process. This tradition can both enable extensive reform and constrain change where it departs significantly from accepted understandings. The constraints derive from the Westminster model as well as routines and conventions that emerge from experiential learning, while the pragmatism has its origins in British administrative style. A significant trend during the reform era has been the apparent reification of the potential of instrumentalism and pragmatism as governments rose to new levels of reformism.

Managerialism (or new public management) has been most associated with anglophone countries because of their early experiments

and where this reform agenda reached its apogee. At the same time, the role of the political executive was being transformed, leading to a redistribution of roles and responsibilities, particularly for policy advice. Both developments were facilitated by the flexibilities in the anglophone administrative tradition (Halligan, 2015, 2020). The consequences of managerialism and politicisation are central to the provision of advice in the evolving policy advisory systems.

At this point it can be noted that the inner contradictions of the administrative tradition have exposed significant tensions and dilemmas with major implications for advisory systems (Pierre 1995; Marrando and Craft, 2017). On the one hand, the tradition has enabled unparalleled reform and flexibility, often centred on maximising further flexibilities and few constraints; but, on the other hand, core elements of both the tradition, and Westminster more generally, have been modified, and fluidity in understandings has fostered ambiguity. The consequences have been disruptive in both senses of the word: preventing progress and effectiveness; and facilitating innovation (Halligan, 2020).

Structure and Operational Trends in PAS

A major aim of this book is to better describe and analyse the state of play with the public service in the twenty-first century and other types of internal and external advisory categories, as well as to improve how they can be analysed and compared. The main actors and advisers' roles and relationship to government are provided in Table 1.1. The actors are generally identifiable because of their formal position or high profile. It has not been possible to cover all the different sources of advice, particularly those that are less tangible. For example, academics, chief science advisers and lobbyists are not examined in detail given data limitations and comparability issues. The inclusion of the relationship to government is not intended to promote the government as the central unit of analysis but rather to help underscore the significance of change with respect to both government organisation and operation and the broader PAS changes set out in the book.

Table 1.1 underscores the significant flexibilities that are prominent in Westminster traditions given the ambiguities and discretion noted earlier. Both structural aspects and operational considerations have characterised recent Westminster PAS. This book details, for instance,

Table 1.1 *Components of policy advisory systems and relationships and roles as policy advisers*

Component	Role	Relationship to government	Issues and questions
Prime minister	Strategic leadership & policy direction	Epitomises the government	Influence of PM's style
Ministers	Policy leadership	Dependent on PM's style	Results of interventions and policy priorities
Departments	Advice provider and organiser; implementation	Dependent and self-generating	Decline in policy role; processing other advice
Central agencies	Policy coordination	Prime minister's department central role	Variable central roles and relationships with PMO
Prime minister's office	Political control	Supports prime minister	Extent of policy role and influence
Ministerial advisers	Political advice and management	Agent and surrogate of employer (minister or government)	Extent of policy role and influence
Government inquiries	Advice to minister or government	Dependent on government for initiation & existence	Depends on what sort of inquiry and level of independence
Government authorities	Specialised advice	Independence depends on funding & referrals	Impact of newer agencies
Parliamentary committees & bodies	Independent advice; reports of inquiries	Depends on source of referrals	Variations in capacity, autonomy, policy impact
Consultants	External expert, specialist advice	Commissioned advice	Providing knowledge & legitimacy for policy
Think tanks	Ideas, analysis, advocacy	Usually independent if not funded	How to demonstrate impact
International bodies	Advice, binding international agreements; coordination and crisis management	Government membership/ signatories to agreements; dependence in times of crisis	How to register impact and implications of influence on domestic PAS actors and levers

clear structural changes to the size and composition of public services, the institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation of some actors and advisory bodies, such as the addition of parliamentary budget offices, and the widespread increase in the number and influence of ministers' partisan advisers. Orthodox assumptions regarding the way advice is generated, circulated and consumed by decision makers is now in question, with developments that suggest departures in practice as well. The bilateralism of minister–senior-official relations is no longer exclusive with a range of other advisers on call or seeking or requiring attention. The public's expectations have evolved, and there have been attempts to open up policy processes through freedom of information regimes and more participatory and 'open' forms of policymaking. Pre-internet era advisory practices of pen and paper and briefing binders full of departmental advice are being replaced by tablets and e-briefing systems. Google searches and WhatsApp texting chains have moved into the executive suite, raising further implications for PAS.

Stability and Change to Advisory Systems over Time

The focus on policy advisory systems is helpful for recognising that a number of policy advisory components exist (e.g. types of policy advisers, advice and advisory practices) and that important distinctions can characterise their respective configurations and operation across jurisdictions and domains (Craft and Wilder, 2016; Craft and Halligan, 2017). Systems can be used to differentiate various dimensions for analysis, such as simple or complex, organised or disorganised (Snyder, 1993; Jervis, 1997). Policy advisory systems can be analysed over time and compared according to the degree to which they are closed or open, hierarchical or horizontal, centralised or decentralised, and considering the relative importance of the main units. In addition, advisory systems facilitate a dynamic and interactive frame for understanding how advisory components interact and how such systems may themselves change over time (Aberbach and Rockman, 1989; Craft and Howlett, 2013; van den Berg, 2017).

A primary focus in this book is providing a characterisation of each advisory system and comparison of the PAS of the four Westminster countries. This is undertaken for the main dimensions of PAS addressed as well as contextual features such as the administrative tradition. This study examines the similarities and differences that characterise

Westminster PAS, how they have evolved and the variations within the anglophone tradition. Where are Westminster principles the strongest, and where are they eroding from a policy advisory perspective? These four cases are often subject to anglophone stereotypes characterised by the primary change dynamics of externalisation from public service suppliers to external, namely consultant and think tank advisers, and by politicisation of PAS driven by ministers seeking greater congruence of advice with political and policy objectives, often secured by the increased use of partisan advisers working for ministers (Rhodes, Wanna and Weller, 2009; Craft and Howlett, 2013; Veselý, 2013). Evidence of this is apparent in the book, but it is qualified and nuanced. As detailed in the following chapters, closer inspection points to important variations in how these systems have evolved, when and why.

Managing PAS and Implications for Policymaking and Governance

The first of two questions concerns the extent to which, and in what ways, governments can manage PAS. It is unclear how often governments think strategically – or holistically – about an entity approximating PAS as opposed to significant components of it. Even then, decisions may reflect short-term political needs and choices about a ready means for achieving policy objectives rather than the consequences for the functioning of PAS. The reliance on one source rather than another has consequences, often unintended, which become apparent in the medium or long term (such as the rundown of internal capability or the budget blowout of external contracts). Governments can alter PAS through austerity programs, stymie open government and close down forms of public engagement. They can favour particular sources of advice to the relative exclusion of others, which can include bypassing public service advice. They can expand or contract greatly the use of partisan advisers, strengthen the centre of government for policy purposes or devolve roles to departments or beyond. It is also commonplace to govern on a 'whole-of-government' basis. Much depends on the myriad decisions made by ministers and departments about whether to source advice internally or to buy it.

The burgeoning PAS is a product of governments extending their advisory processes outward, but increasingly it concerns societal interests seeking to be part of the policymaking process. The discretion and

change that have been suggested earlier in this chapter raise important questions about how the PAS can be better organised and, in the face of less government control over its moving parts, how it can be managed. This raises implications for policymaking and governance of the different approaches to policy advisory systems. These can be quite profound, including a range of effects, such as problems with the supply of policy advice, the quality of advice and reconciling demand and supply.

Contestability has become pervasive and prevails, not only in terms of how modern Westminster systems are now set up but also between departments with specialised units and hierarchical chains of command, constant stakeholder and media scrutiny, and the centre's management of policy processes and strategic direction. Parliamentary committees, auditors general and the media have all seized on significant expenditures to 'external' advisers – and questioned the close links between governments and some policy think tanks.

These systems also require considerable coordination. The fragmentation of policy advice due to new suppliers and advisory needs means governments are now forced to reconcile a broader range of advice within and outside of government. The ensuing chapters detail different strategies and choices with respect to how coordination is sought and, similarly, how ministers and governments have sought to secure political control. There are also persistent questions about how much control government can actually exert any more, as policy and advisory activity often unfolds in arenas and networks less responsive to command and control approaches that may have once worked well. These developments have fueled official reviews and attempts to gain more perspective on how well these systems are serving the needs of contemporary Westminster governments (e.g. Scott, 2010; OECD, 2017) and what is – and can be – done to address their shortcomings.

Main Arguments

The main arguments advanced are linked to the key lenses of analysis set out in this chapter and engaged with throughout the book. Firstly, the policy advisory system is argued to be more dynamic and complex than is currently depicted in the PAS literature. The predominance of the public service as the unit of analysis in PAS research has led to a dominant focus on externalization and politicisation vis-à-vis the public service, at the expense of broader reflections on these dynamics

and the condition of the system itself (Craft and Wilder, 2017). In some cases, these are addressed in studies of PAS components and governance trends (e.g. Boston, 2016, 2017).

Secondly, the book argues that politicisation and externalisation continue to be important dynamics in PAS change but that greater care needs to be taken in explaining their drivers, sustaining factors, manifestations and constraints. There is clear evidence to support several forms of each, with implications for how PAS operates. These dynamics are reflections of the leadership in government, the available alternatives outside of the public service and the context within which they operate. This is particularly the case for PAS in Westminster systems that are themselves based on a significant degree of interpretation and ambiguity. Ministers differ in how they have sought political control, ranging from greater reliance on external consultants to expanding ministerial offices and strengthening central agencies to support the prime ministers, or to the impacts of intra-executive politics on how cabinet operates and the constraints both formal and informal that have limited political control. Similarly, while externalisation is, on a longer time scale, a property of all of these cases, there are differences in the type of externalisation and in some cases the demise of the public service as principal, though not exclusive adviser are overstated. These and unique trajectories for PAS change are broached to broaden the frame of reference against which the change of these systems is understood. Similarly, the types of change are linked to different orders of change, to better reflect that PAS involves both transformational changes associated with system-wide and contextual developments linked to overarching governance arrangements, such as the advent of political advisers or the interpretation of the merit principle of the public service, as well as a range of day-to-day changes that can be important for advice activity and systems.

A third argument is that parallel processes have been operating to both increase flexibility in the advice instruments under political control and expand the range of independent agencies. The first trend is at the behest of governments wanting short- to medium-term reviews. The second is the diverse range of sources of advice and expertise that have emerged inside government but not necessarily as part of a government-inspired design for enhancing PAS.

Rather, they have been created because issues of the day demand more independent capacity for developing policy.

Finally, PAS change, in these four cases, has been primarily gradual and endogenous in nature in two respects: the country context and the anglophone group. In all four countries most change is not abrupt or transformational; although that does occur, *most* PAS change unfolds over long periods of time. Leaving aside acute ruptures, such as Brexit and global financial downturns, PAS can become affected by lesser crises and the impact of successive attempts to reform PAS as part of broader managerial and public sector reforms (Aucoin, 1995; Lodge and Gill, 2011; Halligan, 2020).

Contemporary Westminster Policy Advisory Systems

The discussion has pointed to a more expansive understanding of the policy advisory system that takes into account the complexities of public policy in plural and activist societies. This is one that acknowledges the continuing authority and centrality of government but recognises the multitude of changes that criss-cross society. At the macro level, several dimensions of an evolving policy advisory system are identified (see Table 1.2). These have been derived from analysis of trends and the direction of change evident in the several literatures on political advisers, the policy advisory system, governance and executive politics (e.g. Craft and Howlett, 2012; Lodge and Wegrich, 2014; Craft and Wilder, 2017; Eichbaum and Shaw, 2018; Prince, 2018; Halligan, 2020), although several dimensions have been devised for this framework.

The shift from government towards governance remains debated, but the formulation here envisages the state as central out of necessity, as well as inclination, but having to acknowledge a pluralist PAS that may potentially become more multi-centric. The public service is still regarded as a focal point for multiple actors and networks. The conception of PAS as interlocking is associated with the traditional dominant ministers and public servants where actors generally knew their place and were substantially enclosed at the core of a tightly drawn PAS. Under the emergent system, capability is distributed more between intra- and

Table 1.2 *Policy advisory system: dimensions and directions of change*

Dimension	Traditional	Emergent
Focus	Centred on core public service and ministers	Issue-driven and PM/minister-centric; multiple actors and networks
Politicisation	Limited	Pervasive, a central dynamic of PAS
Externalisation	Limited	Central but contingent dynamic of PAS
Capability	Concentrated	Dispersed
Advisory sources	Formalised and narrow	Flexibility in choice; broad
Contestability of advice	Limited	Standard practice
Accessibility	Closed	Selectively open
Coordination of advice	Routine, narrow confines	Multifarious and highly demanding
Commissioning	Confined	Diverse range: consultants & reviewers
State centricity	High	State focus, responsive to society & international pressures
PAS interlocking	Tight	Loose, interacting and bespoke
Elasticity of PAS	Circumscribed	Expandable
Time frame	short-medium-long term	Short-term emphasis with episodic and ad hoc longer-term focus

extra-government organisations, the latter including several forms of commissioned policy work.

Finally, the emergent policy advisory system is expandable, as the demands of additional and new types of actors compete for attention and expect responses from decision makers.

There are various degrees of 'emergence'. Some are fairly well established while others are 'emerging', and the long-term impact is indeterminate. There are also counter-tendencies in the sense of political leaders who might subvert openness, control access, redact reports and even contract the PAS. The lack of stable government because of fissiparous parties is one of many complicating factors.

Research Design and Plan for the Book

The rationale for the country selection is provided in Chapter 2. The book is based on over sixty interviews with senior public servants, ministers, political staff and select external advisers carried out in 2017 and 2018. The interviews were designed to test and probe existing accounts and to update and confirm characterisations of PAS in the four cases. Almost all were taped and transcribed, typically on a not-for-attribution basis. A full list of interviews is provided in Appendix A. These interviews complemented other interviews the authors have undertaken over the past decade with similar actors (see Craft 2016, 2017; Halligan, 2020).

Additionally, the book represents a rigorous engagement with a sprawling set of secondary literatures that tackle individual aspects of PAS. Staffing figures, budget allocations and basic advisory system compositions have long been scattered in a range of different sources. For instance, descriptions and analysis of ministers and political advisers in discreet countries have become available in the 2010s (Maley, 2011; Hazell and Yong, 2012; Rhodes and Tiernan, 2014a, 2014b; Craft, 2016; Shaw and Eichbaum, 2018a), and their analyses and interpretations are used to support the comparative analysis.

The examination of Westminster PAS begins with the backdrop of the broader administrative tradition of Westminster that has fundamentally shaped, and continues to influence, the broad PAS practices in the four cases, as well as the country-specific developments that are subsequently examined. Chapter 2 situates the cases within their overarching administrative tradition, and this overview and comparative context addresses the shared fundamental features of the Westminster-type system and the constituent features of government pertinent to policy advisory systems. It compares public organisation and structures and unique characteristics, focusing on the organisation of the political executives, machinery of government, ancillary public sector advisory agents (e.g. parliamentary, commissions of inquiry). Attention is also given to unique characteristics of the cases, such as distinct patterns of public sector reform that have implications for policy advice and the role of central agencies vis-à-vis departments.

Chapter 3 addresses the prevailing approaches that have become established perspectives through which to understand how policy advisory systems are organised and operate. Some have focused on

distributional and locational issues of where policy advice is produced in proximity to government, while others have focused on the location of policy advisory supplies and government control over them, content dimensions of policy advice and how policy advisory systems have changed. Chapters 4 through 7 focus on the principal PAS units, providing comparative insights about key developments and current conditions.

The changing position of the public service is examined in Chapter 4 within the context of the expansion in ministers' policy roles. As the political executive assumed policy leadership, a stronger emphasis has been placed on contestability of advice and increasing use of other advisory sources. The common pattern of policy capacity erosion and the effects on public service roles and relationships is analysed.

Chapter 5 explores the politically appointed staffs who work in ministers' offices. Attention is paid to both prime ministers' and ministers' office staff with respect to how they are used to secure political control, provide additional policy capacity and engage with other PAS units. While clearly influential in all four cases, comparative analysis showcases the flexibility of PAS and the diversity of interpretations of Westminster traditions. In Chapter 6, alternative internal, but non–public service, sources of policy advice are addressed. These cover parliamentary committees, commissions of inquiry, and other traditional and emergent alternatives to the public service that remain within the broader public sector. The externalisation dynamic widely attributed to these four systems is analysed in Chapter 7. Two major external advisory units have become established actors in the contemporary Westminster PAS, think tanks and private sector consultants, although the propensity to use them varies between contexts.

Chapters 8 and 9 analyse the patterns and types of change as well as the state and condition of the respective systems. Chapter 8 leverages the comparative analysis to provide a richer understanding of the types and nature of change by drawing attention to system-wide and localised change to particular advisory instruments or their settings. It highlights some distinct types of changes and focuses on the shared and distinct trajectories that have impacted the configuration and operation of these systems.

Chapter 9 returns to country-level appraisals, taking stock of idiosyncratic PAS configurations and their implications for policymaking.

It profiles the distinctive features of the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and United Kingdom advisory systems, presents some areas of reform undertaken by governments and concludes with reflections on the implications for policymaking flowing from the changed PAS. Ultimately, there are major questions to be asked about how much more effective the advisory systems have become and the impact on the quality of public policy when countervailing pressures are present.

The main categories used to depict PAS some twenty years ago remain discernable, but their composition and how actors within them engage in the practices of giving advice have in many ways evolved. There is also the added benefit of new approaches and perspectives that help enrich how we think about advisory activity and the systems that exist to serve decision makers and society more broadly. If decision makers are going to make informed decisions, a proposition that may be more in doubt than in the past, then it is important to think about how these systems work and change within the shared administrative tradition.