

“Greek Ministerial Advisers and Policy Making”

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Abstract

The aim of the present contribution is to examine the policy making role of Greek ministerial advisers. Given the lack of prior empirical work on the issue, the objective is to add the empirical examination of a new case in the literature. This is achieved by locating the Greek ministerial cabinet adviser phenomenon within the ministerial cabinet tradition, as well as putting forward a classification using typologies according to policy roles, policy advice activities based on the nature and dimension of advice, content of advice and finally the policy cycle. The contribution in hand was designed as a single country, small N, comparative study. Data was collected for the 2010 – 2013 period, using a mixed methods approach: a questionnaire survey on 28 advisers, semi-structured interviews with two Ministers and four senior civil servants, and document analysis. The argument put forward in the study is that Greek ministerial advisers form a case of agents active in a politicized advisory system, as found in ministerial cabinets. Based on the evidence in hand Greek ministerial advisers have been classified as coordinators, being predominantly generalists, with a main focus on management of the government program, providing “hot”, pure political and policy process advice, as well as short term crisis and fire-fighting advice. Greek ministerial advisers appear to be political without being overtly partisan. They are primarily managers focusing on policy steering rather than experts focusing on technical policy making. Moreover, they provide for vertical, within the Ministry’s departments, coordination, resorting to horizontal coordination mainly with advisers at other Ministries. Finally, they deal predominantly with the front end of policymaking, enjoying a high leverage in agenda setting and policy formulation. Greek ministerial advisers, though, are also highly active in the back end of the policy cycle in particular implementation and evaluation, reflecting both their project-management coordinator role, as well as the central role ministerial cabinets exercise in policy making.

Keywords: political advisers, policy advisers, ministerial cabinet systems, policy advisory systems

Introduction

Political advisers, the so called third party in political-administrative relations, are nowadays “prominent actors in top political positions” (Schreurs et al 2010, p. 19). Not only are they “engaged in fulfilling the responsibilities of the political executive”, they also “enjoy a share in the policy process” (Schreurs 2010, p. 19). Indeed they are central players in policy advice giving (Craft 2011, p. 9). There are good reasons why this is happening. Ministers, combining various competences and having a big work load, lack time to perform every activity by themselves and therefore need a person they can trust to support them and even replace them at times (Vancoppenolle 2011, p. 6). More importantly, ministerial advisers may address gaps in policy capabilities and capacity (Connaughton 2010, p. 349, Eichbaum and Shaw 2010, p. 21) or coordinate outside sources of advice in more pluralized, horizontal policy advice landscapes (Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 84, 88). As such, advisers might be considered a variable in the equation of responsive government and good governance (Eichbaum and Shaw 2010).

Nevertheless, the advent of political advisers in the central political stage has not been without problems. Since the beginning of the 21st century, political advisers in OECD countries have increasingly come under the spotlight of the media and the public’s attention. Despite being an embedded and overall legitimate actor of public life since the late ‘70s, their role has been largely controversial (Connaughton 2010, p. 349). Concerns about the “people who live in the dark” have primarily been raised due to their growing numbers, their lack of accountability, the way they operate (spin-doctoring), their policy influence at times associated with “responsive incompetence”, as well as the opacity of their status (Blick, 2004, p. 7–9, Eichbaum and Shaw 2010, p. 20, OECD 2011, p. 1).

In Greece too, public concern over the role of advisers has not been limited. Media reporting on the growing numbers and costs of advisers has been in the front line, especially since the outbreak of the debt crisis in 2009. There are indeed risks to be managed. These risks, among others, relate to budgetary costs and democratic accountability, but also to the autonomy of the civil service and the responsiveness of government (Eichbaum & Shaw 2010, p. 9). According to the literature, advisers can either be a threat or an opportunity for effective government and good governance (Connaughton 2010, p. 350). In this sense, the study of political advisers becomes of importance in any democratic polity.

Not surprisingly, a great amount of the recent academic literature has been dedicated to the consequences of advisers’ activities on accountability (OECD 2010, 2011). The current study is not interested in this aspect, important as this might be. The aim of the present contribution is to examine the nature and roles of Greek ministerial advisers, particularly in the policy making process. Given the absence of any previous empirical work on Greek ministerial advisers, our overall objective is to add the empirical examination of a new case in the literature.

We designed our study as a single-country, small N, comparative study. It is comparative because it uses concepts and typologies applicable to other countries and seeks to make larger inferences as to the policy making activities of ministerial advisers in ministerial cabinet systems (Landman 2003, p.34). As such, single country studies like the present in hand may be “considered as part of the larger comparative public administration research enterprise” (Brans 2003, p. 425). Given its classificatory nature, the present contribution does not put forward an explanatory hypothesis. On the contrary, our hypothesis here is that Greek ministerial advisers form a case of agents active in a politicized advisory system, as found in ministerial cabinets. In view of this, data have been collected using a mixed methods approach, aiming to take as many views on the phenomenon under investigation as possible. First, we surveyed a sample of 28 ministerial advisers in the Ministry for Development in the period 2010-2013. Then, we interviewed two Ministers for Development and

four senior civil servants. We also used document analysis in order to describe the legal framework on Greek ministerial cabinets and advisers.

We present our material as follows. First, provide an overview of the literature on Greek ministerial advisers in order to show the depth and width of the empirical gap that needs to be covered. Second, we present our research design. This includes the aims and objectives of the present study, the theoretical framework, especially the typologies we will be using, our choice of sample and the methods for collecting our data. Limitations and problems of the current research will also be presented. Third, we quickly provide a short account of the wider aspects of the Greek ministerial adviser phenomenon in comparison to other OECD countries, while we also sketch the politico-administrative context in which Greek ministerial advisers operate. Fourth, we present a descriptive profile of the Greek ministerial adviser based on our sample of advisers. Fourth, we present the main findings of our survey and construct our typologies. Finally, we conclude with revisiting our research question and providing an overview, as well as a discussion of our findings, also providing leads for future research.

1. Ministerial advisers in Greece: what do we know?

Review of the existing literature on Greek ministerial advisers, shows that the particular field of study has been seriously under-researched. Despite public concern over their actions, little attention has been paid thus far as to the roles, background, expertise and policy activities these actors perform as a collective. The recent OECD (2011) survey on ministerial advisers did not include Greece in the sample of 27 countries under examination. What we know on Greek political advisers, we learn it primarily from studies on the transformation of the top civil service (Tsekos 1986), the evolution of political-administrative relations (Sotiropoulos 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007, Spanou 2001, 2008), and to a lesser extent from studies on the roles of experts in various specific policy fields (Ladi 2005, 2007). According to the literature:

- Ministerial advisers were institutionalized for the first time in 1976 (Tsekos 1986, p. 188-189)
- There is a growing number of political advisers since 1981 after the abolition of the posts of Director Generals (Law 1232/1982), under Law 1320/1983, and later under the reorganization of the Political Offices of the Minister to Cabinets in 1985 (Tsekos 1986, Sotiropoulos 1999, 2007, Spanou 2001).
- Ministerial cabinets in Greece are structured along French lines (Sotiropoulos 1999, p. 15).
- After a confrontational start between politicians and top bureaucrats over ministerial advisers' role in the early eighties, advisers are now widely considered as the third party of what Spanou (2001, p. 109-110) has coined as a "symbiotic" politico-administrative relationship. That is a mutually beneficial exchange between politicians and top bureaucrats, where top civil servants give political submission in return for initiated reforms.
- Politicians act as policy initiators and consequently have a great need for professional experts (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 33). Thus they rely on their advisers as well as on other temporary political staff (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 32).
- Senior civil servants are "unlikely to be valued sources of political and public policy advice" (Page, Wright 2007, p. 233). Under normal "Weberian" conditions the politician would find himself in the position of the "dilettante" who stands opposite the "expert". In the case of Greece the situation is reversed. Policy wise, top bureaucrats remain amateurs in anything but legal advice giving (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 32-33).
- Thus top bureaucrats are excluded from the formulation of most reforms, which require long term strategic planning (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 32).

- However, as Spanou (2008, p. 163) informs us, ministerial cabinets in Greece have neither the expertise nor the policy capacity of the French “Cabinets Ministériels”. Nevertheless, they tend to play an important role in policy making, because they are mostly “staffed by persons that enjoy the minister’s political and personal trust” (Spanou 2008, p. 163)

2. Research design: theory and methods

Given the absence of any prior empirical work on Greek ministerial advisers and in view of the stated aims and objectives of the present study we formed the following research question: what is the nature and role, particularly the policy making role, of the Greek ministerial adviser? We answer the question by putting forward a classification of the Greek ministerial adviser’s roles and activities in policy making. The present paper is part of a larger research project, which ran from December 2012 to April 2013 and was recently submitted as a Master Thesis on Greek ministerial advisers for the needs of the MEPP program at KU Leuven. The project was driven by the above mentioned fundamental research question, but also by the following research sub-questions:

- a) What is the history and evolution of the adviser phenomenon in Greece?
- b) What is the statutory framework for Greek ministerial advisers?
- c) How do Greek ministerial advisers compare to their colleagues in OECD countries and countries with ministerial cabinet systems in relation to wider aspects beyond the legal framework?
- d) What is the descriptive profile (age, gender, education, expertise) of the Greek ministerial adviser?
- e) How can Greek ministerial advisers policy making work be assessed according to existing typologies?

2.1 Theory

In order to escape the fallacy of a non-comparative, “atheoretical”, “interpretative” or “configurative-idiographic” study the present paper relies on the use of concepts and typologies applicable to other countries (Landman 2003, p. 34). Classification is a “necessary component of systematic comparison”, though of a higher level than contextual description since “it seeks to group many separate descriptive entities into simpler categories” (Landman 2003, p. 4). We classify advisers’ policy making involvement according to existing typologies by:

- a) “Policy advisory roles”. Here we use Conaughton’s (2010) four type classification model, according to which an adviser may be classified as expert, partisan, coordinator or minder.
- b) “Dimension and nature of advice”. Here we use Craft’s (2011) four type classification model of policy advice giving activities, according to which advisers may be classified as belonging to the administrative/horizontal type I, the partisan/horizontal type II, the administrative/vertical type III and the partisan vertical type IV. Despite being an early attempt at classification the typology is useful in that it gives us the benefit of looking into the degree of horizontality of the dimension of advisers’ policy activities.
- c) “Content of advice”. Here we use Craft and Howlett’s (2012) four type classification model, according to which an adviser may be seen as offering pure political and policy process advice, medium to long term policy steering advice, short term crisis and fire-fighting advice, evidence based policy making
- d) “Policy cycle stage”. A further way to achieve a more systematic interpretation of ministerial advisers’ policy advice activity is to link their activities to the discrete stages of the policy cycle. In

this way we can locate the stages where political advisers appear to be most active. For the present study we will use the five stages of the policy cycle presented by Howlett, Ramesh and Perl (Howlett et al 2009): a) agenda setting where problems are recognized, b) policy formulation where alternative solutions and proposals are formed, c) decision making where solutions are chose, d) policy implementation where solutions are put into effect, e) policy evaluation where results are been monitored.

2.2 Methods

We designed the present study as a single-country, small N, comparative study. It is comparative because it uses concepts and typologies applicable to other countries and seeks to make larger inferences as to the policy making activities of ministerial advisers in ministerial cabinet systems (Landman 2003, p.34). Having chosen the road of classification, the study in hand does not frame an explanation driven hypothesis. We rather hypothesize that Greek ministerial advisers form a case of agents active in a politicized advisory system as found in ministerial cabinets.

Our case here is Greece and the period under investigation 2010 to 2013. Data were drawn from three sources. First, we ran a 28-item survey with both forced-choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed in the beginning of February 2013 to advisers in two ministerial cabinets, under two different successive Ministers in the Greek Ministry for Development in the period 2010 to 2013. In the first cabinet the questionnaire was distributed directly to 44 advisers. In the second cabinet, the questionnaire was distributed via the cabinet's chief of staff. We were never informed about the exact number of advisers that have received the questionnaire. Overall, we received completed questionnaires from 28 advisers (n = 28). From those, 23 came from the first ministerial cabinet, while 5 came from the second one. With 23 responses out of 44 distributed questionnaires, the response rate for the former is 52%. With only 5 responses from the latter, the response rate is very low. We estimate it to be below 10% of the total number of the Cabinet's advisers at the time. This, of course, is a result not to have been expected at such a scale and poses a limitation to our research. From the sample of 28 advisers 17 are no longer working as advisers, while 11 are currently working in various ministerial cabinets from the Ministry for Development to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. As a second source of collecting data and in order to take as many perspectives as possible on the phenomenon under investigation, we conducted six semi-structured interviews with members of the two groups with whom advisers work most closely: two ministers and four senior civil servants at the level of Director General and Director. The interviews took place in early February 2013 in Athens, Greece. Third, data on the Greek statutory framework were collected using document analysis and secondary analyses presented in the literature and reports like the recent OECD (2011) study on ministerial advisers.

Finally, we need to stress at this point that the study suffers from certain limitations. The first and most important one, already mentioned above, is a very low rate of return in responses from advisers in one of the two ministerial cabinets of our sample. It may be argued that this may hinder the generalisability of our findings. Knowing from the start that we had limited time resources, which would constrain us from distributing the questionnaire to more advisers in case of low response problems, we have tried to predict for such risks in advance. The pre-emptive measures we took are the following. First, we made sure we took semi-structured interviews from both Ministers and senior civil servants in order to triangulate our data. Second, except for reasons of easy access, we have chosen the Ministry for Development, because its ministerial cabinet comprises a larger than average number of advisers, having merged the Cabinets of two and later three previously independent Ministries. Looking at the Ministry for Development we focus, single-handedly, on a large enough sample of advisers from a series of previously independent civilian, non-special corps organised Greek Ministries and thus gain in generalisability in terms of the population we want to generalise to. Finally, a second problem in the study at hand is the moving sand conditions that the

debt crisis in Greece is creating. From October 2009 to June 2012 there have been five different Ministers for Development and four different governments. From those governments, one was technocratic and one care taker. From the ministers, one minister was a technocrat. In order to account for this problem we have chosen two political ministers with a significant political history whose appointment was not the result of pre-electoral emergency.

3. Wider aspects of the Greek ministerial adviser phenomenon

In the present section we offer a brief but compact comparison of the phenomenon of Greek ministerial advisers and in particular its common trends with other OECD countries. In addition, we sketch the politico-administrative context in which Greek advisers operate. The ministerial cabinet system is argued to give rise to certain trends that are different in comparison to other systems and politico-administrative traditions.

3.1 Comparing Greek ministerial advisers to their counterparts in the OECD: common trends

Comparison of our data on Greek ministerial advisers to OECD data (2011) on the phenomenon of advisers in other OECD countries shows that there exist certain common fundamental trends across the board. As in the OECD 27 country sample, in Greece too:

- a) Advisers' appointment is at the sole discretion of the Minister who according to our interviews selects advisers personally regarding "trust and personal chemistry" as an essential criterion. Even more importantly though the Minister wants advisers to "understand politics as the art of the feasible", if needed have "awareness and knowledge of a specific policy portfolio in certain fields" as well as "ability to be fast and efficient learners".
- b) Advisers' job description is not defined in legislation. It is the Minister who assigns job descriptions based on the ministry's competencies, according to departmental (i.e. "oversight of the general secretariat of industry"), functional (i.e. "media and communications"), policy portfolio (i.e. "export policy", "digital convergence") or policy project (i.e. "acceleration of NSRF absorption rates") based criteria or a combination of all these.
- c) The employment framework (pay scale, grade) is streamlined to civil service rules. In the Greek case this is done via Presidential Decree 63/2005.
- d) Ministers appear to value the fact that advisers act as accelerators of the government machine: According to Minister A:

"[The adviser] speeds up the policy process, facilitating its implementation... Essentially he acts as a multiplier and an accelerator, fast and in a wide range of areas... The adviser is the timing belt, the gear that connects the crankshaft to the camshaft, making the government machine work on time". [Own translation]

At the same time, as with 47% of the respondents in the OECD country sample, senior civil servants in Greece appear to consider the facilitation of communication between the Minister and public servants as important. According to respondent 3, a senior civil servant:

"The adviser is the intermediary between the Minister and the public services. The Minister gives directions and the adviser communicates them to the departments" [Own translation]

e) The working boundaries with the civil service are blurred. In Greece, tensions between senior civil servants and politicians over the role of advisers in the '80s resulted to top civil servants resorting to the supreme administrative court of Greece, the Council of State (Symvoulío tis Epikrateias), in order keep political advisers at bay (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 21). The court ruled that advisers can play no role in state executive functions (Council of State 1997). Legislation too makes it explicitly clear that advisers shall not have executive powers and they cannot command the administration. Nevertheless, the working boundaries between the actors though are still defined in an ad hoc way. Advisers might not have the right to sign documents or letters on behalf of ministers, but they still may de facto issue instructions to civil servants or manage them especially in view of the timely completion of a project. Indeed, 32.1% of the respondents in our sample of advisers have stated to be managing civil servants as their primary job function.

f) Finally, advisers in Greece too are considered a source of public concern (spin doctors, people who live in the dark).

3.2 The ministerial cabinet system: fundamental differences

In Greece, like in France, Italy, Belgium where “ministerial cabinets were re-invented” despite the Copernicus reform, and the European Commission, ministerial advisers’ belong to ministerial cabinets (Brans and Steen 2007, p. 77-78, James 2007). This is different to the Westminster tradition, where advisers work alongside a neutral civil service (UK, Australia, New Zealand), or to systems where advisers work alongside a civil service whose top tier is also made up of political appointees like in Spain or the Slovak Republic (OECD 2011, p. 23). As such, the ministerial adviser phenomenon in Greece projects a set of distinct trends, found specifically in ministerial cabinet systems (James 2007).

First, the status, qualifications, employment framework and wider roles of advisers are strictly defined into law. In the case of Greece, it is Presidential Decree 63/2005 on the “Codification of Legislation concerning the Organisation of Government and Governmental Bodies”, which codifies in one single text all provisions regarding the organisation (size and synthesis), personnel and functions of the Political Offices (Cabinets) of the Prime Minister, the Vice- President of the Government, the Ministers and alternate Ministers, the Deputy Ministers as well as the offices of the Secretary Generals. The designation special adviser, coined in Presidential Decree 63/2005, refers to a specific category of ministerial cabinet staff that unlike most of their colleagues is appointed to a special position, gets paid at the highest possible pay scale and is directly liable to the Minister. In reality, though, apart from special advisers, members of the ministerial cabinet may also be considered advisers independently of their formal employment status and legal position title, so long as they perform “advisory” and not “administrative support” duties. This is confirmed by our research findings whereby only (17.8%) of our sample of ministerial advisers have the status of special advisers, (10.7%) that of special associate, while the majority (21.4%) are fixed-termers and seconded civil servants (25%). This is a crucial point to keep in mind before moving further down the path of our analysis. It is not the formal employment status or the title that makes the adviser in Greece, but rather the role assigned to every cabinet staff by the Minister.

Second, ministerial advisers in Greece are numerous. In respect to size, the Political Office of the Minister may range from a minimum size of 24 Cabinet staff to an open number according to the Minister’s needs. This may at times even approach the number of 100 staff. This is comparable to Belgium, where in some ministerial cabinets before the Copernicus reform advisers reached up to 100 members. Slightly smaller, but equally big in size are cabinets in France. According to Göransson (2008, p. 17) they comprise some 40 to 50 members. James (2007, p. 16) talks about 20 to 30 members per minister and 10 to 20 for a deputy minister, reaching in total 700 members in 2007. The total number for Greece in 2012 was estimated at 1200 (Karkatsoulis 2012, p. 9).

Third, like in most ministerial cabinet systems, the use of advisers is linked to an increased need for political control, as well as a perception of civil service inadequacy. According to one of the two interviewed Ministers “advisers form a mini-public administration doing the job that the normal public administration cannot do”. Political control and perceptions of inadequacy are in turn linked to the historical path that brings us to the institutionalisation of the ministerial cabinet system in the first place. In the case of Greece the change of government in 1981 brought along an explosion in the numbers of advisers. PASOK, a then new mass political party of the left, “saw the state apparatus as an impediment” to its program for democratization, democratic modernisation and expansion of the welfare state (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 21). In order to circumscribe the administrative hierarchy and establish political control over what was perceived as a hostile to its aspirations senior civil service, the new government abolished the top administrative posts of Director Generals and increased the number of advisers to 218 (Tsekos 1986, p. 189). In 1985, Law 1558/1985 reorganized political staffs and established ministerial cabinets along French lines (Sotiropoulos 1999, p. 15). In Belgium cabinets go back to the 1840s at the time of Ministers’ emancipation from monarchical influence (Brans and Steen 2007, p. 65). Along with government expansion, grew the need of Ministers for political control. Given the discontinuity produced by the Belgian “partitocracy” the civil service was in no position to play such role (Brans and Steen 2007, p. 66).

Fourth, as in most ministerial cabinet systems, the working boundaries between advisers and civil servants are not only blurred, but politicisation also runs high. This in turn results to increased politico-administrative friction. Ministerial advisers in Greece, by law, are not allowed to issue orders to civil servants (PD 63/2005). However, our research has found that Greek ministerial advisers de facto issue instructions to civil servants or manage them especially in view of the timely completion of a project. Indeed, 32.1% of the respondents in our sample of advisers have claimed to be managing civil servants as their primary job function. Moreover, interviews with senior civil servants have shown, that Greek ministerial advisers’ beneficial role is also associated with important limitations. Advisers’ role has come up as “controversial and questionable”, having “important side effects” and pointing at “negative consequences from advisers’ wrong advice”. In addition, they are perceived as gatekeepers of the ministerial office, thus preventing direct access to the minister. Finally, instead of shielding senior civil servants from political involvement, they are perceived as increasing politicisation (OECD 2011, p.19-20). Referring to the situation in the ‘80s and to a certain extent today, a senior civil servant referred to the alienation of the public administration, while stating that “there were ministerial advisers overarching even the deputy ministers, simply because they were coming from the minister...”

Finally, as is the case with all ministerial cabinet systems, ministerial cabinets in Greece have a central role in the “design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy” (James 2007, p. 17). This is also the case in France and Belgium, but also Spain is seen as moving along this path (James 2007, p. 17, p. 51-64). Moreover, as with most ministerial cabinet systems, decision-making in Greece too “is pulled upwards”, towards the cabinet, pushing the rest of the ministry and its departments into more technical roles, mainly execution of decisions taken at the top (James 2007, p. 17). But who are the advisers and what do they do in terms of policy making?

4. Who are the advisers, what skills should they possess and why they do it?

In the present section we are going to obtain a descriptive profile of the Greek ministerial adviser in view of the absence of any prior empirical work. Who are they? What is their background? What is their previous work experience? Have they had advisory work experience before? What skills should an adviser possess according to them? Finally, why do they do this job? Data has been

selected on the basis of a questionnaire on 28 advisers working in the Minister's Cabinet at the Ministry for Development in the period 2010 - 2013. Our material will be presented according to: general profile, previous work experience and skills, skills an adviser should possess, and reasons for doing this job.

4.1 General profile: gender, age, education

In respect to gender the vast majority of the advisers in our sample are men (67.8%), as opposed to female (32.1%). This is similar to what Connaughton (2011, p. 354) and Eichbaum and Shaw (2007, p. 97) found for advisers in Ireland and New Zealand respectively. In respect to age more than half of the advisers in our sample are in their thirties (57.1%), followed by 17.8% in their forties, 14.2% in their twenties, 7.1% in their fifties, 3.57% in their sixties and none above 65. The dominant age in the ministerial cabinet is 30 to 34 (35.7%). In terms of education level the highest qualification among the advisers who responded has a Doctorate (10.7%), whereas 67.8% of advisers surveyed have a Masters degree and 21.4% a Bachelors. In terms of field of education, lawyers and political scientists come first with 21.4% and 17.8% respectively, while 3.57% have both a legal and political science background. Advisers whose field of education is economics follow suit with 10.7%, same as those with a communication and media education background. If to the economists we add the 3.57% with a business educational background then advisers with a broad economic educational background appear to make up 14.27%, still an odd third place for a productive Ministry, like the Ministry for Development under examination. Finally, for a ministerial cabinet system built on French lines, it may be argued that it is rather odd that only one adviser of our sample was a graduate of the National School for Public Administration the Greek equivalent to ENA.

4.2 Previous work experience

The Greek ministerial advisers surveyed were drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds. Just before their recruitment to the ministerial cabinet, 25% stated that they have already been working as political advisers. Equally large is the number of professionals from the media, communication, public relations and journalism, making all together 24.9% with 10.7% coming from journalism and 14.2% from the communications industry. Lawyers and legal experts along with private sector managers make up the next two biggest professional categories with 14.2% each, while researchers and people working in academia the fifth with 7.1%. As far as the actual former sector of employment is concerned, there, we see that 50% was employed in the public sector as opposed to 35.7% in the private and 14.3% in the third sectors respectively. Given that only a quarter of the advisers in our sample are seconded public servants, this high previous public sector employment begs for an explanation. We assume that the answer here is that some of the sample's advisers have been working as advisers to the previous Minister for Development and retained their posts with the next one, coming in after a government reshuffling, while some of them were already working as advisers at another Ministry and were transferred along to the new one with their Minister.

Apart from asking them to state their previous to the ministerial cabinet job, we also asked advisers to state whether they have had any advisory or private consulting experience at any time during the past. Based on their responses half of them (50%) appeared to have done consulting work in private business, and a little less than half (46.4%) appeared to have had ministerial cabinet advisory experience. These numbers are followed by 32.1% with advisory experience in a Think Tank and 28.57% in an NGO. 7.1% advisers appeared to have had no past advisory experience. Among the response coded as other (14.28%) answers included advisory work experience in the EU, the UN, a law office and the public sector of another country.

Table 1: Advisory past experience by organisation (%), n = 28

Organisation:	No + (%)
Think Tank	9 (32.1%)
University	5 (17.85%)
Governmental organisation	6 (21.4%)
Ministerial cabinet	13 (46.4%)
Political Party	3 (10.7%)
Office of an MP	8 (28.57%)
Office of an MEP	1 (3.57%)
NGO	8 (28.57%)
Private Business	14 (50%)
Other	4 (14.28%)
No advisory experience	2 (7.1%)

4.3 Skills an adviser should possess

In the present study we also asked advisers to state what kind of skills and traits they thought an adviser should possess in order to perform their job properly. Applied politics and policy skills came up as the most important attributes an adviser must possess. On one hand, this reflects either the importance of understanding processes, like the workings of executive government, stated as most important by 39.2%, or skills like policy negotiation (28.57%). On the other hand, it reflects the importance of having technical skills relating to the actual design and implementation of public policy. Here, policy research and analysis as well as policy evaluation come first with 32.1% each, while generic policy expertise follows with 28.57%. These results are consistent with the overall picture presented by both Connaughton (2011, p. 355) and Eichbaum and Shaw (2007, p. 101-102) for advisers in Ireland and New Zealand respectively. We need to be careful with those results though. As Ministers point to civil service inadequacies but are careful not to talk about mistrusting the administration, advisers too might be framing their answers in a socially desirable way. In the case of the advisers of our sample it may be argued that one very important factor works against the social desirability hypothesis. In Greece, partisan politics in the sense of elections and maintaining support for the Minister's constituency is a function primarily outsourced to the Political Office of the Minister as Member of Parliament. This office is staffed both under a different statutory framework and follows different political needs. The merits valued by politicians and respectively the traits needed on behalf of this political advisory personnel to perform the job properly differ in comparison to the needs of the cabinet. To illustrate this point a bit further, it is often the case that the two offices antagonize each other, at times even exchanging criticisms for being apolitical technocrats or over-politicised party partisans respectively. Of course, how much of a technocrat the Greek ministerial adviser really is, we will have the opportunity to discover in the next section. Getting back on the question on skills and traits an adviser ideally should possess, we observe that communication and media do not feature as much either, since only 17.8% of advisers consider them as most important. Finally, among responses coded as "other" (28.57%) it is interesting to note that the need for specialisation and expertise came up half of the times as important, thus double stressing the need Greek ministerial advisers seem to give to applied policy skills. Beyond this, it is interesting also to note that "project management" also came up as a necessary skill advisers must possess.

Table 2 Skills and traits an adviser should possess (%), n = 28

Skills/Traits	Not at all important	Least Important	Fairly important	Most important

Network with Government Departments	1 (3.57%)	10 (35.7%)	15 (53.57%)	2 (7.1%)
Policy expertise	0 (0%)	3 (10.7%)	17 (60.7%)	8 (28.57%)
Policy negotiation	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.57%)	17 (60.7%)	8 (28.57%)
Communications/media	0 (0%)	11 (39.2%)	11 (39.2%)	5 (17.8%)
Same ideology/political preferences as minister	2 (7.1%)	14 (50%)	11 (39.2%)	1 (3.57%)
Pre-existing links with the public service	4 (14.2%)	14 (50%)	7 (25%)	3 (10.7%)
Understanding the processes of executive government	1 (3.57%)	0 (0%)	16 (57.1%)	11 (39.2%)
Policy evaluation skills	1 (3.57%)	1 (3.57%)	15 (53.57%)	9 (32.1%)
Membership of the same political party as the minister	12 (42.8%)	10 (35.7%)	6 (21.4%)	0 (0%)
Policy research & analysis	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	15 (53.57%)	9 (32.1%)
Pre-existing links with interest groups	9 (32.1%)	15 (53.57%)	4 (14.2%)	1 (3.57%)
Speech writing	4 (14.2%)	15 (53.57%)	8 (28.57%)	0 (0%)
Other (please define)			<u>2 (7.1%)</u> (1) Team Spirit (2)Specialisation	<u>6 (21.4%)</u> (2) Project mgt (2) Effectiveness (1) Faith, trust, sincerity, confidentiality (1) Specialisation

4.4 Why do they do it?

Ministerial advisers in Greece appear to display similar reasons with those in other countries for undertaking their role. 89.2% have responded that they rather agree or fully agree that the reason for being an adviser is in order to contribute to politics and policy making at a senior level (Table 3). It is important here to note that 46.3% of advisers appear to have been offered the job by chance and only 32% to have had a prior relationship with the minister which played a role in their deciding to become advisers. Moreover, a quarter of advisers seem to view their entering the Cabinet as a step towards future involvement in politics. Finally, from the five persons who stated other reasons for becoming an adviser, two have linked their decision to taking a step towards future employment in public affairs, policy making and education, while three have linked to “helping the minister whose integrity and sincerity I value the most” or “help Greece at difficult times”.

Table 3 Why become an adviser? (%), n = 28

	I totally disagree	I rather disagree	I rather agree	I fully agree
By chance, I was offered the opportunity and grabbed it	7 (25%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (28.5%)	5 (17.8%)

To contribute to politics and policy making at a senior level	1 (3.57%)	1 (3.57%)	7 (25%)	18 (64.2%)
I come from a similar political background and I have a close personal relationship with the Minister	8 (28.5%)	8 (28.5%)	8 (28.5%)	1 (3.57%)
It's a step towards a future involvement in politics	11 (39.28%)	8 (28.5%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.57%)
Other (please specify):			2 (7.1%)	3 (10.7%)

**One did not answer and one gave half answers.*

5. Inside the cabinet: advisers and policy making

In the following section we indulge into the details of advisers' involvement in policy making. In particular, we attempt to classify advisers by policy role, policy advice activity based on the nature and dimension of advice, content of advice, and policy cycle stage.

5.1 Policy expertise: generalists or specialists?

According to Suleiman (1974) a typical ministerial staff unit comprises both specialists and generalists. The exact balance is thought to be dependent on the minister's style and preferences (Connaughton 2010, p. 354). However, it may be argued that it is also institutional configurations that define this balance (James 2007, Schreurs et al. 2010). In ministerial cabinet systems we would expect to find a greater number of specialists in a wide array of fields related to various departmental portfolios. In our sample of ministerial advisers, specialists and generalists seem to be quite balanced, with specialists (15) marginally overtaking the generalists (13). 53.5% of advisers perceive themselves as specialists, as opposed to generalists comprising about 46.5%. The above results seem to marginally classify Greece in accordance with what one would expect to find in ministerial cabinet systems: prevalence of the type C "expert" adviser (Schreurs et al. 2010). As such it may be argued too that the dominant type of adviser in Greece, according to the OECD (2011, p. 11) three-category classification, is the expert.

Having said this though, the real question in relation to policy making is how many qualified experts are there in fields related to a departmental portfolio? From the advisers who stated they are specialists the vast majority, 40%, stated that they specialise in a Ministry portfolio, 26.6% in Law, another 26.6% in Media and Communication, while 6.6% stated they specialise in generic public policy. Furthermore within the sample of specialists 33.3% answered that they specialise in a second field too, for example in a Ministry Portfolio, but also in Project Management. From those, one person appeared to specialise both in Law and a departmental portfolio. What the above results really tell us in relation to the real level of policy expertise is that within the whole sample of 28 advisers, there are only 8 experts (28.57%) in some particular departmental policy related field. This of course is rather odd given responses emphasising the need for applied politics and policy skills. In order to get a clearer picture we need to examine what advisers actually do in greater detail.

5.2 Policy making: what do advisers do?

Job description

We saw in section three, briefly, that advisers' job descriptions, as these were assigned by the political executive, may be classified using functional, departmental and policy project criteria. Analysing job descriptions further, based on advisers' open statements about the job assigned to

them by the Minister, we observe that the grand majority, 60.7%, appear to be involved in policy projects, like setting up the “One Stop Shop Business Facility”, “Enhancing Liquidity to SME’s”, “Accelerating Absorption of NSRF funds”, “Monitoring the Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry and the Troica”. Following this, 21.4% responded they do Communication and Media, 10.7% Law, while 3.57% are involved in both policy and law. However, in order to get a more precise picture of what Greek ministerial do we need to move beyond job descriptions into the actual reality.

Primary job functions

A first step is to analyse advisers’ primary job functions. According to the data in hand 71.4% of the respondents appear to share as their primary job function the management of policy projects codified as “managing projects and project management”. Following this, 42.8% are involved in formulating policy measures, 39.2% provide strategic advice, 35.7% advice on political considerations, 32.1% coordinate relations with stakeholders, while an equally high percentage appears to manage and administrate civil servants. Finally, 28.5% of the respondents appear to share communication and media as their primary job function. According to this observation, it may be argued that what Greek ministerial advisers do ranges from management and coordination to the nuts and bolts of policy, to strategy and communication. However, the impressive finding here is that the vast majority of advisers “manage projects” as their primary job function. This is closely associated to advisers’ job description we saw above.

Table 4: Advisers’ primary job functions (%), n = 28

Job Function	No + (%)
Giving Strategic Advice	11 (39.2%)
Coordinating Relations with Stakeholders	9 (32.1%)
Advising on Political Considerations	10 (35.57%)
Providing Media and Communication Advice	8 (28.5%)
Formulating Policy Measures	12 (42.8%)
Managing Projects	20 (71.4%)
Managing Civil Servants	9 (32.1%)
No answer	1 (3.57%)

Activities, tasks and their frequency

In the research, beyond job descriptions and primary functions, advisers were also asked to explain how they spend their time according to types of broad activities and specific tasks performed. In table 5 below, we can see the frequency of time spend in four major categories of activities: policy technicalities (drafting or processing laws, researching, formulating solutions etc), coordination and management (of policy work, the Cabinet staff, civil servants), politics (Party, MPs, Minister’s electoral district, networking) and communication with the media.

Table 5: Frequency of activities undertaken by advisers (%), n = 28

Activities	Never	A couple of times per year	Once a month	Once a week	Every day
Policy Technicalities	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.57%)	5 (17.8%)	10 (35.7%)
Coordination and Management	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.57)	6 (21.4%)	14 (50%)
Politics (Party, MPs, Minister's electoral district, Networking)	7 (25%)	7 (25%)	4 (14.3%)	5 (17.8%)	2 (7.1%)
Media and Communication	5 (17.8%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	9 (32.1%)

What is evident from the responses is how little time Greek ministerial advisers seem to spend in overt political activities (7.1%) and how much time they dedicate in coordination and management (50%) followed by policy technicalities (35.7%). This observation is consistent with both advisers' job description and primary job function. However, it seems at odds with responses, according to which 35.7% provide advice on political considerations as their primary job function. How can one perform a primary job function so rarely? We may at this point suggest an explanation. "Advice on political considerations" is rightly understood by the advisers in our sample as political advice related to the public interest aspects of policy making. On the contrary, politics in the above mentioned question refers to party politics and the political executive's electoral fortune, which in this respect relates to partisan politics. As we already pointed, in Greece, overt political work of the partisan type, for example elections, maintaining support for the Minister and relations with the party, is mainly outsourced to the political-electoral office (*Vouleftiko Grafeio*) that the Minister maintains as a Member of Parliament.

Moving now from broad activities to specific tasks, it is evident from advisers' responses that they do not perform partisan tasks. The vast majority, 67.8%, never or rarely maintain relations with the electoral district of the minister. An impressive 85.7% does not maintain relations with the grassroots support of the minister. This is in stark contrast to what Connaughton (2010, p. 359) found for the Irish advisers, where 79% of respondents answered that they very frequently or frequently assist their minister with electoral activities. However, it is closer to what Eichbaum and Shaw (2007, p. 99) found for advisers in New Zealand, where 50% of advisers in their sample responded that they never or rarely assist their minister with electoral issues. This detachment of Greek ministerial advisers from overt partisan political activities is further supported by an impressive 78.57% of respondents stating that they never or rarely meet with party officials. So, if Greek ministerial advisers do not get involved in such overt partisan political tasks, what is it exactly that they do then? More importantly is their work at all political or are they just a cluster of experts substituting the civil service?

According to the data in hand, Greek ministerial advisers appear to be mainly focused on coordination and management tasks, as well as the nuts and bolts of policy making within their department. As Connaughton (2010, p. 358) argues "these are tasks that the ministers would do themselves if they had the time or would not be inclined to delegate to an apolitical civil servant". On the coordination and management side advisers appear to frequently and very frequently ask

officials to provide memos or advice, attend meetings with civil servants and departmental officials, convey or clarify the minister's wishes, meet advisers from other ministerial cabinets. While their vertical, within the ministry, coordination activity appears to be strong, their horizontal activity across ministries, government departments and political institutions appears to be rather weak. Liaising with MPs and party members is something that never or rarely happens. On the pure policy side advisers appear to analyse and evaluate implemented policy, read and comment on departmental advice, prepare policy files and memos, monitor the implementation of policy, produce evidence and facts in support of policy making.

Table 6: Tasks undertaken by Greek ministerial advisers and their frequency (%), n= 28

Tasks	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Ask officials to provide memos or advice	0 (0%)	1 (3.57%)	7 (25%)	13 (46.4%)	6 (21.4%)
Assist with budgetary matters	14 (50%)	6 (21.4%)	4 (14.2%)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0%)
Attend meetings with civil servants	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (28.57%)	12 (42.8%)	7 (25%)
Broker meetings with interest groups	4 (14.2%)	5 (17.8%)	10 (35.7%)	4 (14.2%)	4 (14.2%)
Convey or clarify Minister's wishes	1 (3.57%)	0 (0%)	10 (35.7%)	10 (35.7%)	6 (21.4%)
Maintain relations with the electoral district of the minister	12 (42.8%)	7 (25%)	5 (17.8%)	3 (10.7%)	0 (0%)
Meet with MPs	11 (39.2%)	7 (25%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.57%)
Meet with Party officials	14 (50%)	8 (28.57%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	0 (0%)
Analyse and Evaluate implemented Policy	4 (14.2%)	5 (17.8%)	3 (10.7%)	13 (46.4%)	1 (3.57%)
Meet advisers from other ministerial cabinets	0%	1 (3.57%)	5 (17.8%)	15 (53.35%)	6 (21.4%)
Meet with departmental officials	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (17.8%)	12 (42.8%)	10 (35.7%)
Write press statements	7 (25%)	5 (17.8%)	4 (14.2%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)
Raise new policy initiatives with Minister	5 (17.8%)	7 (25%)	6 (21.4%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)
Read & comment on official departmental advice	2 (7.1%)	4 (14.2%)	3 (10.7%)	13 (46.4%)	5 (17.8%)
Represent minister at departmental meetings	5 (17.8%)	7 (25%)	7 (25%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)
Write speeches	12 (42.8%)	5 (17.8%)	4 (14.2%)	4 (14.2%)	2 (7.1%)
Receive external delegations on the minister's behalf	5 (17.8%)	8 (28.57%)	8 (28.57%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)
Prepare policy files and memos	8 (28.57%)	2 (7.1%)	5 (17.8%)	8 (28.57%)	4 (14.2%)

Monitor the implementation of policy	8 (28.57%)	6 (21.4%)	4 (14.2%)	8 (28.57%)	2 (7.1%)
Maintain relations with the grassroots support of the minister	14 (50%)	10 (35.7%)	3 (10.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Produce evidence and facts in support of policy making	7 (25%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)	9 (32.1%)	3 (10.7%)
Other (please specify)					1 (3.57%) Support Departments do their work

5.3 A classification of policy advisory roles

Based on data on advisers' profiles, job descriptions, primary job functions, frequency of tasks and main activities performed, we will now classify Greek ministerial advisers according to policy advisory roles. As we have seen in our theoretical chapter, Connaughton (2010) suggests four types of advisers: the expert, the partisan, the coordinator and the minder. These role perceptions are constructed based on advisers' profiles, as well as along two axes involving "policy making" and "communication" roles. The former role relates to substantive policy formulation and implementation activities, ranging from technical policy advice to policy steering. The latter role refers to procedural "communications" functions ranging from technical/managerial to political (Craft 2011, p. 89).

We have seen above that while the majority of Greek ministerial advisers perceive themselves as specialists, in reality as far as policy making is concerned they are largely generalists who specialise in coordination and management of policy projects and to a second degree are involved in policy technicalities.

Having established their general profile, we will now move to locate advisers by "policy making" and "communication" roles. Starting with "communication" roles, based on advisers' responses, we may argue that they perform both technical/management and political tasks. On one side advisers appear to frequently and very frequently ask officials to provide memos or advice, attend meetings with civil servants and departmental officials, on the other they convey or clarify the minister's wishes and meet advisers from other ministerial cabinets.

Moving now to the "policy formulation and implementation" dimension, we see that our sample's advisers are more focused on the steering side of the continuum rather than on the technical policy advice side. The Greek ministerial adviser is more of a "fixer" that mends, monitors policy and intervenes (Connaughton 2010, p. 365). This is supported by various data: a) the very few numbers of specialists dealing with policy issues related to departmental portfolios, b) the fact that 71.4% of advisers state "managing projects" as their primary job function at the ministry, c) the same percentage (71.4%) stating that they frequently or very frequently perform "project management" activities, d) the majority of advisers (64.2%) who frequently and very frequently focus attention on reading and commenting on official departmental advice.

It is evident from the above that the Greek ministerial adviser fits best to the coordinator type, whose role includes the monitoring of the ministry's program, as well as the steering of the policy process. This coordinator policy advisory role is also confirmed by data from our interviews.

The political executive's needs and attention appear to be mainly focused on policy management rather than on the actual design and formulation of the policy itself. According to Minister B:

“I want advisers to monitor the development of policy in a particular field. I want them to provide input and then monitor the evolution of policy. Ideally they should be able to formulate policy too, but in this, the role they can play here depends on their individual capabilities and knowledge”
[Own translation]

Minister A gave a blunter view on the issue:

“The adviser is a gear, a timing belt in the government machine. His basic function is policy acceleration, monitoring and supervision. He is neither an agenda setter, nor a policy formulator”.
[Own translation]

This policy management function has sprung up in one of our interviews with top civil servants. According to respondent 3:

“Advisers are involved in the implementation of policy too. Whereby implementation means supervision, timeline, project management, monitoring of deadlines”. [Own translation]

5.4 A classification of policy advice activity

Following the suggestion of Craft (2011, p. 14), “a further step towards greater specificity” may be taken by examining the nature of advisers’ offered policy advice along substantive (administrative-partisan) and procedural (vertical – horizontal) lines. Using again the same data as above, we may argue that the nature of advice offered by Greek ministerial advisers is of the administrative (substantive dimension) since Greek ministerial advisers appear not be involved in any significant overt political partisan activities, given that these are mainly the task of the Ministers’ *Vouleftiko Grafeio*. However, this is a classification base on what Greek ministerial advisers are not, rather than on what they are. The data in hand tells us that they are predominantly focused on policy projects, managing these projects, performing project management and policy steering tasks. This angle in the nature of advice is not captured here.

Moving now to the dimension of policy advice, based again on the same data, we may argue that Greek ministerial advisers work mainly along a vertical dimension, since advice giving focuses more on interdepartmental command and control type of activities, rather than those of a horizontal steering nature. Not disregarding the fact that 74.75% of advisers appear to meet very frequently or frequently with their colleagues from other ministries, the matter of fact is that 64.2% of advisers claim to never or rarely liaise with Members of Parliament, only 28.4% of the respondents appear to very frequently and frequently broker meetings with interest groups, while 78.57% never or rarely meets with party officials.

Based on these observations we may claim that the Greek ministerial adviser is classified as the Administrative-Vertical type. This however, a classification we need to be wary about since it does not capture what the Greek adviser’s policy advice activity is, but rather what it is not. It is not partisan and definitely not horizontal. To argue that as a result Greek ministerial adviser’s policy advice activity is technical and fully vertical is not supported by the data in hand either. However, it may be argued that using Craft’s (2011) early attempt at classification of policy advice activities we did illuminate further two things: a) first the non technical nature of Greek ministerial adviser’s policy advice giving activities, b) most importantly the dimension of advisers’ policy activity, which is vertical with certain horizontal elements as far as coordination with advisers’ counterparts is concerned.

Figure 1: Classification of Greek ministerial advisers policy advice activity according to nature and dimension of advice

Procedural (dimension of policy advice activity)	Substantive Nature of policy advice contribution	
	ADMINISTRATIVE	PARTISAN
	Type I Administrative – Horizontal	Type II Partisan – Horizontal
HORIZONTAL		
VERTICAL	GR Type III Administrative – Vertical	Type IV Partisan Vertical

Source: Craft (2011, p.16)

5.5 A classification according to content of advice

We may now proceed to classify Greek ministerial advisers according to the content of advice they provide within the broader policy advisory system. In order to locate advisers by content of advice, new data, beyond the ones used for the substantive/procedural based typologies above is needed. For this reason, advisers were asked to express their opinion on what they thought the content of advice provided by their colleagues was. The initial results are presented in table 7.

Table 7: Greek ministerial advisers' content of advice (%), n = 28

	Not at all	Very little	Quite strongly	Strongly
1. Information-based	0 (0%)	1 (3.57%)	14 (50%)	11 (39.2%)
2. Based on fragmented information, gossip	5 (17.8%)	9 (32.1%)	11 (39.2%)	1 (3.57%)
3. Based on Scientific Research	0 (0%)	10 (35.7%)	8 (28.57%)	9 (32.1%)
4. Based on opinion and ideology	0 (0%)	4 (14.2%)	17 (60.7%)	5 (17.8%)
5. Independent, neutral and problem solving	1 (3.57%)	8 (28.57%)	15 (53.57%)	2 (7.1%)
6. Partisan/ about winning	0 (0%)	3 (10.7%)	15 (53.57%)	8 (28.57%)
7. Long-term	1 (3.57%)	10 (35.7%)	13 (46.4%)	2 (7.1%)
8. Short-term	0 (0%)	6 (21.4%)	15 (53.57%)	5 (17.8%)
9. Proactive and anticipatory	3 (10.7%)	16 (57.1%)	7 (25%)	0 (0%)
10. Reactive/crisis driven	0 (0%)	2 (7.1%)	15 (53.57%)	9 (32.1%)
11. Strategic and wide range/systematic	1 (3.57%)	12 (42.8%)	10 (35.7%)	3 (10.7%)
12. Single issue	0 (0%)	9 (32.1%)	14 (50%)	3 (10.7%)
13. Pragmatic	0 (0%)	3 (10.7%)	19 (67.8%)	3 (10.7%)
14. Idealistic	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)	9 (32.1%)	1 (3.57%)
15. Public interest focus	1 (3.57%)	2 (7.1%)	18 (64.28%)	5 (17.8%)
16. Electoral gain oriented	0 (0%)	7 (25%)	15 (53.57%)	4 (14.2%)

17. Open processes	2 (7.1%)	11 (39.28%)	13 (46.4%)	0 (0%)
18. Secret/deal making	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)	10 (35.7%)	1 (3.57%)
19. Objective clarity	1 (3.57%)	7 (25%)	18 (64.2%)	1 (3.57%)
20. Ambiguity/overlapping	0 (0%)	8 (28.57%)	18 (64.2%)	0 (0%)
21. Seek/propose best solution	0 (0%)	3 (10.7%)	18 (64.2%)	5 (17.8%)
22. Consensus solution	1 (3.57%)	3 (10.7%)	17 (60.7%)	5 (17.8%)

There are two ways of reading Table 7. First, for every item above we may measure agreement and disagreement. This is a very shallow way of getting results on content of advice and we will not attempt it. Second, we may read it in contrasting pairs where the odd numbers refer to elements of “cold”, long-term and anticipatory advice, and the even ones to “hot” short-term reactive advice. Based on this second way of looking at our data we produced table 8.

Table 8: Greek ministerial advisers “hot” vs “cold” advice (%), n = 28

Cold Advice	Q. Strongly/ Strongly	Hot Advice	Q. Strongly / Strongly
Information-based	25 (89.2%)	Based on fragmented information, gossip	13 (42.8%)
Based on Scientific Research	17 (60.7%)	Based on opinion and ideology	22 (78.5%)
Independent, neutral and problem solving	17 (60.7%)	Partisan/ about winning	23 (82.1%)
Long-term	15 (53.6%)	Short-term	20 (71.4%)
Proactive and anticipatory	7 (25%)	Reactive/crisis driven	24 (85.7%)
Strategic and wide range/systematic	13 (46.4%)	Single issue	17 (60.7%)
Pragmatic	22 (78.5%)	Idealistic	10 (35.7%)
Public interest focus	23 (82.1%)	Electoral gain oriented	19 (67.8%)
Open processes	13 (46.4%)	Secret/deal making	11 (39.2%)
Objective clarity	19 (67.8%)	Ambiguity/overlapping	18 (64.2%)
Seek/propose best solution	23 (78.5%)	Consensus solution	22 (78.5%)

According to the data presented in table 8 the content of advice, which the advisers of our sample quite strongly or strongly agree that their peers are giving, is predominantly information-based, based on opinion and ideology, partisan about winning, short-term, reactive and crisis driven, single issue, pragmatic and with a focus on the public interest. As far the remaining characteristics are concerned the differences are very marginal for us to be able to claim a clear direction. However, we may argue that as far as those characteristics are concerned the content of advice leans marginally towards open processes, objectiveness and clarity, as well as searching for the best solutions. Overall, it may be argued that what we see here is a content of advice, which while marginally focused towards a long-term and anticipatory direction (pragmatic, public interest focus, open processes, clarity and best solutions) its real basis relies on short-term reactive elements (opinion and ideology, partisan, short-term, reactive and crisis driven, single issues). Thus, we may argue that the advice offered by the advisers in our sample, though dressed in “cold” clothes has in reality a “hot” content. In view of this, we may now position Greek ministerial advisers as providing predominantly two types of advice content: “pure” political and policy process advice, as far as the dimension of advice is concerned, and short term crisis and fire-fighting advice, as far as the nature of advice is concerned.

5.5 Advisers and the policy cycle

Finally, we attempt to link advisers' activities to the content of the discrete stages of the policy cycle. As we have argued in our theoretical chapter, this will allow us to achieve a more systematic interpretation of advisers' policy activity. In view of this, advisers were asked to locate the exact policy cycle stage where they thought their activities in the ministerial cabinet are most important. Their responses are summarised in table 9.

Table 9: Greek advisers roles in the policy cycle according to importance (%), n = 28

Policy Cycle Stage	Least Important	Not very Important	Important	Most important
Recognizing problems - setting agenda priorities	0 (0%)	6 (21.4%)	17(60.7%)	4 (14.2%)
Proposing Solutions and formulating policies	0 (0%)	6 (21.4%)	14 (50%)	6 (21.4%)
Deciding on the preferred course of action	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)	8 (28.5%)	2 (7.1%)
Putting solutions into effect	1 (3.57%)	8 (28.5%)	9 (32.1%)	8 (28.5%)
Monitoring results	4 (14.2%)	7 (25%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)

Note: 2 respondents answered half of the table, while one did not answer at all

What we see here is that Greek ministerial advisers' work is most important in the front end of policymaking. The above results confirm Sotiropoulos' (2007, p. 22) observation that ministerial advisers in Greece enjoy extensive political leverage to set agendas and formulate policies. Indeed 74.9% consider their role in recognition of problems and agenda setting as important and very important. In addition, an equally impressive 71.4% consider their role in proposing solutions and formulating policies as important or very important. As we would expect, advisers' role appears as least important and not very important in deciding on the preferred course of action (53.5%). As Howlett, Ramesh and Perl (Howlett et al. 2009, p. 12) argue, when a decision is taken on one or more options, the number of actors is reduced to "only the subset of the policy subsystem composed of authoritative government decision makers". Moreover, "unlike office-holders [ministers, deputy ministers, general secretaries], those other actors have, at best, voice in the decision-making process, not a vote" (Howlett et al. 2009, p. 140). Finally, as we would expect the "policy hour glass" opens up again as we move to the back end of policy making: policy implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett et al 2009, p. 12). It may be argued that the opening might be considered bigger than expected. The literature seems to deny advisers a significant role on policy implementation and evaluation (Craft 2011, p. 14). However, according to the responses of the advisers in our sample 60.6% appear to have an important or very important role in putting solutions into effect, while 53.5% seem to play an important or very important role in monitoring results. The above results show that Greek ministerial advisers are heavily involved in all stages of the policy cycle, except for the decision making process. This reflects the fact that ministerial cabinets have found to exercise a central role in the "design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy" (James 2007, p. 17). It may be argued though that it also reflects the profile of our sample's advisers as coordinators and policy project managers.

Conclusion

In the present study we investigated the phenomenon of Greek ministerial advisers in the policy making process. Our fundamental research question was the following: what is the nature and role, particularly the policy making role, of the Greek ministerial adviser? The study has tried to answer the question by classifying Greek ministerial advisers' policy work according to policy advisory roles, policy advice activities based on nature and dimension of advice, content of advice, and the policy cycle, all through the use of relevant existing typologies.

Starting with a sketch of the Greek politico-administrative context we saw that advisers in Greece belong to ministerial cabinets. As such, the phenomenon of Greek ministerial advisers shares important common characteristics with other OECD countries, but also projects fundamental differences. As in most OECD countries, in Greece too advisers' appointment is at the sole discretion of the minister, their job description is not statutorily defined, their employment framework is streamlined to that of the civil service, their activity is perceived as beneficial in that they accelerate the policy process and improve the responsiveness of government, the working boundaries with the civil service are blurred, while finally they may also be a source of public concern. Belonging to a ministerial cabinet, though, accounts for certain fundamental differences. To begin with, advisers' status, qualifications, employment framework and to a broader extent roles are strongly grounded in law. Greece belongs to the group of countries that define advisers in their regulations in terms of special advisers, a specific category of ministerial cabinet staff that unlike most of their colleagues is appointed to a special position, gets paid at the highest possible pay scale and is directly liable to the Minister. This however, does not mean that it is only they who perform advisory duties, nor is it to say that job descriptions, roles and activities in the Cabinet are legally predetermined. Apart from special advisers, members of the ministerial cabinet, like "special associates", "scientific associates", "fixed-term administrative employees" and "seconded civil servants", may also be considered advisers so long as they perform "advisory" and not "administrative support" duties. This *de facto* division between "advisory" and "administrative support" staff is fundamental for understanding who has the status of an adviser in a Greek ministerial cabinet. Second, advisers are numerous since ministerial cabinets are composed of a mixture of civil servants and external political appointees and run by a Chief of Cabinet, while they also have a varying size and synthesis based on the specific needs of every minister. Third, as in most ministerial cabinet systems, the use of advisers is linked to an increased need for political control, as well as a perception of civil service inadequacy. Fourth, Greek ministerial advisers form a "mini administration", which apart from advice, also attempts to manage the civil service and this may be a source a constant friction among members of the Cabinet and civil servants. As interviews with senior civil servants have shown, Greek ministerial advisers' beneficial role is also associated with important limitations. Like in most ministerial cabinet systems advisers receive criticism for belonging in a "closed circuit spoils system" (James 2007, p.18). In addition, they are perceived as gatekeepers of the ministerial office, thus preventing direct access to the minister. Finally, instead of shielding senior civil servants from political involvement, they are perceived as increasing politicisation (OECD 2011, p.19-20).

But who are the Greek ministerial advisers? Our research has shown, that the Greek ministerial adviser appears to be predominantly male, in his thirties, with a postgraduate level of education who wants to contribute to politics and policy making at a senior level, and considers applied politics and policy skills to be the most important trait an adviser should possess in order to be able to perform his duty properly. Male dominance is a characteristic of also Ireland and New Zealand for which we have access to comparable data (Connaughton 2010, Eichbaum and Shaw 2007). In terms of field of education and professional background, we saw that advisers form a rather mixed group of people. Advisers with an educational background in law and politics, marginally more numerous, mingle with those with a background in communication and to a lesser extent economics and

business. Finally, we have argued that, in Greece, we might be observing the development of a political adviser profession, as is also the case with other ministerial cabinet systems (James 2007, p.11).

Moving to the details of their policy making contribution, our research has shown that the majority of Greek ministerial advisers perceive themselves as specialists. This is consistent with the type of adviser profile we would expect to find in a ministerial cabinet system (Schreurs et al. 2010). However, the specialists dealing with specific departmental policy portfolios make up a minority in comparison to the generalists doing policy work, even when we add the legal specialists, traditionally found in ministerial cabinet systems. But what do these advisers do? Applying Connaughton's (2010), Craft's (2011), Craft and Howlett's (2012) typologies, as well as the policy cycle approach on our data, we found that the Greek ministerial adviser:

a) Belongs to the “Coordinator” type. He is predominantly a generalist with a main focus on management of the government program. This project management aspect of the Greek ministerial adviser's job is a significant finding. First, it shows that Greek ministerial advisers do not fall within the traditional partisan political adviser category. It is not elections and the minister's constituency they most deal with, since this is dealt by the political executive's office as an MP (*Vouleftiko Grafeio*). Second, despite predominantly dealing with policy projects and while they seem to be involved to a great extent with policy technicalities, they are not the technical experts that we would expect to dominate in a traditional Cabinet system. One explanation for this is related to the personal styles of the two Ministers under examination, who give great emphasis to acceleration, management, coordination and an understanding of policy as made of single projects that need to be designed and implemented as such. Another might be the simple reality that policy making in Greece is highly political, with reform time always trying to catch up to political time, therefore characterised by a lack of technical, rational and evidence based policy making activities while in constant need for immediate swift action and results. We may argue that the literature on the role of experts in policy making in Greece lends some support to this explanation (Monastiriotes 2009, Ladi 2005, 2007, Spanou 2008, p. 163).

b) Performs policy advisory activity of the “Administrative-Vertical” type. According to the data in hand the Greek ministerial adviser seems definitely not partisan in the sense of party politics and narrow electoral gain orientation, while he is definitely not horizontal in a “governance” sort of way. However, despite the merits of this early theoretical attempt at classification, in the case of Greek ministerial adviser it does not illuminate two important traits of the phenomenon. In terms of nature of advice (substantive dimension) the Greek ministerial adviser is more focused on policy management and not technical/rational or evidence based as the typology suggests. This is better captured by Connaughton's (2010) coordinator type. Moreover, in terms of dimension of advice (procedural dimension), our data shows that the Greek ministerial adviser, as James (2007, p.17) has shown to be the case with advisers in ministerial cabinet systems, has a frequent interdepartmental coordination role activity mainly with other ministerial advisers. This crucial horizontal element is not captured in the typology, since the Greek ministerial adviser appears to work in a silo when it comes to liaising with other MPs, party members and meeting interest groups. It may be argued that this again is a significant finding, which points to the need to further test the project manager hypothesis.

c) Offers “hot” policy advice, dressed in “cold” clothes. Despite the offered policy advice being focused towards a long-term and anticipatory direction (pragmatic, public interest focus, open processes, clarity and best solutions) its real basis relies on short-term reactive elements (opinion and ideology, partisan-political, short-term, reactive and crisis driven, single issues focused). In this respect Greek ministerial advisers are classified as providing predominantly two types of advice content: “pure” political and policy process advice and short term crisis fighting and fire-fighting

advice. This again is a significant finding in that it reveals how policy advice, on behalf of Greek ministerial advisers, becomes political without being overtly partisan.

d) Deals predominantly with the front end of policymaking, agenda setting and policy formulation. This finding is consistent with the claim that Greek ministerial “advisers enjoy extensive political leverage to set agendas and formulate policies” (Sotiropoulos 2007, p. 22). As far as decision making is concerned Greek ministerial advisers might have a “voice”, but certainly not a “vote”, as popular discourse might take it to be the case (Howlett and Ramesh 2009, p.140). However, our research has also shown that Greek ministerial advisers are significantly involved in the back end of the policy making process, in particular implementation and policy evaluation. This reflects the reality of ministerial cabinets exercising a central role in the “design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy” (James 2007, p.17). It may be argued that it also reflects the coordinator, project manager type of adviser that we found to be dominant in our sample.

Finally, in view of the findings presented in the current research, we need to be careful before claiming that they may be generalised to the broader population of Greek ministerial advisers. Indications are strong that we have produced an adequately significant classification of advisers’ policy making activities, based on “policy advisory roles”, “nature and dimension of advice”, “content of advice” and “stage of involvement in the policy cycle”. At a first level, the existing empirical gap was closed. The Greek ministerial adviser appears to be working within a ministerial cabinet context with a twist towards a coordinator and project management role. As such we may argue that Greek ministerial advisers form a case of a case of agents active in a politicized advisory system, as found in ministerial cabinets. However, our results would need to be put to the test. In view of this we would like to offer the following leads for future research: a) in respect to the research design, add interviews with ministerial advisers specifically focused on the construction of typologies in order to get a deeper view of the data, b) in respect to theory, improve typologies along substantive-procedural lines so that the issue of coordination may come into the forefront, c) in respect to sample selection, empirically test our findings by running the survey into a different sample of ministerial advisers from the Ministry for Development or, even better, another civilian, non special corps organised Ministry. Finally, given that our investigation inside the Cabinet projects a lack of technical expertise in policy related issues it would be interesting to investigate where this expertise might be coming from, if at all, within the broader Greek policy advisory system? Of course this would entail the examination of the policy advisory system on specific policy fields. To conclude, on a more practical tone and if we may suggest a course of action to Greek ministerial advisers, this would be to become more active in the horizontal coordination of external sources of policy advice, whether these are found in academic, professional, interest group and civil society expertise or in political institutions such as the Parliament and political parties.

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