Advising Technocrats: Ministerial Advisers in a Caretaker Government

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Abstract: The study of political and ministerial advisers has advanced significantly in recent years, yet little is known about their role in technocratic governments. This paper addresses that gap by examining the case of the Ódor technocratic cabinet in Slovakia, which was appointed in 2023 following the collapse of a minority government. While the case is Slovak, the aim is broader: to explore how ministerial advisers function when ministers themselves are technocrats, often former senior civil servants, rather than party politicians. We analyze advisers' career profiles and the types of expertise they bring (policy, political, PR/media), and investigate how their roles evolve through interactions with both civil servants and technocratic ministers. Given Slovakia's highly politicized senior civil service, the case offers unique insights into how advisers mediate between politicized bureaucracies and politically unaffiliated leadership. Based on semi-structured interviews, this study contributes to understanding advisory roles in technocratic settings.