



Education Councils in Europe >>Increasing the impact of policy advice?

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Presentation Structure

Introduction

- I. Relevant findings in the study on EC
- II. Workshop



Definition: education councils

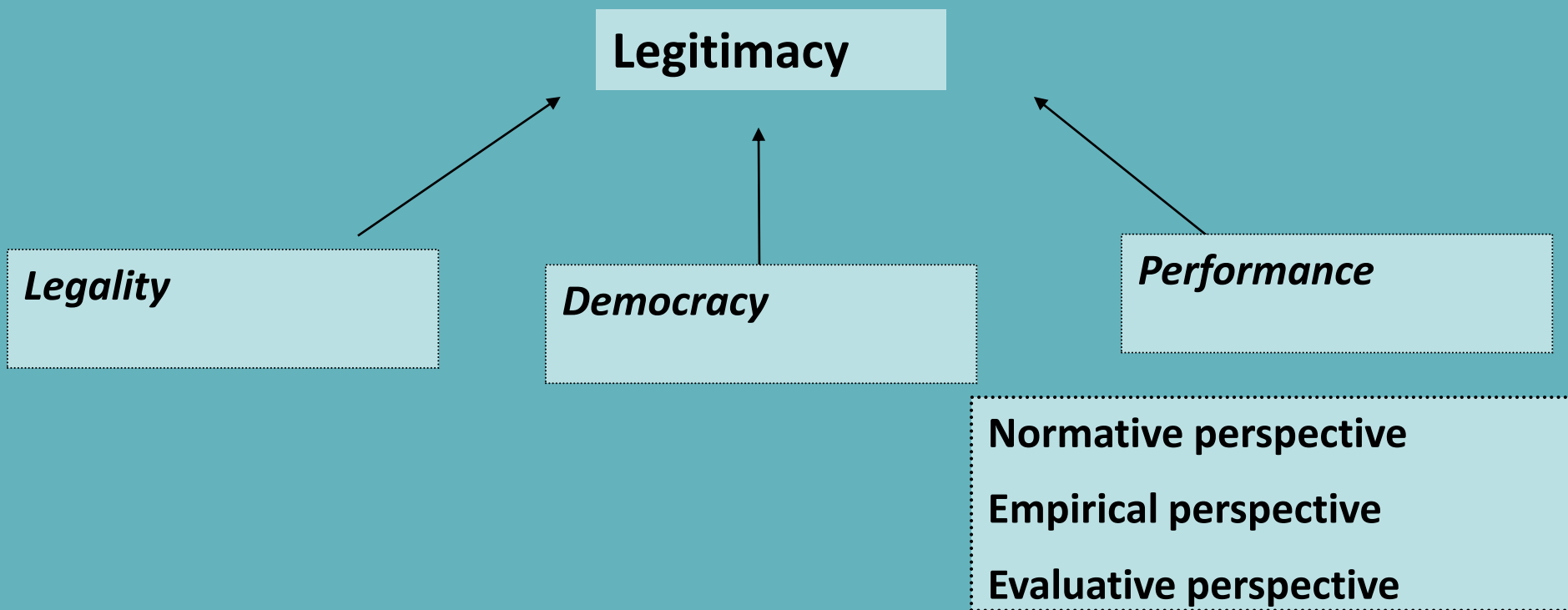
- 1) Made up of a collection of members sourced from at least the expert and/or civil society communities.
- 2) Contains no obvious domination in membership from one social or political grouping.
- 3) Recognised by the government as an advisory body, either legal, financial or through the employment of the body by the government.
- 4) Provides, as its primary and chief function the provision of advice of an instrumental, conceptual or agenda setting nature.
- 5) Formed with an open ended remit as opposed to one which is time limited.



EC as boundary organisations

- As permanent systems of advice educational councils can bridge the worlds of policy-makers, expertise and science, and civil society
- To produce useful products to all three worlds: innovativeness and policy impact, social learning, conflict reduction, satisfaction and policy support, scientific reputation
- Independence of boundary work lies in its dependence on multiple communities

EC need to be (perceived as) legitimate



Types of 'policy impact'

- Types
 - Instrumental
 - Conceptual
 - Agenda-setting
 - (Strategic - Political)



A sufficiently funded, embedded,
autonomous, broad and representative EC
will have better possibilities of high advisory
impact



Recommendations Meso

- Ensure sufficient funding and means to the advisory council as an organisation, or to the members.
- Grant the advisory council a status in law.
- Legally embed the roles of advisory bodies.
- Legally settle the council's access points to different stages of the policy cycle.



Recommendations Meso

- Raise their commitment as a principal by assigning leading civil servants
- Allow for the inclusion of different communities; if not through membership, representation, and co-optation, than through mechanisms of consultation of experts and civil society interests.
- Raise the number of principals, by for instance including parliament as a client of the council's advice.
- Combine legal guarantees with granting sufficient discretion..
- Invest in knowledge base



Recommendations Micro

- Adopt strategies and tools for combining civil society input and expertise, next to what is settled in their membership structure: expert pools, e-fora, or focus groups.
- Adopt different advisory tracks
- Adopt conscious and diversified dissemination strategies, in order to communicate with their different principals, raise the utility of their products, increase their networks.
- Customize information in the process and products to the different principals and audiences.



Recommendations Micro

- Engender with members and principals different understandings of advisory success
- Efficiently plan and time advisory processes and products in multi-annual and annual work programmes.
- Make use of the best available evidence in their advisory process and products: data, research, and analysis, the latter of which blends in opinion of stakeholders.
- Develop conscious strategies to train staff and leaders as boundary workers: communication and policy analytical skills;



Workshop



In-depth case studies:

- Portugal: established, large, broad membership, mixed scope, high status
- Dutch: small, expertise focus, agenda setting, high ratio staff to members
- Flemish: established, strongly embedded, large, strong admin support
- Estonian: very large, broad, open access, weak legal status, 1 principal, long term focus, high discretion
- Greek: focus on instrumental advice, no right of initiative
- Spanish: established, large, broad, representational membership, active presence government



Contact?

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