Argentine Ministers and Ministries: A Prosopographic Analysis of the Cabinet (1854–2011)

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Abstract

This article is framed within sociological debates on political elites and seeks to account for the correlation between certain socio-professional profiles prevalent among Argentine ministers between 1854 and 2011 and the portfolios they held. Our working hypothesis is that ministerial nominations depend on broader sociological logics, including those analyzed here. Our cartographic approach aims to identify patterns shared by all cabinets in this period in order to contribute to the understanding of specific cases through a comprehension of general characteristics.

Keywords: Argentina, ministers, national cabinet, political sociology, prosopographic analysis

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Acronyms

DNT  National Work Department (Departamento Nacional de Trabajo)
FLACSO Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales)
MOP  Ministry of Public Works (Ministerio de Obras Públicas)
UBA  University of Buenos Aires (Universidad de Buenos Aires)
UCA  Catholic University of Argentina (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina)
UCR  Radical Civic Union (Unión Cívica Radical)
YPF  Treasury Petroleum Fields (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales)
INTRODUCTION

The Argentine cabinet has recently been the subject of a series of significant research projects, which take two general approaches. On the one hand, there are studies on the formation and composition of the cabinets of specific governments. On the other, there are works that concentrate on one particular ministry, reconstructing its highest level officials over the course of several governments. While all these studies make in-depth or specific contributions, the goal of this article is to provide the elements that will contribute to a global and general understanding of the cabinet as a sociological phenomenon.

The following question guides this research in political sociology: Can general trends be identified in the profiles of government ministers? Moreover and more specifically, are there correlations between certain social characteristics of the ministers and the type of portfolio that they held?

We will answer this question through a long-term analysis of the profiles of the men and women who served as ministers in Argentina between 1854 and 2011. We will study the sociological patterns associated with their training and socio-professional trajectories, while recognizing that there are numerous concurrent factors at play. The task consists in identifying consistencies in their socio-political and professional trajectories, according to the ministry in which each worked. It emerges that in some cases there are relatively strong links between public policy areas and specific professional and educational profiles, and that the forms that these links take varies over time.

The working hypothesis is that the appointment of a minister does not depend on chance or on presidential will alone, and that there are long-term structural social patterns as well as conjectural patterns associated with specific political situations that create the social conditions for access to the cabinet. Consequently, this research focuses on the general consistencies which requires the study not just of the ministers but also each cabinet in turn. Nevertheless, the ultimate objective is to provide a general cartography which will enrich individual studies through the information it provides on certain general patterns. This article forms one part of a larger research project and as such constitutes only a first step.

In this manner, our work seeks to make contributions at various levels. First, we propose to inductively produce a descriptive cartography that can be used as a tool for future studies on the cabinet, identifying general or partial sociological trends concerning the
circulation of staff into and out of the national cabinet. Second, this work contributes to sociological knowledge about the dominant groups in Argentina and, in particular, about the politico-administrative elites. Third, it lays the ground for future comparative studies on ministerial cabinets in other countries (for example, Fenno 1959; Dogan 1989, 1979; Mathiot and Sawicki 1999a, 1999b).

1. STUDIES ON THE ARGENTINE CABINET

The sociographic method is one of the most common strategies for research into political personnel. It consists in classifying officials by their social characteristics, which are formalized in a number of variables: profession, place of birth, and level of education (Sawicki 1999). Prosopography is a method of creating collective biographies of a coherent social group - that is, one whose members share common external traits - in order to describe the resulting profiles and analyze the social networks to which they belong. At the same time, the method entails two simultaneous operations: it sociographically analyzes the characteristics and attributes of the members of the social group under study and follows their trajectories by determining their multipositionality (Ferrari 2010; Bertrand 1999).

There is a rich tradition of studying government teams, which addresses the following aspects: the logics of power; technocratic specialization and the functional autonomization of the state; recruitment strategies and the circulation of officials; and links with other actors in the political system. These studies are based on information about the social and professional characteristics of the political and ideological trajectories of these government officials. Studies of this kind exist for the case of France (Birbaum 1977; Charle 1987; Mathiot and Sawicki 1999a, 1999b; Suleiman 1976), and for the United States (Dahl 1964; Domhoff 2003; Fenno 1959; Wright Mills 1957) as well as for European parliaments (Laver and Shepsle 1994).

In Argentina, research on government teams is gradually gaining prominence as a field, divided into four thematic areas that are complementary and superposed: studies on bureaucracies and state capacities (cf. Bohoslavsky and Soprano 2010); on expert knowledge and public policies (cf. Morresi and Vommaro 2011); on institutions that are part of the political system, in particular the parliament and executive branch (Bonvecchi and Zelaznik 2012; De Luca 2012; Martinez-Gallardo 2010); and on political elites. All of these studies, like this one, employ sociological approaches.
In the case of studies on elites in general and political elites in particular, the work of José Luis de Ímaz (1964) is crucial. Following the model of *The Power Elite* by Charles Wright Mills (1957), De Ímaz describes the sociological characteristics of members of political elites (presidents, ministers, governors, and political staff in general). Other researchers have studied the influence of business corporations on ministerial appointments from 1955 to 1969 (Niosi 1974) and the profiles of public officials at the ministries of Public Works, the Economy and Education between 1983 and 1999, concluding that political parties have not acted as creators of government cadres (Dalbosco 2004, 2005).

In these works, the cabinet appears reduced to a general object of study, encompassing more than one ministry, and the periods studied transcend interest in party politics or in a particular political regime, taking into account circumstantial factors. In this regard, these studies are a relative exception to the conventional approach to studying government teams in Argentina.

On one hand, a series of research projects were carried out to examine the political staffs of specific governmental regimes. In such studies, a temporal limit was imposed. Examples include Natalio Botana (1998) on the Conservative Order (Orden Conservador); Marcela Ferrari (2008) on the Radical Republic (República Radical); Ana Persello (2004) also on the Radical Civic Union (Unión Cívica Radical, UCR); Daniel Campione (2003) on the renewal of officials between 1943 and 1946; and the works of Raanan Rein (2008) on the second Peronist regime. The numerous studies carried out on political parties also contribute to the field, though they do not focus as closely on teams of government officials.

Another approach to studying government political staff consists in selecting a particular government body and investigating its organizational transformations, reconstructing its upper echelons over the course of successive governments, and analyzing the public policies implemented. In studies of this type, the cut-off criteria is, in part, institutional. Still, there is a prolific historiography studying different government bodies through the expert knowledge of their officials, concentrating on the period before 1955 and on the following issues: public health (González Leandri 2010; Ramacciotti 2009); labor policies (Suriano 2000; Soprano 2010); public statistics (González Bollo 2004); educational policies (Rodríguez 2011) and social assistance policies (Osuna 2012; Giorgi and Mallimaci 2012), among others. Another set of studies, in the tradition of the sociology of ruling groups, explores the attributes and legitimacies of the members of various cabinets, highlighting the ministries' crucial role in elucidating the exercise of
politics (Gené 2007). The approach of historical sociology has been used to study the ministries of the Economy, the Interior, Social Development, and Defense (cf. Heredia et al. 2012; Canelo 2012a, 2012b).

These research projects produce rigorous interpretations of the cases examined, following on from a detailed analysis of the complexity of each historical case. Having accepted that this is the method employed in socio-historical research, our objective is to provide elements of global and general knowledge to the emerging field of debate on the national cabinet. We propose to inductively produce a cartography that will make it possible to identify general or partial sociological tendencies – if they exist – that affect the circulation of common actors in the formation of all cabinets. This cartography has the sole purpose of providing studies of cabinets and political personnel with a tool that will allow the general characteristics of the specific aspects of a particular government or ministry to be discerned. In any case, the factors that explain the formation of each government team have to be discovered through situated socio-historical studies.

2. THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

This prosopographic study of Argentina’s ministries was produced using a data matrix compiled by the author that includes every individual who served as a minister in the national cabinet for at least one day between 1854 – when the first national government under the 1853 Constitution was installed – and December 2011, when the most recent presidential period ended.

Selecting government ministers as an object of study requires favoring one formal category out of the various positions that compose the executive branch: the president, ministers, state secretaries and sub-secretaries, advisers and senior officials in administration. The post of minister possesses several advantages for analysis: ministers have continuously been part of the government structure; the post has public visibility, which facilitates data collection; and the position is important, which also justifies the interest in a sociological study of “those who are in command.”

The empirical universe is comprised of 636 individuals (625 men and 11 women), among whom 916 appointments (901 men and 15 women) were distributed over the course of 157 years. Basic sociographic variables (including demographic, educational, labor, political,

1. This is when a national political order with an articulated leadership was established (Lanteri 2013: 129).
and others) have been gathered, which provide data on the ministers' diachronic and synchronic social properties.

At the time of writing, the data matrix covered 82.4% of the individuals (524 out of 636) and 86.5% of the appointments (792 out of 916). This permits sufficient data saturation to undertake an empirically substantiated analysis, considering that the missing data is equally distributed across all areas of government and time periods.

The creation of this type of database requires a large quantity of information, which is not unified. As a result, we have worked with a variety of sources: biographical dictionaries, various universal encyclopedias, obituaries, newspaper articles, and curricula vitae. Numerous academic studies also provided valuable biographical data.

Given the length of the time period covered and the diversity of the cases, the data was organized using two classification criteria for operational purposes and, therefore, is tentative and open to reformulations. On one hand, we classified the 56 different names of the ministries based on their principal public policy area. This produced ten categories of public intervention (Table 1). On the other hand, we grouped the 49 constitutional and de facto governments into 13 periods, according to the government regime, and organized them diachronically. This enabled us to visualize general long-term temporal trends (Table 2).

Before continuing with the analysis disaggregated by ministerial category, it is necessary to make two general observations on the research perspective.

The first concerns the inclusion of the cabinets of both constitutional governments and de facto regimes. It is obvious that the mechanisms for selecting government staff are substantially different between these two types of regimes, and even between a restricted and an expanded democracy. However, we cannot a priori derive from this that the political regime definitively determines ministers' profiles. As a matter of fact, the predominant profiles of political personnel from the de facto governments are not significantly different from those of the democratic governments (except between 1976 and 1981) and we have demonstrated fluid circulation of political staff in both types of governments. On the other hand, we discovered a greater homogeneity in socio-professional profiles based on the historical period and type of ministry.

2. The concept of public intervention (Dubois 2001) refers to the way the state analyzes and organizes its actions, which are then formalized in the organization of the state bureaucracies.
Table 1  
Names of ministries, by area of public policy, 1854–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public policy area</th>
<th>Names of ministries(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Political functions</td>
<td>Chief of the Cabinet; Political Affairs; Interior; Interior and Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Justice</td>
<td>Justice; Justice and Public Instruction; Justice, Security and Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Foreign relations</td>
<td>Foreign Relations; Foreign Relations and Worship; Foreign Relations, International Commerce and Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Economic policies</td>
<td>Agriculture; Agriculture and Livestock; Agriculture, Livestock and Fishing; Economic Affairs; Commerce; Commerce and Maritime Affairs; Foreign Commerce; Economy; Economy, Treasury and Finance; Economy and Production; Economy and Labor; Economy, Social Development, Labor and Health; Economy and Public Works and Services; Finances; Treasury; Treasury and Finance; Tourism; Economy and Public Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Domestic and foreign security policies</td>
<td>Aeronautics; Defense; National Defense; Army; War; War and Navy; Navy; Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Public works and services</td>
<td>Communications; Industry; Industry and Commerce; Industry and Mining; Infrastructure and Housing; Public Works; Public Works and Services; Federal Planning; Public Investment and Services; Production; Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Educational, scientific, and technological policies</td>
<td>Science; Technology and Productive Innovation; Culture and Education; Education; Education and Justice; Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Labor policies</td>
<td>Labor; Labor and Provision; Labor and Social Security; Labor, Employment and Social Security; Labor, Employment and Human Resource Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Health and social policies</td>
<td>Social Action; Social Assistance; Social Assistance and Public Health; Social Welfare; Social Development; Public Health; Public Health and the Environment; Health and Social Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Planning</td>
<td>Technical Affairs; Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 
(1) When the names are ambiguous, the specific characteristics were analyzed. Some examples include: a) for the Ministry of Justice and Public Education (1854–1949), the first name was taken as a reference category, since originally educational policies were primarily the responsibility of the provinces, and were assigned to the National Education Council, from which a separate ministry emerged in 1949; b) in 1954, the Ministry of the Interior and Justice was created and headed by the up-until-then Minister of the Interior, providing continuity between the two ministries; c) from 2003, the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Public Services has been principally concerned with public works and services, with a secondary role as a technical planning body.
This is closely linked to a second – and risky – methodological decision: not to consider the variable of party affiliation. Without ignoring the relevance that political parties have had in political life and in the formation of government cabinets, in the case of Argentina, parties have not played a leading role in the organization of political life, as is the case in other political systems (Welsh 1970; Levitsky 2003; Privitellio 2004; Freidenberg and Levitsky 2007). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that we can find explanatory factors for political careers in these institutions so this is a hypothesis that remains to be tested. At the same time, political parties have been the object of many of the studies on political personnel, relegating other dimensions to a secondary role. The purpose of this study is to explore the explanatory capacity of socio-professional variables which converge with the numerous studies on political parties, which are social environments for political careers.

3. MINISTRIES AND MINISTERS: THE HETEROGENEOUS ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PORTFOLIOS AND SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILES

Below, we will describe the predominant profiles of ministers with different portfolios, following the model presented above. To do so, we consider two dimensions of analysis: university training and professional and political trajectory, disaggregated by ministerial
portfolio and crossed with various significant variables that emerged from the qualitative analysis.

Though we will undertake the analysis by diachronically reducing each government area and describing the profiles within them, there are certain processes that are common to all ministries. To avoid repetition, and because these processes are a product of the analysis, we will return to them in the conclusions. In order for them to serve as a guide for comparative reading, we will only state that they are logics derived from: a) the differentiation of government areas; b) the emergence of professional knowledge and its increasing political visibility; c) the long, medium and short-term temporal cycles that separate general processes. Regarding the last point, we primarily took into account cycles of continuity in the socio-professional profiles. As a result, each ministerial area has different temporalities; at times, there is sustained long-term homogeneity and at others, there are successive changes and heterogeneities in the profiles. However, as pointed out in the conclusions, it is possible to find a general pattern in the professional profiles that crosses all ministerial areas, based on a process of specialization of the socio-professional profiles, with two general turning points in the years 1930-1943 and in 1983.

3.1. Ministries of the Interior: a hunting ground for professional politicians

The Ministry of the Interior has been considered the political portfolio par excellence since 1994, together with the position of Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers (Gené 2012a, 2012b; Oszlak 2003). Its area of responsibility is the internal political governance of the country, a task requiring the specifically "political" skills of "political" ministers. Mariana Gené found that the heads of political ministries are characterized by possessing specific knowledge related to the management of implicit codes and the capacity to negotiate and reach agreements with a variety of actors. These attributes are acquired through experience and synthesized in the idea of "coming from politics" ("venir de la política"). For this reason, high-ranking officials in this area are recruited among "leaders with extensive trajectories both as militants and in elected office or political appointments" (Gené 2012a: 306).

Although Gené made this observation in relation to the period 1930-2007, it is also valid for all ministers in the political area since the beginnings of the modern cabinet in Argentina in 1854. In effect, the Ministry of the Interior has had the largest number of professional political cadres in comparison to other areas of government. The clearest indicator of this is experience in elected offices: 63% of all the political ministers also served at least one

5. Translation by Apuntes.
6. For purely operative purposes, we considered having held elective office (in the parliament or municipal or provincial legislatures) as a broad indicator of minimal political professionalization.
term in the congress, the highest percentage in relation to other ministerial areas (followed by Justice, with 57%). One of the most telling statistics is the directionality of the political career: 47% were in parliament before becoming ministers; that is, they had previous political experience in elected office. This makes the parliament a kind of recruiting area for political ministers in a similar proportion to that found by Richard Fenno in his classic research about the cabinet of the government of the United States (1959). However, Interior is an exception in its strong link to the parliament since similar links were not found in the remaining ministerial areas (the second, Justice, had 37%).

There has been a high proportion of lawyers among ministers of the Interior, just as is the case with the ministries of Justice and Foreign Relations. Individuals with law degrees make up a little more than half of those named “political ministers” (66 of 123), distributed equally along the 157 years that this portfolio has existed: almost all governments appointed lawyers to this post at some point, with the exception of the de facto governments, which prioritized military officers.

Three clear time spans can be discerned: from 1854 to 1943, political portfolios were exclusively controlled by civilians (except for Julio A. Roca, retired from the army in 1879, who was the Minister of the Interior in 1890), the vast majority of whom were lawyers. Overall, more than 94% also had been elected to parliament, which indicates a very high level of circulation among the highest political positions. A second stage lasted from 1943 to 1983, a time when the militarization of Argentine society peaked. This led to the military having access to government positions that were not related to the army (see Section 3.5) and thus to high level politics. Lawyers and military officers alternated in various ministries, with the highest number in de facto governments, especially between 1943-1946 and 1976-1983, when the political areas were wholly in the hands of the military. During this period, ministers without parliamentary experience predominated (24%), probably due to the fact that repeated closures of the congress limited the possibilities of establishing parliamentary careers. From 1983 until 2001, the return of civilians to political ministries was dominated by lawyers, while after 2002, college graduates in economics outnumber lawyers for the first time. This cannot be explained by an increase in the political importance of economic knowledge but rather has to do with professionalized political cadres. As Gené (2012b) points out, university education takes second place to a military career and having the confidence of political superiors. Consequently, the proportion of political ministers who had been elected to parliament increased to 67.7%.

3.2. Justice portfolios: political staff in the judicial family
Of the group of areas that have made up the cabinet since 1854, the Justice portfolios have been the domain of expertise of law graduates. In fact, this is the only ministry in
which lawyers possess the specific expert knowledge acquired through the possession of formal educational credentials.

Of the 106 individuals named ministers of Justice, 96 – that is, nine out of ten ministers – were lawyers. This is the strongest and most consistent association between educational profile and appointment to the cabinet.

Now, the overall high proportion of lawyers within the universe of ministers in all areas leads us to question the extent to which the monopolization by lawyers of the Justice portfolio has to do with expert knowledge and how much is connected to their overall predominance in relation to other professions within political elites, something that occurs in the Ministry of the Interior.

We found an answer when we examined experience in the judiciary of ministers of Justice. On the one hand, less than 58% of the lawyers named as ministers of Justice had also held a position in the judiciary on the federal or provincial levels. On the other hand, of the total percentage of ministers with experience in the judiciary, 44% were named ministers of Justice and 66% of the rest were appointed to other ministerial areas. This general data should be analyzed in more depth. How the internal organization of the judiciary and the different tendencies within the field of law imply logics of positioning within this branch as well as outside of it, including within the Ministry of Justice (see Vecchioli 2012), requires investigation. One interesting line of research would be to perform a comparative study of the socio-political composition of this ministry and that of the Supreme Court of Justice.

We still need to identify the 42% of the ministers of Justice who did not have judicial experience. While we know that most had degrees in law, we cannot conclude from this that they had expert knowledge of the administration of justice. One relevant fact is that concomitant with the percentage of lawyer-ministers is experience in elective office (national and provincial legislators, provincial and municipal executives), which permits us to suppose that there are two probable competencies related to the functions of a high official in the area of justice: first, the métier of legislating, the knowledge of

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7. Julio Oyhanarte (1972) states that what predominates is a relation of “adaptation” – neither submission nor opposition – between the Supreme Court and national politics. There is research in juridical sociology carried out by lawyers who have studied the Supreme Court justices, taking into consideration their sociological characteristics and identifying different juridical traditions (Bercholc 2007; Kunz 1989: 17-23). Related to this point, the organizational and functional autonomy of the judiciary is a key contributing factor to understanding both the politicization of justice and the judicialization of politics (Couso 2004; cf. Helmke 2003).
laws and the intricacies of norms; and second, political experience, that is, a degree of professionalization in the art of doing politics, an attribute that is to be expected (though not shared by everyone) of a cadre who reaches the level of minister.

In contrast to other ministerial areas, the socio-professional profiles of the ministers of Justice possess a relatively high level of homogeneity over time, without the moments of significant change that would indicate passage to a new era.

3.3. Ministers of Foreign Relations: political cadres ahead of the diplomatic corps

Another area in which holders of law degrees predominate is the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the sector of the state responsible for coordinating the country's foreign policy. Of the 124 ministers of Foreign Relations named since 1854, 93 were lawyers, that is, three out of every four. This contrasts with the consolidation of diplomacy as a government profession during the 20th century.

Indeed, numerous advances have been made in creating a professionalized diplomatic corps that is autonomous and relatively homogenous in terms of the capacity of its members, something that has not been done in other sectors of the state bureaucracy. In 1906, regulations for the diplomatic corps were approved, although the first draft legislation dates back to 1879. Some time later, towards the middle of the 20th century, the first university courses on the subject were offered (Persello 2013). A qualitative leap forward occurred in 1963 with the creation of the Institute of External Service (Instituto del Servicio Exterior). This established an entry course for a diplomatic career based on meritocratic criteria. The creation of this professional path deepened tensions with those in positions of political power. There were various efforts to impose limitations; for example, no more than 25 “political” ambassadors were allowed outside the career diplomatic corps (see Rizzo 2012).

Around 1930, the Ministry of Foreign Relations was made up of an organized and professional diplomatic corps to the level of secretary, with officials who were prepared to represent the country abroad (Solveira 1997: 113). Nevertheless, though there existed career diplomats and diplomats with degrees in their field, they rarely became ministers.

When analyzing those who did become ministers, we need to distinguish those individuals who were lacking in the diplomatic arts but were named to the position of minister, generally on account of either of two types of political motivations. The most frequent was having held mid- and high-level posts in the Foreign Service: office of attaché, consulate, or embassy. A total of 46.7% of the ministers had held some post in the diplomatic structure and, of these, 79.3% had previously worked in the ministry. A smaller number, 12%, of foreign ministers had previously held a high post in the bureaucracy.
of the ministry: in the minister’s office, secretary or sub-secretary. This indicates that experience had a certain weight as an implicit criteria in the designation of foreign ministers, which was combined with a component of political experience. At the same time, this also shows the low level of specialized expert experience in the highest levels of public management in this area of government. To a lesser degree, embassies are viewed as spaces for retreat and retraining of former political cadres, who withdraw abroad in times of political crisis.

Diachronic analysis allows us to distinguish two eras of differing lengths. From 1854 to 1983, lawyers hegemonized the Ministry of Foreign Relations (four fifths of the appointments), complemented by military officers during de facto regimes and by some engineers. For example, during the last military dictatorship, three officers and three lawyers who had previously served in embassies took turns at being in charge of foreign policy. A second era began in 1983, during which there does not appear to have been a definite profile that characterizes the eight individuals who received the 12 appointments to head the ministry, though some characteristics are repeated. First, there are certain academic credentials: a university degree abroad (undergraduate or graduate) and a degree in economics and university teaching experience. Second, almost all of those who were named foreign ministers share a previous or later career in political posts which go beyond foreign relations, whether these are elected and/or government posts. Two divergent cases stand out in particular: Héctor Timerman – a businessman and journalist, with a university degree; and Susana Ruiz Cerruti – a career diplomat (who, curiously, held the post for the shortest time since 1983) and, more significantly, the first woman to head the ministry.

3.4. The economic portfolios: the monopolization of experts in economics
Together with the areas of labor and health policies, the government structures related to economics have held the most interest for researchers. Fortunately, there is a vast bibliography which deals with government economic bureaucracies and their high-ranking officials.

In relation to the profiles of the ministers with economic portfolios, we can identify two important moments that represent watersheds for the emergence of a new professional group: individuals with degrees in economics.

In the first stage (1854–1946), it was lawyers who ran the economic ministries. The vast majority were political cadres with experience in parliament or public management on the national level.8

8. Below, we will analyze the differences between the two economic portfolios: Economy and Agriculture.
The second period began in 1943 and resulted in the consolidation of economics professionals in the public sphere – not as advisors but as managers. The faculties of Economic Sciences were created in the first decades of the 20th century and their graduates began to gravitate toward public management from the 1930s. While the principal public figures in the new discipline, such as Alejandro Bunge or Raúl Prebisch, accepted assignments in management and technical advisement, they did not become ministers and nor did they hold similar posts (cf. Caravaca and Plotkin 2007; Caravaca 2012; González Bollo 2012). The so-called Grupo Bunge was influential in setting the economic agenda in the following decades and knew how to take advantage of the coup d’état of 1943, a window of opportunity for numerous technical cadres who were then promoted from lower levels of public administration to key management positions in the cabinet (Campione 2003; Belini 2006). To a greater degree from 1946, individuals with degrees in economics took over the political management of economic policy, consolidating their positions in the cabinet on account of the creation of a large bureaucratic framework, which was institutionalized through the 1949 constitutional reform (Stawski 2012). The members of this first group of economic experts were public accountants with doctorates in Economics from the UBA, among them various graduates of the Carlos Pellegrini School of Commerce (Escuela Superior de Comercio Carlos Pellegrini). This was a sign that specialized education began during adolescence, and of the importance of educational institutions in the creation of professionals.

From then on, the presence of individuals with degrees in Economics Sciences kept on growing. Until 1976, businesspeople without economics degrees alternated with party cadres. The last de facto government opened the second phase of consolidation of expert economic knowhow, this time in the hands of technocratic cadres working in research centers (Heredia 2004, 2011). From the de facto presidency of Roberto Viola, installed in 1981, until today, economic policy has been a matter for economists: 22 of the 26 ministers of the Economy appointed had undergraduate or graduate degrees in the subject. Among them, Mariana Heredia (2012) stands out among specialists who were party militants and worked at research centers. Of the rest, three were high-level executives from large enterprises, and the other, a party cadre who had previously been a minister of the Economy.

9. The first professional certification programs (“licenciaturas”) in Economics were created in 1958 (in the UCA) and in 1959 (in the UBA, split off from the professional certification in Public Accounting).
10. Translator’s note: this is a high school.
11. This idea, suggested by Carolina Montera, is linked to Matthew Mahler’s (2006) proposal to approach commitment (political or professional) based on the ambiences and sociabilities that give rise to and channel passions.
12. If we sum all the ministries involved in economics (Economics, Agriculture, Tourism), 23 of 30 ministers had economics degrees.
One of the differences relating to the profiles of ministers has to do with which economics-related ministry they head. In the case of Agriculture, for example, various authors agree that a high percentage of the ministers were members of the Argentine Rural Society (Sociedad Rural Argentina) (Ansaldi 1994: 18; Giménez Zapiola 1975: 291). This institution maintained its importance, although to a lesser degree, in the first years of the second half of the 20th century (Palomino 1988).

In the case of the Ministry of the Treasury, the principal economic portfolio until 1958, the profiles of the 57 individuals that were named to the position 74 times can be divided into three overlapping vectors: first, almost half (47.4%) held management positions in public banks (primarily at the Hipotecario Nacional, Nacional, Nación and Provincia banks) or the Central Bank of the Argentine Republic. They were men with experience in the field of public finances. The second vector is made up of those who had previously held positions in government and public management (68.4%), primarily in provincial governments (52%), but also in the central government (30%); these cadres had no experience in elected office, only in public management. The third vector consists of those excluded from the previous profiles: political party cadres who, before becoming ministers, had been elected to parliament at least once; that is, professional politicians without experience in public management.

In any case, 74.5% of the ministers of the Treasury (1854–1958) had also held elective office, a percentage that contrasts with ministers of the Economy (1958–2011), of which only 24.5% held such offices. This reveals another trend in the circulation in political positions of institutional heads of economic policy by permitting us to divide this circulation into two stages: one with a marked rotation among elected and management positions and the other with a relative separation of the two types of “political work.”

3.5. Areas of War and Defense: from military leadership to civilian control
Numerous studies have demonstrated that war has been one of the principal causes of the formation of the modern state bureaucracy (cf. Tilly 1975; Garavaglia et al. 2012). In Argentina, one of the five ministries established by the government in 1854 was dedicated to the administration of coercion in the bellicose 19th century: the Ministry of War and the Navy. During the 1870s and 1880s, a major reorganization of the armed forces was carried out with the purpose of professionalizing military careers and modernizing the components of the armed forces and organizing military structures under hierarchical command. During

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14. The change in name from “treasury” to “economy” in 1958 can be linked to the transformation of the former category of public intervention, primitively linked to a conception of administration of agricultural and livestock goods, to a developmental perspective linked to the economic sciences.
the ministerial reform of 1898, this was translated into the institutionalization of the two types of military activity into two ministries: War and the Navy. In 1949, this specialization in the military bureaucracy was augmented with the simultaneous creation of the ministries of Aeronautics and National Defense, with the latter charged with coordinating the work of the three branches of the armed forces in view of the factionalism that existed within the military bureaucracies. In 1958, another ministerial reorganization brought together these portfolios under the Ministry of Defense, relegating the three branches of the armed forces to the level of secretariats. Each secretary was, at the same time, the commander-in-chief of the respective branch, uniting the two responsibilities. The purpose of this organizational scheme was to establish civilian control of the military. Below, we take a look at the profiles of the individuals who held military portfolios.

The principal rift that governs the distribution of the ministers with military portfolios pits civilians against the military for the political control of the ministry. Of the 143 ministers that held these portfolios, 56 were civilians and 87 were military; that is, war professionals (60.8%). This general information needs to be divided into two long eras during which the proportion between military and civilians is inverted. From 1854 to 1958, 83 of 96 appointments to the Ministry of War were military men (86.5%). It appears that in this first period, war professionals enjoyed hegemonic control over this bureaucracy. A second period started in 1958 and has lasted until today. During this era, 91.5% of those appointed to be Minister of Defense (43 of 47) were civilians. The only time military officers held portfolios related to war was during the last dictatorship (1976-1983). This overwhelming predominance of civilians is remarkable, considering the importance of the armed forces on the national political scene until 1983.

It is necessary to point out some aspects of this sub-period, which begins when Frondizi took office and lasts until the end of the Process of National Reorganization. The first factor is that the presence of civilians in Defense reflects a strategy to limit the political participation by the military that, from the vantage of a historical perspective, can be seen to have failed. This is not only evident in the successive military coup d'états and the tutelage that the armed forces maintained over civilian power, but also in a significant fact related to the cabinet: the military went well beyond the military portfolios, occupying proportionally more ministries in other areas of public policy. When we look at the ministers outside the defense area, we can see that between 1962 and 1983, military professionals included: a) 12 of 26 ministers of the Interior; b) six of 30 ministers of Justice; c) four of 25 ministers of Labor; and d) four of 29 ministers of Health and Social Welfare. In the same period only four of 28 ministers of Defense were military officers. The analysis of the logics that led to this distribution of portfolios among the different branches of the armed forces requires sociological analysis that is beyond the scope of this article.
We can find a key to analyzing the strategy of tripartite distribution during the Process of National Reorganization, studied by Paula Canelo, who refers to the “balkanization” of the cabinet (2012a, 2012b). Canelo clearly demonstrates that among the aspirations of the armed forces, the Ministry of Defense occupies a secondary place.

However, this has to be integrated into lengthier processes that not only took place during the last dictatorship but also during previous de facto governments and which are useful in understanding the absence of military officers in these portfolios after 1958. The professionalization of the military career implied, among other things, establishing a structure of ranks that though clearly defined, was modified at various times. The top rank of the professional career went on being transformed and, with it, the borderline with politics, which is porous and has various intercommunicating channels, except during a few periods in Argentine history. Until 1949, the post of minister was not unconnected – in practice – to a military career. In 1951, with the creation of the Ministry of Defense, an administrative body was established that did not have direct authority over the armed forces, but was placed at the top of the military bureaucracy with the reform of 1958 (Potash 1981: 143, 373). This decision converted the secretariat of each branch into the highest military rank, as well as being the highest post in the political administration of each branch. A logical consequence of this would be that, for a military officer, the transition to politics consisted in aspiring to posts that were not linked to the military profession since the position of Minister of Defense did not have administrative authority over each branch and thus did not possess sufficient political specificity to make it an attractive post.

When it comes to the civilians that headed these ministries, there are two types that predominate. On the one hand, there are individuals who were closely linked to networks that included military men, whether through familial relations, having taught at military institutes, or circulation in social spaces shared with the military. Thus, three relatives of General Alejandro Lanusse and a brother of General Jorge Cáceres Monié, both heads of the army, were ministers of Defense. The other profile is that of political party cadres who reflected the desire of various democratically elected governments to politically control the armed forces. Thus, starting with the government of Gabriel del Mazo through to the government of Ángel F. Robledo, there was acute tension between some branches of the armed forces, which were strongly politicized, and civilian governments under military tutelage.

Starting in 1983, a new period began in which the military disappeared from all cabinet positions, not only military portfolios. The loss of prestige that had mounted when the last dictatorship ended and during distinct episodes in the 1980s, in addition to cuts in the
military budget in the 1990s, led to the disappearance of the military as a political factor, ergo, their absence from positions of political power.

3.6 Public works and services: the engineers of the entrepreneurial state

One of the principal innovations of the ministerial reform of 1898 was the creation of a Ministry of Public Works (MOP). From then on, this area of public intervention remained a key axis of government, except in some periods in which it became a secretariat of the Ministry of the Economy. The MOP oversees government bodies related to public works, services, and infrastructure, including state enterprises in the areas of energy, transport, and public services. Over time, the MOP would become the heart of the entrepreneurial state. At the time, such was the rapid expansion of the ministerial bureaucracy that it was divided into four portfolios between 1949 and 1955: the ministries of Public Works, Industry and Commerce, Transportation, and Communications.

The MOP was built on the foundations of the Office of Engineers and, at least until 1943, the development of its technical bureaucracy was strictly linked to the consolidation of engineering as a professional field (Ballent 2008). In its dependent entities and state enterprises such as National Railroads, Sanitary Works, Highway Administration or YPF, specialized and professionalized bureaucratic corps were established, which included a great many engineers who controlled the highest administrative positions (Salerno 2011: 67–68). Professionally-licensed engineers headed almost all the divisions of MOP, but the position of minister stayed in the hands of professional politicians (Palermo 2006: 230). After a reorganization of the ministry between 1943 and 1945 (Lucchini 1981), the profiles of the ministers varied, with the number of engineers in political posts increasing.

Of the 77 ministers named between 1898 and 2011, at least 30 had training in one of the fields of engineering, 21 were lawyers, and 11 were military officers, among them some with degrees in engineering.

The professional trajectories of the ministers are more revealing: 66.3% of them had experience in public management in the area they would be responsible for. The sources of recruitment were principally two: a small group had experience heading provincial agencies of Public Works and Services (19.5%) and other national politico-administrative posts such as secretary or sub-secretary (26%); the other group, numerically larger (54.5%), came from inside the national ministerial bureaucracies, from different areas associated with the competencies of these portfolios, but especially from high-ranking posts in the national

railroads, the offices of water and energy, and various science and technical research centers, in addition to a few who came from the Highway Administration.

As regards variation over time, two stages of changes in profiles can be identified, though the changes are not large as they were in other ministerial areas.

The situation until 1943 has already been described: engineers controlled the technical bureaucracy but without reaching the position of minister (only 14.3% did so). The ministers at that time had degrees in law (57.1%), were professional politicians (52% had held at least one elective office) and/or had experience in the field of business (47.6%). This last relates to the phenomenon of pantouflage: the circulation of cadres between the worlds of business and government in the same areas of activity, generating public policy networks and intermediation of interests. In general, it is lawyers who move the most back and forth between business and politics (62%).

Starting in 1943, the politico-administrative management of portfolios in this area was in the hands of individuals with profiles that were formally more specialized. Two facts are illustrative: engineers began to be more numerous in government teams, holding 48.5% of the posts and permanently placing themselves in control as heads of the ministries related to Public Works (63.3%). At the same time, the proportion of ministers who were professionals participating in electoral politics diminished (16.1%). This change can be partially explained by the change from a state whose public works policies aimed at incentivizing and controlling private activity at the beginning of the 20th century, to an entrepreneurial state responsible not only for infrastructure that subsidized the private sector, but which had a more active role in entrepreneurial field, starting in the 1930s. Of course, this is no more than a hypothesis that should be tested with more in-depth studies.

The presence of the military was concentrated between 1943 and 1952, at a time when the military-industrial complex was expanding (six of eight appointments), later losing ground. In the case of civilians, the proportion of those with experience in the public sector (in technical or administrative positions) is equally high over time. However, it becomes more common for ministers in ministries related to public works to have occupied national and provincial politico-administrative posts, particularly as heads of provincial departments of public works, before moving to the national ministry.

3.7 Educational policies: from educators to educologists
The history of the construction of education as a category of autonomous public intervention certainly does not start with the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1949. From 1854,
educational policies were the province of the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction, in the Division of Public Instruction. Among its dependencies, along with Secondary Instruction and Universities, was the National Council of Education, which gained more visibility in the organization of the structures of the state in the 1930s. Around 1935, this council appeared as one of the principal items of the national budget, with the same rank as ministries. Finally, in 1949, the Ministry of Education was created.

Around this definition of education as a public policy area – within which the areas of culture and of science and technology would emerge – two types of cadres with experience in educational management would converge: a) those with high-ranking positions in national universities (dean and/or rector); and b) cadres with experience in administering educational policy dependencies on the national or sub-national levels. Thus, 24 of 28 individuals who held portfolios in Education possessed at least one of these characteristics. Of the other four, two had been university professors or researchers.

Analyzing the data further, we find indications of a change in the logics of political appointments in the area of education, whose breaking point occurred in the 1980s. Between 1949 and 1983, university administration was an important space for gaining public recognition, which provided possibilities of becoming a minister. During this period, 63% of the ministers of Education had previously held high-ranking positions at national universities. At the same time, one of every three ministers had previously held a high-ranking position in a provincial or national educational institution (undersecretary or secretary).

The second period is marked by the rise of techno-politicians: academic intellectuals who entered (private or state) educational management not as expert advisors but as occupants of high-ranking positions related to the development and implementation of educational policies (Suasnábar 2012: 200–202). This was the product of a long process of change which had a clear impact on the profile of those who held high positions in Education until the 1990s. This constitutes a technocratic model of educational management which includes the autonomization of an area of expert knowledge, with teaching and research

16. The National Council of Education was created as a result of the nationalization of the Federal Capital in 1880 and had competency over national institutions of primary education.
17. Between 1983 and 1991, the ministerial structure that united Justice and Education was reinstituted. This is the reason that the ministers during this period are not taken into consideration in this part of the discussion.
18. This elevation of experts in education is in many ways similar to the case of economists, even though they occurred in different periods: expert knowledge displaces practical experience as an attribute that legitimates government functionaries.
institutions and specialized spokespersons (Tiramonti 2001; Nardacchione 2011). The latter supposes a valuation of technical expertise over and above practical experience in education; that is, of the educologist over the educator.

These developments are reflected in the cabinet, both in terms of experience and in the possession of expert credentials. First, the vast majority (83.3%) of the ministers of Education in this period had previous experience in political jobs in state educational management (provincial and national). Second, there was a change in the type of credentials held by ministers. From 1949 to 1983, more than 70% of ministers of Education had degrees in law or medicine; in either case, they shared experience in university or public management (37.5%), as indicated above, but without specific training in educational management. In contrast, starting in 1983, individuals with undergraduate or graduate degrees in social sciences constituted 58.3% of those named as ministers and half of these (six of 12) are explicitly identified as experts in education.19 FLACSO then emerged in the last decades as one the principal networks of experts with an interest in national public management in education, whatever the political orientation of the government.20

The other significant axis for the analysis of ministers of Education is their insertion in different types of religious networks. A long list of ministers who were members of Catholic social networks followed each other into this ministry, from Oscar Ivanissevich who was named in 1949, to Juan José Llach, minister in 2000, representing more than a third of the ministers of Education. While this does not mean that the Catholic Church controlled educational policy through these cadres, it does illustrate the strong tendency of a heterogeneous Catholic movement to interest itself in education and create cadres to act in this area (see Rodríguez 2011).

3.8. Labor policies: labor specialists and unionists
Like Education and Health, labor policies are a category of public intervention that underwent a long process that involved the progressive hierarchization of the offices created to work on these issues. The institutionalization of labor policies started with the creation of the National Department of Labor (DNT) in the Ministry of the Interior

19. Thus, the naming of Jorge Sábado as Minister of Education and Justice (1987–1989) anticipates tendencies that were consolidated with the naming of Susana Decibe as minister in 1996.
20. The participation of Cecilia Braslavsky in the design of the Federal Law of Education (Ley Federal de Educación) consolidated the entrance of FLACSO into the Ministry of Education. Another FLACSO cadre who occupied high-ranking positions in Education early on is Daniel Filmus, although the fact that he was named Secretary of Education by Mayor Carlos Grosso in 1989 was influenced by his political militancy in the technical teams of Peronism.
in 1907. This entity, which was the branch of the state charged with mediation between capital and labor, expanded its structure and its responsibilities, taking on a major role in mediation during the conflictive decade of the 1930s (González Bollo 2004; Soprano 2000; Gaudio and Pilone 1984). In 1943, Colonel Juan Domingo Perón became head of the DNT and rapidly converted it into the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security, increasing its responsibilities, resources, and competencies. The centrality of this office to Perón’s construction of his own power led to its becoming the Ministry of Labor and Social Security after the constitutional reform of 1949. Since then, it has remained a ministry, with the exception of a brief period of five years (1966–1971) during which it functioned as a Secretariat of the Ministry of Economy and Labor.

A total of 45 individuals were assigned to the Labor portfolios 53 times, and half of them were lawyers. In general, two profiles predominate. First, 35% of the ministers had some kind of organic link with union organizations. The majority of these (29.8% of the total) had been political union leaders; that is, at some point, they vied for political party leadership positions, ran for Congress or held a government position (Damín 2011). To a lesser extent, there were individuals who had weaker links to unions, having been legal advisors, or mid-level leaders. As is to be expected, the naming of unionists to be minister primarily occurred during the Peronist governments, with the exception of the government of Alfonsín, who had three political-union leaders among his five ministers of Labor, probably because of his desire to reform the primarily Peronist organized labor movement.21

In the second profile of ministers of Labor, we find individuals who have some experience in the public sector related to labor issues (26.4%). Primarily, these are lawyers named to mid-level political positions (secretaries, sub-secretaries) in the Ministry of Labor who ascended to the position of minister and, to a lesser extent, individuals who entered this ministry as employees and were gradually promoted in the course of their careers, finally moving from a bureaucratic to a political position.22

21. Fourteen political-union leaders were heads of a ministry on 21 occasions. Of these, 16 headed Labor, four were in Interior and Chief of the Cabinet, and one in Health and Social Action. This demonstrates the structure of ministerial opportunities for labor leaders, defined by a strong association between the organized labor movement and labor areas, at a time that they were relatively excluded from serving in other areas of government.

22. A clear example of this is Rubens San Sebastián. Without a university degree (he was a certified public accountant who graduated from the Carlos Pellegrini Superior School of Commerce), he entered the Ministry of Labor in 1956 where he moved up the career ladder as: secretary, director general, and later the national director of Labor Relations. He developed links with union leaders, such as Augusto Vandor. In 1966, the military government named him Secretary of Labor and in 1971, Alejandro Lanusse promoted him to Minister of Labor until the end of his administration. After leaving government, he became a labor advisor, establishing his own consulting firm.
The rest of the ministerial appointees had diverse profiles: businesspeople, military officers, and professional party cadres, the latter during Radical governments.

3.9. Public health and social assistance policies: from medical hegemony to the autonomization of the social

The public legitimacy which doctors enjoyed since the middle of the 19th century provided them with important political opportunities (Ferrari 2008: 137-141). Thus “doctor-politicians” (González Leandri 2010: 69) such as Guillermo Rawson, Eduardo Wilde, Pedro Pardo or Manuel Montes de Oca held positions in the cabinet. The social ascent of doctors was possible to the extent that they were successful in constructing a field of professional competence associated with the monopolistic possession of specific knowledge, which was institutionally accredited (cf. González Leandri 2000). The professionalization of the “art of curing” was accompanied by the institutionalization of specialized bureaucracies of public health: in 1880, the Department of National Hygiene was created to replace the Council of Hygiene of the Federal Capital and also the Public Assistance Office. The prevailing hygienist mentality led to a strong link between medical knowledge and social issues (González Leandri 2006: 12).

All this means that, among other things, doctors monopolized the top positions and were the first option to head the public bureaucracies in the area of Health, first the National Department of Hygiene (1880-1943), then, the Secretariat of Health (1943-1949), and finally, starting in 1949, the Ministry of Health.

The successful efforts of doctors to maintain control and monopolize knowledge about social health issues lasted until the middle of the 20th century, when it started to show signs of weakening.

If the rise of doctors in the political world is associated with the expansion of their professional niche; their consolidation as political cadres in the cabinet was made possible with the creation of the Ministry of Health in 1949 (cf. Ramacciotti 2009). After this, it is possible to discern various ministerial configurations. Between 1949 and 1966 and from 1982 until today, Health has had the rank of a ministry and the great majority of ministers were doctors (25 out of 31); between 1966 and 1982, there was an interlude during which Health areas were part of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The creation of the Ministry of Social Welfare was not simply a change in name, but was due to the reformulations of government categorizations of public policies related to the emergence of the development-welfare pairing. For various reasons, this institutional transformation implied the dehierarchization of Health to the rank of a secretariat and the subsequent loss of political control of the ministry by doctors. At the same time, heading
Social Welfare were a series of individuals without a discernable profile: lawyers, engineers, military officers, and only one doctor. In December 1983, there was a return to a ministerial scheme under the political administration of doctors and it was only in 1994 that social assistance policies became autonomous from health policies.

In addition to the predominance of medicine as a career among the ministers, there are at least two other characteristics that are apparent among ministers of Health and Social Policy. First, they have been connected with religious circles: the majority circulated in religious spaces identified with Catholicism to a greater or lesser degree. Second, those who had been members of political parties both in Radical and Peronist governments, maintained links with the president of the country that transcended normal party channels. The autonomization of the field of “social” intervention is partially the result of the construction of poverty as the province of experts (Vommaro 2011), which affected the structures of the state through the creation of specialized bureaucracies. In 1994, the Secretariat of Social Development was created, and had the rank of a ministry as well as a chair at cabinet meetings. In 1999, it became a ministry. This new portfolio reconfigures an old link between women and social issues: three of its seven ministers have been female. In addition, the establishment of social development as a category of public intervention has led to the appointment of an expert in the field, Alicia Kirchner, who is the first social worker to become a minister.23

4. CONTRIBUTIONS TO A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE STATE

The preceding analysis of the profiles of the men and women who headed Argentine ministries between 1854 and 2011 empirically demonstrates the existence of relatively strong associations between specific social characteristics and the portfolios of those who headed ministries. This said, the analysis permits us to outline some general observations and hypotheses that derive from the data and that we consider the most useful to the debate.

The first, to be precise, is the verification of the premise of the extended analysis. The cabinet of ministers is not a flat structure of positions, made up of sociologically isomorphic positions. On the contrary, just as the bodies of knowledge contained within the state are multiple, each ministerial portfolio requires a degree of specialization that affects the selection of the profile of the minister who will head the ministry, without leaving aside political party considerations. Thus, the category of minister includes a multiplicity of profiles.

However, the second observation warns about the implications of this premise: we must be careful not to break up the structures of the state into small islands of reality, as the

23. The fact that she is the sister of Néstor Kirchner should not diminish the importance of this fact.
various institutions studied here appear to be. It is necessary to articulate the different niches that make up this “archipelago” in order to analyze the complex empirical unity that is the state – as well as the government – in its diverse facets. Thus, these multiple attributes and trajectories that are characteristic of each ministry should not serve to hide the characteristics typically shared by all those who made up the cabinet.

The latter points to the tension in the study of the cabinet as an undifferentiated entity and the study of its autonomous parts. Therefore, the challenge is to consider the cabinet as an articulated totality, crisscrossed by tendencies related to both the general characteristics of national politics and phenomena arising from the specificities of this or that state entity. These tendencies are inscribed as vectors articulated through at least four dimensions of analysis that can be inferred from the general logical paths of conformation and circulation of individuals through the positions of ministers.

In the first place, the cabinet is organized on the basis of sectoral logics by public policy areas. Each public entity possesses certain specificities derived from its competencies and the types of public actions that it carries out. In accordance with this, the attributes, profiles, and characteristics of the biographies of its officials will differ. This study has focused on these links.

The second vector is related to professional logics. Ministries undergo processes of transformation in the profiles of the ministers who, albeit at different paces, move in the direction of expanding their professional specialized knowledge. This common tendency in all areas of government is expressed in the displacement of experienced cadres (with practical experience in the area of public policy that they manage) by expert cadres (with specialized and technically supported credentials acquired in academia).

Two secondary processes accompany this one. On the one hand, the predominance of lawyers among political personnel, which has a long history and an unequal distribution among the different ministries and is dependents on various factors: the diversification in university courses available, the dispute about the representation of the state and the public, the political visibilization of other professional specialties, and the increase in the complexity of the areas of state intervention. Inside the cabinet, the presence of lawyers continues but decreases. In the first period (1854 and 1943), the number of lawyers decreases from 71.9% to 58.5%; later (1955–1976), their presence oscillates between 48 and 44.8%; and finally (1983–2011), it varies between 41.6% and 33.8%.24 Starting in 1943,
the language of politics (that is, of the state) begins to decouple from legal knowledge; consequently, lawyers cease to monopolize representation of the public order. But lawyers continue to maintain a high level of political participation, because they conserve their status as generalists in politics. At the same time, nuances also appear among political personnel: for example, while 38% of those who occupied the high government positions during the Argentine Confederation (Lanteri 2013) were lawyers, they constituted 78.1% of the ministers.

On the other hand, this overlaps with the proportion of professional politicians (those for whom politics is their principal modus vivendi for a period of various years), which was relatively high between 1854 and 1930, decreases until 1983, after which it goes up to the level in the first period. This curve, in the long term, would mark three cycles of professional political cadres as part of the cabinet.

A third dimension or vector is the existence of temporal logics from which are derived factors of differing importance in the development of a political career in general and appointments to the cabinet in particular. Thus, temporal cycles have to be differentiated. In the long term, it is possible to see a convergence in the profiles of ministers from different ministerial areas around two turning points: 1930–1943 and 1983, moments in time that delimit long cycles of general tendencies. These, at the same time, articulate unequal processes associated with the irreducible particularities of each ministerial area. In the short term, there are conjectural factors linked to concrete socio-historical processes whose study can provide explanations for appointments and the length of time in office; the contributions of our long-term study provide a framework for these studies of specific situations. It is between the short and the long term, where we should situate concrete moments of the formation of specialized bureaucracies as part of processes of acquiring the attributes of statehood, which leads to modifications in the structure and the cabinets of government (cf. Oszlak 2006).

In fourth and last place, politico-party logics constitute a central dimension of analysis, even though in this study we have not taken into consideration the party affiliations of the ministers nor the parties that controlled the government. Of course, the majority of the studies about government teams tend to deal exclusively with these logics. It is because

25. For lawyers’ embodiment of the representation of the republican order, see Lucien Karpik (1995).
26. De Ímaz (1964: 185) notes that the coup d’état of 1943 was carried out in repudiation of professional politicians.
27. In relation to this issue, an analysis of the differences between different types of political professionalization still needs to be carried out.
of the predominance of such studies that we decided to work on more complex and less studied issues.

In conclusion, when studying the cabinet of a particular government, we should make a distinction between different dimensions of mutually determined analysis, attributable to each of the logics described and others that should emerge from the socio-historical analysis of the cabinet.

In this article, we have seen that the cabinet is not organized on the basis of a single hierarchical scale but rather on the basis of a complex matrix which organizes – more or less forcefully, depending on the case – the possibilities of the different political actors to be appointed to different government posts according to their characteristics and those of their competitors. On this point, from the perspective of political sociology, we can propose the task of analyzing the social distance of each minister in respect to the other ministers of the government that he/she is part of, on the one hand, and in relation to his/her predecessors and successors in the ministry that he/she heads, on the other. This would permit us to understand which dimension is the most important in the formation of government cabinets: the social homogeneity of its members or the specific characteristics of each area of government. Certainly, this question cannot be answered in the abstract but must be investigated in each specific historical case.

Recapitulating, we have empirically demonstrated the existence of more or less strong tendencies around which the normal profiles of ministers are constructed. All these serve as criteria for the selection of political personnel for the positions to which they aspire and to the window of opportunity which they find themselves facing.
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