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Bureaucratic Politics & Role Perception Formation in Israeli Civil Service

MA Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Alongside politicians, civil servants hold a significant position in the administrative process of policy design and execution, and thus are influential to its outcome. Therefore, it is important to understand how they perceive their position, to what and whom they feel loyal, as well as how their perceptions are shaped. This research focuses on the factors impacting the formation of civil servants' role perceptions, using bureaucratic politics theory to explain how organizational structures contribute to shaping bureaucrats' perceptions of their work.

This study uses qualitative and quantitative methods of research, leaning on secondary analysis of interviews with senior civil servants. Using qualitative analysis, this research first creates a hierarchy pyramid reflecting the power dynamic between the governmental ministries, dividing them into dominant and subordinate groups. Then, it identifies three overarching role perceptions: loyalty to either the minister, the public, or professionalism; as well as nine sub role types within those. Finally, the research examines the effect of the ministries' positioning within the governmental hierarchy on the formation of civil servants' loyalties and role perceptions, using quantitative analysis.

As a key finding, the analysis presents several differences in the perceptions of bureaucrats from the two groups, as officials from the dominant group were more inclined to perceive their role in terms of loyalty to professional values, relating to different sub-categories of this perception. In comparison, the overarching perceptions of loyalty to the minister and to the public interest did not show significant differences between the two groups, as all officials leaned towards the role of loyalty to the general public over serving the ministers agenda. Additionally, many bureaucrats tended to hold a complex attitude, identifying with several perceptions simultaneously.

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INTRODUCTION

Politicians are often portrayed as those who lead the policy decision-making process, though this work cannot be achieved by them alone. Alongside them, career civil servants play an important part in this process and have substantial influence over its outcome. Given their key position in crafting the policies shaping the public sphere under the law, it is important to understand what motivates these bureaucrats, what directs them in their work, and to what and whom they are loyal. Though these issues describe feelings and attitudes, they have the power to affect behavior. Thus, it is important to examine the attitudes that bureaucrats hold towards their work and how they perceive their roles in the organization that is government (Brewer & Maranto, 2000; Selden, Brewer and Brudney, 1999; Trondal, Mudroch & Geys, 2017).

This research seeks to advance our understanding of how bureaucrats' role perceptions are formed. Past studies on this issue have created typologies and examined the variety of role perceptions that bureaucrats hold, though they have not delved into the process through which these perceptions are formed. In order to fully grasp the significance of loyalty and role perceptions, there is a need to study the antecedents influencing the formation of the different perceptions.

This research examines the factors shaping bureaucrats' role perceptions in governmental ministries in Israel. It analyzes the effect of structural and organizational factors, guided by the bureaucratic politics model. The research is conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of research, leaning on secondary analysis of interviews with senior civil servants, carried between 2014 to 2015 for a different project, which examined bureaucrats' response to the Israeli social protest of 2011.

THE STUDY OF BUREAUCRATIC ROLE PERCEPTION

Given the potential importance of bureaucrats' inputs to the administrative process of policy design and execution, and the need for deeper understanding of what affects policy-making processes, it is necessary to examine the factors influencing bureaucrats' role perceptions. Over the years, different researchers have looked at bureaucrats' role perceptions in different ways, creating a variety of typologies and motivation theories (Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman, 1981; Bovens,

1998; Golden, 2000; Brewer & Maranto, 2000; De Graaf, 2011; Downs, 1967; Petter, 2005; Selden, Brewer & Brudney, 1999; Trondal, Mudroch & Geys's, 2017; Baekgaard, Blom-Hansen & Serritzlew, 2020).

The literature on this issue, as described below, varies in how it conceptualizes bureaucratic loyalties and role perceptions into typologies and in its assumptions regarding the factors influencing their formation. Some refer to studying administrators' loyalties, others to their motivations, role perceptions, or responsibilities. Much of the research looked at the values guiding the bureaucrats or have studied their self-perception as servants of elected politicians, in comparison to other aspects of their personal and professional life (e.g. Bovens, 1998; De Graaf, 2011). These different concepts leading bureaucrats in their work can be looked at as corresponding to different assumptions as to what influences bureaucratic motivation in the administration. In discussing how these perceptions are formed, some researchers assume each person forms his or her own role perception individually, while others point to organizational or external influences on employees.

The study of bureaucratic motivations and role types emerged during the second half of the 20th century, with Anthony Down's Typology depicted in his *Inside Bureaucracy* (1967). Downs's analysis is centered around bureaucrats' different attitudes to their work, theorizing that bureaucrats are motivated to serve their own interests and categorizing them into five types, where some are more self-serving and others more altruistic: climbers, conservers, zealots, advocates, and statesmen. Drawing on 'public choice' theory, his assumption is that bureaucrats' motivations are guided by their constant personal desire to maximize their own interests and power, which influences their behavior within the administration. Though Downs does not specifically refer to these types of bureaucratic motivations as role perceptions, his research opened the gate to future research on bureaucratic behavior and motivations.

Golden (2000) continues this discussion on bureaucrats' motivation, through the lens of bureaucrats' reaction to change in government's political agenda. Golden works to "put a human face on the abstract concept of 'principal-agent' theory", discussing the factors shaping bureaucratic responsiveness to elected officials and improving our understanding of bureaucratic behavior. In her analysis, Golden outlines the importance of examining both individual level and agency level explanations. Golden explains that in addition to individual factors, the norms,

beliefs, practices, and values shared by the members of an organization shape their behavior and decisions. She concludes that self-interest, role perception, agency context and the administrative presidency (under President Reagan, in the case of her study) affect bureaucrats' response to the executive branch. Specifically, in the case that she studied, she found that role perception as X encouraged cooperation with the administration, bureaucrats' self-interest and administrative presidency discouraged resistance, and agency context factors, such as A and B, facilitated resistance, though this is also depended on sub-factors, such as ideology and agency history.

Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman's (APR) research (1981) studied the nature of politicians and bureaucrats' relationship, developing four images to characterize politicians and bureaucrats' roles: policy/administration, facts/interests, energy/equilibrium and "the pure hybrid". These images, they argue, have and may change over time, place and individual actors. The first image defines a clear contrast between political and bureaucratic roles, politicians being the ones who plan, and bureaucrats execute. The second and third images assume both take part in policymaking, though suggest that each have a distinct contribution. The difference between them is the third brings the roles a step closer, where both sides focus on interests, but do so from different angles. As an opposite of the first, the last image paints a true blend of the roles, describing the bureaucratization of politics and politicization of bureaucracy.

The APR study was highly influential and shaped the way political and bureaucratic roles were perceived. Their study was unique because it saw these roles as dynamic and changing over time, from the first image to the last. While defining these images, their assumption on the formation of these roles stresses the individual's point of view. They state that though they acknowledge that institutional and structural influences play a part in shaping the roles, they chose not to enquire into those, but rather focus on bureaucrats and politicians as individual policymakers, studying their thoughts and actions through a variety of countries and political systems.

Their research laid the foundations for many studies that followed on political and bureaucratic role perceptions. Among those, two of the original team worked on later studies together, refining their role images (Aberbach & Rockman, 1988, 2000, 2006). Most recently, Baekgaard, Blom-Hansen & Serritzlew (2020) addressed issues in the original APR study with a comprehensive approach, identifying six distinct images of the political-bureaucratic relationship, as seen from local politicians' point of view: outsiders, skeptics, fatalists, unconcerned, insiders and

mainstreamers. These images create a spectrum of defined relations, examined through the levels of contact and trust of the bureaucracy, as well as the degree of reliance on information and impartiality they credit the civil servants. In comparison to the APR studies' hypothetical-deductive method, the images in the recent research were built through an inductive cluster-analysis, based on individual respondents' information. In regarding the formation on these images, they suggest systemic and individual factors contribute to the differences in the images, referring to differences in ideology, culture, and institutional setups.

De Graaf (2011) on the other hand, looks at role perceptions from the bureaucrats' point of view. In his work, he advances the idea that public administrators serve many 'masters', focusing on individual values, moral conflicts, and ethical dilemmas as factors affecting civil servants' role perceptions. However, he does not delve into the formation process of these factors. In his research, he deals with top public administrators' loyalties and creates a typology for their different loyalties, divided into four categories: by-the-book professionals, society's neutral servants, the personally grounded, and the open and principled independents. Though they had different orientations to their loyalties, one basic theme that arose from all of them was that all the administrators felt loyal to their ministers. Also, most of the top administrators in his research spoke of the importance of serving the public interest and explained that their drive to do governmental work stems from their interest to serve society.

Selden, Brewer and Brudney (1999) examine bureaucrats' role perceptions through the lens of administrative responsibility. Their study defines five distinct types of bureaucrats: stewards of the public interest, adapted realists, business-like utilitarians, resigned custodians, and practical idealists. Each of the five puts their emphasis on a different aspect of the administrative work, some focusing on promoting the public interest, others efficiency, neutrality, or professionalism. Some see themselves as responsive to elected officials, in comparison the others who see themselves as upholding social equity and the public good. In discussing the different types, in four out of the five types Seldens' team do not mention the factors shaping different bureaucratic role perceptions. However, when discussing 'adapted realists' they suggest that the values at the basis of this role perception may be influenced by sources external to the individual, such as rules, regulations, supervisors, and legislators. By referring to these external influences as being unique and in contrast to the other types of role perceptions, one can understand that their assumption as

to the shaping of role perceptions assumes inherent individual-level as opposed to structural and institutional differences.

Petter (2005) distinguished eight types of bureaucratic perceptions of responsibility, which are based on specific values, each connecting to a different potential area of tension in the administrative work. Petter addresses this field by looking at types of bureaucratic responsibility, which sequentially affect bureaucrats' behaviors: moral responsibility, professional responsibility, fiscal responsibility, legal responsibility, leadership responsibility, consumer responsibility, and lastly, public responsibility. In dealing with the factors shaping bureaucrats' role perceptions, Petters' framework suggests that an administrator can influence the type of responsibility his or her employees will embrace. That is, if employees hold different values than their superiors want them to, the latter can create systematic incentives (e.g. changing audit methods) to push subordinate from one responsibility perception to another. This idea demonstrates that Petters considers the specific organizational atmosphere to be what shapes the workers' role perceptions.

Bovens (1998) divides his conceptualization of administrative loyalties and responsibilities into five categories, relating each type of responsibility to its target of loyalty. The five types are the hierarchical, where one's loyalty is to their superiors and organization; personal, representing loyalty to conscience and personal ethics; social, loyalty to peers and social norms; professional, to the professional group and ethics; and civic, loyalty to citizens and democratic structures. In his analysis, he describes how employees of governmental ministries do not function exclusively as private persons, but first and foremost as members of an organization. Bovens explains how an individuals' responsibility perception forms through difficult cases, in which conflict arises between different demanding loyalties in the organization (such as loyalty to superiors versus colleagues or professional values). To demonstrate this, he provides four case studies discussing situations in which civil servants were in positions of ethical conflict, asking "how far does individual responsibility go?". As a distinction to the other four, in his categorization of professional influence, he states that this type of responsibility introduces external moral considerations, as well as personal ones, into the bureaucratic work, and thus provides a basis for the discussion of factors that are external to the individual level.

To sum up, extant research, as elaborated above, studied the types of role perceptions bureaucrats identify with, creating divergent lists of typologies through which to differentiate among civil

servants. Though, for the most part, researchers did not discuss the mechanisms underlying the formation of different bureaucratic loyalties and role perceptions. When discussed, mechanisms were mentioned as potential factors that might influence the development of bureaucratic role perceptions, but they were rarely systematically studied and did not receive the attention as the dominant issue studied in the research. Some of the research suggested that the formation happens as an internal individual process (Downs, 1967; De Graaf, 2011), while others described it as something that can be influenced by external factors, such as the professional workplace environment (Petters, 2005; Bovens, 1998). As stated earlier, Selden’s team for the most part did not discuss the reasons for the role perceptions formation process, though suggested that one of their types may be influenced by workplace-related factors (Selden & others, 1999). Table 1 summarizes the assumptions on the formation of role perceptions in past research.

Table 1: Past research on role perceptions summary

Research	Assumptions regarding the factors shaping role perceptions
<i>Downs</i>	Behavioral types form through constant personal desire to maximize one's interests and power. Individuals differ in their inherent motivations.
<i>Golden</i>	Both individual and agency level factors affect bureaucratic behavior; in addition to individual factors, the norms, beliefs, practices, and values shared by the members of an organization shape their decisions and actions.
<i>Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman</i>	Role perception form through the individual’s point of view. Do not discuss institutional level factors, but rather the bureaucrats and politicians’ standpoint as individual policymakers, suggesting that these can change over time and according to political systems.
<i>Baekgaard, Blom-Hansen & Serritzlew</i>	Suggest systemic and individual factors contribute to the differences in the images, referring to differences in ideology, culture, and institutional setups, though do not delve into the study of these factors.
<i>De Graaf</i>	Individual values, moral conflicts, and ethical dilemmas simultaneously affect role perception. He does not discuss the formation process.
<i>Selden, Brewer & Brudney</i>	Suggests that the ‘adapted realists’ type is shaped by organizational rules and regulations. Do not discuss the factors shaping the other role types, though the frequently used term 'individual' suggests they see the formation as a personal process.
<i>Petter</i>	Specific organizational atmosphere and the creation of systematic incentives may influence employees’ responsibility perception.
<i>Bovens</i>	Responsibility perceptions form through loyalty conflicts within the organization. Acknowledges external factors' influence, such as professions.

The insufficient attention to the formation of the role perceptions is noticeable in the summary, creating a gap in the literature which this research begins to address. By focusing on the causes for the formation of role perceptions, we will aim to offer a deeper understanding of the motivations held by people doing governmental work, and as a derivative of that, the influences on policy-making processes. Thus, this thesis attempts to create a framework through which to examine the dynamics shaping administrators' role perceptions. In order to do so, I wish to examine the formation of role perceptions through the prism of the bureaucratic politics model, analyzing the organizational and structural mechanisms built into systems of government as considerations for what shapes bureaucrats' loyalties.

ROLE PERCEPTIONS AND BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS

In order to discuss the mechanisms affecting the formation of different role perceptions, this research will draw on the theory of bureaucratic politics to explain how organizational structures shape public administrators' role perceptions. The bureaucratic politics model explains governmental action as the result of negotiations among players positioned hierarchically within the government, focusing on the many individuals acting within governmental systems and the interaction among them (Allison & Halperin, 1972).

Bureaucratic politics theory explains public policy as an outcome of the internal struggle across governmental units over resources and credit for their work, as well as the struggle within the administration between the political and bureaucratic levels over control and power to design policy (Allison & Halperin, 1972; Gilad & Cohen, 2018; Gilad, Alon Barkat & Weiss, 2019; Hartlapp Metz, & Rauh, 2013). These theories also discuss the politicization of the bureaucracy and examine the tension bureaucrats face between serving elected officials and remaining nonpartisan and loyal to the public (Cooper, 2018; Ebinger, Veit & Fromm, 2019; Grube & Howard, 2016). There are several elements of the literature on bureaucratic politics which will be useful for understanding the shaping of bureaucrats' role perceptions, as they shed light on the relationships between politicians and bureaucrats and between bureaucratic agencies within the administration, affecting the administrative work of shaping and implementing policy.

Most relevant for this thesis, research has examined how hierarchically-structured bureaucratic politics in the European Commission has a systematic effect on legislation and policy. In Hartlapp Metz, & Rauh's (2013) study on the European Commission, they showed how institutional rules play an important role in structuring the hierarchical dynamics between ministries, giving certain agencies unequal access to influence the policy-making process. This thesis continues this line of research in relation to the Israeli case.

Bureaucratic Politics in Israel

Past research on Israel demonstrated how policy outcomes reflect the struggle and power relations between the interests of several governmental units, representing the political competition over influence and credit between different sides of the political leadership. Decision making structures reflect the efforts and negotiations made by political actors, which create a setting providing certain bureaucratic players with systematic advantage to shape policy. This advantage described in the research is not set in stone and is dependent on the support of key political actors (Gilad & Cohen, 2018).

While studying government translation of movement agenda, Gilad, Alon Barkat & Weiss (2019) used the bureaucratic politics model to explain decision-making processes. They illustrated a bureaucratic politics continuum between confrontational and consensus-seeking dynamics, which works to explain bureaucrats' behavior in decision-making processes and highlights their influence on the translation of movements' agenda to policy plans. This work demonstrates the strong effect that dynamics of bureaucratic politics have on the administrative system and those working within it, providing a reason to believe this theory can be used to explain the formation of Israeli bureaucrats' role perceptions.

Gilad & Cohen's research (2018) on bureaucratic politics in Israel discusses the dominant positioning of the ministry of finance in the governmental system, giving it an advantage over the other ministries in designing policy. They argue that its powers stem from a combination of institutional factors and political actors' disinclination, most of the time, to intervene in inter-ministerial bureaucratic struggles. In discussing the structural factors shaping the abilities of the various ministries to get their policy pushed through, they describe the importance of the ministries' position within the existing governmental hierarchy.

Furthermore, Dahan & Ben-Bassat discussed the Israeli finance ministry's structural advantage in their research on the power relations during the budgeting process. Their analysis shows that this ministry has the ability to set the governmental priorities as part of the financial plan. First, during the initial budget planning when the budget law is passed, and then again during the financial year in its negotiations with other ministries over their resources and project budgeting (Dahan & Ben-Bassat, 2006).

The concentrated power held by the Israeli ministry of finance in setting the budget and directing funds to the different government units creates a dependency for many ministries on the attention and prioritization of this ministry. This creates a hierarchical structure in which the ministry of finance is positioned above other ministries, leaving the other governmental units in an inferior position in their ability to lead policy. For civil servants outside Finance, who are trying to get their project through, this constellation means their work is contingent on efforts by those in the political ranks to "push and shove" in order to get the attention and funds needed. This dynamic creates a functional dependency of civil servants on their ministers and thus affect how they perceive their role in the organization and their loyalty to the elected official leading their ministry. Compatibly, one may assume that bureaucrats who work in ministries or agencies that enjoy relative policy autonomy are less dependent on ministers for the advancement of their professional policy goals, and thereby less inclined to develop a perception of themselves as loyal servants of their ministers.

The above research describes the effects of bureaucratic politics on policy-making processes and the relations between the political and bureaucratic levels. These ideas portray the effect these structures have on those working within the administration and therefore on policy decisions. The influence observed by past research of bureaucratic politics on decision-making procedures conveys the potential of this model to further explain the formation of bureaucrats' loyalties and role perceptions. Consequently, my thesis will attempt to use the bureaucratic politics model to demonstrate how the hierarchically-structured struggle in the Israeli administration over resources affect the role perceptions of the individuals within it.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

Drawing on these ideas, I will be examining civil servants' role perceptions as loyalty to either the minister, the public, or professionalism. These can be looked at as three separate ideas that are led by different values, which people develop devotion to throughout their professional careers. Another way to conceive the above distinction is that loyalty to professionalism and to the public are closely aligned and distinguished from ministerial loyalty as role perceptions that grant administrators legitimacy for disobedience to political leaders, in cases where the bureaucrats feel the need to defend the public good, preserve the rule of law and prevent potential waste of resources (De Graaf, 2011).

In past literature on these ideas, the term 'loyalty' is closely connected to 'role perception' (e.g., Bovens, 1998; Petter, 2005). Thus, I combine notions of loyalty and role perception to create an integrated definition of the ideas discussed in extant research. In his discussion on the definition of loyalty in his research, De Graaf explains that loyalty is sometimes described as an attitude and sometimes as a behavior, or as a sense of dedication. As attitudes influence behavior in the long run, he defines loyalty as "the willing and practical dedication of a person to an object" (De Graaf, 2011). In comparison, Selden, Brewer and Brudney (1999) use the term as 'role perceptions' as pertaining to an administrator's "set of job-related values and attitudes that provides the public administrator a stable set of expectations about his or her responsibilities." Therefore, I will define a bureaucrat's loyalty as the object to which one is dedicated and committed to in one's administrative work.

In this paper, I explore the hypothesis that the positioning of the ministry that a bureaucrat works at within the governmental hierarchy works as the primary factor affecting her or his role perception. I examine the extent to which bureaucrats are affected by structural and organizational, as well as individual, factors in defining their role perception. This proposition stands in contrast to the assumption that they conceptualize their role perception individually and based on personal values only. Though I wish to examine the individual level as well, I argue that the organizational level has an important part in the explanation. Thus, the research question is: How do structural and organizational factors affect bureaucrats' role perception, in terms of loyalty to the public, professional values, or the minister?

My hypothesis is that I am expecting to find influences of the structural political struggle within the government on civil servants' role perceptions. More specifically, I expect to find that bureaucrats working in ministries that are generally more influential within the state bureaucratic hierarchy will tend to perceive their role as entailing loyalty to the public and their professional values, while those working in ministries that are less influential will be more likely to perceive their role as requiring loyalty to the minister. This hypothesis rests upon the idea that some ministries are more dependent on their minister to promote their policy issues than others, whose work may not be hinged on the minister pushing their issues forward, and whose work tends to be led by their ministerial professional task. In the case of the less influential ministries, I expect that their dependency on the minister's support to get their policies through pushes them to attach their loyalty to him or her.

METHODOLOGY

In order to test the research question and hypothesis, I carried out qualitative thematic coding and quantitative content analysis of interview data. The qualitative analysis of the research uses data that is formed of words and text, in comparison to numerical data, or quantitative data. The first analysis of the text was performed in a qualitative fashion, meaning I analyzed the ideas rising from the text, as opposed to using the words as numbers and “counting words” to find proof for the presence of specific ideas in the text. After the first analysis of the text, I performed a quantitative content analysis of the concepts I established, which allowed me to examine whether ministries' hierarchical positioning as a statistically significant effect on civil servants' distinct role perceptions.

The data used in this research is in-depth interviews with 73 senior civil servants, which were conducted between 2014 to 2015 by Prof. Sharon Gilad and Dr. Saar Alon-Barkat as part of a research project on the governmental response to the social protest, which occurred in Israel during the summer of 2011. The participants in the interviews were drawn from 11 central government ministries, which varied in terms of the policies they are responsible for and their organizational size. The research question that led the interviews was not specifically about the formation of role perceptions, but the issue of motivations and loyalties was nonetheless an integral part of the

researchers' interview schedules. Also, by examining the bureaucrats' answers and reactions to the questions about the social protest, it is possible to grasp their perceptions through the issues they discuss and the attitudes they display in their answers.

In order to carry out the research, I first created categories for the different interview subjects according to structural and organizational factors: by different ministries, civil servants' individual ranks, the type of position and professional background. After that, the interviews were analyzed and coded according to thematic categories for different role perceptions: loyalty to the minister, the public interest, or professionalism.

Next, I created a diagram showing the governmental hierarchy, expressing the positions of the different ministries in relation to each other. This ranking divides the ministries into two groups, a subordinate group and dominant group. The division is defined according to the ministries' dependency on the ministry of finance's support in prioritizing their budget and providing them the funds for their projects, as well as their dependency on the ministry of justice in providing them the legal basis on which to lean as they plan policy. After that, I examined what role perceptions are found in the different interviews, their variation and relative prevalence, creating codes for the specific role types within each overarching role perception. Also, I observed what explanations were provided for loyalty to the minister, the public, and to professional values.

The next step taken in analyzing the data and answering the research question is the quantitative analysis to the data obtained from the interviews. The dataset for the quantitative analysis is built so that the columns are: 'ministry' (11 options), 'ministry type' (subordinate or dominant), 'ministry type – divided to three categories (subordinate, ministry of finance or ministry of Justice), 'role type' (9 options, detailed later). The dependent variable—"mentioned"—pertains to whether or not an individual bureaucrat did or did not mention each of the nine role types (yes or no). As for the rows, each respondent is listed in the dataset 9 times, with each role pertaining to one of the 9 nine role types, and thus the 'mentioned' column refers to each role type, coded as one if an interviewee discussed the role perception as part of his/her self-definition as a civil servant, and as zero if this was not the case. Correspondingly, the dataset includes 648 observations (72 bureaucrats for whom coding was plausible*9 role types).

In order to assess the inclination of bureaucrats from the dominant and subordinate ministries to

perceive their role in relation to the various role types, I employ linear probability models (LPMs) in which I treat the binary dependent variable, whether or not a role perception was mentioned by an interviewee, as if linear (Bingham & Fry, 2010). I cluster standard errors at the individual level to reflect the fact that each interviewee appears in the data 9 times, that is once per each role type examined. The independent variables are the ministry type (dominant, i.e., the ministries of Finance and Justice, versus subordinate, including all other ministries), and role types, involving nine categories (as defined later). The role types are coded such that ‘Serve the minister’s agenda’ = 0, making it the code to which the other types are compared. This coincides with the theoretical idea that I am examining bureaucrats’ role perception in relation to the object of their loyalty, comparing their loyalty to the minister with other objects of loyalty, namely the public and professional values. To examine my main hypothesis, I estimate interaction terms between ministry type and role types.

The above modelling allows me to examine whether some types of role perceptions are generally more prevalent than others in interviewees’ self-concept, and whether interviewees from some ministries are more likely than others to emphasize certain role perceptions over others. If the latter is the case, then this would entail a more coherent shared understanding of bureaucrats’ roles in some ministries, compared with a more diverse, or individualistic perception in other ministries resulting in their members’ insignificant inclination to emphasize certain roles over others.

The LPM is convenient in terms of the interpretability of the effects of categorical variables (here, types of ministries and role perceptions), as regression coefficients transparently reflect estimated differences in probability, and interaction terms manifest the contrasts between differences in probability. The alternative of a binary logistic regression, which I have also run, but do not present (available upon request), yields similar results, but its interpretation is more cumbersome and less transparent to the reader.

OPERATIONALIZING MINISTRIES’ POWER

Studying the above research question and hypothesis entails categorizing ministries’ positioning within the Israeli government hierarchy. Starting from the ministry of finance, in addition to the above literature on its unique position as part of the bureaucratic politics paradigm (Gilad & Cohen, 2018; Dahan & Ben-Bassat, 2006), its significance was mentioned also in the interviews analysed

in this research. The salient position of the finance ministry was evident, as bureaucrats from all the ministries who participated in the research spoke of the finance ministry's power to set budget priorities and to push or stop policy ideas. Several spoke of the relationship with the ministry of finance as a struggle, while others as a collaboration, though all set the finance ministry at the top of the power pyramid. Presented are examples of a few of the bureaucrats' views about the finance ministry's effect on their ministries' work:

“We are very much run by the [ministry of finance's] Budget Unit” (Man, Ministry of Economy)

“We don't allocate budget, that's [under the] finance [ministry]... The [decision] that public transportation was at the top of our priorities came from the ministry of finance.” (Woman, Ministry of Transportation)

Besides the references to the finance ministry's power, interviewees from various ministries mentioned the ministry of justice's unique position as well, referring to its ability to block policy plans if they are conceived as incompatible with the law. The idea that one might look at the justice ministry as also having a structural advantage, and even as aligned with the finance ministry's status was also raised by bureaucrats from the finance and justice ministries themselves. Presented are a few examples of these statements by representative of various ministries:

“Q: If the ministry of justice would change its stance [regarding regulatory responsibility for product failure] would your opinion [involving preference for strict standards] change?
A: umm, ... yes, it would be easier for me to work [and accept the risk of flexible standards], but I [would still] have professional responsibility.” (Man, Ministry of Economy)

“Every deck of cards has a joker who can do whatever it wants, ... the [Israeli] government has two joker cards, maybe three; the justice ministry, the finance ministry and the Prime Minister's office, when it's involved.” (Man, Ministry of Finance)

Figure 1 presents a diagram showing the governmental hierarchy as it arises from the interviewees' perceptions, in addition to the literature on bureaucratic politics in Israel. Note that there are no implications to the order of the ministries in the lower level of the diagram as these are seen as one group.

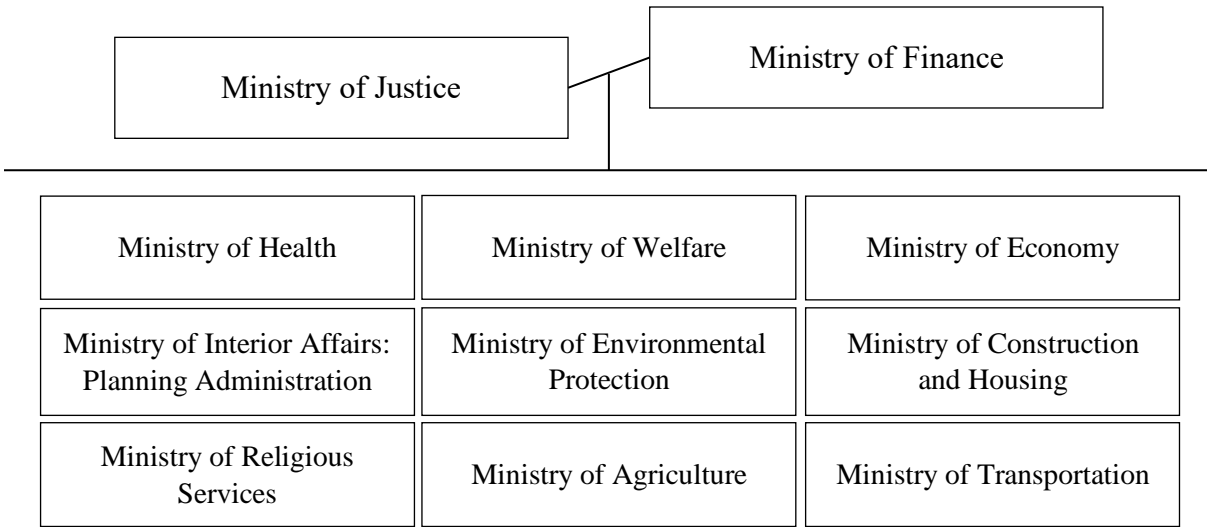


Figure 1: Governmental Hierarchy Diagram

IDENTIFYING TYPES OF ROLE PERCEPTION IN ISRAELI BUREAUCRACY

The analysis of the responses throughout the interviews showed three clear and consistent overarching role perceptions held by bureaucrats from all ministries in this research: loyalty to the minister, loyalty to serving the public, and devotion to professional values. Within each of these overarching role perception categories, interviewees alluded to different dimensions of their role.

Bureaucrats who perceived their role as being about serving the minister portrayed this role in two ways: advancing the minister's agenda, and responsibility to provide advice to the minister. The explanations underlying these roles differed. The argument for serving the minister's agenda was presented through structural and ideological lenses. The structural point of view stated that according to the law, the politicians' role is to make decisions and establish policy, and in comparison, bureaucrats' role is to implement policy. The ideological lens suggested that the minister was chosen by the people and thus represented their wishes and needs, and the bureaucracies' role is thus to execute those wishes as policy plans. The same individuals, when speaking of their roles as responsible for providing the minister with advice, explained that as their role is to serve the minister, thus they must provide him/ her with tools to fulfil their position and advance their political agenda. For example:

“At the end of the day [I am] supposed to be... [the minister’s] ‘right hand man’ who will implement his policy, so if he points towards this or that direction, I execute.” (Man, Ministry of Environmental Protection)

In contrast to the above perspective, other bureaucrats explained that as public servants, whose job is to serve the people, they must provide the minister with advice in order to guide him or her and to promote policy that they see as beneficial to the public good. The following is a representative example:

“You need to provide... the correct professional framework, also a work plan, [and] also correct analysis that will present the real problems being pointed at... and then suggest operative steps that would guide [them] in the right direction” (Man, Ministry of Finance)

Finally, in between the above polar positions, many bureaucrats suggested that while they would stand for and make a case for their policy positions, once the minister reached a decision, they will work to implement the chosen policy and would not fight it. This prevalent notion is presented by the following quote:

“I’ll try to convince him why he is wrong, and if I don’t succeed, with all respect to myself, he came to implement the agenda, that is what he was elected for.” (Man, Ministry of Agriculture)

Most bureaucrats who spoke of their role in terms of serving the public discussed their obligation to serve the general public, whereas some of them spoke about their responsibility to serve a specific sector related to their ministerial work. Another aspect of officials’ self-defined role as public servants related to their sense of mission and calling to public service, that is wanting to do something for the greater good, creating three role types within this overarching role perception.

Those who spoke of serving the general public perceived themselves as having a profound understanding of the public’s needs, the capacity to see the bigger picture and to think about the achievement of long run policy goals, as opposed to politicians’ short-termism. In some cases, bureaucrats referred to serving the general public as an inherent trait of their ministries’ tasks within the government (e.g., since the ministry of health is in charge of the public health system, their role demands they work “for the public”). Additionally, some spoke of their role to protect the general public as opposed to politicians’ tendency to give preference to powerful stakeholders

or to specific constituencies. Likewise, some said that public opinion of their ministry leads them to take the public's needs into account, suggesting that they, rather than politicians, are the representatives of the general, silent, public within the state apparatus, so:

“I think the first thing [that defines this ministry's identity] is the [pursuit of] citizens' good... [a] high commitment to the citizen. To create high quality health services. That is the first thing, the most important.” (Woman, Ministry of health)

“[To be a civil servant is] To think what it [the policy] does to the public, what it does to the market... learn to think as a bureaucrat whose role is to come and think about the good of the country, the public.” (Man, Ministry of Economy)

Alongside bureaucrats' self-perceptions as the representatives of the general public and its interests, some conceived their role as guardians of specific publics or interests. One sector that received particular mention were the farmers, as bureaucrats at the ministry of agriculture clearly expressed that their goal is to further the needs and interests of people working in agriculture. Another social group mentioned specifically were disadvantaged and poor communities, where in various ministries the bureaucrats grasped the protection of underprivileged communities as part of their ministerial goals, such as at the ministry of labor, social affairs and social services, the ministry of construction and housing, and the ministry of finance.

“We are the linchpin between the [ministry's] headquarters and the farmers. We pass the farmers' needs to the headquarters and let them know about decisions made at the headquarters.” (Woman, Ministry of Agriculture)

“It was clear to all in the ministry that we need to provide more money to the poor and the underprivileged, which means public housing and assistance with rental payments.” (Man, Ministry of Construction and Housing)

In discussing their loyalty to professional values, the interviewees spoke of four aspects of their professional role, which reflected their perceived responsibility to bring professional values into decision making processes. Some spoke of the importance of promoting efficient and professional work practices, while others of keeping work ethics. Another viewpoint of this overarching role perception was the discussion of the civil servants' academic training and the knowledge that comes with it, providing them with a professional lens through which they perceive their work.

The last aspect within this perception that the officials spoke of, was the urge to act as ‘policy advocates’, seeing themselves as advocates who can and want to push for change and influential policy programs.

“The first and almost only value [of this department] is professionalism. The system is very complicated... it deals with a large variety of considerations, making it a very professional system” (Man, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Department of Planning Administration)

“The stance from which the ministry of health comes from, is a place that is evidence based, research based... that is their professional truth.” (Man, Ministry of Health)

“The DNA of the budget unit is on the one hand fiscal responsibility. On the other hand, structural change, reforms... That is our role, if we won’t bring [such change], no one will.” (Man, Ministry of Finance)

Most interviewees perceived professional commitment as a force urging them to push for policy programs aligned with their professional stance, seeing themselves as having an important position in the decision-making process. Alternatively, others saw this commitment to professionalism as an attribute pushing them to be less active in promoting policy, as they thought they should stay in their “professional corner”. Presented is an example for the second approach, being the minority:

“I don’t transcend my scope [of responsibility], I don’t plan to manage the State and I don’t mean to give them [the elected politicians] advice [on how to do so]... let them take responsibility, I was not elected, I’ll just provide the judicial umbrella of what is legal and what is not.” (Man, Ministry of Justice)

In this section I identified three overarching role perceptions, and, within those, I specified nine sub role types that will accompany the analysis going forward. Regarding the first overarching role perception, ‘loyalty to the minister’, I presented two sub types: ‘Serve the minister’s agenda’ and ‘Provide advice to the minister’. Regarding the second meta role perception, ‘loyalty to serving the public’, I described three sub role types: ‘general public servant’, ‘specific public servant’ and ‘sense of mission for public service’. The third broad role perception, ‘devotion to professional values’ manifested four sub role types, pertaining to commitment to: ‘academic professionalism’, ‘efficiency and professionalism’, ‘professional ethics’ and being a ‘policy advocate’.

In relation to past research that created typologies for bureaucratic role perceptions, loyalties, and motivation, the three overarching role perceptions I suggest can be found to some extent in various lists of roles throughout the studies. The categories that emerged from my interview analysis partially overlap with those of former typologies (e.g. Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman, 1981; Bovens, 1998; De Graaf, 2011; Selden, Brewer and Brudney, 1999). However, contrary to former research, my analysis differs by suggesting two levels of role categories, as I identified three overarching role perceptions (loyalty to the minister, the public and to professional values), and nine sub role types within these three broad categories.

ROLE PERCEPTION PROBABILITY BY MINISTRY TYPE: Quantitative Findings and Discussion

After presenting my qualitative analysis of the role perceptions as conveyed in the interviews, I now turn to the quantitative analysis, estimating the interaction between officials' various role perceptions and ministry type in which they work. Table 1 presents two linear probability models of interviewees' inclination to assert, or to forego allusion, to a role type. Model 1 presents the effect of ministry type (with subordinate ministries as the reference category, and the ministries of finance and justice jointly analyzed as "dominant"), and the role type categories (with serving the minister's agenda as the reference category). This model essentially measures whether ministry type is associated with a more diverse role perception (which would entail a positive coefficient), and whether some role perceptions are generally more prevalent than others among interviewees. Model 2, which directly examines my key hypothesis, presents a set of interaction terms between role types mentions and ministry type. These interactions are intended to capture whether interviewees from dominant/subordinate ministries are more inclined, as a group, to consistently hold and assert certain role types over others.

Table 1. Linear probability model with Interaction of role type mentions by ministry type:

VARIABLES	Role Type Mentions	
	Model 1	Model 2
1.ministry_type (1=Dominant)	0.0641 (0.0595)	-0.0791 (0.140)
1. Academic Professionalism	-0.236** (0.0784)	-0.236* (0.0908)
2. Efficiency and Professionalism	0.0694 (0.0876)	0.000 (0.105)
3. Policy Advocate	-0.125 (0.0820)	-0.236* (0.0908)
4. Professional Ethics	-0.208* (0.0795)	-0.236* (0.0945)
5. General Public Servant	0.292** (0.0855)	0.255* (0.0989)
6. Specific Public Servant	-0.194* (0.0788)	-0.164 (0.0937)
7. Sense of Mission for Public Service	-0.167* (0.0745)	-0.218* (0.0935)
8. Provide Advice to Minister	0.0556 (0.0687)	0.0182 (0.0765)
1. Dominant #1. Academic Professionalism		0.00107 (0.184)
1. Dominant #2. Efficiency and Professionalism		0.294 (0.176)
1. Dominant #3. Policy Advocate		0.472* (0.184)
1. Dominant #4. Professional Ethics		0.119 (0.172)
1. Dominant #5. General Public Servant		0.157 (0.198)
1. Dominant #6. Specific Public Servant		-0.130 (0.169)
1. Dominant #7. Sense of Mission for Public Service		0.218 (0.126)
1. Dominant #8. Provide Advice to Minister		0.158 (0.171)
Constant	0.457*** (0.0596)	0.491*** (0.0688)
Observations	648	648
Adjusted R-squared	0.102	0.112

Notes: cell entries are non-standardized linear probabilities model estimates with clustered standard errors at the interviewee level in parentheses.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Model #1 indicates that there is no significant effect to ministry type, that is subordinate/dominant ministries do not generally vary in their inclination to mention more/less role types. Additionally,

compared with serving the minister’s agenda, interviewees were significantly more, or less likely, to hold role perceptions as ‘Academic Professionalism’, ‘Professional Ethics’, ‘General Public Servant’, ‘Specific Public Servant’ and ‘Sense of mission for public Service’. Besides one, all these role types present a negative coefficient, meaning that bureaucrats are less likely to conceptualize their role in these terms compared with explaining their role as intended to ‘Serve the Minister’s Agenda’. The exception being ‘General Public Servant’, as this specific role perception had a positive coefficient of 0.292 ($p < 0.01$), entailing a 29.2 percentage points difference compared with serving the minister’s agenda. In order to better describe this finding, I extracted predicted probabilities from model # 1 of Table 1 using Stata margins command.

Based on the regression model, the marginal prediction of bureaucrats perceiving their role as Serving the Minister’s Agenda and as General Public Servants shows that the expected rate of perceiving one’s role as being a General Public Servants is 76.3 percent, higher than the expected rate of perceiving one’s role as Serving the Minister’ Agenda, being 47.2 percent. This analysis indicates that the perception of being a General Public Servants was held by a substantial share of government officials across the board, non-related to the type of ministry they work at. This finding suggests that this role type holds an important position in civil servants’ perception of their work in the government. Figure 2 presents a graph portraying the findings discussed above.

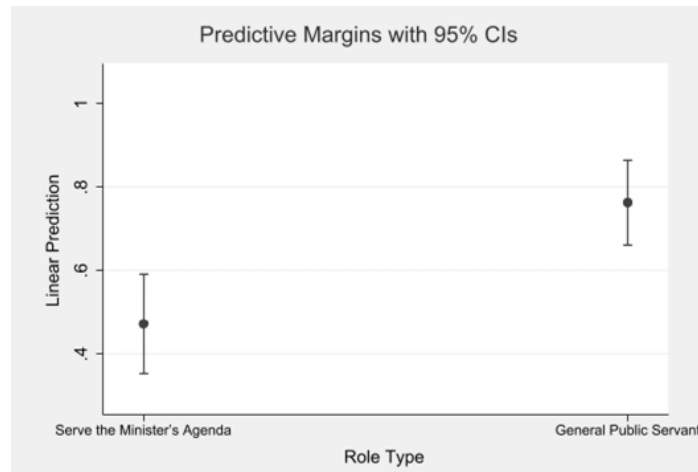


Figure 2: Marginal prediction of perception as serving the minister’ agenda vs as general public servants

The next analysis within Table 1, as depicted in model #2, examined the interactions between the role types and ministry type, relating to my key hypothesis. To better assess the probability of bureaucrats relating to various role types according to their ministry type, I extracted linear probability model predictions for the dominant and subordinate ministries, across the nine role

types examined in this study¹. Similar predictions are obtained when employing mixed-effect models with a random intercept at the individual interviewee level. This examination differs from the regression analysis in that it presents each role type independently, as opposed to being compared to the reference category of ‘Serving the Minister’s Agenda’.

Figure 3 presents the probability of bureaucrats seeing themselves as identifying with each role type, according to the subordinate and dominant ministries. The significance of each finding is presented by the standard error lines around the predicted estimate, according to the level of overlapping between them. If the standard error lines do not overlap, the difference is significant ($p < 0.05$), if they partially overlap, the difference is marginally significant ($p < 0.1$), and if they fully overlap the difference is insignificant. Thus, according to this figure, the statistically significant role types are ‘Efficiency & Professionalism’, ‘Policy Advocate’ and ‘Specific Public Servant’.

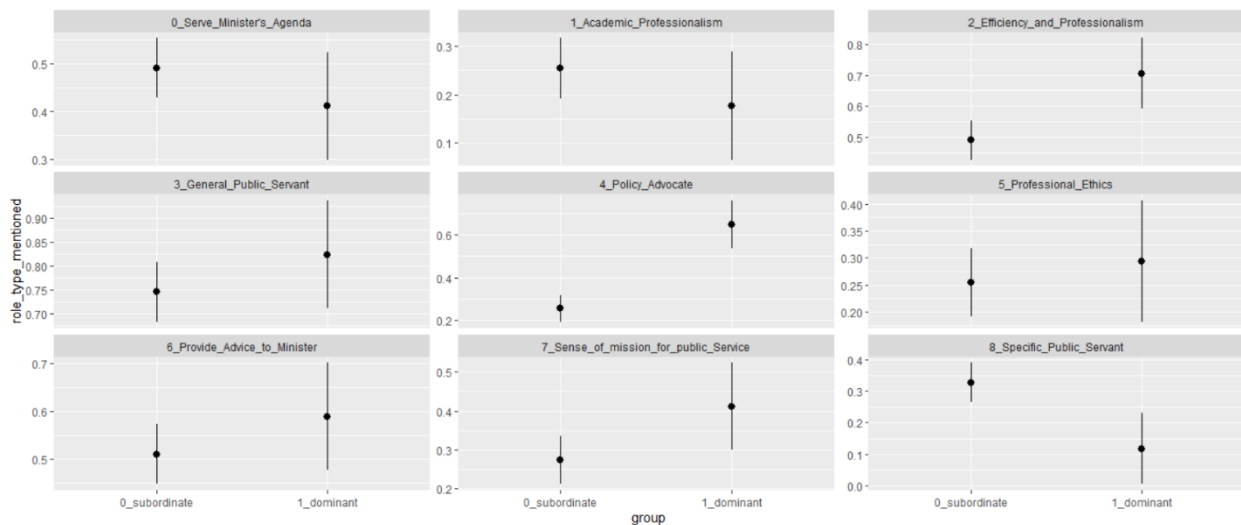


Figure 3: LPM predictions for dominant versus subordinate ministries across role types. Predictions and graphs produced with R `ggeffects` and `ggplot` based on equivalent linear probability models as in Table 1 model #2.

When examining the ‘Efficiency & Professionalism’ role type, the predicted rate for subordinate ministries to perceive themselves as this role type is 49%, whereas for the dominant ministries it stands at 70.5%, entailing a sizable difference between the ministry types. The ‘Policy Advocate’ role type presents a substantial distinction between the ministry types as well, as the predicted rate for subordinate ministries to perceive themselves as policy advocates is at 25.4%, whereas for the

¹ In order to reflect the clustered standard error in the regression analysis, alongside the LPM predictions figure the graphs were also produced using multilevel models as well, providing result that were virtually the same.

dominant ministries it is 64.7%. These role types are both categorized within the role perception of ‘devotion to professional values’ and represent bureaucrats’ leaning towards professional values within their work, suggesting a noteworthy inclination by the bureaucrats from the dominant ministers towards this overarching role perception.

The third significant finding within this predictions examination is within the role type being a ‘Specific Public Servant’, as the predicted rate for subordinate ministries to perceive themselves as servants of specific groups is 32.7%, whereas for the dominant ministries it is at 11.7%. Given that the subordinate ministry type groups together many ministries, one may assume that this finding was largely affected by the unique discussion at the ministry of agriculture and at the ministry of construction and housing, where the officials expressed their leaning towards serving specific social groups (farmers and underprivileged communities, respectively).

Since the Governmental Hierarchy Diagram (Figure 1) presented a distinction between the finance and justice ministries, where even though both were part of the dominant group they held different aspects of structural power in relation to the subordinate group of ministries, it is important to examine this finding in relation to the attitudes held by bureaucrats from each of these ministries. Thus, presented in Table 2 are two additional linear probability models, with model #2 estimating interaction terms between each of the role types and each of the ministries within the dominant group separately. This analysis will allow a better understanding of the findings in the previous regression model presented, and whether they in fact reflect similar perceptions among members of the Finance and Justice ministries, which are jointly opposed to those of bureaucrats from other ministries.

Table 2. Linear probability model with Interaction of role type mentions by three ministry types:

VARIABLES	Role Type Mentions	
	Model 1	Model 2
1. Finance Ministry	0.0343 (0.0695)	-0.127 (0.164)
2. Justice Ministry	0.119 (0.0974)	0.00909 (0.221)
1. Academic Professionalism	-0.236** (0.0785)	-0.236* (0.0914)
2. Efficiency and Professionalism	0.0694 (0.0876)	0.000 (0.106)
3. Policy Advocate	-0.125	-0.236*

	(0.0820)	(0.0914)
4. Professional Ethics	-0.208*	-0.236*
	(0.0796)	(0.0952)
5. General Public Servant	0.292**	0.255*
	(0.0856)	(0.0997)
6. Specific Public Servant	-0.194*	-0.164
	(0.0788)	(0.0944)
7. Sense of Mission for Public Service	-0.167*	-0.218*
	(0.0746)	(0.0942)
8. Provide Advice to Minister	0.0556	0.0182
	(0.0687)	(0.0770)
1. Finance Ministry #1. Academic Professionalism		-0.0364
		(0.166)
1. Finance Ministry #2. Efficiency and Professionalism		0.364
		(0.226)
1. Finance Ministry #3. Policy Advocate		0.691**
		(0.223)
1. Finance Ministry #4. Professional Ethics		-0.127
		(0.177)
1. Finance Ministry #5. General Public Servant		0.200
		(0.226)
1. Finance Ministry #6. Specific Public Servant		-0.0182
		(0.202)
1. Finance Ministry #7. Sense of Mission for Public Service		0.218
		(0.162)
1. Finance Ministry #8. Provide Advice to Minister		0.164
		(0.235)
2. Justice Ministry #1. Academic Professionalism		0.0697
		(0.388)
2. Justice Ministry #2. Efficiency and Professionalism		0.167
		(0.189)
2. Justice Ministry #3. Policy Advocate		0.0697
		(0.181)
2. Justice Ministry #4. Professional Ethics		0.570*
		(0.220)
2. Justice Ministry #5. General Public Servant		0.0788
		(0.328)
2. Justice Ministry #6. Specific Public Servant		-0.336
		(0.230)
2. Justice Ministry #7. Sense of Mission for Public Service		0.218*
		(0.0942)
2. Justice Ministry #8. Provide Advice to Minister		0.148
		(0.174)
Constant	0.457***	0.491***
	(0.0596)	(0.0693)
Observations	648	648
Adjusted R-squared	0.102	0.127

Notes: cell entries are non-standardized linear probabilities model estimates with clustered standard errors at the interviewee level in parentheses.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Comparing model #2 of Table 2 with model #2 of Table 1, various interaction terms present different estimates for the two dominant ministries in relation to the role types. To better assess the probability of bureaucrats from each ministry within the dominant group and the group of subordinate ministries' inclination towards to the various role types, I once again extracted linear probability model predictions for the finance and justice ministries versus the subordinate ministries, across the nine role types.

The estimated predictions in Figure 4 shows that similarly to the former analysis, there are statistically significant differences between the ministry groups for the role types of 'Efficiency & Professionalism', 'Policy Advocate' and 'Specific Public Servant', as well as for the role type of 'Professional Ethics'. Additionally, I find a marginally significant difference for the role type of having a 'Sense of Mission for Public Service'.

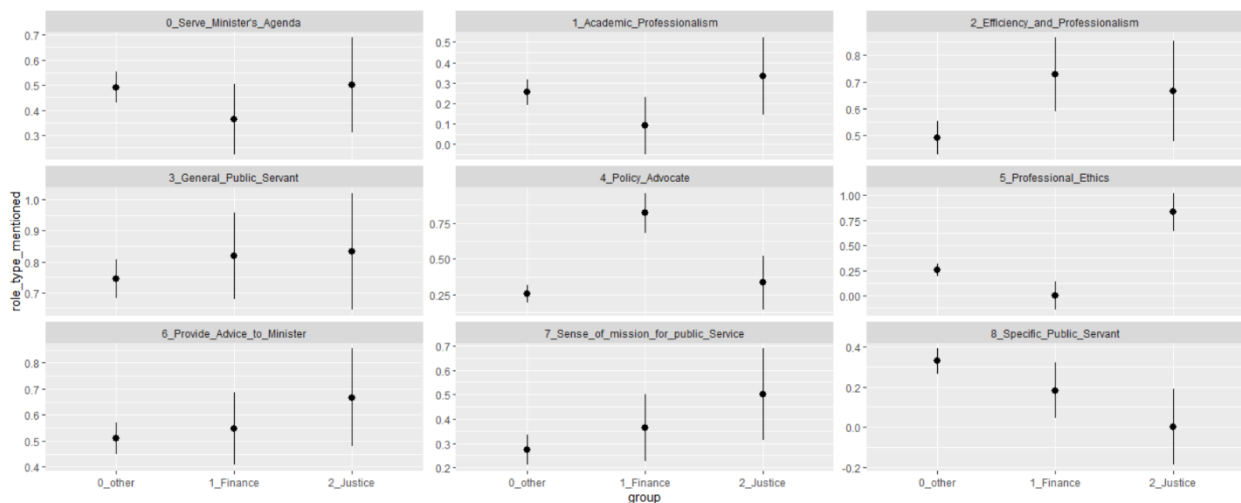


Figure 4: LPM predictions for Finance and Justice versus subordinate ministries across role types. Predictions and graphs produced with R ggeffects and ggplot based on equivalent linear probability models as in Table 2 model #2.

Regarding the role type of 'Efficiency & Professionalism', this analysis shows that the significant difference within the ministry groups is between the subordinate ministries (who's predicted rate is 49%) and between the ministry of finance (at 72.7%), whereas there is no significant difference between the ministry of justice and either of the other groups (rated at 66%). Though the two ministries within the dominant group have a somewhat similar rate of perceiving themselves as upholding efficiency and professionalism, this finding suggests it is the rate of ministry of finance that generated the significant difference in figure 3 between the dominant and subordinate ministry groups.

As for the role type of being a ‘Policy Advocate’, the predicted rate for the ministry of finance is 81.8%, having a statistically significant difference from both the ministry of justice (rated at 33.3%) and the group of subordinate ministries (at 25.4%). This implies that the significant finding for the dominant group of ministries in the previous regression model mirrored a phenomenon occurring specifically within the finance ministry. This finding associating officials from the finance ministry with perceiving themselves as policy advocates indicates that their distinctive task within the government may influence the way they perceive their role as civil servants. This idea is supported by the theoretical literature discussed earlier, which described the influence that systematic advantages held by certain bureaucratic players have on officials’ behavior and decision-making processes (Gilad & Cohen, 2018; Gilad, Alon Barkat & Weiss, 2019). Gilad & Cohen’s study (2018) discussed the structural factors creating the ministry of finance’s unique positioning and power over the other ministries, and Dahan & Ben-Bassat’s (2006) research on the ministry of finance’s work showed that the ministry’s structural advantage laid in its ability to set priorities in policy as part of the budgeting process, relating to the role perception of being a ‘Policy Advocate’.

The role type of being a ‘Specific Public Servant’ in this analysis shows that the statistically significant difference is between the ministry of justice and the group of subordinate ministries. The predicted rate for this role type within the subordinate group is at 32.7%, while at the ministry of justice it is 0%, meaning this role type was not mentioned even once within this group of civil servants. Though not significant, the predicted rate at the ministry of finance is 18.2%, relating to the interviewees from the ministry who spoke of the importance of caring for underprivileged groups as part of their work. These findings imply that the statistically significant difference seen in the previous analysis was impacted by the predicted rate at the ministry of justice.

An interesting finding in this analysis are the statistically significant differences found between the three groups in relation to the role type of ‘Professional Ethics’, which were not visible in the previous analysis (which had the ministries of justice and finance grouped together). This analysis shows significant differences between each group and the two other groups, as the predicted rate for the subordinate group is 25.4%, for the ministry of finance 0%, and at the ministry of justice it is 83.3%. This finding suggests that the role type of adhering to professional ethics is prominent within the ministry of justice, while being a complete “non-issue” within the ministry of finance, highlighting the difference in attitude between the two dominant ministries.

When examining the statements by interviewees from the justice ministry, a considerable portion of their allusion to their professional goals and ethical commitment related to their task of keeping and protecting the law. The rate of which ‘Professional Ethics’ was mentioned by respondents from the ministry of justice as relates to this responsibility of the ministry, suggests that their structural position of guiding governmental policy to be compatible with the law may have affected the way individuals in the ministry perceive their role. Presented is a quote expressing this idea:

“[the ministry of Justice officials] see themselves as a sort of gatekeeper in relation to other ministries, [...] who are led more by the ministers... many times the feeling is that this ministry is the one who stops wild initiatives, illegal initiatives, it is the gatekeeper, it needs to protect and this relates to the ethos as well.” (Man, Ministry of Justice)

Alongside ‘Professional Ethics’, another role type in which the ministry of justice stood out with a marginally significant difference was for having a ‘Sense of Mission for Public Service’, as the predicted rate for this role type within the ministry is 50%, while the rate within the subordinate group of ministries is 27.2%. The rate shown by the finance ministry is 36.3%, though statistically insignificant. This finding suggests a noteworthy inclination by bureaucrats from the ministry of justice towards a sense of mission in their work. This may relate to the overall attitude held by civil servants at the ministry of justice regarding their role perception, where they heavily discussed the importance of their ministerial task to protect the law. When discussing their position and role within the government, officials spoke of the force driving them to work in the government in comparison to the private sector, stating that they found the work being done as being important and meaningful. This idea rose in relation to the unique work of protecting the law being done as part of the ministry of justice. For example, one of the officials discussing the way he perceived his role within public service and described the ministry’s task within the government as such:

“The rule of law and human rights. It’s [about] Uncompromising enforcement... Also when facing the most senior positions in the state... and enforcing the lawful and appropriate way to act when needed.” (Man, Ministry of Justice)

As this conversation continued the official spoke about the ministry personnel’s attitude and explained:

“Those who come to work here come to work in service of the state, where the engine pushing them is usually a sense of mission. The strongest resource we have in the ministry of justice, is the human capital.” (Man, Ministry of Justice)

This discussion linking the bureaucrats’ professional task and their sense of mission within public service supports the idea raised in my hypothesis, suggesting a connection between the structural position and professional task of the ministry having and being related to the conception of one’s role.

COMPLEXITIES AND CONTRADICTING PERSPECTIVES WITHIN INTERVIEWS

As a rule, the officials interviewed tended not to perceive their role as being defined by just one of the role perceptions identified in this research and were inclined to embrace several of them to different extents within the same interview. Some of them even considered this as part of their explanation of the complexity of their position as professional civil servants. When doing so, they conveyed which aspect of their role perception was most dominant, as well as what they perceived as its boundaries.

A noticeable example of this phenomenon was at the ministry of finance. As the officials there presented their role perceptions, many of them explained that serving the public was their goal. Additionally, advising the minister stood as the channel through which to promote policy that will work “for the people” and thus their task was to present policy options, all while leaning on their professional experience and knowledge to do so. They clearly stated that as bureaucrats they would not go against the minister, though they would argue their point in order to convince him or her that their professional argument is the way to go. In this statement they expressed that their goal when working with the minister is to ensure that policy is planned professionally, for the public’s good. Presented is a quote expressing this approach:

“The role of the bureaucracy is very clear. The bureaucracy needs to provide suggestions for all problems and subjects needing attendance, they need to present policy options... They need to hold their stance and do so with courage, detached from external pressures... but once a decision is made, they need to implement it if they like it or not... He [an official]

is a public servant, he is not a political appointment, he serves the public” (Man, Ministry of Finance)

Though this attitude was especially evident in at the ministry of finance, similar views were held by interviewees from various ministries. Likewise, the two role perceptions of serving the general public and working towards efficiency and professionalism were frequently spoken of together, creating a dynamic where bureaucrats perceived working efficiently as a means to provide good service to the public. This, however, did not clash with their sense of loyalty to the minister, as they made it clear they would not disregard his or her decisions.

Not all bureaucrats actively brought up and discussed the interaction and contradiction of the role perceptions on how these coexist alongside each other. Generally, there were various ways in which respondents grasped the different perceptions within the same interview, some created a distinction between their own opinion vs. what “a bureaucrats’ role is”, while others leaned on the prominent perception in their organizational surroundings as an explanation for their own attitude.

When discussing the common perceptions held within their organizational environment, many of the respondents repeatedly referred to their role and responsibilities in terms of the organizational identity of the department or ministry that they worked at, as an indicator for their own mindset. When doing so, they tended to use plural pronouns to describe their ministerial role (*we, our, here at the ministry*), suggesting that individuals’ role perception is partly shaped by their identification with the organization’s identity, as they understand it. Presented are examples for these statements:

“[The] ethos of the ministry that says that we are public servants. We are the only ones who care for the public environmental interest” (Woman, Ministry of Environmental Protection)

“The ethos of the department is very strong, [holding] that we work for the good of the insured and [public] investors” (Man, Ministry of finance)

In a small number of instances, this discussion on the common perception at the ministry of their organisational role was used as an object of disagreements and explained as the concept from which the interviewee diverged.

As a whole, the interviewees did not regard the various perceptions existing side by side as a problem, suggesting that the work of civil service embodies the different loyalties simultaneously.

This view suggests that the original formulation of the research question and hypothesis and question as a “this or that” discussion, does not fit with the way most bureaucrats’ perceive their role within the system, where instead they hold a much more complex and interweaved view on their loyalties and role perceptions. Still, as evident from the statistical analysis, the clustering of role perceptions notwithstanding, I observed that some role perceptions (e.g., policy advocate, professional ethics) were more dominant in the self-conception of bureaucrats from the dominant ministries, of finance and justice.

CONCLUSIONS

This research examined the issue of the formation of civil servants’ role perceptions, contributing to the current understanding on Israeli bureaucrats’ loyalties in the administrative work. To conduct the study, I created a hierarchy pyramid reflecting the power dynamic between the dominant and subordinate ministries in the Israeli government, leaning on former literature (Gilad & Cohen, 2018; Dahan & Ben-Bassat’s, 2006) and statements provided by the bureaucrats interviewed.

In my analysis of the interviewees’ attitudes towards and perceptions of their work and position, I identified three overarching role perceptions, as well as nine sub role types within those; loyalty to the minister: serve the minister’s agenda & provide advice to the minister; loyalty to serving the public: general public servant, specific public servant & sense of mission for public service; devotion to professional values: academic professionalism, efficiency and professionalism, professional ethics, & policy advocate.

My research question focused on the formation of these perceptions. Drawing on the bureaucratic politics model I hypothesized that the ministries’ positioning within the governmental hierarchy would act as antecedents for the formation of loyalties and role perceptions of the civil servants working within them. More specifically, I suggested that bureaucrats working in the dominant ministries will tend to perceive their role in terms of loyalty to the public or to professional values, and those working within the group of subordinate ministries would relatively tend to see themselves as loyal to the minister.

My general hypothesis regarding there being structural and organizational influences on one's role perception was partially confirmed, as I found some differences in the way bureaucrats from the dominant and subordinate ministries perceived their roles.

The first analysis, which looked at the dominant ministries as one group, showed an orientation towards the perceptions of upholding 'Efficiency & Professionalism' and of being a 'Policy Advocate' within the dominant group, and a leaning towards the role perception of being a 'Specific Public Servant' within the subordinate group of ministries. Once I divided the dominant ministries and examined the justice and finance ministries individually, I found several distinctions within those and additional significant differences between the three groups.

Compared to bureaucrats from the subordinate ministries, those from the ministry of finance were more inclined to perceive their role as 'Policy Advocates' and as supporting 'Efficiency & Professionalism', and those from the ministry of justice were more likely to conceptualize their roles as being loyal to 'Professional Ethics' and having a 'Sense of Mission in Public Service', all of which, except one, are situated under the perception of devotion to professional values. The exception being having a 'Sense of Mission in Public Service' which is part of the role perception of being loyal to serving the public. As for the officials from the subordinate ministries, they presented a significant leaning towards the role type of serving a specific group in society. though as stated, this may have been affected by the aggregation of these ministries into one group, and specifically by the noteworthy discussion within the ministries of agriculture and of construction and housing on the communities their respective ministries are responsible for.

Regarding the perceptions of being loyal to the minister or to the public interest, I found that all bureaucrats were generally more inclined to perceive their role as loyal to the general public than to serving the ministers agenda. When I added the interaction with ministry type to the analysis, there were no significant differences between the perceptions of bureaucrats from the two types of ministries in relation to these loyalties, also when the dominant ministries were analyzed individually.

Ultimately, the above analysis suggests that my original assumption regarding the specific inclinations of bureaucrats from the subordinate vs dominant ministries towards this or that role was partially confirmed. As shown, officials from the justice and finance ministries were more inclined to perceive their role in terms of loyalty to professional values, alluding to different sub-

categories within this meta role perception, as well as having a slight leaning at the ministry of justice towards one of the role types within the overarching role perception of loyalty to serving the public. Conversely, to the most part they were no more, or less likely than bureaucrats from the subordinate ministries to conceive their role in terms of loyalty to the minister or to the public interest.

Moreover, when delving into the reasoning given by officials for being simultaneously loyal to serving the minister and the public, many officials saw them as coexisting alongside each other and not necessarily clashing. This finding relates to De Graafs' study (2011), in which the basic theme he found among the officials in his research was a sense of loyalty to the minister, alongside a devotion to serving the public interest, also being what pushed them in their administrative work. In De Graaf's research these perceptions are not opposed to each other and he speaks of the civil servants as having 'many masters'. In comparison, this finding differs from the approach in Selden, Brewer and Brudneys' study (1999) in which part of their 'responsibility types' are responsive to elected officials, contrast to their other types who are loyal to the public and social equity.

Another finding relevant to the influence of organizational factors on the formation of one's role perception was bureaucrats referring to their role perception as related to their ministry's task, as well as speaking of their perception in plural terms, associating themselves to the way they comprehended their organizational identity. This relates to former studies on bureaucratic role perception, who spoke of the organization's values, norms and practices, as having key influence on how its employees perceive their work (Bovens, 1998; Golden, 2000; Petter, 2005).

The theoretical significance of these findings is the insight into the influence of the structural positioning of the finance and justice ministries on the role perceptions of those working within them. This influence is shaped by their specific authorities over other ministries in regard to policy guidance (due to the funding process or compatibility with the law), suggesting an effect on the way those bureaucrats see their work within the government, and thus effecting their attitudes and behavior in the administrative process. Moreover, the research may contribute to the study of bureaucratic politics in Israel, as it furthers our understanding of the relations between various governmental ministries. Though former research had discussed the ministry of finance's unique position (Gilad & Cohen, 2018; Dahan & Ben-Bassat, 2006), this research expanded the discussion

to include the relations between the ministry of justice and other ministries' work, and its influence on the officials involved.

As to the current research limitations that must be addressed, the interviews used in this thesis were conducted as part of a research on a different subject, which related to the study of bureaucratic role perception, but also dealt with other issues. Moreover, the interviews were conducted about five years before this thesis and discussed the interviewees' attitudes towards events from four years before that, meaning that the content in the interviews could be considered outdated to the reality during the time that this thesis was written. If I were to carry interviews solely for this thesis, I would probably have asked different questions throughout the interviews and thus received somewhat different answers for their analysis. In addition, due to insufficient resources the coding to the interviews for this research was conducted only by the thesis student, in consultation with the supervisor and a postdoctoral researcher, but were not systematically verified by means of statistical inter-coder reliability. This may have affected the content and consistency of the analysis as another pair of eyes could have added insight to more or different sections in the interviews that may have been relevant to the study.

Future research on this subject could continue the study of factors shaping bureaucrats' role perceptions by examining the effect of profession, or rank within the ministry as other organisational factors, as well as elements like familial situation, gender or years of experience for individual factors. Such research could ask the interviewees directly how they saw the formation of their role perception, if they saw it as influenced more by external or internal components. Another expansion on the research could be towards the field of bureaucratic politics, diving into the position of the justice ministry and furthering our understanding of its structural influences and relations to other ministries in the Israeli government.

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