



SIP Talk:  
Intermediäre zwischen  
Wissenschaft und Politik

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## ➤ FORWIT

How much independence does scientific policy advice need – and how much can it afford? When does evidence become a political argument, and when does expertise remain without consequence? This special issue brings together contributions from Austria, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, South Africa and the EU that get to the bottom of these questions – historically, institutionally and systemically. At its centre are advisory councils and evaluation systems: their origins, their evolution, and their often contradictory roles at the interface of science and politics. The findings are as sobering as they are illuminating: neither maximum autonomy nor close alignment with the political process guarantees impact. What remains is the need to continuously recalibrate this balance – and that is precisely what this issue sets out to explore.

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## JOURNAL

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Special Issue

## GOVERNING WITH EVIDENCE

Councils,  
Advisory Systems,  
and Evaluation

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Managing Ed. Isabella Wagner

## Ausgangsfragen und Ergebnisse

### Ausgangsfragen

1. „Shifts in role of advisory councils“
2. „Changes in demands to evaluation practices“
3. „Novel advisory formats, new institutional arrangements“

### Ergebnisse – welche Beiträge?

- Development of advisory councils in historical perspective
- Adaptation of advisory councils to new demands
- Governance models affecting interplay between councils, evaluation organisations, and policymakers
- Different types of science-for-policy ecosystems

| Author(s), short title                                                            | Key characteristics describing advisory systems                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                   | Significance of independence of advice structures                                                                                                                                                                                    | Functions of advice within policy frameworks                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Councils: Trajectories of Science and Research Policy Advice</b>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Pichler: History of advisory councils in Austria                                  | Development from legally dependent councils with predominantly institutional memberships and without resources to councils with their own legal personality, staff and budget as well as a personal membership led to greater impact | Development from a mere sounding board to a coordination platform for science and research policy, eventually to a “real” advisory body devising opinions and strategies as well as recommendations on the allocation of extra-budgetary funds |
| Banda/Sanz-Menéndez: Science, technology and innovation advisory council in Spain | Increasing independence and shift towards predominantly meritocratic composition of membership weakened impact on science and research policies and responsiveness to political requirements                                         | Accompanying transition to democracy; coordination and design of science and research policy, originally entrenched in the national governance system; change to a more detached external perspective of advice                                |
| Heinze/Jappe: German Wissenschaftsrat                                             | The Wissenschaftsrat is not really independent; it is deeply embedded in a multi-layered federal governance system; there is an increasing tension between its formal structure and actual actions                                   | Coordination between the federal and state governments in higher education and science policy matters; advice on reform proposals and the promotion and evaluation of scientific excellence                                                    |
| Buntfuß/König: Quality management                                                 | Relatively high independence does not replace the need to establish practices for quality assurance.                                                                                                                                 | Different and diffuse expectations in role of FORWIT requires the council to calibrate its practices for quality assurance on case-by-case basis                                                                                               |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>Ecosystems: Institutional Structures and System Dynamics</b>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Faßmann: Scientific policy advice in Austria                      | Independence (autonomy) of advice bodies and agencies is most effective when relating to clearly defined areas, otherwise advice may lose link to policymaking; dedicated resources are key                                                                                    | Science for policy: enabling the apt implementation of a broad range of sector policies (e.g. fiscal, social, health, climate); policy for science: advice on the design of science and research policies                                         |
| Zollinger: Scientific advisory network in Switzerland             | Existing policy advice institutions proved inept during the Corona crisis due to their self-referential setup and the resulting unstructured use of scientific advice; a new network is intended to overcome institutional boundaries and lead to more yet formalised openness | Utilizing scientific advice systematically in the federal government's crisis management; establishing coordination processes between the bodies involved and clear communication with policy; joint planning of evidence-based policy            |
| Wise/Wilson/<br>Schwaag Serger:<br>Place-based science-for-policy | Co-creation of advice structures in specific (e.g. thematic or local) settings; science-policy interaction works both ways and is highly context-specific; organization must be flexible and challenge-driven; stable funding is beneficial                                    | Integration of advisory and evaluative functions, governance of transformation; policy learning, more interactive relationship between knowledge and policy, strategic coordination, trans-disciplinary approach, turning knowledge into practice |

## Zusammenfassung #2b

### Ecosystems of Scientific Advice

| Author(s), short title                                                                    | Key characteristics describing advisory systems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <b>Ecosystems: Institutional Structures and System Dynamics</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Kahn/Ralphs/<br>Mustapha/Borel-<br>Saladin: Policymaking<br>and advice in South<br>Africa | Long-lasting impact of autonomy<br>paradigm; tensions and lacking<br>communication between<br>academic and state-directed<br>approaches leads to failure in the<br>face of challenges; convergence<br>can provide opportunities                                                        | Providing evidence, particularly<br>scientometrics, for informed<br>policymaking; sounding board<br>for dealing with HIV/AIDS crisis;<br>joint planning of big science<br>and developing complex<br>technosystems                                                                                    |
| Allegra: Scientific<br>Advice in EU<br>institutions                                       | Advisory bodies in EU-specific<br>sectoral policy domains:<br>separation of advice and<br>regulation to keep scientific<br>independence as legitimation;<br>development of more general<br>advice structures towards a quasi-<br>council embedded in the EU<br>institutional framework | Informing and legitimizing sectoral<br>policymaking while balancing<br>tensions between scientific<br>expertise and democracy,<br>thereby providing spaces of co-<br>production; strategic cross-cutting<br>scientific advice to coordinate<br>more generally across the science-<br>policy boundary |

## Ausblick SIP-Talks



19. Okt.: Jakob Kofler  
„Kausalanalysen“



18. Nov.: Mario Scharfbillig  
„Fractured Reality“