

UNDERSTANDING MINISTERIAL COMPETENCES AND PROFILES

Main ideas discussed in this chapter

1. Ministerial profiles as an analytical tool

- Categorizing ministers based on their profiles (partisan ministers, technocrats, experts, outsiders, etc.) has been widely used and analytically powerful.
- The literature has driven ambitious data collection efforts but remains dominated by dichotomous classifications (e.g., politicians vs. non-politicians), limiting comparability and knowledge accumulation. The coexistence of extensive data and simplistic typologies reveals inconsistencies, while the lack of communication between classification strategies has led to overlapping labels and operational criteria.

2. A competence-based approach to ministerial profiles

- We propose an alternative strategy based on ministerial competences. Ministerial competences are disaggregated into five dimensions: partisan, political, professional, managerial, and academic.
- These competences are then integrated into a four-type typology of ministerial profiles.

3. Explaining ministerial recruitment: three theoretical perspectives

- Ministerial profiles can be explained through three overarching sets of arguments:
- As a response to long-term processes of growing governance complexity.
- As a strategy to mitigate agency loss by strong formateurs.
- As a response to critical junctures.

4. Ministerial profiles and their impact

- We provide insights into how different ministerial profiles influence government dynamics and performance.

Ministers' profiles

Partisans —————> Coalition theories

Technocrats

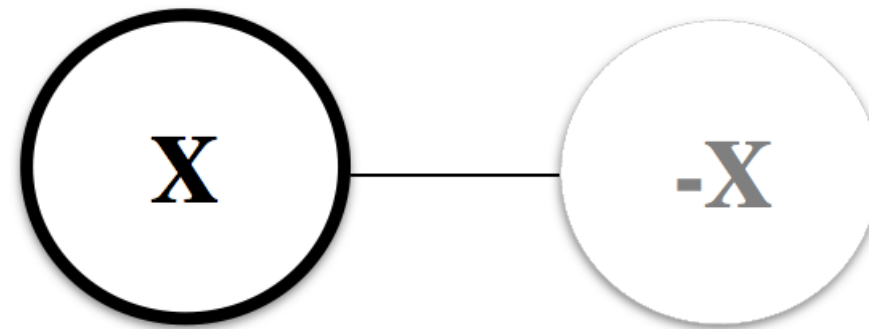
Experts

Independents

Outsiders

Cronies

I- MINISTER PROFILES IN THE LITERATURE



rigid typologies

disentangle

partisans, technocrats, technopols, amateurs, or outsiders

ideology

too disaggregated

age

sex

place of birth

policy area

parliamentary experience

executive experience

party positions

PhD certificate

n° of children

field of higher education

local level

national level

European level

affiliations

M. COMPETENCES

PARTISAN

POLITICAL

JOB

MANAGERIAL

ACADEMIC

a) Experience

party position

political position

related job

managerial p.

related credential

b) Duration

small-med-long

small-med-long

small-med-long

small-med-long

-

c) Hierarchy

party hierarchy

(Guideline list)

(Guideline list)

(Guideline list)

Grad-Posg-Phd

**Ordinal
measure**

----- none (little) - some - ample -----

Types

Non-p
Shadow-p
Low-p
High-p

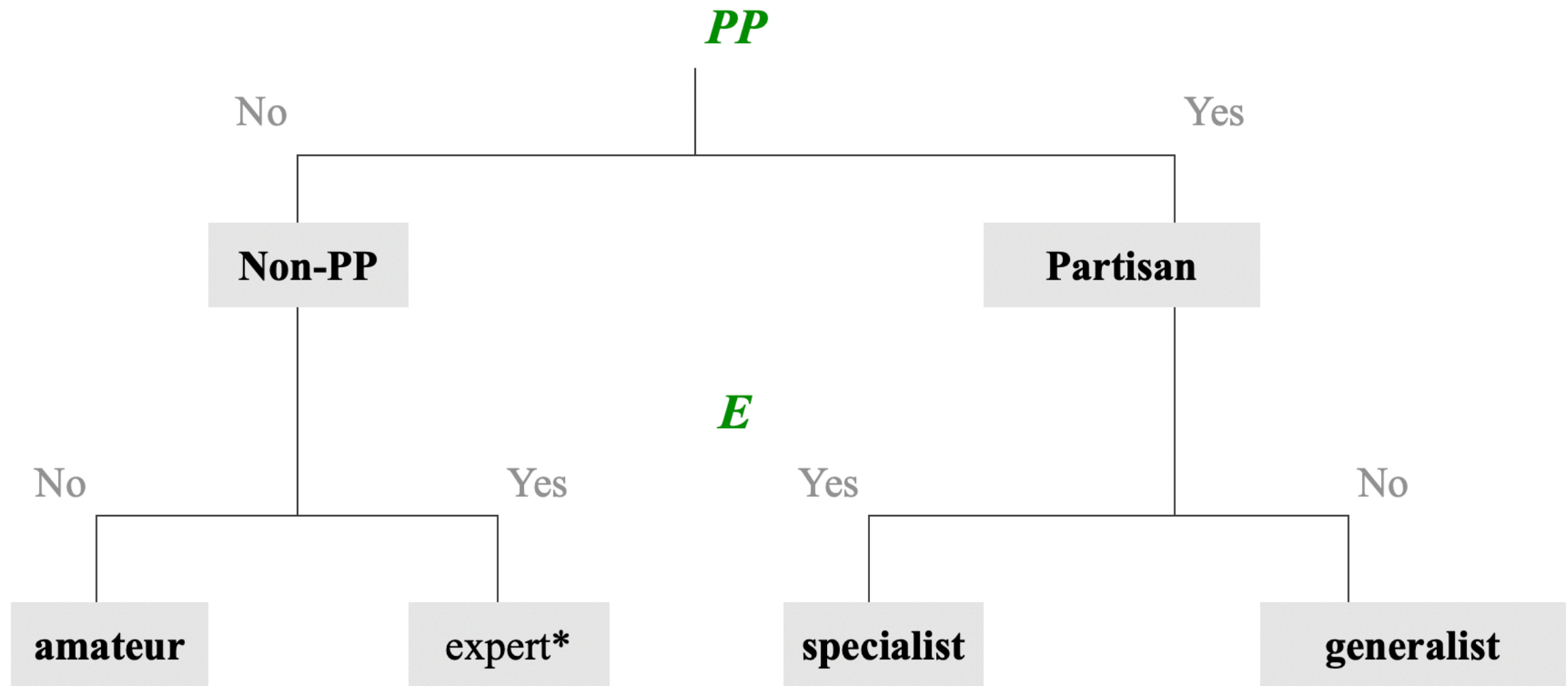
Executive
Legislative
(* 3 levels)

Job fields

Public
Private
Public-Private

Educ. fields

Ministerial Profiles Typology



PP= *partisanship+politicness*;

E= *policy expertise (academic, job, managerial)*

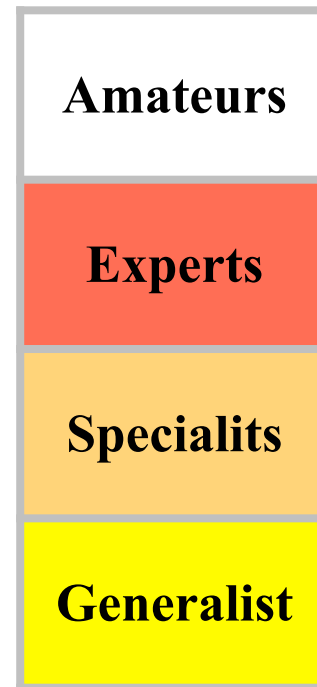
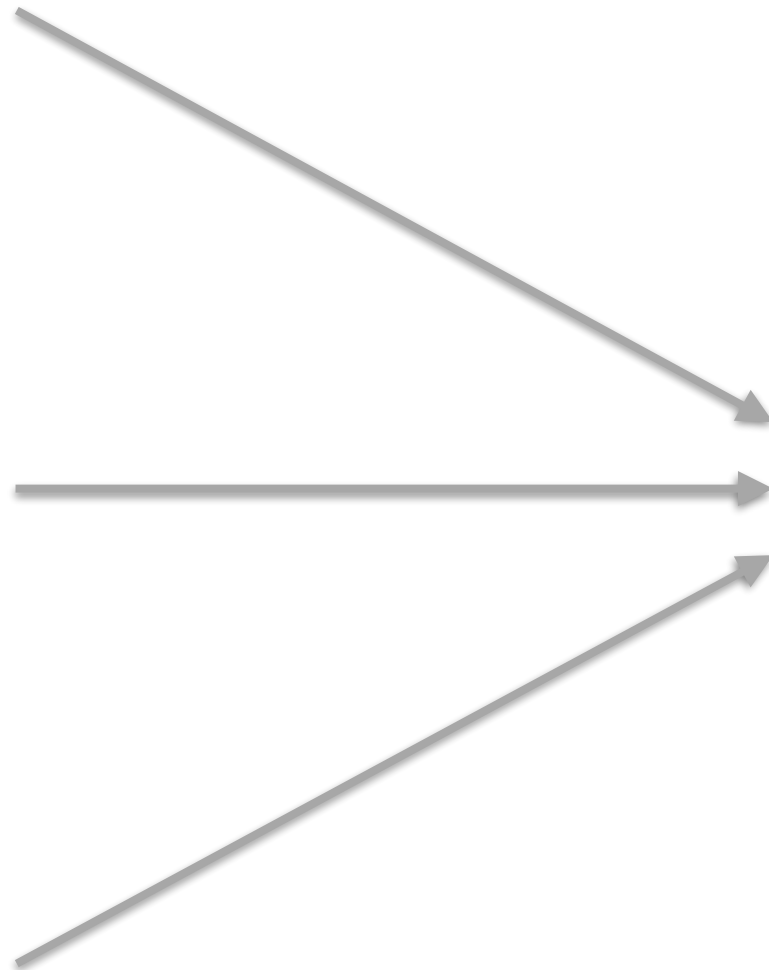
* Looking for the best label.

- "**Professional**" refers to ministers with training or experience in the field of their portfolio, whether in academia, the professional sector, or managerial roles. It should not be confused with the notion of a "professional politician," which designates individuals who have made politics their primary career.
- "**Qualified**" refers to ministers with training or experience in the field of their portfolio, whether in academia, the job sector, or managerial roles. This label highlights their expertise in the subject matter of their ministry, rather than their political career.

Critical Juncture
Argument

Critical Juncture
Argument

Agency Control
Argument



Argument 1: Technically-skilled ministers are appointed to deal with complexity and other long-term dynamics

- H1: The presence of technically-skilled ministers in technical areas should increase gradually over time.
- H1.b: All else equal, different dynamics should be observed for non-experts in technical areas and for experts in non-technical areas.

Argument 2: Non-partisan ministers are appointed by strong formateurs to mitigate the risk of agency loss

- H2: The presence of non-partisans in core portfolios should increase when government formateurs are strong.
- H2.b: All else equal, different dynamics should be observed for partisans in core portfolios and for non-partisans in non-core portfolios.

Argument 3: Technocratic ministers are appointed by party leaders to deal with critical junctures

- H3: the presence of technocratic ministers in charge of challenging or unpopular policies should increase during times of crisis
- H3.b: All else equal, different dynamics should be observed for partisans in core portfolios and for non-partisans in non-core portfolios.

