

***Understanding HR in the Morality
Construction of Policy Analysts***

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*Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts (MA) in Public Administration*

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Abstract

Title	Understanding HR in the Morality Construction of Policy Analysts
Brief Summary	This study traces the influence of the Government of Canada's human resources management system, as a form of organizational discourse, in how policy practice is constructed in a moral form within the institutional setting. The study aims to move beyond the conceptual and theoretical models of policy analysis present in the current literature to explore what policy 'work' entails in practice.
Research Question	How has organizational discourse, through the use of human resources management instruments, led to an institutional morality construction of the work of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service?
Theoretical Approach	The study views the emergence of the policy analysis function as a response to early twentieth century modernization and rationalization reforms undertaken by western public administrations. By using Foucauldian perspectives on the exercise of power through the use of discourse, the study maps out how the Government of Canada used discursive instruments to instill particular values and behaviors on the manifestation of policy work by civil servants.
Methodology	The study proposes the use of critical discourse analysis to study human resource management instruments, namely recruitment material, where written language is used to delineate an occupational jurisdiction for policy workers. The analysis of these texts will be used to formulate a morality for how policy analysis 'work' is ought to be practiced by policy analyst practitioners.

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Acknowledgements

My heartfelt gratitude to my family for their relentless support, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey.

My special thanks to Professor Jonathan Paquette, whose trust, persistence, and intellectual safety left an indelible mark on my academic journey.

Thank you to all the professors from uOttawa, including those who participated in my evaluation committee. Your contributions to my growth are not forgotten.

Finally, to my cohort of POL & PAP peers, friends, and colleagues from Health Canada who shared invaluable support and encouragement along the way; my sincerest thanks.

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Understanding HR in the Morality Construction of Policy Analysts

Chapter 1: Introduction

A vast amount of literature has been published on the practice of policy analysis in Canada and around the world. While the early roots of the practice can be traced back to the progressive reform movement of the 1800s (Brooks 2007, 28), policy analysis gained definition in the 1900s, where ideas of scientific rationality, civil service reform, and a post-war movement to bring rationality to government decision making became areas of focus for western public administrations. Combined, these forces brought about a renewal in how ‘public’ problems are viewed and mitigated, one based on the use of intellect and a scientific approach to developing government interventions (Pal 2006, 14). The early days of this ‘movement’ rested in the hands of an elite cadre of academic experts whose practice relied largely on the application of technical knowledge and methodologies (Brooks 2007, 28).

Today, the elitism and exclusivity of the practice is no longer a reality. Policy analysis now cuts across a multitude of domains, and has seen widespread growth and incorporation into many facets of society. While policy analysis continues to dominate in the work of government institutions, policy actors are found across sectors such as private enterprises, non-governmental organizations, consultancies, think tanks, and academic institutions (Howlett, Wellstead, and Craft 2016, 5). This growth has contributed to the expansion of degree programs in universities, where a range of undergraduate and graduate programs across the country aggressively promote their comprehensive training programs to the next generation of policy leaders. The practice has also been subject to a cultural shift. Brooks (2007) explains that:

The policy expert – the university professor commenting on the ethical implications of an assisted suicide law, the think tank economist interviewed for her views on a government

budget, or the criminologist talking about the experience of the victims of crime – has become a routine and even necessary part of popular political discourse... In doing so, the ‘expert’ has become an icon in a society whose consciousness and values are powerfully affected by his or her activities. (25)

Despite the widespread growth, there still exist gaps in the understanding of policy analysis as a function carried out by actors within society (Dobuzinskis, Laycock, and Howlett 2007, 8). The gap is the object of this study, which proposes to examine how policy work, as practiced within the confines of one specific institutional context – the Canadian federal public service – has been influenced and shaped by discursive phenomenon. The paper argues that through the use of discourse, the institution instills a form of morality that is expressed and promoted to candidates during their candidacy for such careers, such as in job advertisements, and is more generally articulated in those processes. The specific form of morality is explored through the use of discourse analysis of those human resources products to deepen our understanding of the nature of the moral obligation that is being imposed on these actors.

The paper begins in Chapter 2 by grounding our understanding of policy analysis as a complex phenomenon. We trace the establishment and influence of this quasi-profession in western settings through emergences such as the policy sciences, and then pivot to establishing an understanding of the representation of policy analysis as a form of ‘work’. We also take an initial foray into articulating the impact of discourse as it relates to work, and how, through the use of power and knowledge dynamics, discourse is used within organizational settings to motivate certain types of behaviours within occupational roles. We conclude Chapter 2 by drawing into attention the research question for this paper: *How has organizational discourse, through the use*

of human resources management instruments, led to an institutional morality construction of the work of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service?

In Chapter 3, we attempt to establish the core concepts which are at play in this paper. We begin with a re-examination of the concept of policy analysis through a theoretical lens, and also attempt to put parameters around the specific case study in question, that is, the use case of ‘policy analysts’ occupying roles within the Canadian civil service. We then begin to unpack the critical elements that will help situate this project. Building from the discussion in Chapter 2, we further examine human resources processes as a form of discourse, and attempt to bridge the use of discourse within organizations to formulate distinct identities and ethos. With the introduction of the term ethos, we pause to situate the particular focus of ethics that is of relevance to this study, recognizing the sheer depth of the term on its own. With the foray into ethics, we attempt to explore how ethics is developed within organizations through language, and how organizations ‘work’ to develop specific forms of ethics. We conclude the literature review by honing in on practical ethical dilemmas specific to public service organizations, including the development of job-specific forms of moral agency that are unique to public service ‘office-holders’, which in its nature can extend to the study of policy analysts within the civil service.

In Chapter 4, we articulate the research project at hand, by reiterating the question, case selection, analytical methodology, and data collection mechanisms which are central to the data collection necessary for this project. In Chapter 5, we provide a high-level summary of findings, drawing mainly on the numericizing of the qualitative findings, and providing initial discussion on aspects such as the frequency and dominance of certain qualities and ethics.

The final sections, Chapter 6 and 7, offer a discussion on the occupational morality construction of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service by dissecting different categories

of occupational requirements elaborated in the records examined in this project (human resources management instruments, namely, job advertisements). These include a discussion on requirements related to experiential requirements, knowledge requirements, abilities, and what the employer terms as 'suitabilities'. We then take stock and present a high-level reflection of the morality construction of this occupation in the concluding paragraphs.

Before embarking on a read of this paper, a few words on the significance of this issue. By often being at the juncture between political power and the public administration of that power, the role of the analyst is rooted in partaking in knowledge translation, dispensing recommendations for policy solutions, and implementing the will of the powerful, all with the view of preserving the public interest. This deserves a higher level of awareness of the ways in which occupants holding these offices exercise their duties. While public service ethics as a field points to no shortages of ethical dilemmas that exist within public administrations, this study attempts to explore public service ethics through another vantage point, that is, by focusing on the holders of the responsibilities of those offices, in order to help address gaps in our understanding of who they are, what they do, and how they operate. By better understanding the morality construction of these officials, we can better reflect on the policy solutions they bring to the table, and recognise whether those two elements reconcile. ●

Chapter 2: Research Problem

2.1. Studying Policy Analysis: Making Sense of the Complex Phenomenon

Research in the field of policy analysis and development is aggravated by the complexity in speaking to matters of ‘policy’ as a singular phenomenon, for fewer terms can invoke a similar sense of ambiguity, especially in the absence of a central paradigm or regulatory environment such as those seen in more established fields such as law, medicine, or engineering. In fact, attempts to singularly classify the practice into a distinct category have been diverse and abstract. Policy analysis has taken on labels ranging from a ‘profession’ (Brooks, 2007), a ‘movement’ (Dobuzinskis, Laycock, and Howlett 2007, 4), a ‘craft’ (Prince, 2007), and even an occupation (Colebatch, Hoppe and Noordegraaf, 2010).

This reality can be articulated best by summarizing Wildavsky (1979) and Goodsell (1992). To them, policy analysis is “a mood more than a science, a loosely organized body of precepts and positions rather than a tightly integrated body of systematic knowledge, more art and craft than genuine “‘science’” (Moran, Rein, and Goodin 2006, 18). For Wildavsky, this art is centered on the concept of ‘speaking truth to power’ (Wildavsky, 1979), a phrase that has been enshrined in public administration literature to powerfully communicate the essence of the function. Since then, scholars have attempted to define more precise parameters around the manifestation of this art. Recent scholars such as Mindrom and Williams (2013) explain that policy analysis can be viewed as a subset of policy advising provided to elected officials in order to “improve the base of knowledge upon which decisions are made” (4).

Other scholars view the practice methodically, such as a way of using “applied social and scientific research (combined with) implicit forms of practical knowledge” (Dobuzinskis, Laycock, and Howlett 2007, 4) in the formulation of state interventions. These research techniques

include “systematic analytical methodologies” (Howlett and Lindquist 2007, 86) such as cost-benefit analysis and quantitative modelling, environmental impact assessments, social impact assessments, and health impact assessments (Mintrom and Williams 2013, 9). With policies being analyzed by the range of institutions mentioned earlier, there is also a standing recognition that policy analysis is highly contextual and can be carried out under various guises depending on the environment in which it is being produced and applied (Lindquist 2007).

While it is clear that policy analysis in contemporary practice cannot represent a singular phenomenon, it would be remiss to think that it has not been influenced and anchored by dominant ideas or discourses. Policy analysis today has been shaped by the creation of a ‘policy sciences’ field in the mid-1900s by Laswell. His work focused on the rigorous application of science to governance and government in a way that mediates the interests of policy actors by using objective information to guide the development of solutions to public problems.

From there, a body of authors have covered extensive track from a historical lens (for example, Radin, 2000; Page, 2006; Brooks, 2007), theoretical lens (for example, Sabatier, 2007), and methodological lens (for example, Hall and Taylor, 1996; Hood and Margetts, 2007) to understand policy development and analysis. Not only has this literature, most of which has seen repeated iterations over the last few decades, formed the foundation of public administration knowledge that has permeated through to the myriad of institutions and organizations practicing policy analysis, but it has developed a central ethos for the study of policy, one that centers on using objective, ‘truthful’ information in the governance of democracy (DeLeon 2006, 40).

2.2. Studying Policy as ‘Work’: Addressing Academic and Contemporary Themes

While the rapid growth of the policy field over the course of the 1900s has led to immense knowledge development by policy actors across public and private sectors, most have been focused

on either theoretical frameworks or in-depth case studies of specific policy initiatives. Although these have been beneficial in furthering our understanding of the development and impact of public policy, the majority of these contributions lead to a strong conceptual understanding of the field. To what extent does the conceptual understanding of policy work compare to how the work is actually exercised within institutions?

Policy scholars agree that there exists a large disconnect between what is presented in academic literature and practice. In his paper on *What Work Makes Policy?*, Colebatch (2006) addresses this disconnect by saying that “policy analysis texts are mostly concerned with instruction and exhortation, and the basic assumptions about the nature of the game...are taken for granted. But these assumptions often seem to be at variance with the experience of policy practitioners.” (310) He points to Radin (2000) who echoes similar sentiments, and then further explains that the content of policy textbooks “represent a norm, an ideal to which policy workers aspire” (311).

A handful of authors in Canada have examined the work of policy professionals, such as the masses of policy analysts and advisors working within the ranks of federal and provincial governments. What continues to be lacking is an examination of the discipline beyond a conceptual view, one that examines the manifestation of the work of policy under different contexts. This is echoed by scholars who express that: “there is a clear need for better empirical research into the sociology of policy analysis... who is doing what in government and outside of it?” (Dobuzinskis, Laycock, and Howlett 2007, 8). While research in this domain has been done in international jurisdictions such as in the United States, New Zealand, and Europe, this has lagged behind in Canada until very recently (Howlett, Wellstead, and Craft 2016, 6).

This gap in the existing literature is explained by its heavy focus on developing what is referred to as policy ‘knowledge’, that is, transferable knowledge that policy analysts and decision makers can apply in their fields of work. In turn, scholars looking to study the practice of policy have coined the term ‘policy work’ to reflect their object of study. Howlett, Wellstead, and Craft (2016) describe policy work as a term that captures the “applied practice of policy – what is it that policy professionals actually do – and the field of research for its study.” (7) They explain that the study of policy work aims to empirically capture the nature of policy work, but at the same time, develop theoretical contributions to how contemporary practice affects the policy process (7). Studying this work also allows for a better understanding of how analysis is generated, and the influence it carries on government decision making.

One aspect of policy work which has been studied looks at the strong influence that the location of policy analysis, as in the proximity to decision makers, plays in policymaking. The location is important, because, as Craft and Howlett (2007) explain, “the personal and professional components of a policy advice supply system, along with their internal and external sourcing... can have significant implications for the kind of advice that are generated and listened to by governments.” (81) The study of ‘location-based’ models of policy analysis generally identified three locational sources of policy analysis. The first two sources include *proximate decision makers*, such as individuals who have formal, legitimate authority to make policy decisions, and *knowledge producers*, such as academics who conduct research to produce scientific and social scientific data upon which policy analysis is conducted.

The final source of policy analysis is of most interest to this study: that is, the role of *knowledge brokers* who act “as intermediaries between the knowledge generators and proximate decision-makers, repackaging data and information into usable form.” (Lindvall 2009; Sundquist

1978; as cited in Craft and Howlett 2007, 82). These knowledge brokers include policy and research workers within government who support decision makers, but also include external actors such as interest groups and think tanks.

It is in this vein of studying the *location* of policy analysis that this study finds its purpose, by examining the form of policy work that is in operation within Canada's public service. However, unlike previous research, this study is not interested in re-examining how the location of the policy analysis influences on policy making, but rather, how the locational setting instills particular values that influence policy practices and behaviours. By studying the dominant values that paint policy practice in the public service, this study hopes to contrast existing assumptions that the nature of professional policy practice rests largely on ideals of objectivity and neutrality, and rather, particular value judgements imposed on them by the institutions within which they operate. In order to do, the study proposes to look at organizational discourses that are used to communicate an organization's ideals to employees. In particular, the study proposes the examination of human resources documents, as forms of organizational discourse, to understand the types of ideals and values that are communicated to individuals attempting to enter into the policy profession within the public service.

The study borrows from both the organizational and discourse studies branch of sociology to understand how institutions and organizations distill values in their respective members. Organizational studies assert that organizations are viewed not only as sites of oppression, but sites where "groups compete to shape the social reality" (Montessori 2010, 159). In this case, it is hypothesized that the public service, as the employer of federal policy practitioners, competes to produce an ideal of policy practise that is normalized across the organization and presented as the ideal way to conduct policy practice. How distinct this institutional ideal of policy practice is,

compared to more established ideas of policy analysis, such as in policy literature, motivates this research.

2.3. Shaping 'Work' through Discourse

A second element of study in this research borrows from the domain of discourse studies, of which, organizational discourse has been established as a legitimate force of power. This domain asserts that while institutions are shaped by discourses, “they also have the capacity to shape and impose discourses, thus influencing everyday routine experiences.” (159) Mumby and Clair (1997) explain that “discourse is the principle means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are.” (181) Discourse comes in various forms and styles. At the micro-level, discourse can be constituted as the interactions, on a day to day basis, that give organizations substance and allow them to operate. More relevant to this research is the study of discourse at the macro-level. Here, discourse is characterized as the “functions to frame the broad social context within which everyday organizing processes occur.” (Mumby and Mease 2011, 284) The use of such discourse is based on the idea of premising certain behaviors and decision making processes within the organization.

This idea of policy practice being a product of macro-level organization discourse is a departure point for this study. To understand the influence of such discursive practices, the study turns to the use of human resources management (HRM) instruments, such as job advertisements, to observe the types of discourses, employed at the institutional level, to condition the senses and behaviours of policy practitioners within the federal public service.

The view of HRM as a form of organizational discourse, one that not only produces distinct occupational roles, but shapes the behaviours associated with the roles, has been an area of interest for authors in the domain of human relations and the management sciences. Writing in the 1990s,

Townley explains that HRM is the vehicle by which employees are “selected, appraised, trained, developed, and remunerated” (518), a system that has been globally and extensively normalized within organizations (519). To Townley, the acceptance of HRM at face value is inadequate, and she suggests that HRM can be viewed as being more than simply a technical exercise in organizing and ordering constituents within an organization. Instead, she finds that HRM is very much a tool to manage power relations, one that can be used to compel actors within an organization to behave and act towards certain ends.

At its core, HRM is used to fulfill ambiguities in the employment contract, an instrument that is used to articulate the relationship between the employer and the worker. This relationship carries with it two primary unknowns: the nature of the work required, and the nature of the operator. It is these two unknowns which drive the need for human resources management systems: first, to construct and produce forms of knowledge to shape the type of work involved in an employment relationship and second, to outline how a worker ought to complete it. Townley describes this force of HRM as there to “bridge the gap between promise and performance, between labor power and labor, and ... (organize) labor into a productive force.” (526) By employing the use of various techniques and tools, HRM “render(s) organizations and their participants calculable arenas, offering, through a variety of technologies, the means by which activities and individuals become knowable and governable.” (526) Thus, the use of HRM instruments, such as job descriptions and training manuals that articulate precise techniques and behaviours required by workers, can be challenged as more than technical exercises in training and organizational management; rather, these instruments represent instances where power is exercised, in the form of knowledge production, to define work and shape social realities for workers.

2.4. Research Question

This study will bring these concepts of organizational discourse and the use of HRM to mould workers' attitudes and behaviours to the study of policy practitioners within the federal public service. By doing so, the project hopes to better understand the underlying values and behaviours which are imposed upon policy workers by various discursive mechanisms, and the resulting implications for the quality of policy analysis emerging within the institutional setting. More precisely, the study attempts to address the following research question: How has organizational discourse, through the use of human resources management instruments, led to an institutional morality construction of the work of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service?

This study hopes to make a contribution to the growing body of literature on policy work by examining the manifestation of policy analysis within the federal civil service. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will primarily benefit educators in the field of public administration, hoping to prepare students with relevant skills for a policy career with the federal public service. In addition, the study hopes to offer a few insights linked to broader themes in public administration, such as the relevance of values and subjectivity in the development of public policy. ●

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1. Policy Work from a Theoretical Perspective

This study proposes to examine how the practical manifestation of policy analysis has been shaped and influenced by organizational discourse in the Government of Canada. Before outlining the design of the study, this section establishes the theoretical grounding on which it is based in two parts. The first part summarizes the underpinnings behind which this study's understanding of policy 'work' within government institutions is based. The second focuses on the use and impact of discourse in shaping the behavior and values of actors within organizations.

To understand the establishment of policy analysis as a function in government, Brooks (2007) identifies three lenses through which the phenomenon can be explained: technical, political, and cultural (23). The technical lens, which is most relevant to the objective of this study, draws from the work of Weber on the replacement of traditional forms of bureaucracy with rational based authority. In such a system, authority is achieved based on "recognized expert credentials that may include formal training, degrees, certification, and particular types of experience." (Brooks 2007, 23) This stands in contrast to traditional forms of bureaucracy, where authority was achieved through purely political and personal factors. Instead, the high regard for rationality in modern bureaucracies ensures that rules, not persons, guide actions and behaviours, resulting in an environment where formally educated bureaucrats dominate and exercise judgement which is free from 'prejudice and passion' (Weber, as cited in Brooks 2007, 24).

Weber's vision of a modern bureaucracy can be used to explain the rise of policy workers within the federal public service. As a modern, rational state, there was a need for the Canadian state to have "experts whose special knowledge is indispensable to the activities of the state." (24) The rise of policy analysts, therefore, can be viewed in response to the rationalization and

modernization of the Canadian state. Brooks' historical account of the policy analysis profession in Canada corroborates this theoretical approach. In his 2007 article, he tracks the rise of formally educated, technical experts in the Canadian bureaucracy, from the post-War period, right up until recent decades. His findings show that the modernization process in Canada was supported by two key trends.

First, progressive transformations in the public service's staffing system saw a significant shift from a political-patronage hiring system to a merit-based system (Brooks 2007, 27-28). This saw a radical change in personnel selection to one based on formal education, skills, and competencies. This paved the way for university-educated individuals, fresh with technical knowledge and know-how, to transcend the ranks of the public service. Second, the years after the First World War were marked by widespread economic crises that saw an increased interest from political actors in understanding the economic implications of government policies. The convergence of both of these trends eventually led to a philosophical shift, which saw policymakers starting to solicit technical advice from formally educated experts to support government decision making, laying the foundation for the framework of policy work as it is understood today. By mid-century, the rise of non-partisan analysts rose substantially, and the growing community, branded as the 'Ottawa boys' (Brooks 2007: 28), signaled the rise of economics, social sciences, and intellect based decision making more broadly within the public sector. Since then, the landscape for Canadian public administration faced much turbulence, but the practice of policy analysis continued to flourish. Today, the function of policy analysis has become a key fixture in virtually all areas of the public service.

3.2. Policy analysts as an occupational group

Given the focus of this study on a specific community of policy workers, it is important to clarify this study's approach to viewing this particular occupational group as a social phenomenon. A variety of terms exist when studying the occupational role, ranging in interpretation from liberal to orthodox (Paquette 2016, 3). At the liberal extreme, the term can be used to describe "any type of work-based forms of agency" (3), whereas a more orthodox interpretation can be seen in Wilensky's study of professions as referring to any occupation that "has successfully gained the monopoly over a practise, with warranty and recognition of this monopoly by the state" (3).

While the intention of the study is not to confine the practice of policy analysis into a distinct occupational category, the study is influenced by studies on the evolution of policy practice that demonstrate a steady 'movement' towards professionalization. As such, Wilensky's (1964) views on professions as a process, rather than an entity, remain relevant to this research. This process, which he calls a process of professionalization, include elements such as the establishment of full-time practice, dedicated training institutions, professional associations, and political agitation to develop monopoly over practice (144-145). While a study on the level of professionalization of public service policy workers remains to be explored, there are clear indicators of disparate elements of professionalization in this community, such as the rampant rise of university programs that prepare students for policy careers with the federal government, as well as active engagement by civil servants with national professional associations such as the Institute for Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). Most importantly, policy workers in the federal civil service enjoy recognition by the employer under a distinct Economics and Social Sciences (EC) occupational group. This group, among other responsibilities, is responsible for the

research, analysis, and evaluation of policies (Treasury Board of Canada 2017). We point to the totality of these factors to justify the study of policy workers as a distinct social phenomenon.

3.3. Human Resources Management as a Form of Discourse

The second element of study which requires theoretical grounding looks at how organizational discourse, in the form of human resources management, has influenced how policy work is conducted within the civil service. The theoretical underpinnings of work on discourse can be traced back to Foucault's exploratory work on power and knowledge. Hall (1997) summarizes Foucault's intellectual pursuit of discourse as a force of power that shapes the social world. In contrast to the study of linguistics, which views discourse as simply instances of writing or speech, discourse represents instances where knowledge is created to depict certain realities. Discourse is then normalized to give meaning to practices and behaviours that shape human conduct (72). By doing so, discourse becomes a tool of discipline that sets rules and boundaries around the nature of things: how and how not to talk, write, and conduct oneself (75). It is here where the element of power in discourse becomes apparent. The Foucauldian view challenges existing notions that power belongs to particular institutions or entities such as the state. Instead, power is relational and become apparent when it is exercised, such as through the use of techniques and procedures that regulate the behaviour of actors within institutions (Townley 1993, 530).

This view on power, knowledge, and discourse is relevant for this study as it attempts to map out how the Government of Canada, as an institution and organization, exudes power in the name of human resources management to instill particular values and behaviors on policy workers. There is no shortage of authors who build on Foucauldian ideas of discourse as a way to explain organizational phenomena. Oswick et. al (2000) explain that discourse is "the principal way by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they

are.” (Mumby and Clair 1997, 181 as cited in Oswick et. al 2000, 1116) Furthermore, “organizational discourse identifies ways in which a variety of discursive practices can contribute to the process of organizing and the behaviour of organizational stakeholders.” (1116) Similar parallels can be found between the study of organizational discourse and the domain of human resource management, which was elaborated on in the previous section. To summarize our earlier view, HRM represents a “discourse which organizes analytical space... (and) disciplines the interior of the organization, organizing time, space, and movement within it.” (526) One of the ways this is done is through the articulation and elaboration of labour by using ‘instruments’ such as job descriptions, classification schemes, and employee hand books to define activity and behaviour. These instruments are forms of knowledge generation that shape and enforce behaviour and conduct within the employee and employer relationship.

The discursive impact of HRM continues to be an area of exploration in the literature, particularly in the field of human relations and organizational management. Researchers who have analyzed discourse used during human resources recruitment practices reported finding a “complex relationship between organizational values, discourses, meaning making, and gender bias.” (Askehave 2010, 314) Numerous studies exploring gender issues in job performance show “the ideological impact of business discourses” (315) to “reflect the practices and values in an organization and play a central role in creating, sustaining, or changing organizational reality.” (315) In sum, this study builds on theoretical and experimental research that establish the use of HRM instruments as a form of discourse to shape and guide occupational behavior.

3.4. Identity and Ethos Construction within Organizations

Key to this research project, is understanding how identities are created within organizations, a concept that has been established thoroughly through organizational management

literature in unpacking the impact that organizations have on actors within them. It is therefore prudent to use an opportunity to take stock of this literature and make the connection between organizations and instances of identity creation, in order to subsequently argue how this has taken place in the specific case study which is under examination in this project.

Like the term ‘policy’, ‘identity’ is one of those concepts that has been studied extensively and now permeates into various dialogues in both academic and civic settings, yet continues to be difficult to commonly define, as the term beseeches complexity and ambiguity. We find that at its core, identity is part of a process that individuals look to undergo to develop and understanding of themselves, versus the ‘other’ (Ybema et al. 2009, 300). The ‘other’ is not a singular phenomenon, but rather refers to various different settings that the individual places themselves in, be it social circles, professional settings, or even at very personal and micro settings, which allow individuals to define their individual identity within society. Furthermore, Ybema et al. (301) describe how identities are “complex, recursive, reflexive, and constantly ‘under construction’”, further reinforcing the complexity of studying this concept.

This research project is interested in examining the specific setting of a professional organization of which an actor belongs to, specifically, employees belonging to the ‘organization’ of the Canadian civil service. As such, we will look to establish an understanding of how the organization contributes to identity formation as part of its organizational management approaches. When examining identity within organizations, there is a further duality that needs to be examined, that is, the concept of self-definition on one hand, and the element of ‘definition by other’ on the other (302). Actors belonging to an organization can engage in identity creation that is self-driven, in which they take it upon themselves to self-regulate their behaviour in reaction to different discursive forms, such as organizational narratives, storytelling, or cultural interactions

(Ybema et al. 2009, 300). But there is also a form of identity creation within organizations that is more deliberate on the part of the organization itself, where those same tools, such as different discourses or cultural behaviours, are thrust onto the actors of the organization to shape their behaviours. This latter lens is more relevant to this study, as we are more interested in understanding the actions of the organization in shaping identities, rather than examining how the actors within the organizations themselves engage in patterns of identity creation at the self-level.

Ybema et al. explains how organizations use “prescriptive” and “professional” discourses to articulate the ideal social behaviour and shared belief systems for actors. The authors cite Bordieu (1977) in which he argued that this is done through ‘symbolic violence’ which refers to a process by which groups who hold greater power in a social organization set and enforce specific norms onto those members who do not occupy roles of power. The authors also cite Foucault’s work in 1972 which outlined the “social construction of ‘subjectivity’ through ‘disciplinary’ power-knowledge process” (Ybema et al. 2009, 301), referring to processes that powerful forces use through dialogue to influence social actions. The ongoing effect of this process is vital to understand, as any such processes are not a moment in time phenomenon, but rather a continuous process that does not have a stable trajectory. It refers to an ongoing period of negotiation between the self and the social, and not subject to a singular occurrence. Indeed it is completely possible that individuals form identities concurrently across multiple different social settings and organizations, and the limits of when these processes start and end are entirely in flux. This entire process of identity formation is defined concisely by Ybema et al. (2009) as,

a complex, multi-faceted process which produces a socially negotiated temporary outcome of the dynamic interplay between internal strivings and external prescriptions, between

self-presentation and labeling by others, between achievement and ascription and between regulation and resistance. (301)

But what is the interplay between identity and organizations? Ybema et al.'s article points to the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966). In their book, *The Social Construction of Reality*, the authors explain how society itself has two different homes. On one hand, it exists in individualized forms of thinking within persons in one respect, and on the other, it lives within more institutionalized settings that are shaped by collective understandings of symbols and structures. From there, a two-way exchange takes place, where individuals express their own form of identity in the form of actions and ways of thinking, and through interactions and feedback within institutional settings, to develop persistent patterns of behaviour which are distinct from individualized forms of thinking. The key here is the immersion within another setting, as over time, the immersion helps mould the individual's behaviour, which the individual internalizes through the acceptance and learning of the culture, knowledge, symbols, and accepted behaviours.

Ybema et al. explains that language plays an significant role in this process, as it is discursive practices that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and behaviours, and its enforcement allows the individual to habituate these patterns. We learn from this that identity formation within organizations is a phenomenon that takes place through the immersion of individuals within institutions, and through the exchange of discourse that instill accepted behaviours and languages within its occupants.

In Paul Du Gay's *Organizing Identity* (2007), he explains how this view of identity formation within organizations draws on the sociological-anthropological approach, which instead of viewing subjectivity and identity as separate and distinct, looks to understand how individuals develop "specific forms of 'personhood' that individuals acquire as a result of their immersion in,

or subjection to, particular normative and technical regimes of conduct.” (Du Gay 2007, 11) Du Gay explains that organizations will use tools and instruments to cultivate individual’s postures and mannerisms. But how can we explain how individuals come to embrace different identities within different contexts?

Du Guy attempts to dissect the concept of differing forms of personhood, examining what it means to be a person, and how the concept of ‘self’ is developed by individuals. He uses the work of three authors to explain the sociology of identity, grounding it in Foucault’s term ‘genealogy of subjectification’ (1985), which refers to the “processes and practices through which human beings come to relate to themselves as persons of a certain sort” (as cited in Du Gay 2007, 40). He also explains Mauss’ (1985) separation of the individual and a person. Whereas an ‘individual’ refers to the raw, unstructured personal being, a ‘person’ refers to the “complexes of instituted statuses and attributes that have provided the means of actually conducting oneself and one’s relations with others” (40). This is then internalized into an “inner entity (conscience, consciousness)” which is externally represented into the “many potential and actual ways of being a ‘person.’” (41)

Du Guy uses the work of Weber to reinforce examples of how this is actualized with individuals forming different “personae”, and which emphasize interplays between specific conducts and ‘departments of existence’, referring to orders of living under different environments. Du Gay then moves onto the work of Foucault, describing his work on developing different forms of personhood through techniques and processes of subjectification (42). He outlines Foucault’s differentiation between ethics and morals, referring to morals as a static ‘thou shalt or shalt not do this or that’ (58), whereas ethical practices refer to practical inspirations that individuals use to regulate themselves in relation to some form of a moral code. Overall, Du Gay’s work helps

strengthen our understanding of how individuals “acquire(d) definite capacities and attributes for social existence as certain sorts of person” (62). His work also reminds us of the plurality in forms of personhood and the importance of not delineating these forms from the cultural settings.

3.5. Situating Ethics

We have used the term ‘ethics’ in a few instances above, and before proceeding, establishing the meaning of the concept as it relates to this study is important. While the general meaning of the term ethics is generally understood, when studying ethics, there are a number of different ways ethics can be perceived to better understand its impact. Namely, the three key forms of ethics are described as virtue ethics, consequentialist ethics, and deontological ethics (Chakrabarty and Bass 2015, 496). Virtue ethics posits that the character of a moral organization is what drives ethical behaviour (496). The focus here is on the organization itself, and whether or not the organization is a reflection of ethical behaviour. There is a dependency that an organization could be deemed ethical if the totality of its agents display ethical behaviour. From an organizational management perspective, virtue ethics help organizations focus on how the organization itself can internalize good moral character (496); these would then “not only guide the firm in its daily activities and operations, but also increase the firm’s reputation and moral standing in the society in which it operates.” (496)

The second form of ethics, known as consequentialist ethics, looks at the impact of an agent’s actions to determine whether the outcome is beneficial. If it is, consequentialist ethics would determine the agent and the organization to be ethical. This style of ethics is focused on practices that affect the outcome of a problem, and not a universal set of ethical actions that apply to every scenario under all circumstances. An organization who prioritizes this form of ethics development would look to its internal practices to determine how it develops agents that know

how to maximize benefits when solving an issue, not just for the organization, but for the agent, the clients, and any others that are impacted by the problem (496). Unlike the previous example of virtue based ethics, the focus here is not on the agent, but rather the outcomes.

The final form of ethics is referred to as deontological ethics, which “emphasizes ethical actions driven by adherence to institutional rules, regulations, laws, and norms” (Koehn 1995; Rawwas et al. 2005 as cited in Chakrabarty and Bass 2015, 496). The authors explain how this focus of ethics focus on how “socially accepted norms help dictate and guide appropriate ethical actions in individuals and organizations” (496). The focus for organizations here is on developing appropriate norms and standards that can help its agents display ethical behaviour. The standards would articulate “the responsibilities or duties” (496) of an agent to the various parties interacting with the organization and focuses less on ethics of the organization overall. The organization does this by “providing boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate firm behaviours”.

For the agent of an organization, ethical actions are driven by an obligation towards a set of duties or adherence to norms (499), and for this reason, this style of ethics is most relevant to this research project. We are interested in examining the obligations that are imposed within the Canadian civil service as an organization, onto members of a specified class (i.e., policy analysts). In doing so, we are arguing that the organization is in fact attempting to impose ethical standards on a body of its employees, and it is through the adherence to these standards that the employer is reinforcing good moral and ethical behaviour. It is in this light that this project seeks to understand: what is the duty? What is the nature of the obligation?

3.6. Developing Ethics through Language

We have established thus far the use of organizational discourse to produce expected behaviour, but some exploration of the role of language within organizations is important,

especially as it relates to developing ethics. By this, we mean the role that language plays in forming a sense of what is good and bad behaviour, not in terms of their nature, but rather in terms of their technical abilities (Lawton 2008, 51). To further specify, the development of ethics of interest relate to “what actions are deemed to be good or bad” (51). We start with a quote referenced in Alan Lawton’s *The Language of Ethics* (2008), where the linkage between language and reality is made:

Men [sic] think by communicating language systems; these systems help constitute both their conceptual worlds and the authority-structures, or social worlds, related to these; the conceptual and social worlds may be seen as a context to the other, so that the picture gains in concreteness. The individual’s thinking may now be viewed as a social event, an act of communication and of response within a paradigm-system, and as a historical event, a moment in a process of transformation of that system and of the interacting worlds which both system and act help to constitute and are constituted by. (Pocock 1972, 15 as cited in Lawton 2008)

Lawton explains how any examination of language needs to be done within its organizational setting, and that we are interested in understanding not just what is said, but the wider context of how it is used and understood. He explains how the study of language within organizational studies has been a focus for a number of years, and specifically within the study of public service organizations. At the core of this, is a curiosity for how “understanding of organizations is enhanced by a study of the language used by individuals such that organizational “reality” does not exist independently of that language.” (46) Furthermore, “ethical language is part of a tradition and a form of life, and understanding the language individuals

use tells the researcher something about how they view ethics in their organizations. At the same time, organizations are constituted by different discourses, and organizational life and language are linked to issues of power.” (46)

But what is language, or discourse, as a concept? Lawton’s argument reminds us of the nature of this term draws frequent criticism, as its ability to refer to everything can mean that it is not referring to anything at all. Nonetheless, he points to Mumby and Clair’s (1997) definition that discourse is “the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are” (181, as cited in Lawton 2008, 49). Lawton explains that social reality within organizations is created through discourse, and so this reality is not a phenomenon that is separate from the organization, but weaved in with the very fabric of an organization. Forms of discourse, such as storytelling, narratives, and metaphors are what is used to develop that reality, and take practical forms such as reports, speeches, and other written and verbal products (49). Another important element is the source of the discourse, with Lawton acknowledging that there is not usually a singular discourse that shapes a reality, but rather, it is a form of “co-authoring” (49). Lawton also differentiates the presence of critical discourse analysis which is what can bring in the power element that is of relevance to this study. In citing Pocock, Lawton draws attention to this quote:

The two-way character of communication will be entirely lost when there are those who have the meaning of their words decided entirely for them, and reply to the speech acts of those in command of the language only, if at all, in terms which the latter have determined and to which they import nothing of their own. (36, as cited in Lawton 2008, 50)

The observation of the power dynamics within an organization, where certain sources of discourses (i.e., from the powerful) are more defining over others is of particular interest, as this study is

looking to understand how the employer, as the actor that holds the dominant power role, exerts influence over its employees.

3.7. The Use of Discursive Ethics within Organizations

Even within organizational ethics, how organizations deploy discourse to develop ethics varies. In some cases, there is an interest in instilling ethics through legal discourse (51), which is a style of discourse which is formalized and technical. Lawton uses the example of codes of conduct, which are frequently used legal discourses within organizations. These codes of conduct are there to ensure compliance and communicate that any violations of the code will result in sanctions (51). They offer guidance to agents, but importantly, strip out the role of its agents to take it upon themselves to exercise judgement and enable a more personalized form of ethic. Lawton highlights the critique with these styles of codes, indicating that “it is easy to hide behind a code and suspend individual judgement.” (Willmott 1998, as cited in Lawton 2008, 52) It is not just a passive presence for the agents; in fact, the ethical role for the organization is diminished to primarily monitoring and enforcement, as once the code is established, there is little else to do beyond ensuring awareness and compliance of the code among agents. This is different than other forms of ethics, which are less static, and more informal and dynamic, as will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Different than legal discourses in the form of codes of conduct, ethics are sometimes derived from political discourses (52), which are “concerned with persuasion, rhetoric, and conviction rather than with the logic of scientific or mathematical understanding.” (52) These discourses are about using rhetoric to appeal to forms of good and bad manners, but in a way that can not be attributed to legal or scientific methods, such as codes of conduct. Political discourses are dependent on the institutions where they are used (52). Lawton uses the example of an

organization that determines that science and the scientific-method are the legitimate solutions to universal problems. In this instance, the organization would use political discourses that assure its agents that its solutions are based on ‘the latest evidence’ in an attempt to offer greater credibility to its actions (52). In this light, political discourses can be seen to be more about ideological arguments (52).

The final type of discourse that Lawton explains is the development of ethics as a form of managerial discourse. He recalls the intent of the New Public Management (NPM) movement to instill a hyperfocus on organizational management, delivery, efficiency, and measurement. As such, NPM focused on producing high performing staff who could deliver on the priorities of the organization, and this requires facilitating their ability to share the vision of the organization and take responsibility for their actions. From this perspective, organizations employed managerial discourses that created an ideal ethic for their employees, developing values such as “focusing on customers” or “pursuing excellence” in an attempt to instill them into their overall ethics.

Both this latter form of ethical discourse as well as the earlier form of legal discourse can be attributed to be the most relevant to the study at hand, as this project is seeking to understand the impact of formal human resources management instruments, namely job posters, in constructing an overall form of morality for policy analysts within the civil service. Although job advertisements are not legal products, such that of codes of conduct against which employees may be sanctioned, they do possess legal-like properties, in that they outline the basic competencies against which candidates may apply for employment, and the repercussions of not meeting these standards are grave. In other words, in the case of not meeting the standards, this can lead to non-appointment of the position, and even worse, in the case of falsifying competencies, this can be used for legal or prosecutorial action.

However, as mentioned above, job advertisements do not represent a formalized doctrine, such that of a code of conduct. In fact, it can be argued that more than a legal purpose, there is an overtly managerial purpose to these documents given that they arise from the human resources *management* domain. These advertisements are there to set out the basic attributes that the employer views is valuable for the position so that the selected candidate can fulfill certain forms of “work” that is required by the employer. The purpose of the advertisement is to ensure that the selected candidate possesses the necessary depth of knowledge, experience, and skills to do so. The reflection of these documents as managerial tools would warrant their depiction as a form of managerial discourse, and through the value statements that are observed in the advertisements themselves, as will be seen in the findings, linkages can be drawn between what is contained in them, and the values that the employer is trying to instill in potential candidates and future employees.

3.8. Organizational “Work” to Develop Ethics

In reflecting on the forms of ethics to influence how actors within organizations conduct their “work”, it begs the question of the significance of the “work” that organizations do to develop ethics. For here, we move away from ethical literature and delve briefly into the field of organizational studies. Institutional work, as outlined by Lawrence and Suddaby in 2006, is about “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting organizations.” (3) We are most concerned with the attempt of organizations in “creating” forms of organization for this study, but before this is discussed, we look to establish a basic framework for understanding institutional work.

First, there is a need to “highlight the awareness, skill and reflexivity of individual and collective actors” (9), referring to our ability to understand the actors within an organization as

rational beings that “are able to work with institutionally-defined logics of effect or appropriateness” (9); they do this by adapting to conditions that are demanded of them. From here, we must secondly acknowledge that institutions rely heavily on the “conscious action of individual and collective actors” (10), putting a focus on the set of practices that maintain institutions, and other practices that create new ones or disrupt existing ones. Finally, we acknowledge the role of institutional rules that are “techniques (and) generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices.” (10)

If we pause here and apply these three elements to the case study in question for this research project, we validate the work of ‘policy analysts’ as a form of organizational work, by assuming that this is a group that works towards a standardized form of expected behaviour (which is the focus for this study), that the analysts take conscious actions to abide by these standards, and that there is the establishment of practices that maintain the form of organization of this body of professionals.

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) also highlight the different forms of institutional work that go into creating, maintaining, and disrupting organizations. They elaborate that forms of work that create institutions include work to ‘define’ and ‘construct identities’ that are important to this project, which is looking to understand how, through the use of human resources instruments, the employer is attempting to construct an occupational morality for policy analysts. To further elaborate, the authors explain how a form of institutional work involves “activity directed toward *defining* the construction of rule systems that confer status or identity, define boundaries of membership or create status hierarchies within the field.” (14) Work is also involved in ‘constructing identities’ that are associated with the development of professions, both in terms of the emergence of new ones and the transformation of existing ones (17). Both of these forms of

work legitimize the effects of the human resources instruments that are under examination within this study and help validate their intended effect to construct professional identities and defining roles and responsibilities within the policy analyst occupational group.

3.9. Ethics and Public Sector Organizations

We have thus far focused on organizations and discourse in more generalized fashions, but this particular research project is focused on a case study which falls under the specific context of a public sector organization. For this final section, we turn to situating ethical dilemmas in the public sector and the intersection of public administration and ethics. Inwood (2012) explains how ethical standards of behaviour are of particular interest in the field of public administration, which demand questions such as “what behaviours are acceptable in the public service, and what are not?” (338). He explains the importance of ethics in the public service, as the work conducted by public servants is dependant on the perception by the public that the work being undertaken in their interest is being done in a manner that “promotes trust and efficacy” (340). This goes back to the understanding that public servants act in a manner that produce results that are in the best interests of constituents, and thus they need to behave in a manner that is fair and reflective of their technical expertise to make the best possible decisions.

Inwood provides a historical overview that reinforces how the field of ethics specifically has interplayed with the Canadian public service. The early days of the public service, including the transition of staffing within the public service to merit based hiring in the early 1900s did not demonstrate a focus on ethics. Those early days saw a public service that was relatively small in size, and the sheer size of the service at the time benefited from shared values and meanings in more organic fashions. But as the size of the public service grew throughout the century, the increase in size saw more and more diverse public servants emerge into an area with their own

views on ethical behaviour. This relinquished control of shared meanings and required new efforts to align ethics at a macro level. In addition to the growing size of the public service, there was also a recognition of the discretionary authorities that were being born by public servants, and their need to use their judgement more and more. This further reinforced the need for a common ethic within the public service. This ultimately led to inquiries and studies, including the 1996 report *A Strong Foundation*, which triggered an in-depth discussion on values and ethics in the public service, after which, in 2003, a *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service* was eventually released. Furthermore, within the public administration literature, Inwood reminds us that two public administration scholars have come to develop the “seven commandments” for all public servants to adhere to, showcasing efforts to create overall ethics for this organized body:

Act in the public interest; be politically neutral; do not disclose confidential information; protect the privacy of citizens and employees; provide efficient, effective, and fair service to the public; avoid conflicts of interest; and be accountable. (Kernaghan and Langford 1990, as cited in Inwood 2012, 352)

The ethics that are under discussion from Inwood’s book speak to more concrete ethics that all Canadian public servants must oblige, which is different from the ethical and moral construction of the policy analyst profession that is under examination in this study. The ethics in discussion by Inwood speak to fostering normative ethics across the large body of the public administration such that all members of the service act in a manner which conforms to high ethical standards, to promote trust, promote transparency, prevent corruption, and overall maintain a positive public image. This is particularly important given the latest trends that have been observed in terms of public perception of government, with Inwood highlighting facts such as how trust in government has dropped drastically since the 1960s, how public perception on ethical standards in the public

service have slipped badly in the past decades, and how more and more Canadians do not believe that the ‘public interest’ drives government decision-making.

Yet despite being a different form of ethics unrelated to this study, its presence reminds us of the need for administrative ethics, specifically within public sector organizations. Quoting an observer, Inwood explains administrative ethics as involving “the application of moral principles to the conduct of officials in organizations.” (Thompson 1992 as cited in Inwood 2012, 345). Inwood confides in the principle of regulating the behaviour of individuals within organizations being a complex phenomenon, that is further reinforced by not all members being part of the same moral code (345). Administrative ethics thus helps articulate moral behaviour within organizations from an “objective and disengaged” perspective (345). Inwood then goes on to discuss two mitigating solutions: codes of conducts, and human resources practices, such as onboarding programs for new employees as forms of developing ethical behaviour in the public service. While onboarding programs are not the focus of our particular study, the use of human resources programs as a tool to develop ethics within a particular profession *is*, and falls along a spectrum of discursive human resources techniques that are typically used.

3.10. Job-Specific Forms of Moral Agency

Yet there is another form of ethic that is relevant to this study. In Paul Du Gay’s book *Organizing Identity*, he explains the unique phenomenon where public office holders, including civil servants, can be seen to possess a persona (or form of ‘person’), rather than an individual notion of self that they bring to the job. He makes a case that the state bureaucrat, public administrator, or career civil servant develops such persona through “politico-organizational” attempts to “transform the conduct of this persona” (104). Through his, he explains the development of office-specific forms of moral agency within public service organizations,

something that is quite relevant to this research project. This comes as the concept of public and political ‘office’ and ‘office-holders’ has drawn considerable scrutiny in light of contemporary scandals, which has drawn in an area of interest in “the forms of moral agency appropriate to the performance of political and governmental offices.” (104)

Before delving into office-based forms of moral agency, Du Gay explains that this requires a view of public service organizations and constituted structures of ‘offices’ (105). As the modern state was developed to “exercise authoritative political and legal decision-making over a given territory and subject-population” (105), so too was an understanding of the concept of political authority, being a form of delegation of legal authorities to certain locations within institutions (106) which eventually was not envisioned as a human being (106). Instead, those delegations permeated to an “abstract structure of offices” (106) which served as the bodies that exercised all sorts of powers in the name of persona, or ‘office-holder’. In the context of a public service organization, these delegations came to become the responsibilities of public servants occupying former roles in various offices to exercise legal mandates. This ultimately required strict definitions of the roles and responsibilities of these office holders. Du Gay brings in Weber who reinforces that “the institutional and moral responsibility of the different officers of state – rulers, political leaders, bureaucrats – is to be understood in terms of their quite distinct duties attached to their particular responsibilities of office” (Du Gay 2007, 107).

The author helps us better understand why bureaucrats further benefit from a unique persona. Referring to Weber’s vision of the ideal bureaucrat. the impersonal, the expert, the procedural, the hierarchical (108), working in distinct ‘bureaus’ that “comprise the socio-technical conditions of a distinctive organization of the person” (108), Du Gay explains that the bureaucrat office-holder is subject to their office as a “particular sphere of life (which) provide(s) the office-

holder with a distinctive ethical bearing or status conduct.” (108) Du Gay goes on to further explain how for Weber, one of the most critical elements for an office-holder is the possession of a ‘vocation’, which is a “focus of ethical commitment and duty, autonomous of and superior to the holder’s extra-official ties to kith, kin, class or conscience” (125). The office itself is a particular “life-order” which provides the civil servant with an ethical bearing (125). It is through the ethics that emanate from this life order that these civil servants acquire their ability to “conduct themselves according to the ethos of bureaucratic office.” (125)

Du Gay’s argument that there are specific ethos of bureaucratic offices is at the heart of this research study which looks to understand the construction of a distinct morality that is attributed to one form of professional organization within the Canadian civil service, that is, the occupational group of policy analysts. By arguing that a form of ethics is developed, particular for this occupational group, it is not to suggest that there is a formal and distinct code of ethics specific to this group. Rather, this study is looking to understand the creation of a generalized moral fabric for this occupation, using discursive methodologies in the form of human resources instruments. We propose to examine the construction of this morality by using discourse analysis to understand the nature of the obligation of the policy analyst, and the moral qualities which are prescribed to members of this community to conduct their work.

While the significance of this line of research will be addressed in the final chapters of this paper, we conclude using some points raised throughout this section on the overall question of ethics within the public service and how it is a relevant question that warrants its fair share of examination. Any scrutiny over how the civil services creates or prioritizes moral structures to deliver services in the interest of public citizens can be viewed as part of attempts to draw attention to issues or barriers that prevent the full realization of well functioning public service

organizations. And given the direct relationship between effective public services and the trends of public trust and perception explained earlier, it is safe to indicate that this is a timely moment to study such issues. ●

Chapter 4: Overview of Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine how organizational discourse, in the form of HRM, is used to develop an occupational construction of the role of policy analysts within the federal civil service. To do so, the study will collect and analyze a variety of government human resources instruments in the form of job advertisements related to ‘policy analyst’ positions in the public service – that is, positions where the dominant responsibilities are related to the practice of policy ‘work’ as defined earlier. These instruments will later undergo qualitative discourse analysis to understand the nature of their influence on how policy analysis is practiced within federal government units. The following section outlines the research methodology for the study, namely, case selection, analytical method, and sources of data.

4. 1. Case Selection

The project focuses on the practice of policy analysis by federal policy workers. Given the sheer complexity and size of the federal public service, this is not a simple selection. Lindquist and Desvaux (2007) explain that “policy-oriented units are distributed across public service institutions, which are complex bureaucratic systems serving duly elected governments.” (118) The authors map out different contexts within public service organizations where policy expertise can be found, including departmental policy units, central agencies, and operational units (119-120). Even within governments, each context is highly variable; analytical styles and methods of practice are not necessarily common across all areas. Given the large scope of actors that may be implicated by this study, narrowing down a defined community of policy workers requires firm establishment.

There is also consideration for how jobs for policy workers are advertised, namely, in the job title. There is no unified label of ‘policy analyst’ that encompasses the entirety of the

occupational group. In fact, quite a large diversity of job titles exist for what seemingly would encompass professionals who belong to the same occupational group. For example, a quick initial search for recent job advertisements with the work ‘policy’ in the title garnered a multitude of opportunities, many according well to our field of study, but others proving seemingly irrelevant.

Table 1: Example of the Diversity of Advertisements using the Term ‘Policy’

Policy Analyst	Economic/Policy Analyst
Policy Advisor	Economic/Policy Officer
Strategic Policy Liaison	Policy and Research Analyst
Socio-Economic Policy Analyst	Program/Policy Officer
Analyst, Policy, Planning, and Governance	Science and Technology Policy Advisor

As such, narrowing down an appropriate target title for the job advertisements to study as part of this project is important, both in terms of making sure the research phase is manageable, but also for the purposes of having some assurances of consistency between the type of role being studied. It is therefore decided that case selection would focus on undertaking a compilation and analysis of all job descriptions with titles that specifically included the term ‘policy analyst’. This helped narrow the case selection to a manageable level, but also left diversity within the case selection to assess requirements for different types and levels of policy analysts (i.e. Senior Policy Analyst, Junior Policy Analyst, etc.).

The federal classification system organizes the work of the entire public administration into distinct occupational groups. These groups each come with a set of standardized policy documents that carve out the jurisdiction of each occupation, including minimum qualifications, decision making authorities, and descriptions of the nature of work. The system is a product of early twentieth century public service reforms influenced by ideas of Taylorism and scientific management. To say that the classification system has not been subject to consistent challenges

and disapproval would be an understatement, although not the focus of this project. At the very least, it proves helpful in defining a community of policy practitioners to analyze for this study.

This project proposes to use aspects of the Economics and Social Sciences (EC) classification group to study the practice of policy work. The classification of this group has seen many iterations overtime, but the essential view of this group is explained by the Treasury Board Secretariat (2017), as the employer, as comprising of positions, that among other duties, are responsible for:

...the conduct of surveys, studies and projects in the social sciences; ... the editing of legislation or the provision of advice on legal problems in specific fields; and the application of a comprehensive knowledge of economics, sociology or statistics to the conduct of economic, socio-economic and sociological research, studies, forecasts and surveys; the research, analysis and evaluation of the economic or sociological effects of departmental or interdepartmental projects, programs and policies; the development, application, analysis and evaluation of statistical and survey methods and systems; and the development, analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative information and socio-economic policies and recommendations. (n.p.)

The use of this occupational group to inform the study's view of policy work is appropriate for three reasons. First, one will observe that the language used to describe this group is similar to the definitions of policy analysis defined in earlier sections, especially related to the application of "applied social and scientific research (combined with) implicit forms of practical knowledge" (Dobuzinskis, Laycock, and Howlett 2007, 4) in the development and analysis of public policy. The definition makes clear that positions under this group rely on the use of empirical evidence and scientific approaches to apply to their work.

Second, this definition complements the earlier historical accounts of the policy analysis field as being highly influenced by the use of the social sciences in addressing public problems. The high focus on the use of knowledge from the field of economics, sociology, and statistics demonstrates that this occupational group remains true to the field’s historical roots. The last criteria for adopting this approach relates to the institutional recognition that this occupational group provides to federal policy workers. In fact, the policy documentation for this group specifically mentions the inclusion of a range of positions that bear a policy ‘label’ (see Table 1).

Table 2: Benchmark Index for EC Occupational Group (adapted; bold for emphasis)

Position Titles	
Data Production Recruit	Social Policy Researcher
Junior Paralegal	Regional Statistician
Cataloguing Technician	Senior Program Evaluation Analyst
Senior Research Assistant	Advisor/Economist
Program Evaluation Officer	Expert Paralegal
Economist / Sociologist	Manager, Economic or Socio-Economic Policy Research
Paralegal	Chief, Analytics and Data Systems
Health Policy Analyst	Senior Policy Manager
Economic Policy Analyst	Senior Negotiator

As a result of this case selection approach, human resource instruments analyzed for the purposes of this study will be confined to those belonging to this occupational group. The final consideration for case selection was with respect to the time period being examined. Given the long history of this occupational group, as well as the availability of electronic records for efficient review, the opportunities for selecting a time period was limited to the late 1990s until present day. A choice was made to focus on the most recent organizational discourse being used in the civil service, and as such, the time period for records was selected as a ten year period from 2011 to 2020.

4. 2. Analytical Methodology

This study views human resource instruments as discursive instruments, and proposes to use discourse analysis as the primary research method to analyze the documents under study. As a method, discourse analysis does not reflect a coherent and consistent application of techniques which are unique to the method. This is likely due to the fact that there is widespread variation in understanding what discourse actually means (Alvesson and Karreman 2000, 1126). Instead, the application of discourse analysis requires a level of creativity and interpretation. This study builds on existing literature and views the method as “analyzing written and spoken language used beyond the technical pieces of language, such as words and sentences... (it) focuses on the use of language within a social context.” (Salkind, 2010). This process includes the instigation into elements such as:

What are the origins of particular discourses and policies? How can they be characterised?
How and why are they sustained? When and how are they changed? And, finally, because
PDT is a species of critical theory, how can discourses be evaluated and criticized? (9)

When studying discourse in an organizational setting, Alvesson and Karreman (2000) lay out four dominant approaches: a micro-discourse approach, a meso-discourse approach, a grand discourse approach, and a mega-discourse approach. This study looks to adopt the meso-discourse approach, which is “interested in finding broader patterns and going beyond the details of the text and generalizing to similar local contexts.” (1134) In doing so, the idea of this project is to study the representation of policy work in various government human resources management instruments and capture dominant themes and ideas that have influenced the normative practice of policy analysis within the civil service. Short of first-hand, empirical methods such as interviews and surveys, it is anticipated that the product of this research will offer a better understanding of

how policy analysis is conducted in-practice, in comparison to the existing literature which represents this work from a largely conceptual, ideal-state angle.

The discourse analysis method particular to this study involves a two-step process: (1) data collection and coding, and (2) analysis and discussion. The first part involves the collection of human resource instruments, namely, job advertisements for ‘policy analyst’ roles within the Government of Canada’s online GCJobs recruitment platform. The study is mainly interested in observing and analyzing employer-level discourse outlining the role and responsibilities of policy workers and the qualification requirements which are required for employment. From here, these elements will be coded into categories for analysis.

4. 3. Data Collection

Data collection for this project began by accessing source data from “archived” job postings section of the Government of Canada’s job application website, GCJobs. As discussed above, the data relevant to this project had to be limited to keep the number of records yielded manageable. As such, the data was filtered according to the following parameters:

- In the JOB TITLE field, “policy analyst” was indicated as a search term
- In the JOB TYPES field, “regular job postings” was selected to omit specialized form of hiring, such as graduate student and student hiring
- In the DATE POSTED section, the date parameters was set from 2011-01-01 to 2020-12-31, totaling a period of ten years
- The search was then initiated; records were identified, and data was extracted for analysis

To target the scope of records, the search was limited to non-managerial roles. As such, job advertisements with the terms “manager” or “director” or “chief” or any other indications of a supervisory type role were excluded. Furthermore, references to specific specialties, i.e. “urban

policy analyst” or “economic policy advisor”, and references to multiple specialties, i.e. “policy and planning analyst” were excluded to ensure a degree of consistency between records.

Figure 1: Sample record

Policy Analyst

Organization Name: Health Canada
Location: Ottawa (Ontario)
Classification: ES - 04
Salary: \$64,401 to \$74,268
Closing Date: August 2, 2008 - 23:59, Pacific Time
Reference number: SHC06J-006456-000196
Selection Process Number: 06-NHW-HE-EA-084
Employment tenure: Position for a specified period of one (1) year
Vacancies: 1
Web site: For further information on the department, please visit [Health Canada](#)

Who Can Apply

[Useful Information](#)

- Persons residing in Canada and Canadian citizens residing abroad.

Citizenship

[Useful Information](#)

Preference will be given to Canadian citizens. Please indicate in your application the reason for which you are entitled to work in Canada: Canadian citizenship, permanent resident status or work permit.

Language Proficiency

[Useful Information](#)

Applicants must demonstrate in their application that they meet the following merit criteria to be retained for further consideration.

English essential

Education

[Useful Information](#)

Graduation with a degree from a recognized university with an acceptable specialization in economics, sociology, statistics, environmental sciences or studies, public administration, epidemiology, and/or health sciences.

NOTE: Candidates must always have a university degree. The courses for the specialization do not necessarily have to be part of a degree program in the required specialization. The specialization may also be obtained through an acceptable combination of education, training and/or experience.

Experience

Experience in conducting policy research related to the environment.

Experience in writing and producing analytical reports based on scientific research findings related to environmental health issues.

Experience in gathering statistical data from diverse sources, analyzing this data and developing options and recommendations.

Experience in planning and overseeing projects involving a range of stakeholders with diverse interests.

Experience in preparing and implementing research work plans.

Other Merit Criteria and Conditions of Employment

- **OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**
 - Must be willing to work overtime occasionally.
 - Must be willing to travel occasionally.
- **CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT:**
 - Reliability security clearance. This factor is not used at the preselection stage. The department is responsible for the security clearance process.

Statement of Merit Criteria

Applicants who meet the above criteria will also be assessed against the [Statement of Merit Criteria](#) for this position.

Information to be provided:

You must provide the following information when submitting your application:

- Your résumé.
- You must ensure that you select at least one employment type when submitting your application: [Employment tenure](#)

Once records were compiled, for each relevant job posting, a unique extraction of key fields of the job advertisement was exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The following categories of the job advertisement were prioritized for collection and assessment: closing date,

organization, title, selection process number, classification, education, experience, competencies, abilities, and what the employer terms, 'suitabilities'. The final product of the data collection stage was the formation of a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet that consolidated the information from each advertisement into a single location for data analysis.

The data was then manually sorted and manipulated using built-in features of Microsoft Excel to facilitate data coding and analysis. In addition to coding the content of the human resource instruments against the set of activities outlined above, manual manipulation of the data was used to observe the occurrence of key terms or concepts in the human resources management products and quantify the most popular terms. The specific coding practices used, as well as the types of analysis conducted on the data, will become apparent in the following chapter on 'findings'. Once the data was collected and coded into the coding platform, discourse analysis was used to explore the key themes and values central to the occupational construction that emerged. These will be discussed in the discussion chapters. ●

Chapter 5: Summary of General Observations Following Qualitative Analysis

As discussed in the earlier chapter, this research project looked to conduct qualitative analysis of HRM instruments, specifically job postings, for policy analyst positions advertised by the federal public service during a ten-year period from 2011 to 2020. While the bigger purpose of this project is to understand what the HRM instruments indicate to us as the caricature of an ideal policy analyst through the eyes of the employer, we begin with a short chapter outlining the general observations of the research that we found as we conducted the analysis. We will start by sharing high-level information on the number of records analyzed and some temporal observations, and follow this information by looking at the four areas of the HRM instruments analyzed, namely, the articulation of experience requirements, competencies, abilities, and suitabilities.

5.1. Number of records and temporal trends

Retrieval and consolidation of the job postings acquired for analysis resulted in focusing on a total of 209 job postings over a ten year period. The collection of records comprised of a range of federal departments and agencies for ‘policy analyst’ and ‘policy officer’ positions, ranging a myriad of levels, from entry-level positions classified at lower levels (i.e. EC-02) to those classified in higher levels (i.e. EC-07). The table below indicates the breakdown of total records analyzed over the time period being assessed.

Table 3: Number of records, 2011-2020 (ten years)

Year	Number of Records
2011	21
2012	5
2013	6
2014	11
2015	20
2016	28
2017	19
2018	44

2019	35
2020	20
Total Records	209

While not the focus of this project, a couple of observations was noted was the number of positions advertised relative to what we know about the state of staffing in the public service during those period, namely, the implementation of the Harper government’s Deficit Reduction Act Plan (DRAP) which was announced following the Government of Canada’s 2011 budget. The low level of records retrieved for the years following Budget 2011 are aligned with the intensive scrutiny over staffing actions and reduction of personnel which we understood took place as part of DRAP. As a subsequent point, we see in the table that the number of advertised positions incline quite dramatically in the years following the election of a majority Liberal government. Again, while this project did not undertake a verification of this, we notice alignment with the Liberal government’s platform commitments around investments in the public service following their election. Whether the majority Liberal government ushered in any increase to the size and strength of community of policy practitioners within the federal public service may be a relevant area of focus for other research.

We have indicated in the previous chapter that the focus of the qualitative analysis at the heart of this project focused in on analyzing certain common components of the job descriptions compiled, namely, the experience requirements, competencies, abilities, and suitabilities. From the 209 records analyzed, the table below summarizes the number of individual requirements analyzed as part of these four categories.

Table 4: Individual requirements analyzed

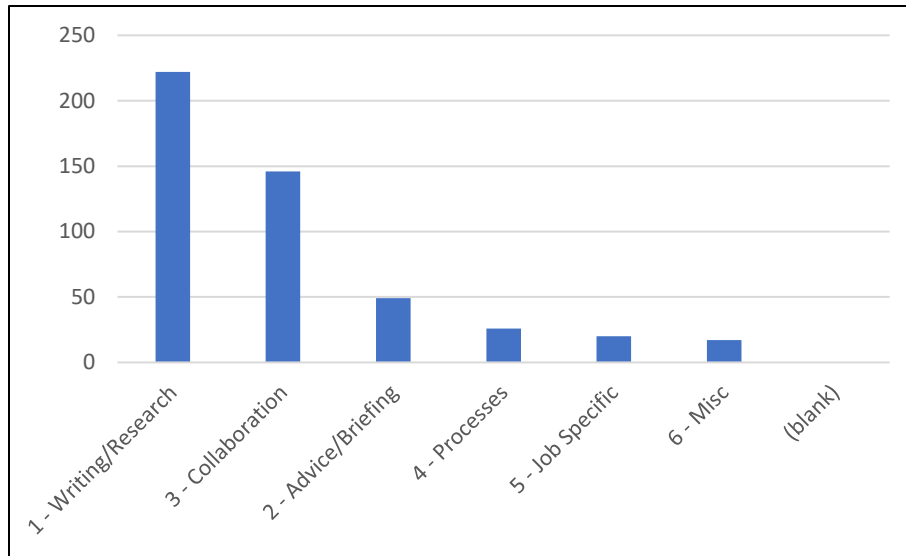
Year	Number of Requirements
Experience	480
Knowledge competencies	455
Abilities	396

Suitabilities	533
Total Statements	1,863

As a general observation, the number of requirements per job description was relatively consistent, and as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, there was high levels of consistency in the requirements as well, despite the records covering such a diverse range of federal organizations. Where the analysis did not venture into, was a coding of the requirements against the departments advertising the specific position, as well as a coding against the level (i.e. junior policy analyst, senior policy analyst) of the poster being analyzed. Subsequent research efforts can track the relationship between the intensity of the requirements and how they intensify for more senior job postings, or how different departments can require different specializations.

The analysis of the 480 *experience* requirements assessed as part of this project very quickly indicated the significant emphasis the employer places on policy analysts possessing certain skills and abilities to perform the work of a policy analyst. As demonstrated in the chart below, an immediate cue is observed on the critical need for policy analysts to possess high levels of experience with writing, research, and analysis; this becomes apparent quite quickly. Of the total experience requirements, 222 of the requirements were coded against this theme. This is followed by requirements relating to collaboration (n=146), both within team dynamics as well as with a range of internal and external stakeholders, being able to deliver briefings and advice to senior management (n=49), and being aware of general Government of Canada processes and procedures (n=26).

Figure 2: Themes noted amongst experience requirements



There are also a small number of experience requirements that are specific to the job position being advertised, signifying that in some instances, the employer expects that policy analysts bring a specific awareness or expertise in a domain to their job. An example of this was a requirement of a candidate to possess experience in conducting “security program reviews” for presumably a policy position in a corporate/security type area. Finally, a number of miscellaneous experience requirements, not central to the work of policy analysis, but other corporate requirements, such as experience in supervising staff, experience managing consultants and contracts, and experience managing finances was observed. A word cloud indicating the frequency of key words in the 480 experience requirements assessed is included below:

Figure 3: High frequency terms used in experience requirements



The analysis of *competency* requirements demonstrated the knowledge areas that the employer believed to be key in the work a policy analyst. A total of 455 knowledge requirements was assessed as part of this angle, and four areas of knowledge become vivid as the research underwent coding. Most noticeable was the expectation of candidates to possess knowledge of high-level government processes and procedures, such as knowledge of decision-making frameworks, roles and responsibilities, and techniques for undertaking research, analysis, and policy development. A total of 153 requirements were coded against this theme. Following this area was knowledge of topics that were specific to the job being advertised (n=117). Examples of this include knowledge of specific policy issues in a particular domain, such as knowledge of federal regulatory frameworks for financial institutions for what presumably is a position that is centered around that financial policy. The remaining two areas were coded as knowledge competencies in terms of broad Government of Canada priorities in a specific domain, as well as knowledge of the department that is conducting the recruitment.

Figure 4: Themes noted amongst knowledge competencies

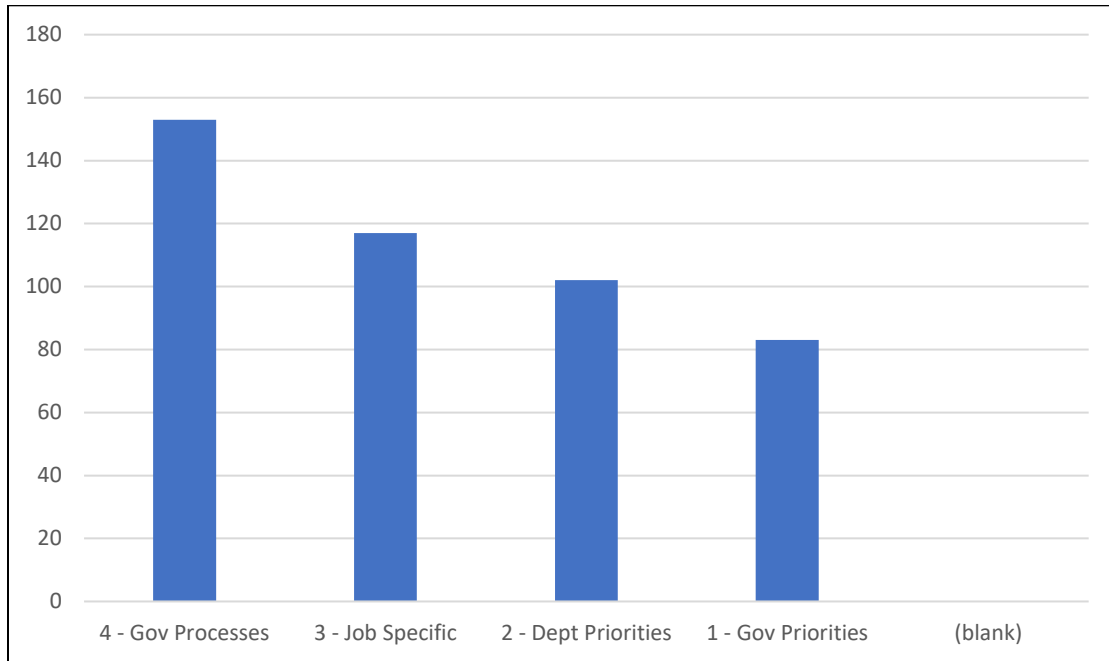
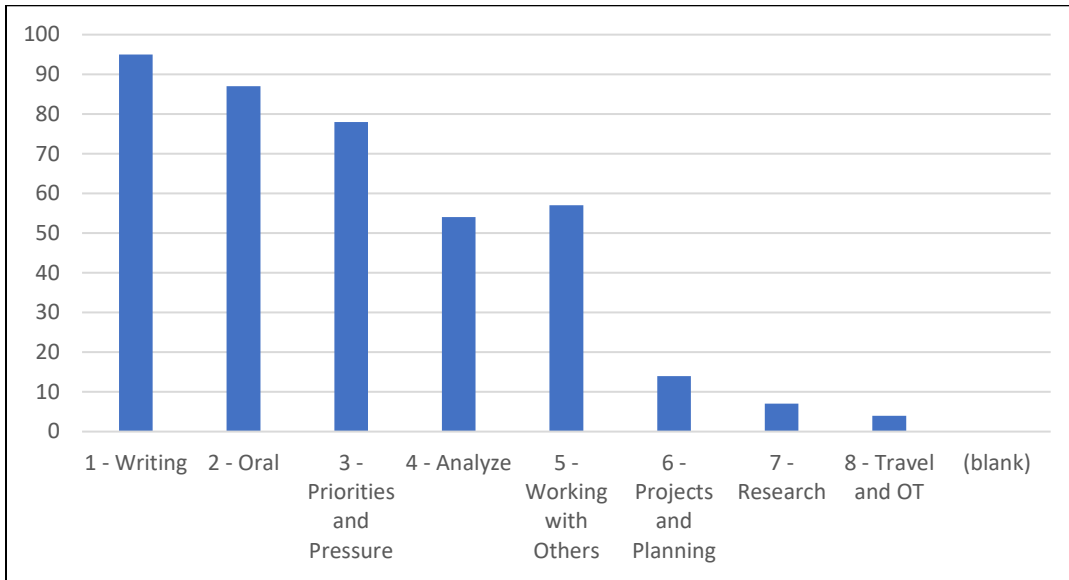


Figure 5: High frequency terms used in knowledge requirements



The *abilities* requirements indicated the capacities that the employer determined is required for policy analysts to conduct their work. A total of 396 abilities requirements were analyzed as part of this project. An immediate observation was the number of themes for these requirements was quite higher than the experience and knowledge competencies explored above. As such, it was necessary to code the abilities into a greater number of categories. The chart below tracks the various thematic areas in decreasing order of observation.

Figure 6: Themes noted in abilities requirements



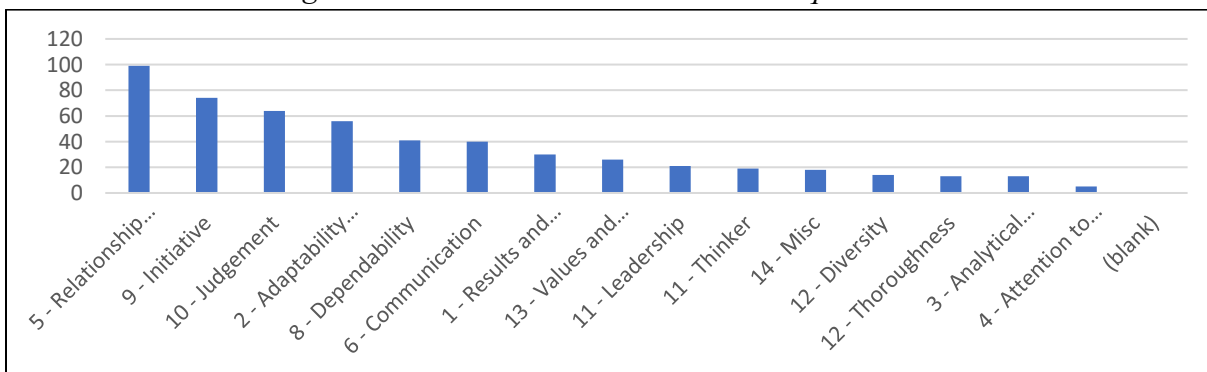
Although a greater diversity in themes, on initial scan, the abilities that are prioritized by the employer become apparent rather quickly and are consistent with the themes observed above. Namely, abilities in policy analysts being able to communicate effectively, both in writing (n=95) and orally (n=87) are top abilities indicated by the employer. Other abilities indicate the preferences of the employer on how policy analysts should do their work, such as by being able to prioritize and plan their work appropriately (n=78; n=14), use analyze skills effectively (n=54), and conduct their work by working well with others (n=57). Although abilities related to research are not reflected in high-frequency in this section, we know the importance of those abilities from assessing the experience requirements above. Below is a word cloud of the high frequency terms used in the elaboration of abilities requirements.

Figure 7: High frequency terms used in abilities requirements



The last category of requirements assessed related to what the employer calls as *'suitabilities'*. We assess this to mean requirements related to a policy analyst's personal characteristics and values that they bring to work. Unlike the previous requirements explored above, the set of suitabilities listed in the various job descriptions analyzed consisted largely of single traits or characteristics, in most instances, being communicated in one to three words. A total of 533 suitabilities were analyzed in this section, and similar to the abilities, cover a much larger range of themes than observed for the experience and knowledge requirements.

Figure 8: Themes noted in suitabilities requirements



Consistent with many of the previous requirements, we see the employer prioritizing the importance of relationship building as a suitability which is key for policy analysts. This is in strong alignment with the experience requirements related to collaboration, working in team environments, and working with a range of internal and external stakeholders. Other top suitabilities pertain to a policy analyst's ability to show initiative, proper judgement, and be adaptable and flexible in the face of competing priorities and uncertainties. The word cloud below demonstrates the high frequency terms observed in the compilation of records for this section.

Figure 9: High frequency terms used in suitabilities requirements



In conclusion, this chapter aimed to provide high level observations in conducting the retrieval, compilation, and analysis of the data records central to this research project. A number of common themes were observed in assessing the four components found in each HRM instrument assessed: experience requirements, knowledge requirements, abilities, and suitabilities. In the following two chapters, we will mount a discussion on the findings to understand what the articulation of these job requirements tell us in terms of how the employer views the attributes of

a good policy analyst, and deepen our understanding of what they do, how they do it, and how the work can be characterized. ●

Chapter 6: Occupational construction through the elaboration of experiential and knowledge competencies in HRM instruments

6. 1. Introduction

As indicated previously, this study looks to use critical discourse analysis to study human resource management instruments such as recruitment material, where written language is used to delineate an occupational jurisdiction for policy workers. The analysis of these texts will be used to formulate observations for how policy analysis work is constructed for practitioners. In this chapter, we begin analyzing such texts and offer initial reflections on how what they articulate in an attempt to discuss what the employer is attempting to convey as important competencies for policy analysts.

Our research focuses on studying job advertisements for policy analyst positions within the Canadian civil service. In doing so, we observe that policy analyst job descriptions follow a very standard elaboration across positions for both policy analyst and other positions. Notably we note that all job descriptions are organised into four key sections. The first one being a category called “experience” requirements, wherein the employer outlines the minimum recommended experience requirements required for a position. The second one, called “competencies” elaborate the minimum recommended knowledge requirements for persons interested in applying to a specific positions. Third we note a section titled “abilities”, wherein the employer outlines necessary abilities required to perform the duties of a position. Finally, we observe a category called “suitabilities” where the employer outlines general values or skills required for a position. The focus of this chapter will shine a spotlight on our analysis of job descriptions for the first two types of categories, namely the experience requirements and competencies.

6. 2. Key experiential requirements for policy analysts

The experience requirements outline the experiences that the employer requires a prospective policy analyst to possess in order to be able to perform the duties of that position. We interpret the elaboration of such experience requirements as suggesting that they formulate the basis or very similar basis to the general functions of a policy analyst within the civil service, other than positions that are highly specialized for a certain function or subject. In reviewing the range of experience requirements from the time period of our research, we note that generally speaking, there are commonalities between the experience requirements for all policy analyst positions. Specifically, we observe that experience requirements fall under four key thematic areas.

First, we observe that across all postings, the employer values experience where a prospective employee was able to develop a solid ability to conduct research, obtain information from a variety of sources, and synthesize the information into a specific deliverable. Second, we note a common requirement for skills in being able to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to accomplish a goal or a project. Third we note an experience requirement in being able to effectively brief senior management and provide advice in a variety of formats. Finally, we note experience requirements that elaborate familiarity with certain key policy development processes that are important within the institution. On that latter experience requirement, we note elements such as experience with federal policy development initiatives or other related processes such as the development of Memoranda to Cabinet. We will dissect each thematic experiential requirement in the following section.

6.2.A. Research, synthesis, and writing experience

The first notable category for experience relates to the ability to research, compile information, synthesize information, and inform written deliverables. Arguably this experience

requirement can be viewed as a very core ability for policy workers, in that all policy analysts are expected to have a minimum post-secondary degree from a recognized institution and these skills in research are fostered quite closely within these degree programs. We note that this requirement is conveyed under a variety of different guises. For example, a common requirement can be denoted as experience conducting research and preparing a written analysis on issues, policies, strategies, or programs. In another job description, we note experience requirements for this thematic area that were elaborated as experience in conducting policy research, policy analysis or policy development and in formulating policy options, positions or strategies.

In reviewing such requirements, we observed that the employer is interested in the ability of a policy worker to be able to assess a variety of information sources on a particular subject matter or a particular topic, take appropriate stock of the information, synthesise it to an appropriate level, and use critical thinking skills to develop a product or a strategy that is informed using the information retrieved. In doing so, we assume that the employer is interested in a worker with strong abilities to conduct knowledge translation on an issue. That is, being able to take information in its original form, assess the quality and source of information against a specific purpose, use judgement to determine if a source of information can be prioritized for the purpose of work, and then translate the information into a level of detail or a formulation of language that can be comprehended and then subsequently processed by decision makers.

If we compare this to the historical understanding of the work of policy analysts, we see similarities in the historical roles that policy analysts played as knowledge brokers, in that, policy analysts would be the conduit for information between decision makers and technical experts. We see for example that policy workers translate highly complex and technical information about the economy, a science, or a complex matter that warrant action by senior officials, into a format that

would be conducive to decision making. We note therefore that this experience requirement for the ability to engage in research, synthesis, writing, and knowledge translation is a foundational requirement which, from our understanding, has withstood the test of time.

In assessing this requirement, we also observe the deliverables which the employer outlines is commonly used by this profession. For example, we see references across job descriptions to the ability to write and develop products such as reports, briefing notes, strategies, and issue sheets. From this, we are able to understand the vehicles that policy analysts use to effectively conduct their work, and we understand the centrality of being able to develop such products by policy workers to support effective decision making within the civil service.

6.2.B. Briefing federal decision makers

In assessing the data collected, we also note a recurring experience requirement of policy workers being able to brief senior decision makers within government, whether senior officials themselves, or other political makers. This experience requirement is denoted in a number of fashions, but for the purposes of illustration here, we note, for example, experience statements such as: experience making recommendations on public policy matters, experience providing policy advice and recommendations to senior management, and experience in preparing and delivering briefings to senior management. We note use of the word briefing quite heavily within the records that we analyze, and note the significance of the term within the lexicon used to construct this profession. We also note an overlap to a certain extent with the previous experience requirements in the preceding section in that the briefings refer to both verbal and written briefing styles. We take that to mean that an effective policy analyst is one that is able to conduct briefings in a variety of formats, notably orally as well as in writing.

The use of this experience requirement demonstrates to us that the construction of this profession is centred around a concept of servitude towards federal decision makers, be it for senior officials within the public service, or even political masters. Here we see the very true connection between the current construction of the profession and the very frequently utilized conception for the role that policy analysts play, in that policy workers are understood to be the conduits for speaking truth to power. And while it is recognized that the public service is made up of a very diverse set of occupations and professions, the establishment of the policy analyst profession is seen as a key source by which the positions of power, namely the executive branch or ministers of government, receive advice from the public service on pursuing or not pursuing a course of action to address an issue. This is done in a manner, if we connect it to the earlier experience requirement, in a way that is informed through the understanding of science and evidence that is consulted, compiled, synthesized, and translated for the purposes of provisioning policy advice to decision makers.

One other notable characteristic in this domain, is references to the ability to have a policy worker provide advice on complex or multi-dimensional issues. We observe this type of language across a number of different job descriptions, particularly for policy work at more senior levels. We take this to mean that what the employer expects, is that as a policy analyst rises in their profession, that their ability to do research, knowledge translation, and briefing, increases in dimension, such that they are able to comprehend a multitude of perspectives or layers of an issue and enhance the quality of their advice through the lens of different disciplines. If we take an example, we understand that a senior policy worker should have the ability to take what is traditionally a health issue, and view the issue from other disciplines such as economics, business, ethics, and potentially many others, to offer a well-rounded briefing to a senior official, and make

a balanced recommendation on the issue. Finally, we conclude by observing from this language the high degree of reliance that federal decision makers place on policy workers, which reinforces the importance of being able to brief them adequately.

6.2.C. Experience with common policy processes, practices, and deliverables

Another experience requirement that we note quite commonly, pertains to the ability to participate in commonly used policy processes within the public service. There is quite a range of processes that are referenced in the records that we have compiled. For example, we note references to general policy procedures or the formulation of strategies, but on the other hand, we also observe specific mentions to processes such as the development of Memoranda to Cabinet. On the latter point, we understand the uniqueness of such Memoranda in supporting decision-making at the highest level within the federal government. To illustrate what is referenced within the material, we note examples of experience requirements such as experience in contributing to the development or review of Memoranda to Cabinet and related cabinet business processes and systems. We also note references to specific processes such as experience in preparing statistical surveys, qualitative and quantitative studies, research reports, Treasury Board submissions, evaluation reports, or other presentations in general.

From this requirement, we understand that the employer expects that a policy worker is well versed and aware of the infrastructure and machinery that is used to drive government decisions. Whether it is knowledge on how research is developed, such as the use of surveys and techniques, or whether it is experience developing important vehicles by which to seek decisions from government, such as Memoranda to Cabinet, the understanding of the policy cycle, policy development writ large, and the organization and functioning of government, seems to be a quality which is held in high regard within this profession. We also understand from this, as we did earlier

from other requirements, the tangible and concrete deliverables or outputs that are central to this profession. In addition, this requirement highlights a sequencing of policy work in a manner which is consistent with the conceptual understanding of the policy cycle. For example, if we consider that the development of a policy needs to go through solid research and analysis, followed by briefing senior officials on a recommended approach, and then finally followed by a decision through a Memoranda to Cabinet, this requirement reinforces a complete spectrum of activities that are central to the work of policy workers.

This connection with an understanding of the functioning and machinery of government is one that is quite unique compared to other professions within the civil service. If we take it that for example, a researcher, or an employee engaged in the operationalization of a specific program, is focused quite exclusively on work or deliverables within the specific confines of their domain or expertise, we can assume that their day-to-day work stays generally within the confines of those limits. Yet, for the policy worker, we note references to an understanding of the policy cycle, federal decision making systems, political, legislative, and regulatory development frameworks, and other processes that are not specific to a single domain but rather broadly related to government operations and effective government functioning. As such, we note that the principles important to this profession are not only dependent on the quality of the experiences elaborated in earlier sections, such as the quality of research, the quality of briefings, and the quality of deliverables, but we also observe, instilled in the construction of the profession, the need for an appreciation of a broader policy cycle and arena for decision-making that leads to effective governance of the country.

This hyper awareness of large and complex processes such as the policy cycle or government decision making alludes to the diversity of activities within this community. If we

dissect for example, simply the policy cycle, we observe the need for knowledge generation, research, knowledge translation, stakeholder management, development of written products, the need for governance specialists, the need for advisors, and many others. While it may be that policy analysts touch on all or a great number of these types of activities, it can be assumed that there are pockets of workers who specialize in certain areas over others. For example, it can very well be that there are specializations among policy workers wherein certain ones of them are primarily responsible for research and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information. On the flip side there are surely workers who are primarily responsible for stakeholder strategies or stakeholder engagement, writing Memoranda to Cabinet, coordinating governance bodies and decision-making for a, or even workers who specialize in knowledge translation or providing policy advice to executives. Nonetheless, while specializations may exist, we note the employer's attempts at identifying common experience requirements and competencies that are applicable for all workers within this domain.

6.2.D. Collaboration and engagement with partners and stakeholders

A final experience requirement which is observed as common across many records, is a requirement for the ability to work effectively with a range of actors to achieve a set purpose. We note, for example, experience requirements that indicate experience working collaboratively with stakeholders external to a policy worker's immediate work group and/or other governmental partners and organizations. We note that at times this experience requirement relates to being able to work effectively with internal partners, such as experts or centres of expertise within or across federal organizations, but many times as well, the requirement relates to be able to work with external stakeholders. On this, we noted references to actors such as provincial and territorial

governments, academic institutions, international stakeholders, and private and non-governmental organisations.

For the internal facing requirements, we understand this to mean that an effective policy worker is able to conduct effective coordination of activities with the necessary players within the federal government to achieve a purpose. For example, if the development of a high stakes deliverable such as a Memorandum to Cabinet requires consultation and sign-off from various offices and centres internal to government, we take it to mean that a policy worker is expected to be able to seamlessly work with internal partners and internal service providers to deliver. We also take it to mean that the policy worker is expected to play the role of convenor as part of the policy process. In earlier experience requirements, we noted the importance of a worker in being able to gather information from various different sources. However, we also take it to mean that a policy worker is expected to do this live, through interactive forums, to facilitate conversations on an issue, so a certain path forward or recommendation can be developed for the purposes of federal decision making. Whether an issue requires perspectives from a scientist, a lawyer, and economist, or even an IT specialist, it can be assumed from the construction of the profession that the policy professional is able to convene a diverse range of experts to extract the necessary information to inform decision-making.

On the external facing experience requirements, we note observations to the ability to work collaboratively with a range of actors that are outside of government. From the experience statements that have been reviewed, we see this requirement as underscoring a fundamental aspect of policy development or the policy cycle, that is, the management of stakeholders and special interests on a policy file. While often it can be understood that the realm of special interests and stakeholder management is more fundamental to the political wings of government, our records

suggest that policy workers are quite intimately involved in these issues. We suspect, that the engagement of stakeholders and the intersections with special interests, takes place on a number of different levels, and that more and more, these dynamics intersect with civil servants directly, and to a wide extent, with the policy community.

The recurrence of this thematic area on collaboration and engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders provides a sense of the employer's expectations to this community of workers to not be a profession that works insularly and independently to an external environment. Rather it's quite evident that policy workers are expected to work quite actively in partnership, in negotiation, and in good faith with other actors to accomplish their work. With that, presumably comes the expectation of a number of soft skills, such as diplomacy, teamwork, and professionalism, and likely many others. These softer skills will be looked at in the next chapter, which will focus on the ability requirements and the personal suitability requirements elaborated in the job descriptions that were assessed in this research project.

6. 3. Competency requirements for policy analysts

The competency requirements elaborated in the job descriptions examined relate to the knowledge that policy workers are expected to bring to their occupation. Similar to the experience requirements in the previous section, we note a number of different thematic commonalities in the knowledge requirements for policy workers. However, unlike the experience requirements, we noted a certain degree of tailoring of the knowledge requirements to the individual position that was being advertised in a job posting. Nonetheless, many commonalities became evident quite quickly and will be discussed in the following section.

The knowledge requirements can be grouped into four key areas. First, we note knowledge requirements in the area of knowledge of overall government priorities and initiatives. Second, we

noted requirements pertaining to knowledge of departmental priorities and responsibilities specific to the department conducting the staffing action. Third, we noted references to knowledge requirements on specific policy issues or policy domains specific to the job being advertised. And lastly, similar to some of the experience requirements discussed above, we noted references to knowledge of certain policy processes and practices that are common to the profession within the civil service, such as, knowledge of the processes required to develop Memoranda to Cabinet.

6.3.A. Knowledge of government priorities

Knowledge in this area pertained to awareness of the Government of Canada's overall priorities in a specific policy area. For example, for a job posting advertised by the Department of Environment, we noted a knowledge requirement that noted knowledge of key environmental issues and objectives of the federal government. Similarly for a position advertised by the Western Economic Development Agency of Canada, we noted a knowledge requirement to understand the activities related to economic development of Western Canada and/or Alberta. In terms of terminology, we note the use of words such as issues, priorities, and objectives, in order to highlight the knowledge needs for these requirements.

The requirement to understand the broad federal priorities in certain policy areas relevant to a policy position underscores the astute need for policy analysts to be in tune with the overall platform and priorities of the government in power. As we know, federal priorities in a given area are commonly articulated in political arenas, and so by extension, we can understand that the employer is highlighting the need for policy practitioners to be in tune with the political dynamics that are at play on a given issue. This is in close alignment with the experience requirements outlined above, wherein policy workers are expected to effectively brief government officials on a recommended course of action. We can understand the importance of the knowledge of broad

government priorities in a given area in order to be able to conduct an effective briefing and recommend options that are in line with the government's direction. In the absence of such an understanding, the practitioner runs the risk of formulating options, or recommending an approach that is inconsistent with the will of the government. Based on the understanding of the role of a policy practitioner to be able to speak truth to power and be a valuable source of information for decision makers, this is a key area which needs to be reconciled in order for a policy worker to be effective.

6.3.B. Knowledge of the department and the department's priorities

For many positions, knowledge of the department for which an applicant was applying for is a common occurrence among many of the job descriptions. Not only was it expressed that knowledge of the department in question, in terms of its mandate and responsibilities, is important, but also the priorities of the department. We understand there to be commonality and alignment between what is meant by referencing the priorities of the department and the priorities of the federal government, as referenced in the previous paragraph. We understand this, as recent realities have demonstrated very prescriptive orders, in the form of mandate letters, that are assigned to each minister, with an expectation that they work with their deputy heads and the public service to accomplish the orders in the mandate letters.

Nonetheless, it is also quite possible that departments have their own set of priorities that compliment or are in general alignment with the priorities of the government of the day and for which the department has the necessary authorities to operate. Examples of departmental priorities which may not necessarily be viewed as government priorities could include such items such as service standards for services provided on a specific purpose, departmental action plans or strategies on a specific issue, or other operational or transformational priorities. We can understand

this focus on an awareness of the department's mandate, responsibilities, functioning, and priorities as central to the role of the policy analyst. It can be associated back to the experiential requirements we observed in the previous section, wherein policy workers are expected to have a solid understanding of government processes and procedures to support decision-making. It can be argued that in the absence of knowledge of a department's functioning, that the functions that are expected of these workers would not be able to happen as effectively. The quality of advice provisioned by a worker that is not aware or not well attuned to the workings or mandate of a department could also lead to inaccurate briefings and recommendations that are outside or well beyond the scope of a certain organization. We note, therefore, the applicability and appropriateness of having this requirement.

6.3.C. Knowledge of policy issues in a specific domain

A knowledge requirement observed for many positions included an expectation that a policy worker possesses awareness of policy issues in the subject matter relevant to a position. As an example, we observed requirements such as knowledge of emerging trends in Canada's financial sector for a position with the Financial Consumer Protection Agency of Canada. Similarly, for a position within the Public Health Agency of Canada, we noted knowledge of sexually transmitted and blood borne infections as a knowledge requirement, for what presumably would be a policy analyst position responsible for conducting policy work in this specific subject matter area.

Knowledge of general policy issues specific to the position being advertised is closely linked to our understanding of the role of the policy analyst in being able to understand the landscape of a policy issue well enough to be able to identify gaps and issues that require mitigation, propose and recommend solutions, and brief on the subject matter. While the language used to describe this requirement stays general by the use of the word “issues”, we can understand

from this that the employer values a wide breath of knowledge on a certain policy issue. If we overlay this with our understanding of the policy cycle, we can assume that the term “issues” encompasses knowledge of a range of elements, such as the nature or context of an issue, the current level of federal action in a given issue, the stakeholder and international landscape, and the legislative and regulatory frameworks under which solutions can be proposed. This knowledge is an enabler for a policy worker to delve into an issue and formulate advice in a cohesive and informed manner.

6.3.D. Knowledge of policy processes

A final observation in the knowledge requirements used to articulate the necessities for policy positions within the civil service, is knowledge of federal government policy processes and decision-making frameworks. This requirement is entirely consistent with the experience requirements discussed above, wherein policy workers are expected to have a good knowledge of how the government works, how decisions are made, and the political-public interface. The knowledge requirements reference a range of processes, but to illustrate a comprehensive example, we cite a requirement which indicates that knowledge of federal machinery of government, decision making processes, the legislative process, and/or the regulation making process is required. The role of the policy analyst in being able to navigate the inner processes, behind the scenes, to drive policy change on a specific issue is thus reaffirmed through this knowledge requirement.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter examined the first two categories of merit criteria elaborated in policy analyst job positions that were studied for the purposes of this research project. We examined the core experience competencies that the employer highlights as important for this line of work, such as

the ability to be an effective researcher, writer, briefer, and horizontal collaborator. We learned that an effective policy analyst can take information from a variety of sources, assess and prioritize the information, and re-package it into information that can be easily digested by decision makers. We saw that the ability to liaise, convene, and negotiate with a range of actors is central to this work, as is the ability to navigate the maze of federal machinery to advance policy objectives.

We also see that policy workers are expected to be knowledgeable in many areas to support their work, such as knowledge of broad political priorities, knowledge of departmental mandates and priorities, knowledge of policy issues in the domain in which a worker works, and finally knowledge of common policy processes and practices. The knowledge requirements are elaborated to ensure that policy analysts appear well informed in their roles, and can analyze issues and propose solutions that are sensible, in alignment with the direction of government, and respects the mandate of the organization in which a worker works. In the process, we learned about some of the capabilities that are core to the construction of the policy analyst profession within the civil service. In the following chapter, we will explore the final two merit criteria categories to further understand the occupational construction, namely, specific abilities, and personal suitabilities that are accorded to the depiction of this type of work. ●

Chapter 7: Continuing our understanding of the occupational construction through the elaboration of ability and suitability requirements

7. 1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined how the discourse analyzed through this research project developed a construction for the occupation by outlining certain experience and knowledge competencies. In this chapter, we continue our analysis of the construction by discussing the observations noted in the final two elements of the HRM instruments analyzed, namely, the requirements pertaining to abilities and suitabilities expected of policy analysts. As discussed in earlier sections, abilities are understood to be capacities that candidates are expected to be able to perform in the context of their duties. As will be seen, these are largely articulated as actions that candidates are expected to be able to perform with a certain degree of familiarity. On the other hand, suitabilities are characterized as more general characteristics or values by which policy analysts are expected to use to exert or champion through their work. Specific details and examples will be discussed below.

7. 2. Key ability requirements for policy analysts

Unlike the requirements studied in the previous chapters, the ability requirements can be fitted into a more diverse range of thematic areas, demonstrating the heightened array of skills and capacities that are expected from candidates. In total, our coding of the 396 ability requirements that were analyzed as part of this project fit logically into 9 categories, which are listed here in decreasing order of frequency: ability to write, ability to communicate orally, ability to manage competing priorities and pressures, ability to analyze and formulate recommendations, ability to work well with others, ability to project manage and plan, ability to research, and miscellaneous abilities, such as the ability to travel as part of work duties and work overtime where necessary.

For the purpose of this chapter, we will take the top 5 categories of abilities with frequencies north of n=57, as the remainder appear much less frequently. Nonetheless, we will share a few words on the less frequent categories at the end.

7. 2. A. Ability to communicate effectively through writing

The most frequent and dominant ability requirement pertains to the ability of policy analysts to be able to write effectively. Little indication is given through these requirements as to understand the intended effect of written communications, as the vast majority of requirements for this element utilized the same style of requirement across tens of job descriptions, essentially, utilizing a statement such as “ability to communicate effectively in writing”. In a few set of requirements, indications such as ability to “develop effective presentations”, “develop written presentations”, “draft communications materials”, and “prepare briefing notes for senior management” provide a little bit more information on the types of material which candidates are expected to know how to write. Nonetheless, the generality of the requirement to be able to communicate effectively in writing can be understood to communicate the importance of written communication quite generally to this profession. In fact, the prioritization of this form of communication over other forms, such as oral, demonstrate the centrality of written expression to the work of policy. We understand from these requirements that policy analysts are writers, and at the core, if we collate our understanding of the profession from some of the experience requirements discussed above, we see that the occupation is there to be able to research and synthesize technical information, and importantly, translate the information in a way and form that is appropriate to a specific audience, through written tools. The employer’s expectation of these abilities is abundantly clear simply from the frequency of use of this type of requirement to possess an ability to communicate effectively in writing.

7. 2. B. Ability to communicate effectively orally

Similar to communicating in writing, the second most prioritized ability for the occupation was articulated as an ability to communicate effectively orally. An overwhelming majority of these requirements was consistent or identical in communicating a statement such as “ability to communicate effectively orally”, but a review of some of the outlier statements provides a few additional clues as to the more detailed expectations. We note statements such as “ability to communicate complex policy and legal issues orally to a non-expert audience”, for example, as a telling sign of the expectation that policy analysts can convey technical information to non-technical audiences, such as decision makers. We also see some linkages between oral communication and the ability to communicate effectively with senior managers specifically highlighted in some instances. For example, we note requirements such as “ability to provide strategic advice and recommendations” to senior management. Beyond this, in certain requirements, we observed other forms of oral communication with alternate objectives, such as “ability to facilitate learning opportunities” or “ability to prepare and present training and/or information sessions”. We note from these types of statements that policy analysts are expected to play the role of messengers of information, and be able to communicate effectively with a range of audiences, whether senior managers, peers, or stakeholders. We also see that policy analysts need to be able to be comfortable in articulating various forms of information effectively, including advice, but also at times, information more generally.

7. 2. C. Ability to manage competing priorities and plan

A large emphasis in the requirement statements analyzed under this theme focus on the ability of a policy analyst to manage various priorities as part of their work and manage emerging advances and uncertainties. This paints a particular picture of the work of policy analysts being

rather disruptive and not steady and linear, as it suggests that employers expect these candidates to be quite malleable in being able to adjust to new types of work and demands on the regular. A diverse range of requirements are used to articulate this type of requirement, including “ability to manage and deliver on multiple priorities within demanding timelines”, “ability to adapt to changing priorities and balance multiple deadlines”, “ability to organize workload”, “ability to plan, prioritize, and meet deadlines”, and “ability to work under pressure”. These types of requirements reinforce the conditions under which analysts are expected to perform well, such as moments of immense work pressure, where analysts are expected to navigate complex, conflicting, and urgent issues with a degree of ease.

From these types of statements, we can understand that the work of this community is tumultuous. To fill in the gaps of why the occupation is faced with this type of dynamic, we reflect on our theoretical understanding of the role to suggest why this is the case. From our introductory chapters, we know that this occupation is at the servitude of political decision making and are there to support their masters in their decision making. From our understanding of the realities of political decision makers, we know the constant tug and shift of priorities caused by the twenty-four hour news cycle, emerging events, crises, and relentless lobbying of special interests and the very limited opportunities that decision makers have to react to these types of issues. We hypothesize based on the employer’s assertion that policy analysts are expected to perform in high pressure, high stake conditions, that they are expected to deliver appropriate advice and recommendations in such moments, and that this may be a driver behind this type of requirement. However, we recognize that such a requirement would not be specific to this occupation as it applies to the working conditions of numerous occupations. Nonetheless, from the employer’s

prioritization of this requirement, we understand it to be a central element in the construction of the policy analyst occupation.

7. 2. D. Ability to analyze

The ability to analyze can be seen as complementary to various experience requirements that stressed the ability of policy analysts to be able to not only research and gather information, but assess and analyze the information to suit a specific purpose. The requirements that were analyzed provide a window into the types of information that policy analysts are required to be able to analyze, through statements such as “ability to analyze quantitative and qualitative data”, “ability to analyze and synthesize complex information”, “ability to identify strategic links”, and “ability to pay attention to detail with consideration for broader context”. These clues demonstrate to us that policy analysts are not passive receivers of information, but that they are professionals who have a close and interactive relationship with information. We see that they are expected to be alert when receiving information to a variety of considerations, such as relevance to their policy domain, relevance to the work or priorities of their organization, and how information can be utilized to inform recommendations and advice to decision-makers.

We understand from these requirements that complementary to be able to write effectively, analysts are expected to have a high degree of familiarity with navigating written products and being able to quickly and efficiently zone in on the content and significance of written information for the purposes of their work, which often, will either be to translate the information into another written product for consideration, or be able to brief on the information. We also understand from these requirements the need for personnel to be comfortable interacting with information irrespective of the technical subject matter or policy area. The generality of the statements in this category relay the expectation that analysts are expected to thrive with any information, about any

topic, that happen to come their way in the context of their work. In this way, these requirements reinforce the nature of policy analysts to be good processors of information.

7. 2. E. Ability to work with others

The expectation that policy analysts are able to work well with others is a continuation of requirements we observed in both the experience and knowledge competency requirements. However, the ability requirements observed as part of this section can be observed as providing a touch more insight, specifically as it relates to two different perspectives. First, there is a strong indication on the internal dynamics under which analysts are expected to work in their immediate teams. On that, we view numerous assertions that policy analysts should be able to “work in a team environment”, “coordinate a project”, “lead a project”, “work well with others”, and many others. These requirements in itself give us a compelling indication that policy analysts are professionals that are expected to work seamlessly with a range of actors, and the centrality of others in the work of policy is observed to quite a high degree. We understand from these that policy analysts are explicitly team players who work in a very coordinated and concerted way with other individuals – whether internal clients, decision makers, or experts.

The second perspective is the ability for policy analysts to collaborate externally. Indeed, numerous requirements stress the importance of these workers to be able to “develop and maintain collaborative working relationships”, “develop strategic partnerships”, “engage effectively with external stakeholders”, “build partnerships”, among other similar statements. From this, we understand the employer’s desire that policy analysts possess a high degree of capacity in being able to nurture professional relationships that can facilitate the work of policy and achieve the organization’s objectives. From this, we understand that the work of analysts is not insular to receiving and processing information in a silo, but the analysts are expected to be able to quite

dynamically engage, network, and maintain relations as a key component of their work. We thus can extrapolate that the role often has some form of outward face, and there is a degree of consensus building, negotiating, and bringing along that would be important.

7. 2. F. Other

A small number of other abilities were analyzed as part of the records compiled. Although more limited in frequency, they provided a good indication of other abilities important to the employer in this profession. One area is in the area of project management. Although this is a discipline in its own, we observed a number of statements that underscored the ability of analysts to be able to manage and lead projects. It is difficult to understand whether the influences of these types of statements tie back to the emerging approaches we observe in the current government to use deliverology approaches or the increasing popularity of the Project Management style of delivering on work from the private sector, so we leave this as a standalone observation for now. Beyond this, the other abilities noted included abilities in being comfortable executing research activities, working overtime, and travelling for work purposes. While the research ability is complementary to many experience requirements, we do not note a particular observation with the ability to travel or work overtime.

7. 3. Key suitability requirements for policy analysts

The final category of requirements is indicated as suitabilities that the employer expresses is important for this occupational group. Unlike the other categories, the very name of the category presents as a vague term, which we observe to accord to higher level moral or ethical elements compared to the more concrete definitions that can be attributed to the others. Also distinct in this category is the sheer diversity in requirements. In fact, unlike the other categories, the amount of different requirements led to our consideration to group the various requirements into similar

themes so that they can be analyzed. As such, we've taken the 15 different requirements and grouped them as follows for the purposes of discussion: relationship building and diversity; initiative, leadership, and results in action; judgement, values, and ethics; adaptability, flexibility, and dependability; analytical thinking, attention to detail, thoroughness, and thinking; and communication.

7. 3. A. Relationship building, diversity

The suitabilities presented under these categories reinforce the importance of policy analysts to be able to work well with others in delivering on their work. In fact, we see various representations of this expectation to demonstrate the type of collaboration which is a necessity in the profession. For example, we witnessed requirements under the label of relationship building such as 'being a team player', 'building partnerships', 'client focus', 'effective interpersonal relationships', 'team work', 'working effectively with others', and 'influence and negotiation'. Under the tag of diversity, we observe a largely uniform requirement to be 'respectful of diversity'. We chose to tag the diversity requirements with the relationship building requirements as we perceive being respectful of diversity entails being mindful of the diverse perspectives or opinions that emerge when collaborating with others, and being inclusive in approaches to work.

We take from this category that the role of a policy analyst is heavily dependant and focused on the input and collaboration with others. The employer makes clear that this not a profession where work is expected to be undertaken in an insulated and indivial way, and that the expectation is very much that this community work seamlessly in teams and their networks towards their objectives. We observe requirements that are both internal and external, in that not only are the professionals expected to be great team players within their immediate, internal work environments, but also expected to form relationships with external actors, such as clients and

business partners to advance their work. Furthermore, the emphasis on having effective interpersonal skills as well as influence and persuasion skills is complementary with earlier themes that we observed that suggested that the work of policy analysts is in part to mobilize others towards common objectives. From these requirements, the employer sets out expectations for how that mobilization is to occur.

7. 3. B. Initiative, leadership, results in action

This group of requirements speaks to how the employer expects policy analysts to deliver on their objectives, in that the employer expects this group to take initiative and leadership in their work, and mobilize towards achieving results. The terminology we assess in this grouping of requirements ranges from ‘achieve results’, ‘results oriented’, ‘makes things happen’, ‘strives for excellence’, ‘leadership’, ‘showing initiative and being action oriented’, and ‘innovation’. We assess from this the significance that the employer places on this occupational group to take action and produce results. This gives us pause to reflect on the overall push in public administration organizations to move towards deliverology approaches, as the language is perceived to provoke sentiments that are often used in that domain.

However, more concretely, we assess these requirements to indicate the level of engagement that the employer expects from this occupational group. We observe that the expectation is not that this profession has a passive relationship with work, but that policy analysts are expected to be in the driver’s seat to make things happen and deliver on work. The terminology incites a sense of provocation that is expected by these professionals, by taking things into their own hands, leading the masses, showing initiative by putting forward solutions, and being innovative in their thinking.

If we overlay these requirements with our understanding of the work of policy analysts to be on the forefront of researching, analyzing, and producing solutions for policy issues, we can understand the importance of these requirements. In a context where a policy issue emerges that requires transformational action, for example, we perceive that these requirements to take initiative and produce results supports the expectations that the government produce solutions to policy issues that work and deliver results for citizens. And from what we understand of the resistance of bureaucracies in certain instances to transform and reform, we see requirements to take leadership and mobilize individuals as pivotal to implement solutions in times of need.

7. 3. C. Judgement, values and ethics,

This grouping of terms describes factors that the employer expects to be forefront when policy analysts are doing their work, and less directive of applications of requirements such as those discussed previously that seem to direct how the analysts should deliver on this work. We observe much less diversity in the terms used in this category, with most limited to ‘values and ethics’ and ‘judgement’, but amongst the minor others, we observe terms such as ‘discretion’, ‘tact’, and ‘integrity’. We take these terms to mean that the employer expects these professionals to bring a good degree of ethics to their work, and while specific ethics are not established for this profession similar to other codes that are available for other more formal professions, we acknowledge that all public servants in Canada are accustomed to the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*. However, we do not understand that the values and ethics expected of policy analysts are limited solely to this code.

By underscoring that policy analysts are expected to demonstrate a good degree of ethics, values, and judgement in their profession, we reflect on the significance of the duties that the policy analyst performs to support the decision makers in a political system to govern a nation. We reflect

on the challenges that come with this type of role, by balancing the requirement to support the political success of a government, while carefully balancing other interests from other actors, and most importantly, being subject to an overall goal to work in the public interest. In light of this, we perceive that by expecting that policy analysts employ good values, ethics, and judgement in their work, the employer expects that this profession use these considerations to guide and deliver on their work. In other words, the multifaceted environments and intersections at which policy analysts work, we believe, expect a constant mindfulness of ethics and values that the employer wishes to reinforce.

7. 3. D. Adaptability, flexibility, dependability

These requirements reinforce many of the requirements we have seen in other sections in that policy analysts are expected to bring a great deal of adaptability, flexibility, and dependability in their work. We have suggested previously that policy analysts are at the intersection of changing political and policy priorities, and need to be able to adapt quickly to support changing environments and contexts. They are also required to bring a good level of dependability to their work. There is little beyond what we have already discussed on these attributes that these suitabilities present. The majority of terms used to describe these requirements are represented as ‘adaptability’, ‘flexibility’, ‘dependability’, and ‘reliability’. While these terms do not invoke any new interpretations, we observe a singular data point with slightly more detail which indicates ‘adapts style, mode and tone based on audience needs and reactions, and the issues being addressed’. This elaboration confirms our previous discussions on the applicability of these terms to the work of this occupational group, suggesting that policy analysts need to be able to adapt their work and deliverables to various types of needs, and quickly pivot to address new issues as they emerge.

7. 3. E. Analytical thinking, attention to detail, thoroughness, thinking

We have established the necessity that policy analysts possess a good degree of analysis skills, and this grouping of requirements reinforce those requirements and provide additional interpretation on the expectations. We observe terms used, such as ‘strategic thinking’, ‘thinking things through’, ‘thoroughness’, ‘analytical thinking’, and ‘attention to detail’. Once again, we observe the emphasis that the employer places on policy analysts’ capacity to be good, strategic thinkers. We perceive this to mean that the employer expects that as policy issues emerge, policy analysts can quickly indulge in brainstorming and strategy to produce recommendations for potential solutions, thinking through elements such as options, ramifications, issues, opportunities, linkages, and relevance to political priorities among presumably many others. This section complements many of the other groupings that we have discussed, including the ability to apply judgement and ethics when thinking things through, collaboration with others to brainstorm and develop solutions, and championing innovation when thinking things through. In other words, we assess that the employer’s requirements in this section reinforce their expectation that policy analysts are good critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators in developing approaches to tackling policy problems.

7. 3. F. Communication

The employer’s expectation that policy analysts are good communicators has been reinforced in almost every section of the job descriptions that were reviewed as part of this research project, and so the appearance of additional reinforcement on this theme in the suitabilities section does not come as a surprise. Beyond many generic terms we observe in this section simply stating requirements such as ‘communication’, ‘writing skills’, and ‘engagement’, we observe a number of other qualifiers that appear that provide us with a sense of how the employer expects the

communication skills to present. Specifically, we observe terminology such as ‘interactive communication’, and ‘engagement’ to suggest that the employer does not expect that policy analysts engage in passive, unidirectional communication, but rather, that policy analysts are expected to be able to be good facilitators and convenors of dialogue, by being engaging and interactive in their style of communication. This terminology complements what we have discussed in other sections where we understand that policy analysts need to be able to bring people to together, work in teams, use good interpersonal skills, and use persuasion and leadership to mobilize people. Therefore, through the use of terms such as ‘interactive communications’ and ‘engagement’, we understand how communications are expected to be used to help policy analysts deliver on their work.

7. 4. Conclusion

This final chapter was used to reflect on the final two elements of the job descriptions that were analyzed as part of this research project, namely, the abilities and suitabilities required of policy analysts. As part of the abilities requirements, we continued to observe expectations elaborated by the employer that this occupational group be able to communicate both orally and in writing, manage priorities, analyze and produce recommendations, work with others, and manage projects and conduct research. The suitabilities we observed presented themes that communicated how policy analysts are expected to behave. For example, we assessed that they are expected to be good team players, take initiative and leadership, be focused on results, apply good judgement and ethics, be adaptable and dependable, be good strategic thinkers, pay attention to detail, and communicate effectively.

In assessing these requirements, we have discussed how these elements are complementary to our understanding of the work that policy analysts do. For example, we have discussed how

these requirements are necessary given the environment in which policy analysts work, which is at the intersection of complex dynamics and actors, including public decision making frameworks, political decision-making, managing the interests of special interests, and an overarching consideration for acting in the best interest of the public. We can therefore understand the importance that the employer places on being able to convene people, conduct provocative thinking, facilitate dialogue, and focus on producing results. We thus understand the employer's impetus behind emphasizing these abilities and suitabilities in HRM instruments for this occupational group. ●

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8. 1. Synthesizing the key takeaways

This paper traces the influence of the Government of Canada's human resources management system, as a form of organizational discourse, in how policy practice is constructed within the institutional setting. The study aims to move beyond the conceptual and theoretical models of policy analysis present in the current literature to explore what policy 'work' entails in practice. Notably, the study aims to answer the question: *How has organizational discourse, through the use of human resources management instruments, led to an institutional morality construction of the work of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service?*

In the beginning chapters, we begin by acknowledging the immense growth of this occupation and track its development from its inception in the Canadian context, where the appearance of policy analysts has been established in a multitude of areas, including government, non-governmental organizations, academia, and in the media. In understanding the establishment of the profession, we discuss the post-war efforts to establish a welfare state in Canada and how it required the government to attract non-technical experts to be available to support the ambitions of the state. This was complemented by other transformations in the public service, that saw the transition of public servants from political appointments to a merit based process. The resulting effect was the establishment of a quasi-profession of policy analysts that took ground in response to the rationalization of the state. It is this quasi-profession that this research project seeks to better examine and understand.

The movement of the public service to a merit based appointment process is of particular relevance to this research project, as this underpinned our interest in unpacking how human resources instruments, that support merit based staffing of policy analysts, articulate the

occupational role. The concept of organization discourse is discussed as a form of discourse that shapes social worlds within an organization, and a form of discourse that is attributed with the formal language or articulations that an organization uses as an influential force. A linkage between human resources management instruments, such as job advertisements and training material for new hires, as being a form of organizational discourse is made, and we indicate how this is used to shape and enforce behaviour and conduct within the employee-employer relationship.

In the middle chapter, we discuss the research project at hand, which looks to use discourse analysis and apply it to human resources management instruments specific to the policy analyst occupational group within the Canadian civil service. We discuss the methodology of researching and consolidating job advertisements for policy analysts over a ten-year period, and using qualitative analysis to unpack the discourse that is used within to develop the occupational construction. In total, 209 records were compiled and analyzed by assessing the job-specific requirements within the job advertisements, in the following categories: experience requirements, knowledge requirements, abilities, and suitabilities. Following a simple quantification of the most frequent attributes observed, the final chapters of the paper discuss the findings in more detail. Specifically, we reflect on what the discourse used in these records signify with respect to what policy analysts do, and what makes a good policy analyst in the eyes of the employer.

8.2. The ideal policy analyst from the eyes of the employer

The employer presents a multifaceted construction of the occupation. By first reflecting on the actions that a policy analyst performs, we understand from this project that the employer sees this profession as a harbourer and translator of knowledge. The policy analyst is expected to seamlessly grasp information and research from a variety of sources and translate it, along with its

significance, for a variety of purposes. The ideal policy analyst is also an excellent briefer for various audiences, but most importantly, for the senior echelons of the organization. Through briefings, the analyst is expected to translate knowledge, recommendations, and advice that influence the subsequent direction provided by political and public masters. The policy analyst is also an exceptional collaborator; internally, the analyst is able to work well in teams and foster internal harmony and consensus. Externally, the analyst is able to nurture professional relationships, conduct consultations, and manage interactions between a myriad of actors that play in the policy domain.

The ideal policy analyst is also very knowledgeable about both government and organizational priorities. The analyst is expected to be in sync with the issues that are top of mind in their respective political domains, while also being in tune with what public service organizations internally are looking to advance. We understand this to mean that policy analysts are great at being aware of both ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ motivations. The ideal policy analyst also brings great awareness of the specific policy areas in which they are employed. Whether for health policy, defence policy, or environmental policy, or other, they bring knowledge of the pertinent issues and complexities that prevail in those areas. Finally, the ideal policy analyst is very aware of the procedures and practices that are central to their profession, such as the mechanisms in place to support governance and seek decisions.

We also learn about the work ethic that the ideal analyst harbours. They manage new and competing priorities effortlessly, and adapt and remain flexible in responding to stimuli. They are analytical beings, that look to identify strategic links and impacts that are relevant for their work. We finally also observe a number of different elements that resemble ethic and moral attributes. For example, we observed that the ideal policy analyst values relationship building and diversity,

takes initiative and leadership, focuses on delivering on results, champions excellence, exercises pristine judgement and ethics, and pays close attention to detail when thinking things through. We reflect on these findings and note their complementarity with our theoretical understanding of what the profession entails.

8. 3. Signifying the findings of this project

By analyzing discourse to understand the occupational discourse of policy analysts within the Canadian civil service, this study aims to make a minor contribution to better understanding a well-established occupational group that has distinct responsibilities and influences in how the work of policy, that is, the work involved in identifying, addressing, and implementing solutions to address a large swath of policy issues that affect our everyday lives. As discussed in earlier sections, much study has gone into studying the work of policy from a theoretical perspective, but we assess gaps in validating what we observe in scholarly work with a closer depiction of the reality of the profession. The choice for studying policy analysts within the civil service also helps demystify elements of a large occupational group that is otherwise largely behind the scenes and invisible to the public eye. Ofcourse, this is not unique to the policy profession, as all public servants are captured by the anonymity that comes with their employment in exchange for fearless advice and loyal execution, but nonetheless, we discussed the effect that policy analysts have in supporting the upper echelons of public and political decision making, and reinforced the significance and impact that this group has in contributing to the workings of the Canadian public service. By being at the forefront of knowledge consolidation, translation, and policy advice that lead to federal interventions and transformations that impact the lives of citizens, an understanding of how this body of professionals operates, and the morals and ethics that underpin the professionals that do this work, future civil service policy analysts can look to these findings to

understand the attributes and values that are championed by their employer, and work towards a candidacy that is in line with what the employer expects. Lastly, it can be suggested that this line of inquiry furthers our understanding, in part, of the actual inner workings of the machinery of government, how information is harbored and translated, how interests and actors are managed, and the values that drive the reasoning behind public sector decisions.

8. 4. Avenues for further research and limitations

When it comes to contributing to the understanding of the social reality of a living and breathing occupational group, there is no easy substitution for engaging the subjects directly to understand the realities that they face. The quality of the findings of this research project should there have been an opportunity to conduct interviews with policy analysts from within the civil service to understand how their employer constructs their social world would have resulted in provoking findings that we would have been able to more closely accord with the actual realities of that occupational group. Nonetheless, by using a research strategy that looked at recent and real discourses that continue to be used by the employer to this date, this provides an initial foray behind the curtains at that we hope one day can be validated through the use of future research that focuses on assessing primary data.

Other avenues for research can also include doing a closer comparison with what is preached through HRM instruments and how it overlays with the theoretical conception of the work of policy analysts, to understand how different the world of civil service policy analysts are with the work of their counterparts in private organizations, non-governmental organizations, and academia and/or validate the theoretical models that exist within scholarly literature. Finally, a more micro-analysis of the findings can offer insights into more localized realities of policy analysts within different civil service organizations. How does the work of policy analysts differ

in a central agency than in a line department? How do responsibilities differ at junior versus senior levels? What is the divide between a generalist and specialist in this occupational group?

A number of other limitations exist in our findings as discussed in our research methodology chapter. To suggest that all policy activities and support for public and political decision makers is provisioned by employees who possess the title of a ‘policy analyst’ could not be further from the truth. The reality is that decision makers benefit from highly skilled technical and non-technical experts at their disposal, in all areas and domains, that inform advice to decision-makers. These officials can have any range of titles, from researcher to consultant to science advisor, and beyond. In fact, the consolidation of input from various areas and subject-matter experts and its translation into high-quality, evidence-based decisions is the very nature of the work of senior public and political officials.

Despite these limitations, we would argue that after more than one hundred years following the establishment of this ‘profession’, how this occupational group has come to be shaped in a real organizational context warrants this type of cursory assessment. There is no doubt that as policy issues and policy work continues to evolve, so will the professionals who respond, and the discourses that shape their being. ●

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