



Ideologues, Partisans, and Loyalists: Ministers and Policymaking in Parliamentary Cabinets

Despina Alexiadou

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For the past thirty years scholars have debated the role of political parties in fiscal, monetary, and social welfare policies. Some argue that Social Democratic parties are more committed to advancing and maintaining welfare protection, while others claim that party ideology has ceased to explain parties' policy choices due to the constraining forces of economic globalization, deindustrialization, and electoral volatility. Indeed, the empirical findings in support of partisan arguments are mixed. Much of this rich literature treats political parties as uniform and cohesive entities when it comes to forming government policy.

Ideologues, Partisans, and Loyalists challenges this assumption and advances the argument that *ideology and partisan policy preferences play a major role in policy choices*, yet they are not necessarily observable at the government or even at the party level. Instead, we often need to look at the individual level -- particularly at the cabinet minister who is in charge of the policy in question to predict policy outcomes.

Ideologues, Partisans, and Loyalists innovatively argues that cabinet ministers can have very important policy role as policy agenda setters. Yet, not all ministers are equally effective policy-makers. Some make a difference, while others do not. Loyalists are loyal to their party leader and prioritize office over policy; partisans are party heavyweights and aspiring leaders; and ideologues have fixed policy ideas and are unwilling to compromise for the perks of holding office. Only ideologues and partisans can effectively change social welfare and labour market policy, above and beyond what their government mandates.

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