

Ministerial Leadership and Endorsement of Bureaucrats: Experimental Evidence from Presidential Governments

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Abstract

Scholars have debated over what constitutes effective ministerial leadership regarding administrative competence versus political influence. We contribute experimental evidence to this debate through a unique survey design of endorsement experiments. Using original data from 949 national civil servants in South Korea, we examine civil servants' assessment of ministerial leadership in three central dimensions of public management: internal management, interbranch coordination, and policy formulation/implementation. Furthermore, we use existing variation in characteristics of agencies to test whether such variation induces systematic differences in civil servants' responses. We find that civil servants' attitudes toward ministerial leadership are asymmetric in nature. Ministers with civil service backgrounds are endorsed in all three dimensions, whereas ministers with legislative backgrounds receive increased support only for interbranch coordination skills. The levels of support faced by ministers with different backgrounds also vary across agency types. Our analysis has implications for public management practice and agency control in presidential governments.

Key Words: Ministerial Leadership, Administrative Behavior, Survey Experiment, Presidential Government, South Korea

In representative democracy, citizens elect politicians to the government, and civil servants execute policy on the elected politicians' behalf. Once in office, chief executives are granted the power to make numerous political appointments to influence policy implementation and bring agencies in line with their platforms. In presidential systems, chief executives are particularly keen that civil servants understand and advance their policies, as this institutional structure features a more complex delegation sequence from chief executives to civil servants. While civil servants in parliamentary systems are simply accountable to department heads, bureaucrats in presidential systems have multiple principals that may place conflicting demands in an effort to hold their agents accountable (Moe and Caldwell 1994; Strøm 2000). Thus, presidents will exert considerable effort to influence policy implementation by employing their central authority to staff top executive posts (Lewis 2008, 2011; Waterman 1989; Wilson 1989).

The question is, whether top executive appointees are fully accountable to the president. Often, accountability in democratic governments is formulated as principals (i.e. elected politicians) seeking to control agents (i.e. civil servants) via multiple instruments such as oversight. The enforcement of regulations is one typical example of where we observe agents' performance (e.g., McCubbins 1985). Yet, the role of principals is much better understood than the role of agents. For example, the likelihood that chief executives will hold top executive appointees to account for bureaucratic performance depends on individual ministers' leadership (Huber and Martínez-Gallardo 2008; Indridason and Kam 2008) and contextual factors that influence liability attributions for policy performance (Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán 2015). On the other hand, much less is known about how agents – civil servants themselves – affect accountability.

In this article, we consider the agent side of this principal-agent relationship by investigating civil servants' support for ministerial leadership across executive agencies in

presidential systems.¹ Representative democracies exhibit great diversity in the distribution of government agencies and the way in which chief executives choose to allocate them (Lee 2018b; Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006). If there is a systematic difference in the way that different types of agency heads get approval from bureaucrats, this can influence the level of accountability to constituents that the chief executive's policies represent. It may also cause debate regarding representation in presidential cabinets and its effect on governability in presidential systems (e.g., Linz 1990). In a nutshell, exploring the role of agents in advancing principals' policy agendas has theoretical and practical importance.

The framework of our study is built on principal-agent and bureaucratic professionalism theories, as they both provide insights into bureaucrats' perceptions (e.g., Brehm and Gates 1997; Huber and Shipan 2002; Meier and O'Toole 2006). Research from principal-agent perspectives contends that bureaucratic agents are expected to behave in response to incentives provided by political principals, but more recent work based on "bottom-up" perspectives suggests that bureaucratic values and preferences should also play an important role in civil servants' decision making (Battaglio et al. 2019; Hollibaugh, Miles, and Newswander 2019; Miller and Whitford 2016; Teodoro 2011; Thomann et al. 2018; Tummers and Bekkers 2014). We then derive insights from the ministerial leadership and presidential appointments literature (Amorim Neto 2006; Andeweg 2000; Lee 2019; Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010) to generate testable implications about how national civil servants' approval of agency heads varies across the top executive appointees' career backgrounds and their assigned policy sectors. Given the consequential role of agency heads in changing agency policies, influencing policy outcomes, and improving bureaucratic performance (Andrews and Boyne 2010; Boyne 2003; Geys and Sørensen 2018; Hong and Kim 2019; Lee 2018a; Lewis 2008; Scholz and Wood 1998), the types of agency heads and the policy

areas they manage are expected to condition the extent to which civil servants assess their leadership roles in three central dimensions of public management: 1) internal management, 2) interbranch coordination, and 3) policy formulation and implementation.

We test our predictions with a unique survey design of endorsement experiments in order to address potential concerns of a bias toward support for ministers with particular backgrounds, using input from 949 national civil servants from 27 executive agencies in South Korea. Furthermore, we use existing variation in the characteristics of agencies to test whether such variation induces systematic differences in civil servants' assessment of effective ministerial leadership. The results show that bureaucrats' attitudes are clearly asymmetric in nature. Agency heads with civil service backgrounds receive increased support from bureaucrats for their leadership in all three dimensions, whereas those with legislative backgrounds are supported only for interbranch coordination skills, receiving negative responses in the two other dimensions. The levels of support faced by ministers also vary across the types of agencies as well as the ministers' career backgrounds. While ministers from the civil service derive considerable support for internal management skills and policy expertise in key policy areas, those from the legislature are endorsed for interbranch coordination abilities in policy areas represented by organized interests. Together, these findings shed light on the need to broaden our theories to consider the role of ministers and their effective leadership in public management practice and agency control.

Understanding bureaucratic agents' assessment of effective ministerial leadership is important due to its policy and political implications. Our analysis shows that civil servants' endorsement of ministerial leadership differs across agency heads' career backgrounds and the types of agencies. Given that agency heads tend to pursue different policy priorities according to their own characteristics (Atchison and Down 2009), such an endorsement pattern by civil servants

is likely to result in different policy outcomes across those factors. Moreover, we can also better predict civil servants' performance according to the types of agency heads and of policy areas. Public employees can build positive relationships with their superiors in conditions where the superiors' leadership characteristics correspond to their own attributes, and such relationships in turn will affect employees' performance and tenure in civil service (Grissom et al. 2012; Hassan and Hatmaker 2015). In addition, from the chief executive's perspective, our findings can also help to better identify a minister appointment strategy that is more effective in containing agency risks.

More importantly, analyzing civil servants' perceptions has practical implications as they influence how a policy is actually implemented. Public employees often make decisions based on their perceptions of reality rather than reality itself (Thomas 1928), and civil servants' perceptions, therefore, do affect their behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Specifically, civil servants are motivated to implement a policy when they perceive that the policy is valuable for society as well as for their direct clients and leaders (Thomann et al. 2018; Tummers 2011); and they are likely to put more effort into executing the policy when they perceive more discretion in policy implementation, because of their influence over the content of the implemented policy (Tummers et al. 2009). In short, civil servants' perceptions and their policy implementation behavior are closely related. Therefore, bureaucratic agents' positive assessment of ministerial leadership is likely to result in better agency performance due to lower levels of agency risks.

Ministerial Leadership and Civil Servant Endorsement in Presidential Governments

Among four types of instruments to control agent behavior – 1) contract design, 2) screening and selection mechanisms, 3) monitoring and reporting requirements, and 4) institutional checks – the

first two methods are *ex ante* means that are typically exerted through appointments (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991). Before nominating and authorizing top executive appointees to oversee their designated agencies, chief executives seek to identify the most qualified candidates for each position (screening and selection mechanisms) and establish shared interests (contract design). Yet, presidential appointment of agency heads may lead to a trade-off between administrative competence and political influence, the two essential goals in the government. As a single national leader, presidents may want to choose agency heads who are loyal to them and are able to competently deliver their policy commitments (Nathan 1983; Wilson 1989; Weingast 2005). On the other hand, presidents, as heads of government, are also motivated to name agency heads who may carry political influence into the relationship with other branches (Amorim Neto 2006; Martínez-Gallardo and Schleiter 2015).

Still, discussion of this particular dilemma all originates from the principal's (chief executive's) perspective, and whether appointing agency heads from inside or beyond the party line leads to the outcome presidents expect is, in fact, not certain. In this article, we therefore propose a framework to explore the anticipated performance of agency heads from the agent's (civil servant's) perspective and assess ministerial leadership according to their career backgrounds and across different policy areas. While the framework of this study is built on a principal-agent perspective where principals' appointment mechanisms affect bureaucrats' attitudes, we also incorporate views from bureaucratic professionalism in developing our hypotheses. Civil servants may respond to the principal's constraints and incentives, but professional values and identities of civil servants also should play a role in determining how they behave (Brehm and Gates 1997; Huber and Shipan 2002; Meier and O'Toole 2006). As recent public administration research demonstrates, there is strong evidence that civil servants' decision

making is more induced by bureaucratic preferences than by political control efforts (Teodoro 2011; Tummers and Bekkers 2014; Miller and Whitford 2016; Thomann et al. 2018). Then, civil servants react to the situations they face in the field, ranging from civil service tasks in relevant policy areas to interactions with ministerial superiors.

The importance of agency heads' leadership skills lies in the fact that they are not only political appointees from a president's perspective but also managers from that of civil servants. Research in public administration shows that the role of agency heads has proven consequential in improving agency performance (Andrews and Boyne 2010; Balla and Gormley 2017; Belardinelli et al. 2018; Boyne 2003; Boyne et al. 2011; Wolf 1993) as well as in changing agency policies and influencing policy outcomes (Connolly 2018; Lewis 2008; Scholz and Wood 1998; Wood 1990; Wood and Waterman 1991, 1994). Agency heads may interpret the vague and sometimes conflicting laws passed by the legislature and translate them into policy; their decisions about budget requests to the legislature, rulemaking, personnel, and the allocation of resources inside the agency can significantly influence policy; they monitor bureaucratic activity; and they can also improve bureaucratic performance by taking actions that advance their agencies' long-term interests and foster a sense of cooperation among agency managers and employees (Lewis 2008, 7; Balla and Gormley 2017, 282; Wolf 1993). In analyzing civil servants' assessment of ministerial leadership in public management practice, we thus focus on the three central aspects of agency heads' roles (e.g., Andeweg 2000; Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010): 1) internal management abilities, 2) interbranch coordination skills, and 3) expertise in policy formulation and implementation. As illustrated in Figure 1, the basic principal-agent framework provides insight into the policy process: from the president (principal) all the way to civil servants as ultimate agents who implement policy.

Our purpose is to consider the agent side of this principal-agent relationship by studying civil servants' support for ministerial leadership.

[Figure 1 about here]

How do we expect civil servants to evaluate their leaders' performance? We argue that civil servants, who can be held accountable to the president as well as to the legislature in the institutional structure of presidential governments (Shugart 2006), will have different perceptions of effective leadership depending on ministers' career backgrounds and across public management dimensions. This variation might not be viewed as surprising, because "the qualities that make for strong leadership at some agencies may not be the qualities that facilitate appropriate leadership at others" (Balla and Gormley 2017, 281). A highly visible agency with programs managing power or key financial resources may benefit from a capable leader who understands its organizational characteristics and manages its highly professional staff. In contrast, an embattled agency with programs constantly being challenged by organized interests and escalating in political and social importance may benefit from a coalition builder who can effectively reach out to influential legislators prior to making crucial decisions. In developing our hypotheses, we focus on ministers' civil service and legislative backgrounds, the two most common and contrasting types in the literature as well as in the Asian context, in order to adjust our discussion to the case of our interest (Hahm, Jung and Lee 2013; Lee 2019).²

For two central reasons, promoting senior civil servants to the top executive position has positive implications for bureaucrats. First, with regard to departmental management, senior civil servants are better equipped to manage subordinates in the bureaucratic organization than any other

type of agency heads (Lee 2019; Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010). In typical meritocratic civil service systems, most recruitment is made at the entry level through centralized examinations, and promotions are based on a rule-bound system, so that civil servants have predictable long-term careers (Rauch and Evans 2000). Given their experience and long-term careers within the organization, senior civil servants will be better positioned to manage rank-and-file civil servants (Evans and Rauch 1999; Jung, Moon, and Hahm 2008). Moreover, meritocratic systems have the advantage of shaping individual motivations in alignment with organizational, long-term goals, which makes bureaucrats more amenable to their superiors and leads to a higher degree of effectiveness in bureaucratic performance. As Evans and Rauch (1999, 752) point out, “bureaucrats who see themselves as having joined their confrères in office by virtue of sharing similar abilities are more likely to internalize shared norms and goals.” Past work on ministerial leadership using civil servants’ evaluations also corroborates that agency heads with civil service backgrounds are capable of balancing civil servants’ short-term and long-term goals in the organization (Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010).

Second, with regard to policy formulation and implementation, once promoted to a top executive post, senior civil servants are expected to competently demonstrate their expertise and skillfully exert their leadership, representing agencies’ policy preferences. Civil servants are more likely to provide internal support for the agency head who, they are aware, will be aligned with their policy position. The longer a minister worked within the agency prior to the appointment, the more likely the minister is to be identified as the agency’s representative in terms of policy directions (Andeweg 2000; Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010). Moreover, because civil servants climb up career ladders as professionals in meritocratic bureaucracies, they are also expected to be

qualified and talented policy specialists when they become seniors. In sum, senior civil servants are perceived as experts who by nature know how to represent their departmental interests.

However, in presidential governments where legislators can also hold executive agencies accountable, bureaucrats are aware of the necessity of politically savvy leaders who can coordinate with the legislative branch. Legislative oversight and efforts to contain agency behavior influence every aspect of bureaucratic politics, ranging from the confirmation of top executive appointees to the policy implementation process. In public hearings where the legislative committee screens top executive nominees' qualifications and policy positions, candidates who are capable of accommodating legislative preferences or perceived to represent legislative interests can more easily achieve confirmation (Hollibaugh 2014).³ In facilitating the passage and implementation of policy agenda, ministers' political backgrounds and experience are often considered more important than other credentials, because the top executive appointees' role of coordinating with the legislative standing committee and the ruling party is essential in these processes. Moreover, ministers are often called to appear before legislative standing committees to answer committee members' questions and vindicate their policy performance during regular or special sessions. Therefore, bureaucrats may approve ministers with legislative backgrounds for their leadership in this specific aspect of public management practice due to the positive effects on the administration's governability. In sum, this line of discussion leads to our first three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The overall bureaucrats' endorsement for agency heads with civil service backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with legislative backgrounds in internal management abilities.

Hypothesis 2: The overall bureaucrats' endorsement for agency heads with civil service backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with legislative backgrounds in policy expertise.

Hypothesis 3: The overall bureaucrats' endorsement for agency heads with legislative backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with civil service backgrounds in interbranch coordination skills.

Ministerial Leadership, Policy Areas, and Civil Servant Support

In the distribution of minister posts, distinguished are not only ministers' career backgrounds but also their suitability to advance particular goals in the assigned agencies. Existing research on portfolio allocations shows that top executive posts can be classified based on diverse policy purposes (Lee and Schuler 2019; Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006). While agency performance in key policy areas, such as finance and economic affairs, directly affects the government's whole reputation, ministerial leadership in some policy areas represented by organized interest groups can improve or undermine the administration's governability. Due to the relative scarcity of top executive positions and delegation problems where executive appointees may differ in their ability and incentives to achieve the principal's goals (Huber and Martínez-Gallardo 2008; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991), presidents have strong incentives to appoint different types of ministers for various policy purposes. By allocating different types of portfolios to ministers who can fulfill the chief executive's goals through their own skill sets, presidents can obtain both administrative competence and political influence in relevant policy areas.

Then, how does civil servants' assessment of ministers' performance vary across different policy areas? In every government, there are policy areas described as "high" in the sense that they

are among the most visible and important duties that the chief executive has to manage while in government (Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006). The so-called “high-policy” areas commonly include internal and foreign affairs, national defense, economic and financial management, and legal affairs. For two key reasons, senior civil servants will be viewed as qualified to lead high-policy agencies from the bureaucrat’s perspective. First, civil servants in these agencies are among the most professional personnel groups in the bureaucratic organization, and senior career officials are expected to manage these professionalized people better than anyone else. In meritocratic civil service systems, public employees tend to be more compliant with their senior careerists than to appointees from outside as they conceive the former to share similar interests and capabilities, and this tendency will be stronger in more professionalized groups.⁴

Second, given their long-term careers and extensive civil service experience, senior career officials are specialized in handling issues of high visibility and importance. From civil service recruitment to internal promotion to top administrative ranks, bureaucrats are required to pass competitive examinations in several focus areas, train themselves in the relevant fields for years, and undergo regular evaluations through a series of written tests. Once they reach senior civil servant ranks, they are still reviewed for their career history as well as their specialization and performance (Kim 2010). Therefore, senior career officials are guided within the organizational hierarchy to become experts who can lead ministries in important issue areas.

Still, in every democratic government, there are certain policy areas represented by organized interest groups. Although positions in this category may vary slightly across countries, they typically cover such issue areas as labor, commerce, environment, healthcare, and welfare. For this set of policy sectors, political backgrounds connected to a strong base in the legislature or other political networks can be effective to exercise leadership. First, in such policy areas,

candidates for agency heads tend to be those who can respond to organized interest groups acting for presidents or those who are perceived to represent such interests. Top executive appointees for these positions are expected to shore up political leverage of the government through fulfilling their main tasks of coordinating with the legislature and other institutions. In this regard, bureaucrats should also be aware of the value and necessity of legislative backgrounds.⁵ Moreover, strategic politicization by the chief executive is more likely to emerge in this type of agency (Miller and Whitford 2016), which may lead to more acceptance of executive appointees from outside among national civil servants. In short, our three hypotheses related to the so-called “high-policy” and “political-leverage” positions are:

Hypothesis 4: The endorsement of bureaucrats in “high-policy” areas for agency heads with civil service backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with legislative backgrounds in internal management abilities.

Hypothesis 5: The endorsement of bureaucrats in “high-policy” areas for agency heads with civil service backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with legislative backgrounds in policy expertise.

Hypothesis 6: The endorsement of bureaucrats in “political-leverage” areas for agency heads with legislative backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with civil service backgrounds in interbranch coordination skills.

What about other dimensions in the political-leverage area: is endorsement for legislators still higher than for senior civil servants as agency heads in internal management abilities or policy expertise? While political-leverage agencies may certainly benefit from a politically savvy leader

who can communicate a president's vision to the legislature and construct a coalition of support across institutional branches for a policy, our theory is more nuanced, as we account for an agency head's specific leadership skills in a particular type of agency group. It is thus likely that ministers with civil service backgrounds will enjoy higher levels of endorsement in internal management abilities and policy expertise even in political-leverage agencies.

With regards to low-profile agencies, these agencies tend to have less access to power or resources and are in the policy areas that are less salient. It may not be so surprising if we see similar patterns of bureaucrats' endorsement exhibited in the other group of agencies. For instance, even in low-profile areas, legislators may better represent their stakeholders by promoting policies and providing services for them than do senior civil servants.⁶ Therefore, we predict that:

Hypothesis 7: The endorsement of bureaucrats in “political-leverage” areas for agency heads with civil service backgrounds will be higher than that for agency heads with legislative backgrounds in internal management abilities and policy expertise.

Hypothesis 8: In low-profile areas, legislators as agency heads will enjoy higher levels of bureaucrats' endorsement for interbranch coordination skills than senior civil servants, but the latter type of agency head will enjoy higher levels of bureaucrats' endorsement for the internal management and policy specialist roles than the former type of leader.

Survey Design: Endorsement Experiments

We adopt a novel survey design that uses a battery of indirect endorsement experiments to measure civil servants' attitudes and their support level for ministerial leadership. This survey methodology builds on but improves the Korean Minister Surveys designed by Lee, Moon, and Hahm (2010) in

that it employs a format of indirect questioning to address concerns about social desirability bias and non-random refusals to respond. In merit-based civil service systems, such as that of South Korea, a good number of ministers tend to be chosen from the civil service (Lee 2019). Due to the hierarchical structure of bureaucratic organizations and the strict civil service culture in South Korea, direct requests to evaluate their agency heads' performance may also result in higher non-response rates, which, in turn, will reduce the validity of our results.⁷ Moreover, respondents are surveyed at their place of work. These circumstances create incentives to conform to prevalent social norms by providing answers heavily biased in favor of ministers with civil service backgrounds (who used to be their superiors) and possibly hiding their true opinions about ministers if asked directly.⁸ Lastly, our survey firm negotiated access to ministries with highly professional civil servants and intelligence officers. In this situation, a format of indirect questioning is preferable as it will provide a higher rate of acceptance among these public agents (Lyll, Blair, and Imai 2013).

The basic design of a survey endorsement experiment is straightforward. It randomizes civil servant respondents into control and treatment groups. We first ask respondents assigned to the treatment groups to show their opinion toward a public management skill *endorsed* by a specific actor whose support level we aim to measure (here, agency heads with civil service and legislative backgrounds), instead of directly asking the respondents about a specific actor's performance concerning a certain public management skill. Through this design, respondents may feel safer in disclosing their truthful opinions as they are reacting to the public management skill and not directly to the specific actor. Then, these responses are compared with responses from a control group of civil servants that answered the same question without the endorsement. Within each dimension, we measure the differences in support between the treatment and control groups.

The estimation based on the differences in support between the treatment and control groups can produce positive or negative outcomes of the endorsement effects, or those not statistically significant. Higher levels of approval for a public management skill with an endorsement relative to the ones without it (i.e. positive and statistically significant difference) are viewed as evidence of support for the endorsing actor, whereas lower levels of approval for a public management skill with an endorsement relative to the ones without it (i.e. negative and statistically significant difference) are viewed as evidence of disapproval for the endorsing actor (Bullock, Imai, and Shapiro 2011). The larger the difference between the treatment and control groups, the larger the substantive effect of approval or disapproval for the endorsing actor. Each respondent is assigned only one condition for an endorsement experiment, and it is therefore “impossible for enumerators or others to compare support levels across different conditions for any individual respondent” (Lyll, Blair, and Imai 2013, 682).

Here, we reproduce our endorsement questions, asking civil servants to assess their ministers’ leadership roles in three dimensions: (1) internal management, (2) interbranch coordination, and (3) policy formulation and implementation.

Internal Management

- Control Condition: Agency heads are responsible for the ministry’s personnel and organizational management. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition I: Agency heads are responsible for the ministry’s personnel and organization management, **which are performed by those from the legislature**. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition II: Agency heads are responsible for the ministry’s personnel and organization management, **which are performed by those from the civil service**. What do you think about such role?

Interbranch Coordination

- Control Group: Agency heads play a central role in coordinating with the legislature on the ministry's policy agendas. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition I: Agency heads play a central role in coordinating with the legislature on the ministry's policy agendas, **which is performed by those from the legislature**. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition II: Agency heads play a central role in coordinating with the legislature on the ministry's policy agendas, **which is performed by those from the civil service**. What do you think about such role?

Policy Formulation and Implementation

- Control Group: Agency heads make decisions in formulating and implementing policy agendas. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition I: Agency heads make decisions in formulating and implementing policy agendas, **which is performed by those from the legislature**. What do you think about such role?
- Treatment Condition II: Agency heads make decisions in formulating and implementing policy agendas, **which is performed by those from the civil service**. What do you think about such role?

For all three endorsement questions, civil servant respondents were asked to evaluate their level of support for each skill on a five-point scale (from 5 to 1): “I strongly agree with this role”; “I somewhat agree with this role”; “I am indifferent to this role”; “I disagree with this role”; and “I strongly disagree with this role.” Respondents were also allowed to choose “Don’t Know” or to refuse to answer. Given that the two most common and contrasting types of ministers are civil servants and legislators in the South Korean context (Hahm, Jung, and Lee 2013; Lee 2018a; Lee 2019), the actual questions should be realistic and respondents will take them seriously.

To estimate the effect of different policy areas on civil servants' assessment, we also categorized all participating agencies into three groups, adopting the template devised by research from ministerial appointments (Lee 2018b; Lee and Park 2018; Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006): high-policy, political-leverage, and low-profile groups. First, high-policy posts involve the most important policy areas that the chief executive needs to effectively manage in every government. These policy areas include economic management, foreign affairs, national defense, internal affairs, and legal affairs.⁹ In the South Korean context, the office of the prime minister is also included in this category. Second, political-leverage posts cover policy areas where organized interests exist. In South Korea, these policy areas concern labor, education, environment, commerce, and healthcare and welfare (Park 2006). Third, low-profile posts include policy areas that are less salient and represented by dispersed interests (Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006). We group all posts that are neither high-policy nor political-leverage into this category. The low-profile category of seats include agriculture, fisheries, small business administration, and gender equality and family posts.¹⁰ The distribution of agencies by policy area is shown in Table 1. The details of agencies included in our sample are described in Appendix Table A1.

[Table 1 about here]

Figure 2 shows the overall and policy-group distributions of responses to the three endorsement questions. In both overall and within-group patterns, support differs significantly across civil servant and legislator endorsements. This is promising as it suggests that the questions, taken individually or together, have strong discriminatory power. First, the overall pattern suggests higher support for internal management skills and policy expertise endorsed by ministers with civil

service backgrounds. Second, in the high-policy group, support for skills endorsed by ministers with civil service backgrounds is far higher than skills endorsed by ministers with legislative backgrounds. In fewer cases, notably for interbranch coordination skills, legislator endorsement translates into higher support. To further validate whether the endorsement experiments are measuring the support for agency heads with civil service and legislative backgrounds, we will present a detailed statistical analysis in the empirical section.

[Figure 2 about here]

Sampling and Balance

Our survey endorsement experiment was conducted between October 2016 and February 2017. Survey respondents are national civil servants working for the South Korean government and recruited by Hankook Research, one of the largest survey research firms in South Korea.¹¹ Survey samples collected by Hankook Research have been widely used in well-regarded social science research. To reduce sampling error and improve the representativeness of the South Korean civil service population, we instructed Hankook Research to use a stratified sampling method based on the three following stratifications: gender (male and female), civil service rank (grades 1-9), and recruitment type (centralized civil service examination and open recruitment). Hankook Research aimed at obtaining 30 to 40 respondents in each agency unit proportional to its size and the South Korean civil service population based on the three stratifications.¹² The sampling method for our survey initially considered including all central government agencies of South Korea. However, after excluding some agencies that were not accessible, our samples include civil servants from 27 government agencies. The sample agencies are representative of South Korean central agencies in

terms of demographics; the country's civil service system is a merit-based system where entry-level recruitment is made mostly through competitive centralized examinations at grades 5, 7, and 9 (high-low), respectively.

South Korea provides a useful case for examining ministerial leadership in non-Western presidential democracies due to clearly distinguished incentives to appoint civil servants versus legislators to particular types of agencies (Lee 2018b). The growing number of organized interest groups after democratic transition has gradually pressured presidents to accommodate their interests in the government. At the same time, there are increasing demands from professionalized civil servants who are likely to stay in the government longer than their presidents (Baum 2011). With the greater chances of multiple principals' influence over the policy implementation process, civil servants' attitudes toward ministers representing different branches of government have important policy implications.

All respondents were randomly assigned to the three groups and completed the surveys in private. In total, 1,014 survey experiments were handed out, with 338 surveys for each of the three conditions. Of the 1,014 surveys distributed, 949 survey experiments were completed (93.6%). Of the completed surveys, 318 (33.5%) came from the control group, 320 (33.7%) from the treatment group I, and 311 (32.8%) from the treatment group II, making the response rate for the control condition similar to the response rate for the treatment conditions.

In Table 2, we report demographic and civil service characteristics of the respondents by group: an **education** level of 0 = completion of secondary education (or lower), 1 = community college, 2 = college (4-year program), 3 = graduate school (master), and 4 = graduate school (Ph.D.); a **civil service rank** of 0 = grade 9 (lowest), 1 = grade 8, 2 = grade 7, 3 = grade 6, 4 = grade 5, 5 = grade 4, and 6 = grade 3, and 7 = senior civil servant (highest); **private sector**

experience of 0 = no experience, and 1 = at least a year of experience; a **recruitment type** of 0 = open recruitment, and 1 = centralized civil service examination; a civil service **job category** of 0 = technical, and 1 = administrative; and the political **ideology** of 1 = very conservative, 2 = conservative, 3 = neutral, 4 = liberal, and 5 = very liberal. Table 2 also presents the respondents' organizational characteristics by group: whether an agency is currently headed by a career civil servant or by a legislator (1 = yes, 0 = no); and the logged value of the number of organized interest groups within each agency.¹³ The *F*-test results show that no characteristics significantly differ across control and treatment groups at 95% levels of statistical significance.

[Table 2 about here]

Statistical Modeling and Empirical Findings

To examine whether civil servants' assessment of ministerial leadership is conditional on the appointees' career backgrounds and their assigned policy areas, we use the methodology adopted by Bullock, Imai, and Shapiro (2011) to consolidate responses from the three sets of our endorsement experiment questions. The model developed by Bullock et al. is based on item response theory, which has been used to estimate ideal points of elites from roll call data (e.g., Poole 2005) and thus facilitates a relevant interpretation of the size of support measures by providing an estimated level of support for each actor given any particular public management skill. This methodology is appropriate to analyze a multilevel model (see Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013, 688-689), where, as in our case, the sample is constructed at a departmental level as well as at an individual level. We fit three models for the three dependent variables (i.e. internal management, interbranch coordination, and policy formulation/implementation), including a

common set of theoretically relevant variables. At the individual level, our models include biographical and civil service characteristics of respondents that may affect their evaluation of ministerial leadership, such as age, gender, education, civil service rank, and recruitment type (Jung, Moon, and Hahm 2008). The models also include department-level covariates, such as incumbent ministers' backgrounds and the category of policy areas to which an agency belongs.

Given that the dependent variables are the responses in a five-point scale (i.e. from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the specific role), we use the ordered probit model where the responses are regressed on the independent and control variables described above. Our multilevel models produce estimates of a respondent's level of support for the specific actor. Estimates are measured regarding the standard deviation of respondents' preferences within a single dimensional space of a public management skill (i.e. ideal points). For our analysis, we first examine the overall effects of ministers' career backgrounds on bureaucratic support levels for their leadership. Then we add nuance to our discussion by examining how ministers' agency types, along with variation in their backgrounds, also condition bureaucrats' perception of their leadership. The posterior mean and standard deviation for each coefficient in our multilevel models are reported in Tables 3 to 6. Given the quantities of interest, we depend on graphs rather than coefficient tables to present our main empirical findings. In each figure, we derive and plot the predicted mean support level from our multilevel models with 95% confidence intervals. If a respondent is assigned to the control group, no estimate is generated. Imagine a respondent is neutral toward the minister's career background. Then, a legislator or a civil-servant endorsement can shift the respondent's ideal point by some range of the standard deviation in the positive or negative direction depending on the respondent's preferences (Bullock, Imai, and Shapiro 2011).

[Table 3 about here]

Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds

How does the minister's career background shape bureaucrats' support levels in different aspects of public management practice? We predicted that ministers with civil service backgrounds would enjoy more support for internal management abilities (H1) and expertise in policy formulation and implementation (H2), because their civil service careers would give bureaucrats a signal of shared norms and goals; and it also indicates a stronger likelihood of representing their policy preferences. On the other hand, we predicted that ministers with legislative backgrounds would receive more support for interbranch coordination skills (H3) due to the necessity of the legislator's power within the executive branch.

In Figure 3, we estimate the predicted mean support level from our multilevel models in Table 3. The left panel of Figure 3 demonstrates the estimated treatment effects of a legislator endorsement in the three dimensions of public management practice, while the right panel shows the treatment effects of a civil servant endorsement in the same dimensions. Positive estimates indicate more support toward the treatment, and negative estimates indicate less support toward the treatment.

[Figure 3 about here]

First, we find that the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for internal management abilities is positive and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a .441 (95% confidence interval at [.405, .478]), whereas the effect of a legislator endorsement on support

for internal management abilities is negative and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a $-.352$ (95% confidence interval at $[-.401, -.303]$). Second, the figure in the right panel suggests that the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for policy expertise is positive and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a $.456$ (95% confidence interval at $[.416, .495]$). In contrast, the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for policy expertise is negative and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a $-.658$ (95% confidence interval at $[-.703, -.613]$). These findings suggest that the first two hypotheses of this study are strongly supported.

Third, we also find that the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is substantively smaller but still positive and statistically significant, with its net effect being a $.066$ (95% confidence interval at $[.025, .107]$). By comparison, the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is substantively larger, with its net effect being a $.113$ (95% confidence interval at $[.074, .152]$), although the difference between the two treatment effects is not statistically significant. The results indicate that our third hypothesis is not supported, but this finding has notable implications. From the bureaucrat's perspective, appointing legislators into top executive positions may lead to a trade-off among the three aspects of public management practice, but that is not necessarily the case when appointing senior civil servants as ministers.

Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds and Policy Areas

In this section, we further examine how ministers' agency types, along with variation in their career backgrounds, condition bureaucrats' assessment of ministerial leadership in different aspects of public management practice. Although internal management skills and policy expertise are

important for all ministries, we expect that these abilities should be central to maintaining key policy areas in every democratic government. Thus, extending our first two hypotheses, we predicted that ministers with civil service backgrounds would enjoy more support for internal management abilities (H4) and expertise in policy formulation and implementation (H5), particularly in “high-policy” positions.

[Table 4 about here]

In Figure 4, we estimate the predicted mean support level from our multilevel models in Table 4 within high-policy agencies. The left panel of Figure 4 shows the estimated treatment effects of a legislator endorsement in the three dimensions of public management practice, and the right panel shows the treatment effects of a civil servant endorsement in the same three dimensions. Likewise, positive estimates indicate more support toward the treatment, and negative estimates indicate less support toward the treatment.

[Figure 4 about here]

In Figure 4, we find that the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for internal management abilities is positive and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a .475 (95% confidence interval at [.414, .536]), whereas the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for internal management abilities is negative and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a $-.267$ (95% confidence interval at $[-.316, -.218]$). We also find that the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for policy expertise is positive and statistically significant, with

its substantive effect being a .394 (95% confidence interval at [.333, .455]), but the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for policy expertise is negative and statistically significant, with its substantive effect being a $-.661$ (95% confidence interval at $[-.724, -.598]$). These findings confirm that Hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported. The results indicate that civil servants in key policy ministries tend to have negative perceptions of ministers from outside the civil service who may not be familiar with managing the highly professional groups and understanding the nature of formulating and implementing key issues in the executive branch. In Figure 4, we further show that the effects of both legislator (.093) and civil servant (.152) endorsements on support for interbranch coordination skills are positive and statistically significant, but their difference is not statistically significant.

[Table 5 about here]

In addition, we expect that coordination with the legislative branch and other institutions is critical for ministries represented by organized interest groups. For this reason, we predicted that ministers with legislative backgrounds would receive more support for interbranch coordination skills, particularly in so-called “political-leverage” posts (H6). In Figure 5, we estimate the predicted mean support level from our multilevel models in Table 5 among a group of political-leverage agencies. Similarly, the left panel of Figure 5 shows the estimated treatment effects of a legislator endorsement in the three dimensions of public management practice, and the right panel demonstrates the treatment effects of a civil servant endorsement in the same three dimensions. Positive estimates indicate more support toward the treatment, and negative estimates indicate less support toward the treatment.

[Figure 5 about here]

In Figure 5, we find that the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is positive and statistically significant, with its net effect being a .449 (95% confidence interval at [.394, .504]), whereas the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is smaller, with its net effect being a .353 (95% confidence interval at [.298, .408]). This finding confirms that Hypothesis 6 is supported. With regards to other public management dimensions such as internal management abilities and policy expertise, in line with our prediction, senior civil servants enjoy higher levels of bureaucrats' endorsement as agency heads even in political-leverage areas (H7). Figure 5 shows that the effects of civil servant endorsements on support for internal management abilities (.523) and policy expertise (.531) are positive and statistically significant, but the effects of legislator endorsements on support for internal management abilities (-.148) and policy expertise (-.241) are negative and statistically significant. Indeed, bureaucrats' support for agency heads with legislative backgrounds is particular to interbranch coordination skills rather than toward their overall leadership abilities in the political-leverage area.

[Table 6 about here]

As an additional analysis of bureaucrats' endorsement in low-profile agencies, we test whether there are similar patterns of bureaucrats' endorsement shown in the other group of agencies. In Figure 6, we estimate the predicted mean support level from our multilevel models in

Table 6 within low-profile agencies. The results in Figure 6 indicate that, as we predicted, senior civil servants as agency heads receive higher levels of bureaucrats' endorsement for the internal management and policy specialist roles, while legislators as agency heads enjoy a higher level of bureaucrats' endorsement for interbranch coordination skills (H8). In Figure 6, the effects of civil servant endorsements on support for internal management abilities (.429) and policy expertise (.400) are positive and statistically significant, but the effects of legislator endorsements on support for internal management abilities (-.158) and policy specialty (-.687) are negative and statistically significant. By contrast, the effect of a legislator endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is positive and statistically significant (.249), but the effect of a civil servant endorsement on support for interbranch coordination skills is substantively smaller (.104).

[Figure 6 about here]

In sum, as shown in Figure 3, ministers with civil service backgrounds enjoy bureaucrats' support for all three aspects of public management practice. Yet, when we examine bureaucrats' perception of ministerial leadership within subgroups of agencies, the characteristics of agencies significantly influence bureaucrats' perspectives. In contrast to previous research using observational data where department-centered leadership (i.e. leadership from within the civil service) is positively associated with agenda setting capabilities (Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010), our experimental approach reveals more nuanced results — the positive association between department-centered leadership and agenda setting abilities may be conditional on specific policy areas — that can help us to understand how ministerial leadership is closely related to their credentials as well as agencies they serve.¹⁴

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we seek to broaden our understanding of ministerial leadership by focusing on bureaucrats' assessment of ministers' career backgrounds and the policy areas the ministers manage in presidential governments. We do so by examining their leadership roles in three central dimensions of public management: internal management, interbranch coordination, and policy formulation and implementation. For these analyses, we developed an original survey design using a battery of indirect endorsement experiments and employed statistical methods to estimate coefficients of interest from the survey experiment. We find that bureaucrats' attitudes toward ministerial leadership are clearly asymmetric in nature. Ministers with civil service backgrounds are endorsed in all three dimensions, while agency heads with legislative backgrounds receive increased support only for interbranch coordination skills (support for their leadership decreases in the other two dimensions). Our analysis adds nuance to the finding by examining how ministers' agency types, along with variation in their backgrounds, condition bureaucrats' perception of their leadership. Ministers with civil service backgrounds are endorsed by bureaucrats in "high-policy" agencies for their internal management abilities and policy expertise, but agency heads with legislative backgrounds receive increased support from bureaucrats in "political-leverage" agencies only for their interbranch coordination skills. In sum, our findings support most of our predictions concerning the role of ministers' career backgrounds and their policy areas in public management practice.

Although we make our experimental design as robust as possible, there are some alternative explanations for our findings on ministerial leadership from the bureaucrat's perspective. First, bureaucrats' endorsement of legislators as agency heads may be due to the types of relationships

bureaucrats formulate with lawmakers and their aides in relevant policy areas. The literature suggests that public employees can be held accountable to the legislature through *ex-post* oversight. If civil servants anticipate broader political influence over their agency (i.e. “political-leverage” posts), they may build closer relationships with lawmakers in relevant committees, who are future ministerial candidates for the agencies. Then, the types of relationships formed with these legislators will affect the bureaucrat’s perception of ministerial leadership, particularly in interbranch coordination skills. In addition, bureaucrats’ perception of ministerial leadership may also depend on characteristics of the organization to which they belong. Extending our discussion of a possible variation in political influence over agencies across different policy areas, bureaucratic organizations under higher political influence may be structured in a more open and receptive way in the recruitment and promotion process, whereas the structure of bureaucratic organizations under lower political influence can be more insulated. If this relationship indeed exists, then it will contribute to bureaucrats’ changing evaluations of ministerial leadership that we observe in the three dimensions of public management and across policy areas.

In analyzing the role of agents’ attitudes or followership in the relationship between executive appointees and civil servants, future research should seek to further unravel the mechanism of bureaucrats’ strong endorsement for the appointees with civil service backgrounds. Currently, the finding can be explained in at least two ways: such support is because the surveyed civil servants have similar backgrounds or because the appointees are actually more effective. While most civil servants in South Korea are recruited through centralized examinations and only a few of them might have legislative experience prior to civil service recruitment,¹⁵ additional research exploring the latter civil servant groups’ attitudes toward the appointees with diverse backgrounds will help to disentangle these mechanisms.

Related to these alternative explanations, our analysis has some limitations that can be investigated as important agenda for future research. First, while our choice of ministers with legislative and civil service backgrounds is based on the theoretical notion that the two types of backgrounds are contrasting and thus bring a trade-off in presidential choice (Amorim Neto 2006; Lee 2018a), we acknowledge that there are other types of professional ministers, such as professors, lawyers, or business leaders (Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010, 86S). Findings from previous research imply that the effects of endorsement for other backgrounds could be limited (Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010), but future research can test this endorsement effect through experimental designs. Second, we focus on the three central and conventional dimensions of public management, but there are new areas of public management that may become responsibilities of agency heads, such as promoting innovative programs, developing new organizational visions, and communicating with stakeholders as well as other agencies for coordination. These new roles are perceived as increasingly important in rapidly changing circumstances and should be also relevant to the South Korean context. Last but not least, in generalizing our analysis beyond the South Korean case, future research should seek to examine other cases and settings. South Korea's civil service system is based on merit-based recruitment and promotion and tends to be politically more insulated. However, this may not be the case in other countries. For example, the civil service system of the United States is more open to external candidates in recruitment and promotion. In such circumstances, civil servants may be more supportive to agency heads with political backgrounds.

Our study has important policy implications and contributes to the understanding of ministerial leadership from bureaucratic agents' perspectives. Most importantly, our findings provide evidence that the responsiveness-competence trade-off in public management is not always a concern to political principals in presidential governments, and that the scope of the trade-

off depends on ministers' career backgrounds and the types of agencies the ministers serve. Future research can add nuance to our findings by examining diverse organizational and environmental contexts surrounding the civil service, as such factors can shape bureaucrats' perceptions and incentives (O'Toole and Meier 2014; see also Petrovsky et al. 2017). In addition, other characteristics of ministers and other dimensions of ministerial leadership may be connected with bureaucratic agents' characteristics, as well as internal and external contexts surrounding bureaucratic organizations, and future research can make contributions by seeking further exploration of their relationships.

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Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Delegation, Role of Minister, and Civil Servant Assessment of Leadership

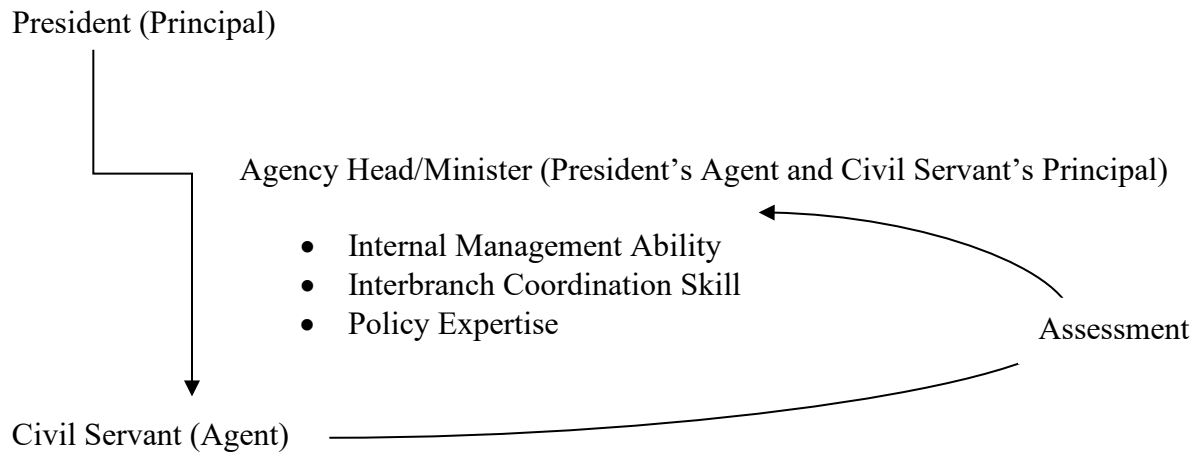
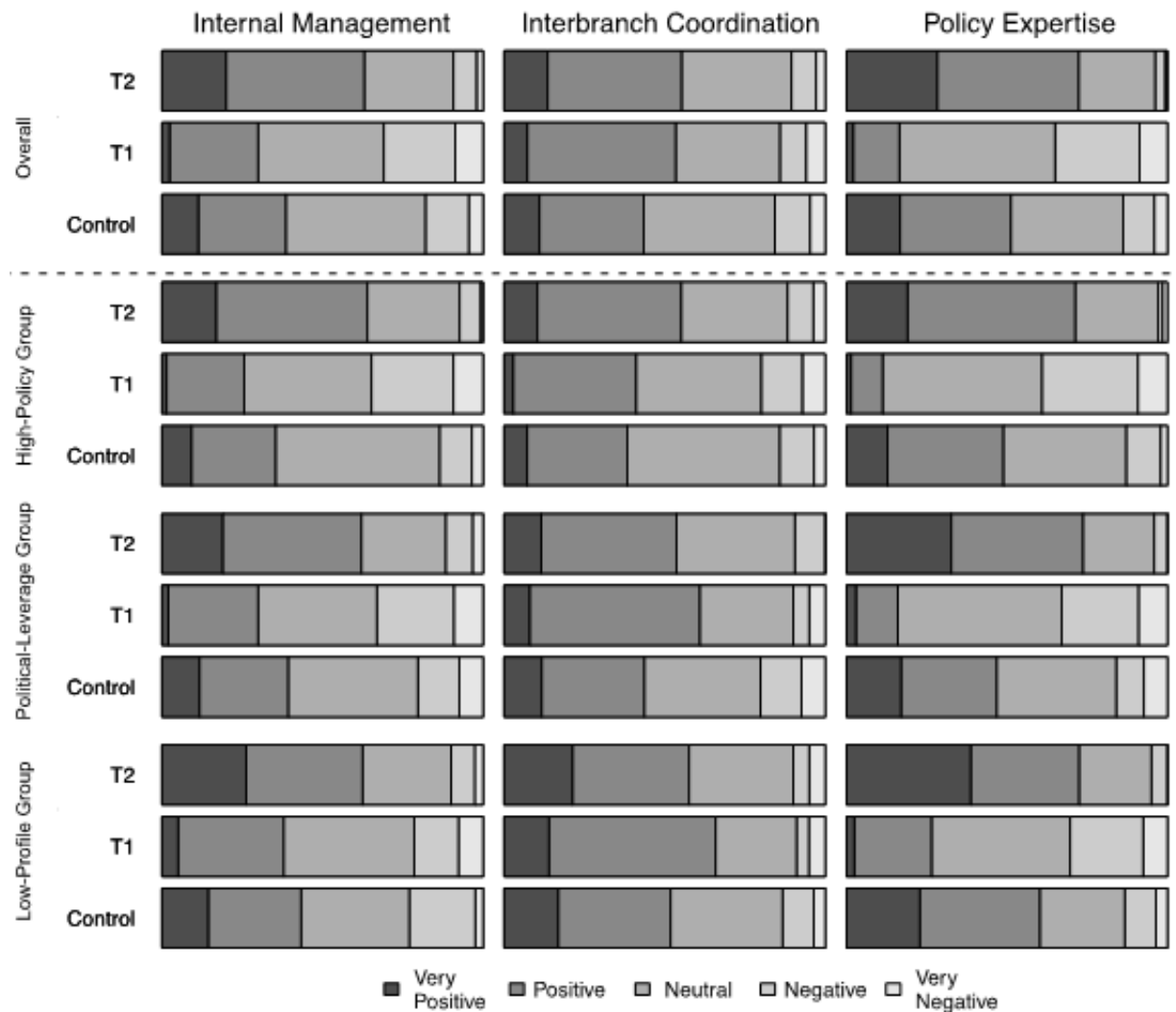


Table 1. Distribution of Cabinet Positions by Policy Area

High-policy	Defense and Public Security	Foreign Affairs
	Finance and Economy Management	Government/Interior/Home Affairs
	Justice and Civil Rights	Office of Prime Minister
Political-leverage	Education	Culture, Sports, and Tourism
	Environment/Environmental Protection	Labor and Manpower
	Health and Social Welfare	Trade, Industry, and Energy
	Land, Infrastructure, and Transport	Unification
Low-profile	Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs	Oceans and Fisheries
	Science and Technology	Small & Medium Business Administration*
	Women's Affairs and Family	Government Legislation*

Note: In the low-profile group, ministries of government legislation and small & medium business administration are vice minister level agencies.

Figure 2. Overall and Within-Group Distribution of Responses from the Endorsement Experiments



Notes: The figure depicts the distribution of responses to the three sets of questions (columns) across the three groups (control group and treatment 1 and 2 endorsement groups) for the overall sample and the three different policy areas. T1 is a legislator endorsement group and T2 is a civil servant endorsement group. Sample sizes are: 384 in high-policy group, 357 in political-leverage group, and 208 in low-profile group.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents by Group

	Control Group	Treatment I: Legislator	Treatment II: Civil Servant	<i>F</i> -test
<i>Individual level</i>				
Age (years)	41.02	40.79	40.07	1.13 (0.32)
Female (%)	0.33	0.309	0.312	0.25 (0.78)
Education	2.27	2.22	2.25	0.45 (0.64)
Civil service rank	3.34	3.36	3.33	0.04 (0.96)
Private sector experience	0.27	0.278	0.277	0.03 (0.97)
Recruitment type	0.849	0.80	0.797	1.78 (0.17)
Job category	0.714	0.722	0.711	0.05 (0.95)
Political ideology	3.61	3.52	3.55	0.83 (0.44)
<i>Department level</i>				
Agency headed by civil servant	0.632	0.628	0.630	0.01 (0.99)
Agency headed by legislator	0.116	0.119	0.119	0.01 (0.99)
Organized interest group, log	4.37	4.38	4.36	0.01 (0.99)

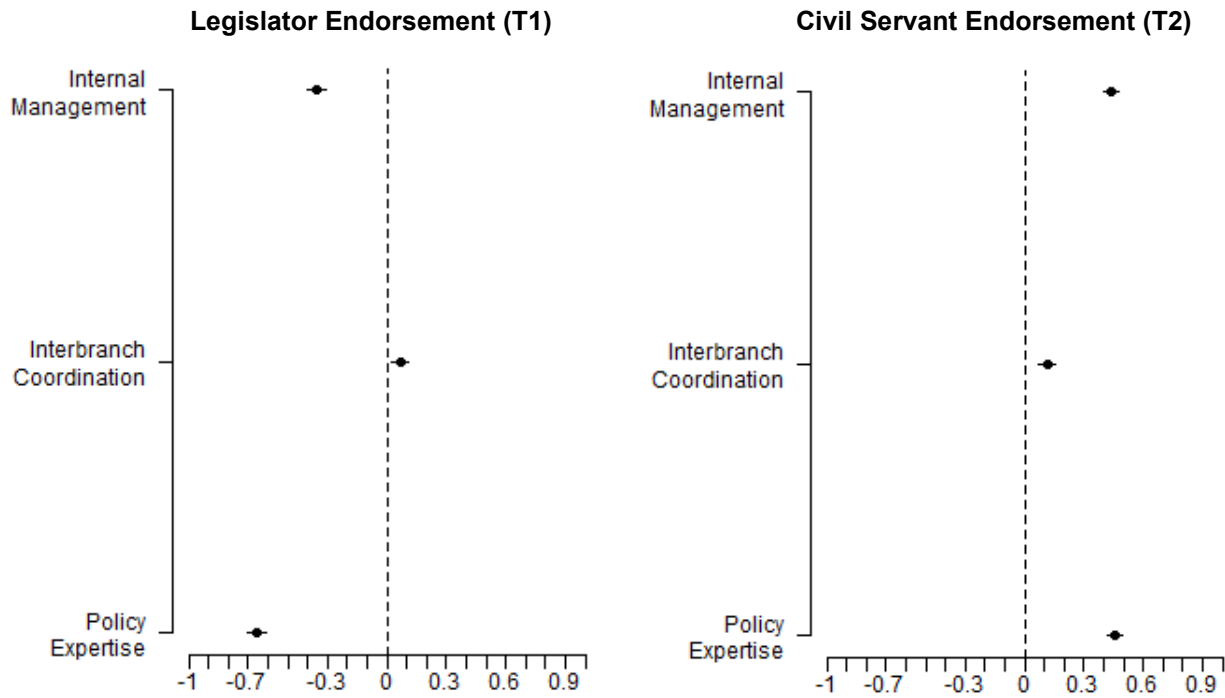
Note: The table presents the mean value of each variable by group and *F*-test statistics with *p*-values in parentheses.

Table 3. Estimated Effects of Covariates on Support for Ministers with Different Backgrounds, Overall Group

Variable	Internal Management		Interbranch Coordination		Policy Expertise	
	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.
Support for Ministers with Legislative Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.056	0.196	-0.188	0.173	-0.025	0.207
Female	-0.004	0.131	0.030	0.157	0.027	0.156
Education	0.290	0.244	-0.150	0.260	0.078	0.216
Civil service rank	0.008	0.221	0.187	0.180	-0.420	0.231
Private sector experience	-0.113	0.196	-0.059	0.173	-0.139	0.211
Recruitment type	0.458	0.243	0.145	0.288	0.052	0.295
Job category	0.249	0.213	0.004	0.191	0.098	0.272
Political ideology	-0.313	0.169	0.204	0.185	-0.335	0.193
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	0.759	0.281	0.485	0.249	0.602	0.290
Agency headed by civil servant	0.116	0.312	0.001	0.179	-0.269	0.255
Org. interest, log	0.212	0.345	0.111	0.210	0.136	0.328
Support for Ministers with Civil Service Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.042	0.168	0.066	0.184	-0.013	0.170
Female	-0.028	0.142	-0.075	0.185	-0.031	0.202
Education	-0.025	0.254	-0.036	0.254	-0.051	0.219
Civil service rank	-0.154	0.221	-0.262	0.206	-0.161	0.217
Private sector experience	0.242	0.201	-0.031	0.185	0.036	0.211
Recruitment type	0.274	0.229	-0.077	0.220	0.213	0.245
Job category	0.300	0.166	-0.091	0.138	-0.054	0.186
Political ideology	0.136	0.112	0.040	0.137	0.124	0.141
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	0.496	0.484	0.460	0.351	0.397	0.618
Agency headed by civil servant	-0.058	0.192	0.046	0.129	-0.215	0.158
Org. interest, log	-0.128	0.234	0.011	0.136	-0.003	0.205

Note: For all three endorsement questions, civil servant respondents were asked to evaluate their level of support for each skill on a five-point scale (dependent variable): “I strongly agree with this role (5)”; “I somewhat agree with this role (4)”; “I am indifferent to this role (3)”; “I disagree with this role (2)”; and “I strongly disagree with this role (1).”

Figure 3. Estimated Treatment Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds, Overall Group



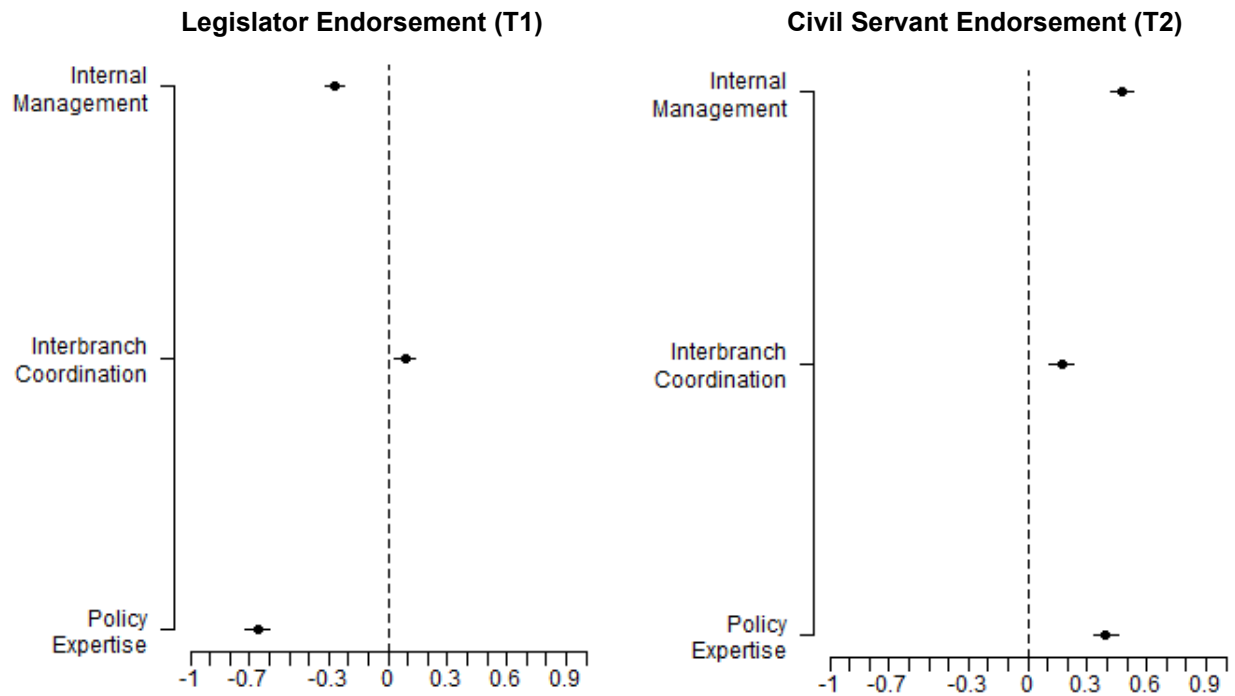
Notes: The predicted mean support level from the multilevel models in Table 3 is plotted with 95% confidence intervals. The left panel presents the effect of a legislator endorsement; and the right panel presents the effect of a civil servant endorsement.

Table 4. Estimated Effects of Covariates on Support for Ministers with Different Backgrounds, High-Policy Group

Variable	Internal Management		Interbranch Coordination		Policy Expertise	
	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.
Support for Ministers with Legislative Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	-0.302	0.392	-0.399	0.282	0.151	0.297
Female	-0.177	0.198	-0.113	0.272	-0.083	0.299
Education	0.503	0.517	0.338	0.394	0.350	0.335
Civil service rank	0.064	0.417	0.079	0.315	-0.762	0.280
Private sector experience	-0.397	0.210	-0.358	0.320	-0.602	0.288
Recruitment type	0.278	0.378	0.061	0.395	0.140	0.429
Job category	0.752	0.487	0.421	0.409	0.407	0.417
Political ideology	-0.202	0.139	0.094	0.271	-0.133	0.218
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	0.043	0.473	0.172	0.243	-0.057	0.168
Agency headed by civil servant	-0.737	0.440	-0.395	0.238	-0.989	0.170
Org. interest, log	1.107	0.280	0.126	0.203	-0.348	0.178
Support for Ministers with Civil Service Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.164	0.304	0.295	0.259	0.230	0.245
Female	-0.695	0.331	-0.880	0.424	-0.734	0.406
Education	0.228	0.252	0.216	0.320	-0.140	0.262
Civil service rank	-0.672	0.419	-0.720	0.375	-0.708	0.263
Private sector experience	-0.087	0.233	-0.410	0.296	-0.549	0.314
Recruitment type	0.254	0.259	-0.116	0.249	0.394	0.308
Job category	0.470	0.276	-0.052	0.260	0.139	0.304
Political ideology	0.255	0.211	0.009	0.186	0.326	0.258
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	0.143	0.246	0.398	0.265	-0.454	0.289
Agency headed by civil servant	-0.159	0.302	0.263	0.299	-0.112	0.346
Org. interest, log	0.755	0.243	0.348	0.236	-0.756	0.156

Note: For endorsement questions, civil servant respondents were asked to evaluate their level of support for each skill on a five-point scale (dependent variable): “I strongly agree with this role (5)”; “I somewhat agree with this role (4)”; “I am indifferent to this role (3)”; “I disagree with this role (2)”; and “I strongly disagree with this role (1).”

Figure 4. Estimated Treatment Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds, High-Policy Group



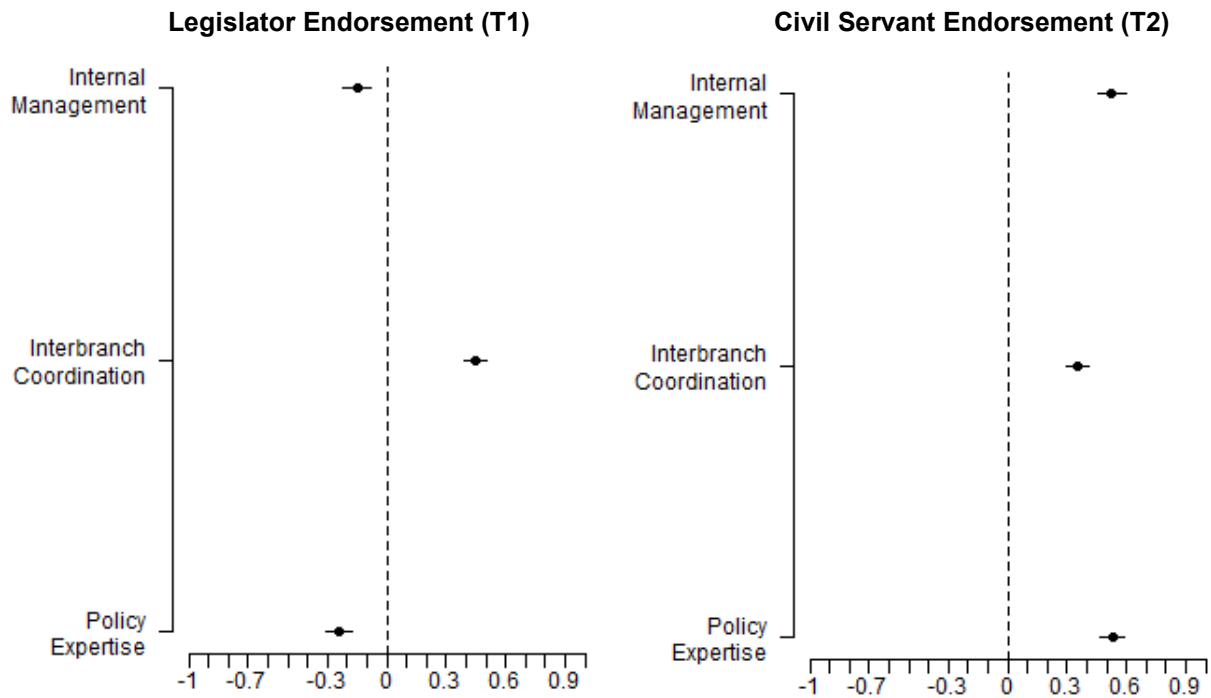
Note: The predicted mean support level from the multilevel models in Table 4 is plotted with 95% confidence intervals. The left panel presents the effect of a legislator endorsement; and the right panel presents the effect of a civil servant endorsement.

Table 5. Estimated Effects of Covariates on Support for Ministers with Different Backgrounds, Political-Leverage Group

Variable	Internal Management		Interbranch Coordination		Policy Expertise	
	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.
Support for Ministers with Legislative Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.424	0.279	-0.019	0.413	0.128	0.437
Female	0.203	0.227	0.352	0.273	0.171	0.294
Education	-0.195	0.344	-0.773	0.462	-0.185	0.392
Civil service rank	0.264	0.444	0.428	0.345	-0.066	0.493
Private sector						
experience	0.481	0.474	0.448	0.251	0.378	0.430
Recruitment type	0.406	0.452	0.220	0.607	0.103	0.593
Job category	-0.139	0.226	-0.290	0.299	-0.367	0.433
Political ideology	-0.138	0.271	0.275	0.240	0.001	0.364
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	1.232	0.553	0.402	0.245	0.852	0.365
Agency headed by civil servant	0.471	0.574	0.023	0.246	-0.073	0.348
Org. interest, log	0.063	0.505	-0.419	0.267	-0.059	0.411
Support for Ministers with Civil Service Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.015	0.218	-0.097	0.391	0.101	0.381
Female	0.458	0.226	0.472	0.243	0.597	0.382
Education	-0.640	0.330	-0.841	0.253	-0.110	0.375
Civil service rank	0.311	0.294	0.264	0.278	0.281	0.374
Private sector						
experience	0.356	0.411	0.145	0.293	0.061	0.373
Recruitment type	0.246	0.598	-0.121	0.451	0.318	0.371
Job category	0.523	0.237	-0.373	0.241	-0.265	0.382
Political ideology	0.177	0.230	0.158	0.268	0.180	0.254
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	1.849	0.351	0.963	0.313	2.231	0.369
Agency headed by civil servant	0.449	0.341	-0.040	0.255	0.106	0.206
Org. interest, log	-0.198	0.313	-0.198	0.247	0.184	0.373

Note: For endorsement questions, civil servant respondents were asked to evaluate their level of support for each skill on a five-point scale (dependent variable): “I strongly agree with this role (5)”; “I somewhat agree with this role (4)”; “I am indifferent to this role (3)”; “I disagree with this role (2)”; and “I strongly disagree with this role (1).”

Figure 5. Estimated Treatment Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds, Political-Leverage Group



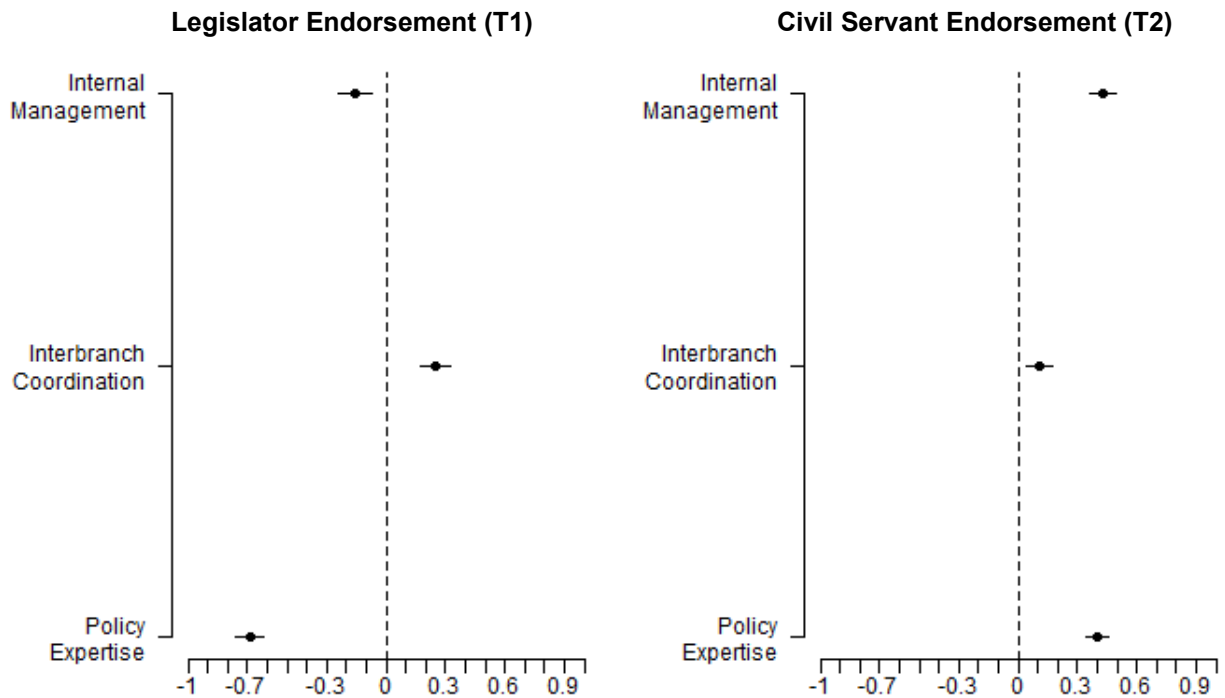
Note: The predicted mean support level from the multilevel models in Table 5 is plotted with 95% confidence intervals. The left panel presents the effect of a legislator endorsement; and the right panel presents the effect of a civil servant endorsement.

Table 6. Estimated Effects of Covariates on Support for Ministers with Different Backgrounds, Low-Profile Group

Variable	Internal Management		Interbranch Coordination		Policy Expertise	
	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.
Support for Ministers with Legislative Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	0.466	0.466	-0.594	0.607	-0.881	0.538
Female	0.248	0.224	-0.492	0.185	-0.543	0.206
Education	1.270	0.210	0.201	0.395	0.317	0.440
Civil service rank	-0.952	0.192	-0.024	0.442	-0.494	0.272
Private sector experience	-0.130	0.215	0.324	0.262	0.119	0.425
Recruitment type	0.815	0.493	0.164	0.499	-0.410	0.318
Job category	0.410	0.414	-0.122	0.277	0.392	0.454
Political ideology	-0.802	0.588	0.826	0.498	-0.737	0.403
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	0.213	0.333	0.655	0.331	1.157	0.416
Agency headed by civil servant	0.137	0.229	0.415	0.303	0.411	0.555
Org. interest, log	—	—	—	—	—	—
Support for Ministers with Civil Service Backgrounds						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Age	-0.141	0.484	0.560	0.487	-0.323	0.341
Female	0.444	0.119	0.262	0.207	-0.198	0.439
Education	0.978	0.598	0.431	0.602	0.519	0.575
Civil service rank	-0.444	0.454	-0.806	0.241	-0.221	0.227
Private sector experience	0.110	0.514	0.268	0.333	0.379	0.532
Recruitment type	0.039	0.568	-0.289	0.581	-0.357	0.631
Job category	-0.361	0.302	0.096	0.282	-0.055	0.318
Political ideology	0.117	0.307	0.159	0.259	-0.234	0.240
<i>Department level</i>						
Agency headed by legislator	-0.520	0.467	-0.166	0.341	-0.096	0.427
Agency headed by civil servant	-0.599	0.302	-0.020	0.220	-0.383	0.299
Org. interest, log	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note: For endorsement questions, civil servant respondents were asked to evaluate their level of support for each skill on a five-point scale (dependent variable): “I strongly agree with this role (5)”; “I somewhat agree with this role (4)”; “I am indifferent to this role (3)”; “I disagree with this role (2)”; and “I strongly disagree with this role (1).”

Figure 6. Estimated Treatment Effects of Ministers' Career Backgrounds, Low-Profile Group



Note: The predicted mean support level from the multilevel models in Appendix Table 2 is plotted with 95% confidence intervals. The left panel presents the effect of a legislator endorsement; and the right panel presents the effect of a civil servant endorsement.

Endnotes

¹ We will use the terms top executive appointees, ministers/secretaries, and agency/departmental heads interchangeably.

² Of course, there are ministers who have other career backgrounds, such as academia, business, law, military or police. However, existing research suggests that these two types of ministers — civil servants versus legislators — precisely represent the two most common leadership skills practiced in South Korean ministries: administrative responsibility and political responsiveness (Lee, Moon and Hahm 2010). Yet, we regard our specific choice of the two types as a potentially narrow operationalization of ministers' backgrounds and an important area for future research.

³ Interview, Prime Minister Chung Un-chan, 8 June 2016, South Korea. Moreover, nomination delay has some important but negative implications for agency performance as the passage of time indicates nominees' incompetence relative to the pool of potential nominees (Hollibaugh 2015).

⁴ Interviews, Oh Keo-don, Minister of Oceans and Fisheries, 30 August 2019, Song Min-soon, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 16 September 2013, and Choo Byung-jik, Minister of Construction and Transportation, 13 September 2013, South Korea.

⁵ Interviews, Lee Hee-beom, Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy, 19 August 2019, and Lee In-je, Minister of Labor and National Assemblyman, 12 September 2013, South Korea.

⁶ Consider some former heads of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (e.g., Kim Yung-rok) and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (e.g., Kim Young-choon) who came from the National Assembly and served their key stakeholders such as farmers and fishermen.

⁷ The nonresponse rate of our experiment is less than 7%, which is lower than that of direct surveys in general.

⁸ In addition, our data from direct surveys indicate that a majority of civil servants have negative perceptions of politics.

⁹ Organized interests may also exist in these policy areas. We address this possibility by accounting for the number of such interest groups within each agency.

¹⁰ While ministries of government legislation and small & medium business administration are included in our sample due to the limited number of agencies in the low-profile group, we acknowledge that they are vice minister level agencies. We regard expanding our sample size and including other vice minister level agencies as an important area for future research.

¹¹ https://directory.esomar.org/country95_Korea-Republic-of/r703_Hankook-Research.php#company-key-people (Last accessed June 21, 2019).

¹² Respondents were granted a \$10 gift card when completing our survey. The statistics of the national civil service population in South Korea can be found here:

http://www.mpm.go.kr/mpm/info/infoStatistics/hrStatistics/statisticsAnnual/?boardId=bbs_000000000000037&mode=view&cntId=852&category=&pageIdx= (Last accessed June 21, 2019).

¹³ Source: Statistics Korea (<http://kosis.kr>).

¹⁴ Our experimental results are also validated by evaluation indicators provided by the South Korean government. Employing evaluation scores measuring agencies' performance issued by the Office for Government Policy Coordination, we find that agencies led by civil servants tend to have higher performance scores in the execution of national tasks and policy as well as administrative reform, while those led by legislators have relatively higher scores in policy communication

(http://www.evaluation.go.kr/user/board/list/userBoardDetail.do?boardCode=psec_eva accessed July 2, 2019).

¹⁵ Limited hiring of civil servants is done through open recruitment, and about 20 percent of positions ranked from grade 1 to 3 (i.e. senior ranks) are expected to be open to external candidates (Kim 2010; Moon and Hwang 2013).