European Journal of Political Research **53**: 654–671, 2014
doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12054

Defining and classifying technocrat-led and technocratic governments

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Abstract. Governments led by technocrats remain a nebulous category in political science literature, with little clarity about how they differ from party governments, how many have existed and how we can differentiate between them. This article aims to provide that conceptual and empirical clarity. Having proposed an ideal type definition of 'technocratic government', it sets out three conditions for an operational definition of a 'technocrat' and, on that basis, lists the 24 technocrat-led governments that have existed in 27 European Union (EU) democracies from the end of the Second World War until June 2013. It then classifies these according to their partisan/technocrat composition and remit. This allows for the presentation of a typology of four different types of technocrat-led governments and the definition of 'full technocratic governments' as those which contain a majority of technocrats and – unlike caretaker governments – have the capacity to change the status quo. The article concludes that full technocratic governments remain extremely rare in EU democracies since there have been only six cases – of which three have occurred in the last decade.

Keywords: technocratic government; technocracy; party government; caretaker government; leadership

Introduction

How many technocrats does it take to make a technocratic government? While this may sound like the set-up to a lame punchline, it in fact touches on an issue that political science has so far failed to address. Indeed, many questions surrounding technocrats and their governments not only remain unanswered, but have not even been posed. The events of November 2011, when technocrat prime ministers took office in Italy and Greece, served to highlight the lack of conceptual clarity, not only among media commentators but also within political science literature, about what exactly a technocrat is and what are technocratic governments. In particular, little consideration has been given to the following questions: How are technocratic governments different from party governments? How can we define a technocrat? How many technocrat-led governments have existed in Europe and are they becoming more prevalent? Can we differentiate between these governments in terms of their partisan/nonpartisan composition? Are all technocrat-led governments caretaker governments? If not, how do they differ in terms of their remit? These questions, among others, will be the objects of analysis in this article.

Before embarking on our discussion, it is worth making two preliminary points. First of all, we are not concerned with technocracy in a classical or utopian sense (Fischer 1990), but rather with the creation of technocrat-led governments in postwar European democracies. As Claudio Radaelli (1999: 24) observes, 'the former advocated for a direct rise to power of experts, whereas the latter is formally respectful of democratic values and institutions'. Second, we are not interested here in discussing the extent to which such governments may

represent a challenge to representative democracy. We recognise that their presence does raise questions about the chain of democratic delegation and accountability, especially as concerns the principal-agent relationship (Strøm & Amorim Neto 2006). However, that is a topic for an entirely different – more theoretical and probably normative – piece of research. Indeed, we hope that our work here of defining and classifying technocrat-led governments may provide more solid conceptual and empirical foundations for such analysis.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. We begin by using Richard Katz's ideal type definition of a 'party government' as a reverse mirror image to propose an ideal type definition of 'technocratic government'. We go on to define 'a technocrat' and, on that basis, present the first list of all technocrat-led governments in the 27 European Union (EU) democracies (as of 1 June 2013) since the end of the Second World War. We then classify these technocrat-led governments according to their partisan composition and their remit. This leads us to consider another problematic term which is often wrongly used synonymously with 'technocratic government': the 'caretaker government'. On the basis of the previous discussions and definitions, we identify the very few cases of what we term 'full technocratic' – as opposed to simply technocrat-led – governments. For, as we explain, while all technocratic governments are technocrat-led, not all technocrats lead full technocratic governments.

Not a party government

In this section, our aim is to arrive at an ideal type definition of a technocratic government. We are not helped, however, by the fact that theoretical work on the topic is sparse and confusing. We have therefore decided to work backwards. In other words, we take as our starting point what ought in our view to be the exact opposite of a technocratic government: a party government. Here, unlike our eventual 'technocratic government' destination, we have a lot of rich political science literature to guide us (e.g., Rose 1969; Katz 1986, 1987; Blondel & Cotta 2000; Mair 2008). For our purposes, we have chosen to use the work of Richard Katz (1987: 7), who sets out five necessary conditions for an ideal type model of party government:

(1) Decisions are made by elected party officials or by those under their control.
(2a) Policy is decided within parties, which
(2b) then act cohesively to enact it.
(3a) Officials are recruited and
(3b) held accountable through party.

Like all ideal types, this is, as Katz (1986: 42–43) says, an intellectual construct 'whose logic is far more coherent than is the actual operation of any real government'. This of course is the function of an ideal type: it is used as an extreme point, to which real-existing party governments 'can be approximated more or less closely'. The passage from 'ideal type' to 'real-existing party governments' not only implies a distancing from the ideal, but also a move from singular to plural – that is, from a single ideal type to a plurality of types. As Jean Blondel (2000: 97) notes: [P]arty government is often mentioned in the singular as if it was

of one type only. In reality, there are large variations among different types.' It is one thing, however, to show that there exist many and varied forms of party governments, but another to identify clearly when we can no longer speak of 'party governments' and instead enter the realm of 'technocratic governments'. Blondel (1991: 14) himself raises the question of the differences between party and technocratic governments when he observes, in reference to the composition of the former, that 'there has to be a limit, however, as the appointment of non-parliamentarians may strain the relationship of the government with parliament'. Unfortunately for us, he does not offer a roadmap of how and where to set this limit. Nor does Maurizio Cotta (2000a: 214), who asserts that 'the "party-dependent government" model is a polar extreme from which real-world situations are distant, albeit more or less', but gives no indication about the location of the point at which we are so far from this polar extreme that we are no longer dealing with a party government, but a technocratic one.

Before we go further, it is worth acknowledging here that some might object – running the risk of 'degreeism' (Sartori 1991: 248–249) – that technocratic governments often do have a low or very low degree of partisanship and, as such, can be placed towards the far end of a party government continuum (i.e., running from maximum to minimum degrees of 'partyness'). Indeed, even in the cases of those technocratic governments that contain no party representatives, one could contend that these governments still depend on parliamentary support and, hence, on parties. As such, although located at the furthest point from the 'polar extreme' of the party government ideal type, technocratic governments – so the argument would go – can nonetheless be viewed as still operating within that pole's magnetic field. While we acknowledge that these governments do remain accountable to parliaments, we believe that analysing technocratic governments as extreme cases of party governments is detrimental to our understanding of each type since it underplays the fundamental differences between the two. In fact, technocratic governments can have profoundly different geneses and, perhaps, consequences than 'normal' party governments. Including these two types of governments in the same conceptual container – and thus reducing their differences to a question of degree – does not allow us to identify their specific and distinct features.

Our main premise is thus that a technocratic government is different from any form of party government. The next step is to identify its main characteristics. If we accept that a technocratic government, in its ideal type form, ought to be a reverse mirror image of the ideal type of party government, then we can return to Katz's (1986, 1987) conditions for party government and say that an ideal type technocratic government should be one in which the following three necessary conditions are satisfied:

(1) All major governmental decisions are *not* made by elected party officials.
(2) Policy is *not* decided within parties which then act cohesively to enact it.
(3) The highest officials (ministers, prime ministers) are *not* recruited through party.

It is worth noting that we have slightly adapted Katz's criteria in order to fit technocratic governments in democracies: as explained earlier, although the principal-agent relationship is a point of contention for such governments, we do not believe it makes sense to set as a condition that technocrat ministers and prime ministers are in no way under party control.

Hence we have omitted the second part of Katz's first condition. Likewise, in our third condition, it would be illogical to posit – at least in European democracies – that technocrat ministers and prime ministers are in no way accountable through party (point 3b in Katz's criteria).

By working backwards, therefore, we now have an ideal type model of a technocratic government that is distinct from any model of party government. The next step consists in moving from this ideal type of technocratic government to those real-existing technocratic governments.

Technocrats and technocrat-led governments

Just as there are many different types of party government at varying distances from Katz's ideal type definition, so too may there be different types of technocratic governments at varying distances from our ideal type definition. Before attempting to classify these, however, our first task is to establish how many potential technocratic governments we are dealing with in Europe. It seems sensible to begin by identifying all those governments that have been led by a technocrat (recalling our third ideal type condition that the highest officials – in this case, the prime minister – are not recruited through a party) before then sifting through these, classifying them and establishing similarities and differences.[1] This first task, however, presents us with another definitional question: How do we decide who is and is not a technocrat?

A good starting point here is the observation by Jean Meynaud (1964: 262) that 'when he becomes a technocrat, the expert becomes political'. This implies two things: first that a technocrat is an expert of some description, and second that 'the technocrat does politics' (Meynaud 1964: 259). This latter point is important since commentators have on occasion misleadingly referred to technocrat-led governments as 'apolitical' or 'non-political'. For example, in the wake of Mario Monti's appointment in Italy, Nathan Gardels (2012: 30) referred to 'the depoliticized democracy being practiced by Prime Minister Monti'. Such views appear to derive from an unfortunate conflation of 'apolitical' with 'not party political'. As regards the question of how we can identify technocrats, Cotta and Verzichelli (2002: 145) define a 'technocratic minister' as someone 'totally lacking in both a parliamentary and party political background and having, rather, some specialist background that is related to the ministry he or she occupies'. While useful, we find this definition too vague to be employed empirically since Cotta and Verzichelli do not explain precisely what a 'party political background' means. For example, it could be used very widely to denote anyone who has ever been a grassroots member of a political party. Or who has ever publicly expressed their support for a particularly party candidate. Or even someone whose family members have been elected party representatives. To overcome this lack of clarity about the degree to which a technocrat should not be 'party political', we propose the following operational definition of a technocrat:

> A prime minister or minister is a technocrat if, at the time of his/her appointment to government, he/she: (1) has never held public office under the banner of a political party; (2) is not a formal member of any party; (3) is said to possess recognized

non-party political expertise which is directly relevant to the role occupied in government.[2]

Taking these three conditions as together necessary and sufficient, we can now proceed to identify all those democratic governments in the EU-27 that have been led by a technocrat since the end of the Second World War.[3] As we can see from Table 1 below, there have been 24 cases of technocrat-led governments up to June 2013 in eight Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Romania). Of these 24 governments, 16 also had a technocrat minister of the economy (which we have included as a further indicator of the extent to which key cabinet posts were occupied by non-party ministers).

Composition of technocrat-led governments

While we have listed those governments in Europe that have been led by technocrats, we should make clear straight away that we do not necessarily view all such governments as *fully technocratic*. Or, to put it another way, we consider some technocrat-led governments more technocratic than others. In this section and the next, we shall demonstrate how and why this is the case.

Even from a brief glance at Table 1, we can see very significant variations between real-existing technocrat-led governments as regards both duration and composition. These are important differences in our view, but they tend to be overlooked in discussions. In particular, the mere presence of a technocrat at the head of a government is often taken as automatically rendering that government equally 'technocratic' with all other technocrat-led ones. The lumping together by many commentators of the governments that took office in Greece and Italy in November 2011 is a good example of this flawed logic: for example, Vivien Schmidt (2011) and Andrew Moravcsik (2012) treat the administrations led by Lucas Papademos in Greece and Monti in Italy as 'technocratic' and equivalent. This, however, ignores the considerable differences between the two. In Greece, Papademos became prime minister in a cabinet composed mostly of representatives from the two largest parties at that time – PASOK and New Democracy. In fact, 12 of his 18-member cabinet had been PASOK ministers in the previous George Papandreou government and, as we can see from Table 1, only 17 per cent of the cabinet was composed of technocrats. The Papademos government can thus be viewed as a temporary oversized coalition that was led by a technocrat (in addition to the two main parties, it also contained the minor party Laos for the first three months). By contrast, in Italy, the outcome of the fall of Silvio Berlusconi's government was very different to that of Papandreou's in Greece: the government led by Monti did not contain a single party representative and was nominated with the stated intention of lasting well over a year in office and bringing in major reforms (Pasquino & Valbruzzi 2012; Bosco & McDonnell 2013; Di Virgilio & Radaelli 2013). It therefore seems a gross simplification to treat these two technocrat-led governments as equally 'technocratic'.

The same holds for many other governments in Table 1, including several that occur in the same country. To take another Greek example, the first Xenophon Zolotas administration in

Table 1. Technocrat-led governments in the EU-27 Member States, 1945–2013

Member State	No.	Prime minister	Period in office	Days in office	Technocrat economy minister	Percentage of technoc ministers
Bulgaria	3	Berov	30 December 1992–17 October 1994	656	Yes	80
		Indzhova	18 October 1994–25 January 1995	99	Yes	100
		Raykov	13 March 2013–29 May 2013	77	Yes	100
Czech Republic	2	Tošovský	1 February 1998–17 July 1998	166	No	38
		Fischer	8 May 2009–13 July 2010	431	Yes	100
Finland	3	Von Fieandt	29 November 1957–18 April 1958	140	Yes	100
		Lehto	18 December 1963–12 September 1964	269	Yes	100
		Liinamaa	13 June 1975–21 September 1975	100	Yes	100
Greece	5	Grivas	12 October 1989–23 November 1989	40	No	76
		Zolotas I	23 November 1989–13 February 1990	82	No	32
		Zolotas II	13 February 1990–11 April 1990	57	No	68
		Papademos	11 November 2011–16 May 2012	187	No	17
		Pikrammenos	16 May 2012–17 June 2012	31	Yes	100
Hungary	1	Bajnai	15 April 2009–14 May 2010	395	Yes	50
Italy	3	Ciampi	29 April 1993–10 May 1994	376	No	44
		Dini	17 January 1995–17 May 1996	486	Yes	100
		Monti	16 November 2011–27 April 2013	528	Yes	100
Portugal	2	Nobre de Costa	29 August 1978–15 September 1978	18	Yes	100
		Pintassilgo	31 July 1979–12 December 1979	147	Yes	100
Romania	5	Stolojan	16 October 1991–27 September 1992	347	No	10
		Vacaroiu I	13 November 1992–18 August 1994	644	Yes	50
		Vacaroiu II	19 August 1994–1 September 1996	745	Yes	32
		Vacaroiu III	2 September 1996–3 November 1996	101	Yes	41
		Isarescu	21 November 1999–26 November 2000	373	No	5
Total	24					

Notes: A new government is coded when there is a change in the party or set of parties holding cabinet posts or when there is a general election. Following the example of the Comparative Parliamentary Democracy Data Archive (www.erdda.se/index.php/projects/cpd), the parliament and government composition database (http://parlgov.org/) and the Comparative Political Dataset (www.ipw.unibe.ch/content/team/klaus_armingeon/comparative_political_data_sets/index_ger.html#_ftn1), data for Greece, Portugal and Spain have been collected only for the periods after their democratisation in the 1970s. Similarly, in the case of new EU Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, we only consider the post-1989 period.

Sources: Bell (1997); Conrad and Golder (2010); Protsyk (2005); Sonntag (2010); Strøm et al. (2003).

1989 was akin to the Papademos one in 2011 since it was formed by the three main parties and included party politicians and technocrats (who, in the case of Zolotas I, were nominated by the parties and, in that of Papademos, were considered linked to the parties) (Dinas & Rori 2013). Likewise, in terms of their remits – a topic which we examine in more detail in the next section – both governments were charged with taking urgent steps over a six-month period to tackle an economic crisis (Pridham & Verney 1991). By contrast, the second Zolotas government in 1990 appears far more similar to that led by Ioannis Grivas in 1989 (indeed, the two cabinets had more individual ministers in common than was the case for Zolotas I and II) and to the 2012 Panagiotis Pikrammenos administration. All three governments – Grivas, Zolotas II and Pikrammenos – contained a majority of technocrat ministers and were what the Greeks call 'service governments' meaning they can only deal with the day-to-day business of government until new elections are held within a very short space of time.[4] It is interesting to note therefore – and indicative of the confusion surrounding technocrat-led governments in political science literature – that despite the significant differences both in composition and remit between Zolotas I and II, some scholars simply refer to a single Zolotas government between November 1989 and April 1990 (e.g., Magone 2003: 80).

We can also see clear differences in the partisan composition of the two technocrat-led governments in the Czech Republic. While Josef Tošovský's government in 1998 contained a majority of party representatives (including some who had been ministers in the previous Vaclac Klaus cabinet), Jan Fischer's 2009–2010 government was more like those of Lamberto Dini and Monti in Italy in the sense that it did not include any party representatives (Hanley 2009). However, it is worth noting that the members of Fischer's cabinet were all explicitly nominated by specific parties – a factor which seems to us to render it slightly less distant from the parties than the executives of Dini and Monti (Linek & Lacina 2010). In this sense, we agree with Rudy Andeweg (2000: 128) that, when assessing the partyness of government, 'as a rule of thumb, the nature of the nominators should usually tip the balance in the diagnosis'. Likewise, the government led by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in Italy from April 1993 to May 1994 was very different to those of his compatriots Dini and Monti since it comprised 14 party representatives and 11 independents.

A final case worth mentioning here, given its borderline status in terms of partisan/technocrat composition, is the government led by Gordon Bajnai in Hungary from April 2009 to May 2010. On the one hand, Bajnai was not a sitting member of parliament when he became prime minister, he and half his cabinet were officially 'independent' (with many ministers coming from outside politics) and his government was pitched as a 'crisis-management' administration (Várnagy 2010: 1003–1004). On the other hand, Bajnai had been a minister in the previous Ferenc Gyurcsány MSZP Socialist government, the non-independent half of his cabinet was composed solely of MSZP elected representatives (including several of that party's leading figures) and it was supported in parliament only by the MSZP. As a result, according to country experts, it was apparently treated by the opposition as an MSZP government.[5] So, while Bajnai fulfils our criteria for definition as a technocrat and his government can therefore be included among the cases of 'technocrat-led' governments in Europe, it seems clear that – at least in terms of the roles played by elected party representatives and party elites in the composition of the cabinet – this case is further from our ideal type definition of a technocratic government than those of Dini or Fischer.

What can technocrat-led governments do?

While extremely useful in understanding the differences between technocrat-led governments, partisan composition is not the only benchmark by which these governments should be divided and classified. As we saw in Table 1, in addition to the large variations in terms of partisan composition, there are also very significant differences in duration. The issue of how long a technocrat-led government lasts is usually linked to the broader question of its remit. In other words: what can these governments do? As Cotta (2000b: 91) says, government is not just about those 'who form part of it at the different levels: it is also constituted by the activities it undertakes, by the policies it decides'. Taking a pair of Greek and Italian cases as examples, if we look just at party composition, then the Dini and Pikrammenos governments appear identical since they were composed entirely of technocrat ministers. However, it would be foolhardy to ignore the fact that the Pikrammenos government lasted just 31 days and was put in place simply to tend to basic daily administration until new elections could be held while the Dini government lasted over a year and introduced major reforms. Thus, even when their partisan composition is similar, there may be clear qualitative differences in terms of remit between technocrat-led governments.

So, remit (i.e., 'what governments can do') counts as well as composition. Considering remit, however, requires us to tackle another problematic category: the caretaker government. While there are many definitions of this term in the literature, unfortunately again we find confusion. Petra Schletter and Edward Morgan-Jones (2009: 674) state that 'caretaker situations arise when governments resign pending early elections, following, for example, coalition failures or parliamentary dissolution' (for a similar view, see Van Roozendal 1997: 72). The problem with this is that it excludes those caretaker governments which arise *after* a general election when the parties are unable to form a government – as was the case, for example, of the Pikrammenos administration in Greece in 2012. Leaving aside the issue of when caretaker governments occur, most definitions do concur on two key points. First, caretakers are said to exert a 'bridging role' between duly-mandated governments for a brief (but unspecified) period of time. For that reason, caretakers are often referred to as 'interim governments'. Second, it is broadly agreed that caretakers cannot undertake the same range of policy actions as a duly-mandated party government. As Valentine Herman and John Pope (1973: 196) say: '[I]t is accepted that these governments have a limited life-span and limited freedom of action.'

This acceptance of a restricted remit for caretakers is reflected in national political cultures. As Sona Golder (2010: 4) points out, most countries 'have a strong norm that caretaker governments . . . do not have the authority to make major policy initiatives'. This acknowledgement may be either formal or informal. For example, in Greece, constitutional law requires 'the caretaker cabinet to be "as far as possible, of wide acceptance in order to conduct the elections" ' (Kleomenis 1994: 280). Similarly, in Belgium, the head of state can ask a government that has resigned 'to remain as a caretaker and attend "to current affairs" (but no politically important matters) until a new government can be sworn in' (De Winter et al. 2000: 343). The same is true of Portugal, whose Constitution (Article 186.5), prescribes – in periods preceding or following a duly-mandated government – the formation of a caretaker cabinet 'which shall limit itself to undertaking such acts as are strictly necessary in order to ensure the management of public affairs'.[6] Likewise, the Danish Constitution (Article 15) stipulates that caretaker governments should 'do what is necessary to ensure

the uninterrupted conduct of official business until the new cabinet takes up office' (Steenbeek 2004: 156). Even in those countries such as Norway and Sweden, whose constitutions do not contain any particular rules or constraints regarding caretaker governments, 'in reality, caretaker cabinets have always avoided presenting bills to Parliament and have confined themselves to administrative matters' (Larsson 1994: 172). This has also been the case in Italy, especially during the so-called 'First Republic' from 1948 to 1993, where caretaker governments have traditionally concerned themselves with ordinary administration and it is broadly understood by all political and institutional actors what they can and cannot do (Bin & Pitruzzella 2012: 183).[7]

To return to the question of caretakers and technocrats: we know that not all caretaker prime ministers are technocrats. We find caretaker governments led by party representatives in countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium, which have no history of technocrat-led governments, while in countries like Finland (Törnudd 1969; Raunio 2004) and Italy we find both party representative-led caretaker governments and technocrat-led caretaker governments. However, based on our discussion of what caretaker governments can do, we also know that not all technocrats are caretakers. If we look again at the cases in Table 1, we can say that those governments led by Reneta Indzhova in Bulgaria and Tošovský in the Czech Republic were caretakers, while those led by Lyuben Berov in Bulgaria and Fischer in the Czech Republic were not: Indzhova and Tošovský could only concern themselves with 'minding the shop temporarily' as Woldendorp et al. (2000: 18) put it. However, this is not the case for Berov, Fischer and the other technocrat-led governments listed in Table 2, such as Zolotas I, Dini or Vacaroiu I, II and II in Romania. If, as Golder (2010: 4) states, caretaker governments 'should simply maintain the *status quo*', then the technocrat-led governments in Table 2 cannot be considered 'caretakers' given both the major policy changes which they were charged with introducing and the length of time they were given to do so (see also Laver & Shepsle 1994; Conrad & Golder 2010). Differentiating between our technocrat-led administrations in this way – in terms of remit – thus allows us to move towards identifying what we term 'real-existing full technocratic governments'.

Real-existing full technocratic governments

Based on our discussion so far, we have devised a typology of technocrat-led governments in terms of their composition and remit in order to arrive at those which we consider 'real-existing full technocratic governments' (see Figure 1). The first criterion – partisan/technocrat composition – requires us to distinguish between technocrat-led cabinets consisting mostly of technocrats and those in which party representatives make up the majority of ministers. There are, of course, a few borderline cases. The Bajnai government, whose composition we mentioned earlier, is one. The first government led by Nicolae Vacaroiu in Romania between 1992 and 1994 is another, since it too was split 50-50 between technocrat and party ministers. In these 'tiebreak' situations, the solution we have adopted when classifying them is to check whether the minister of the economy (or 'finance', as it may be called) is also a technocrat. In other words, if both the premiership and what is generally considered the most important ministry are occupied by technocrats, then we judge evenly

Table 2. Non-caretaker technocrat-led governments and their policies

Government	Period	Main economic policies adopted or implemented
Zolotas I (Greece)	1989–1990	Re-organisation of collective bargaining framework; VAT increase
Stolojan (Romania)	1991–1992	Price liberalisation; wage stabilisation; privatisation of some state-owned enterprises; decrease of restrictions on exports
Vacaroiu I, II and III (Romania)	1992–1996	Price and trade liberalisations; cuts in subsidies to state enterprises; privatisation policies; introduction of VAT
Berov (Bulgaria)	1992–1994	Deficit reduction; privatisation law; law on agricultural land ownership and use; introduction of VAT
Ciampi (Italy)	1993–1994	Reform of the collective bargaining system; public administration reforms; wage controls; adoption of a legal framework for supplementary pensions; electoral system reform
Dini (Italy)	1995–1996	Introduction of a flexible retirement age; shift to a contribution-related formula for pensions; indexation of pensions to real wage growth; deficit cuts
Isarescu (Romania)	1999–2000	Introduction of new pension systems; financial sector reforms; privatisation law
Bajnai (Hungary)	2009–2010	Income tax reductions; abolition of different special taxes; introduction of new property taxes; indexing of pensions to GDP; increase in the retirement age
Fischer (Czech Republic)	2009–2010	Adoption of 'anti-crisis package' (deficit cuts; increase in VAT and consumer tax; reduction of some state benefits; suspension of plans to increase pensions; reduction of salaries for state employees)
Papademos (Greece)	2011–2012	Adoption of 'anti-crisis package' (increase in property tax; introduction of special tax on high pensions; reform of pension system; cuts to public sector allowances)
Monti (Italy)	2011–2013	Large reduction in the budget deficit; introduction of property taxes; increase in the retirement age; cuts in the size and costs of administrative bodies; 'liberalisation' of closed professions, labour market reform

Sources: Blokker (2002); Ferrera (1997); Ganev and Wyzan (2005); Hopkin (2012); Linek and Lacina (2010); Pop (2006); Roper (2000); Schmidt and Gualmini (2013); Várnagy (2010).

split cabinets to be more 'technocratic' than 'partisan'. In most cases, however, this problem does not arise.

The second criterion – remit – refers to the mandate of technocrat-led governments to change the status quo (i.e., to go beyond a 'caretaker' role). Whether they do so or not is another matter: it is of course possible that a government may not. But here we are interested in whether they have it within their power to do so. As we have explained, caretaker governments take office with the knowledge that they have been created to look

		COMPOSITION	
		Majority technocrat	Majority party representatives
REMIT	Must maintain status quo	*Nonpartisan caretaker*	*Partisan caretaker*
	Mandate to change status quo	*Full technocratic government*	*Technocrat-led partisan government*

Figure 1. A typology of technocrat-led governments.

after daily administration, to 'mind the shop' rather than to make major changes. However, as we have also shown, this limitation does not apply to all technocrat-led governments. By combining these two criteria of 'composition' and 'remit', we therefore propose the following typology of technocrat-led governments.

As we can see from Figure 1, if we subdivide by remit and composition, we have four types of technocrat-led governments. The first type (in the bottom right-hand corner) is the 'technocrat-led partisan government', characterised by a majority of party representatives under a technocrat prime minister and with a mandate to change the status quo. There have been seven cases of this in the EU-27: Zolotas I and Papademos in Greece; Ciampi in Italy; Stolojan, Vacarioiu II and III and Isarescu in Romania. The second type (in the top right-hand corner) is that of the 'partisan caretaker', which contains a majority of party representatives in cabinet under a technocrat prime minister, but does not have a mandate to change the status quo. There have been no cases of this in the EU-27, but there is no reason – theoretically – why such a government could not exist. The third type (in the top left-hand corner) is the 'nonpartisan caretaker'. This is characterised by a majority of technocrats in cabinet under a technocrat prime minister and does not have a mandate to change the status quo. There have been 11 such governments in the EU-27: Indzhova and Raykov in Bulgaria; Tošovský in the Czech Republic; Grivas, Zolotas II and Pikrammenos in Greece; Nobre de Costa and Pintassilgo in Portugal; and three cases in Finland (Von Fieandt, Lehto and Liinamaa). The fourth and final type (in the bottom left-hand corner) is what we term 'full technocratic government'. These governments contain a majority of technocrats in cabinet under a technocrat prime minister and have a mandate to change the status quo. There have been six such cases in the EU-27: Dini and Monti in Italy; Bajnai in Hungary; Vacaroiu I in Romania; Berov in Bulgaria; and Fischer in the Czech Republic. These are the only governments which we consider 'real-existing full technocratic governments'. In other words, they are technocrat-led governments whose composition and remit are such that they are qualitatively distinct from other types of technocrat-led administrations. All six, although they do differ from one another in some respects, fulfil the following three necessary and sufficient conditions:

(1) The prime minister is a technocrat.
(2) The majority of ministers are technocrats.
(3) They have a mandate to change the status quo.

Table 3. Types of technocrat-led governments in the EU-27 Member States, 1945–2013

Member State	No.	Prime minister	Type of government
Bulgaria	3	*Berov*	*Full technocratic government*
		Indzhova	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Raykov	Nonpartisan caretaker
Czech Republic	2	Tošovský	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Fischer	*Full technocratic government*
Finland	3	Von Fieandt	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Lehto	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Liinamaa	Nonpartisan caretaker
Greece	5	Grivas	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Zolotas I	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Zolotas II	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Papademos	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Pikrammenos	Nonpartisan caretaker
Hungary	1	*Bajnai*	*Full technocratic government*
Italy	3	Ciampi	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Dini	*Full technocratic government*
		Monti	*Full technocratic government*
Portugal	2	Nobre de Costa	Nonpartisan caretaker
		Pintassilgo	Nonpartisan caretaker
Romania	5	Stolojan	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Vacaroiu I	*Full technocratic government*
		Vacaroiu II	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Vacaroiu III	Technocrat-led partisan government
		Isarescu	Technocrat-led partisan government
Total	24		

Note: See the notes and sources for Table 1.

Having presented our typology, we can now return to the list of cases presented in Table 1 and classify all technocrat-led governments in the EU-27 accordingly (Table 3).[8]

It should be noted at this point that a technocrat-led government's classification is not necessarily set in stone and that the same government may shift from one of our four types to another due to changing circumstances. A good example of this is Fischer's government in the Czech Republic which was created as 'a caretaker government of experts' (Stegmaier & Vlachová 2011: 238), or what we call a 'nonpartisan caretaker' government. Its original remit was simply to 'mind the shop' until a constitutional amendment could be passed allowing a general election to be called. However, after Fischer had been in office for a month, the Czech Constitutional Court rejected the amendment and so his government found itself continuing longer than had been envisaged. In the meantime, the Czech Republic was faced with a severe economic crisis, which required the adoption of strong austerity measures. As a result, the Fischer administration went from being a 'nonpartisan caretaker' to what we term a 'full technocratic government' for most of its time in office

(Linek & Lacina 2010: 939). We could also say that the Monti government made the opposite journey. Having been a 'full technocratic government' for most of its time in office, it found itself acting as a 'nonpartisan caretaker' in the two months before the February 2013 general election in Italy after Silvio Berlusconi's party, the Popolo della Libertà (PDL, People of Freedom) withdrew its support in December 2012. It then continued as a 'nonpartisan caretaker' for two months after the general election since the main parties could not come to a coalition agreement. While, for ease of explanation, we have classified technocrat-led governments according to what they spent most of their time as, we believe that the categories we have proposed here can help us understand not only the differences between such governments, but also how individual governments may change in nature.

It is worth emphasising, finally, that the other types of real-existing technocrat-led governments we have identified – 'nonpartisan caretaker' and 'technocrat-led partisan government' – by far outnumber the 'full technocratic' governments in our list above (Table 3). This ought to encourage us to reflect on how we talk about technocratic governments, in particular as concerns their prevalence and significance in contemporary Europe. Put simply, there has been no 'technocratic government invasion' as many commentators would have had us believe in late 2011. European governments remain, overwhelming, duly-mandated party governments. And, on those occasions when they are not duly-mandated party governments or caretaker governments led by party representatives, they are more likely to be caretaker governments led by technocrats rather than full technocratic governments.

Future research: Genesis, policy and accountability

As we have said, the topic of technocrats and technocratic government remains a largely unexplored field and our contribution to it is primarily to establish some conceptual clarity, which can also serve to provide more solid foundations for further research. In our view, there are three main areas which scholars might profitably focus on. The first is to consider the conditions under which the governments discussed in this article occur. An initial observation, based on the data we have presented, is that we seem to find them in political systems where the head of state plays a key role in government formation (Blondel & Müller-Rommel 2001). For example, in the case of Monti, President Napolitano was central in bringing about this outcome (Fusaro 2013). Such research might also consider the extent to which constitutional provisions or more informal norms play a role in different countries and how they do so. A second observation is that these governments appear more common in states where the party system is either crumbling (such as Italy and Greece) or has not been fully rooted (the obvious examples are countries that have recently undergone a transition to democracy such as Bulgaria and Romania in the early 1990s). In the light of these observations, it is interesting to look at the levels of electoral volatility (Pedersen 1979) before and after technocrat-led governments. As we can see from Table 4, volatility is noticeably high in the cases of full technocratic and technocrat-led partisan governments. These two variables – party system consolidation and the role of the head of state – thus seem useful starting points for additional work on the genesis of different types of technocrat-led governments. Following on from this, it would also be worth studying the

Table 4. Average duration, parliamentary support and electoral volatility of the 24 technocrat-led governments in the EU-27 Member States, 1945–2013

	Duration (days)	% of parliamentary support	Electoral volatility (before)	Electoral volatility (after)
Full technocratic governments	520	52	26.2	29.7
Technocrat-led partisan governments	316	65	23.6	24.8
Non-partisan caretaker governments	103	36.8	8.3	14.2

Note: By parliamentary support, we mean the percentage of MPs who vote the government into office.
Sources: Strøm et al. (2003); Dassonneville and Hooghe (2011); www.parlgov.org

factors underpinning the different durations of such governments, according to type (as Table 4 shows very clearly, there is signification variation in this sense).

The second main area for further research concerns policy. For example, comparative case studies could examine in far greater detail than we have been able to do what such governments do in policy terms (see Table 2). They also could consider the real degree of policy autonomy of these governments from party groups and relevant external actors. After all, there is obviously more to 'technocratic politics' than we have been able to discuss in this article. Our starting point has been what, following Katz, we might define 'the technocraticness of government'. However, 'technocratic governmentness' – by which we mean the spread of the role of experts in various areas of policy making – is also an important area of research. On this point, it is worth noting that many party governments contain technocrats in key ministries. And even those that do not may pursue policies that are designed and closely monitored by external technocrats. For example, one might ask how austerity policies pursued by party governments in Ireland in recent years have been influenced by technocrats. This in turn recalls the important questions about democratic accountability mentioned in the introduction and which, in our view, constitute the third main area of potentially fruitful research on this topic. The issues that technocrats in government raise in this sense are far too big an area for us to explore here, but we believe the discussions and typology we have presented can serve as a useful platform for this type of work.

Conclusion

By building on our definition of a technocrat, in this article we have been able to identify 24 cases of technocrat-led governments in EU-27 democracies and then classify them according to their party composition and remit. This in turn has allowed us to present a definition of real-existing full technocratic governments and a typology which, together, provide conceptual clarity and distinguish meaningfully between different types of technocrat-led governments. They also allow for better informed comparative research on what remains an understudied and misunderstood topic. To date, as we have discussed in

this article, there has been considerable confusion surrounding technocrat-led governments and the term 'technocratic government' has served as a nebulous one-size-fits-all category, irrespective of the often significant variations between cases. And while those few attempts at putting flesh on the bones of the 'technocrat' and 'technocratic' labels have been useful (e.g., Cotta & Verzichelli 2002; Protsyk 2005: 140–141), they have not provided operational definitions that allow us to easily distinguish the specificities of real-existing technocrat-led governments.

The definitions and classifications presented in this article have also enabled us to establish that technocrat-led governments are rare in EU Member States. There have been 24 of them and 11 of these were what we term 'nonpartisan caretaker'. Moreover, our typology of technocrat-led governments shows that full technocratic governments are extremely rare. There have been only six cases of these, of which just three (Bajnai, Fischer and Monti) have occurred in the last decade. Indeed, if we return to the events of November 2011, we can now say that the evidence presented in this article demonstrates clearly that Monti's government stands out not because it was typical of a new type of government menacing European democracy, but because it was an extreme case of a technocrat-led government in terms of party composition and remit. Not only was it a full technocratic government but, even in comparison to the other cases of full technocratic governments we have identified, Monti's is the one which most closely matches the ideal type definition we proposed at the beginning of this article: all major governmental decisions were not made by elected party officials; policy was not decided within parties which then acted cohesively to enact it; and the highest officials (ministers, prime ministers) were not recruited through party. It was as Monti himself once termed it, 'a strange government'.[9] For now, however, it remains very much an exception in Europe.

Acknowledgements

In addition to the country experts mentioned in the endnotes who provided us with essential information regarding our classification of specific cases, we would like to thank the following colleagues for their comments on various drafts of this article: Anna Bosco, Chris Hanretty, Hanspeter Kriesi, Conor Little and Emanuele Massetti. In particular, we would like to thank Richard Katz, who acted as discussant for an earlier version of this article that we presented at the 2013 EUSA Conference in Baltimore, MD, and was extremely generous with his advice. Finally, we are grateful to the *EJPR* editors and the anonymous referees for their very helpful suggestions during the review process.

Notes

1. While it could be objected that this excludes governments made up of technocrats but led by a party representative, we have chosen not to consider these for three main reasons. First, there is the fundamental role played by the prime minister in parliamentary government systems, particularly in recent decades (Poguntke & Webb 2005). Second, as we have explained, a technocratic government is defined by the distance that separates it from a party government – that is, one in which party representatives occupy the key roles, first and foremost that of prime minister. Hence, it seems contradictory to include a government

led by a party representative within the realm of technocratic governments. And third, to date in Europe there has not been a single case of a government in which a party representative has acted as prime minister in a cabinet composed of a majority of technocrat ministers. As we will see later in the article, this latter point is a key element for classification as 'full technocratic government'.

2. By setting the condition that technocrats have not held public office under the banner of a political party, this also allows us to exclude those figures such as mayors who may run as 'civil society' candidates, but are supported by (and closely linked to) specific parties both during campaigns and while in office (we thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion). While time-consuming, establishing whether a minister is not a formal member of a party is possible thanks to biographical research (in our case, this was done using available literature, media sources and by consulting country experts).
3. As explained in the note below Table 1, data for Greece, Portugal and Spain have been collected only for the periods after their democratisation in the 1970s. Following the same logic, in the case of new EU Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, we only consider the post-1989 period.
4. We thank Susannah Verney of the University of Athens for taking the time to explain to us the intricacies of the various Greek technocrat-led governments and for checking our classifications of these.
5. We thank András Bozoki and Zsolt Enyedi of the Central European University for this information and for their advice regarding the classification of the Bajnai government.
6. See www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=206670
7. We are aware that there may be gaps between what caretaker governments can do in theory and what they actually do in practice (indeed, this is a potentially interesting area of study in which, to our knowledge, no comparative research exists). Nonetheless, for our purposes in this article, it is sufficient to take account of the powers and limits – whether formal or informal – of caretaker governments upon entering office.
8. In addition to the country experts for Greece and Hungary thanked already, we would like to express our gratitude to the following for their comments on individual cases: Georgi Kantchev of *The Economist* for Bulgaria; Seán Hanley of University College London for the Czech Republic; Ann-Cathrine Jungar of Södertörns University and Petri Burtsov of the Finnish State Broadcasting Company for Finland; Sorina Soare of the University of Florence for Romania.
9. Monti said this twice during an interview on the RAI 3 programme *Che tempo che fa*, 8 January 2012.

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