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**MINISTERIAL CAREERS
IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS**

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MINISTERIAL CAREERS IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS

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In order to understand the real structure and even the behavioural characteristics of cabinet government, a subject which is still, as is well-known, largely mysterious, a detailed study of careers of ministers provides many important clues. In a previous paper, in which the careers of ministers in Austria and Belgium were examined, major differences were indeed discovered in some of the characteristics which are held to be central in cabinet government (1). For instance, there were substantial differences in the proportion of ministers drawn from parliament in the two countries: in Austria, a substantial minority of the ministers had not been in parliament before coming to office, while in Belgium over 85 percent of the ministers were parliamentarians. This, and other differences, suggest that the two countries correspond to two variations of cabinet government, the Belgian model being truly political, while the Austrian executive could be labelled 'managerial'.

Two country studies are not sufficient to establish firmly these contrasts, however; nor can they of course enable us to see how far other models might be in existence or whether the two countries are at polar ends of an underlying continuum. It is therefore necessary to undertake a more general analysis in order to discover the extent to which differences exist among ministerial careers and what such differences might reveal about the nature of cabinet government. The purpose of the present paper is to constitute a first step towards such a general analysis.

* * * *

If what cabinet government is in reality still needs to be discovered, there is seemingly little doubt about the nature of the 'ideology' or 'philosophy' of such a government: cabinet government is the constitutional and legal embodiment of the idea of representative government. Previously labelled parliamentary government, this form of executive came increasingly to be known as cabinet government as the effective power of the legislature seemed to decline. But the parliamentary and representative origins have not been abandoned, in law or in fact: the cabinet has to retain the confidence of parliament to remain in office. Moreover, the parliamentary origins of the system continue to have two consequences. First, unlike other governmental systems,

cabinet government is deemed to be collective; the executive is a government in the strong sense of the word: it is not a collection of ministers. Second, the ministers constitute a different 'class' from the civil servants, who are deemed to provide technical advice as well as implement the decisions of the cabinet as a whole and of the ministers individually.

Thus cabinet government is ostensibly representative, linked to parliament, and collective: these are characteristics which are bound to have consequences for the recruitment of the ministers and for the patterns of ministerial careers. Conversely, it is natural to expect that ministerial recruitment and careers will reflect the main characteristics of cabinet government; specifically, we would expect ministers to be, on the whole, more 'representative' than 'technical' or 'specialist', to be drawn 'normally' from parliament, and to emerge from political groupings, political parties in particular, where they would have had occasion to work previously together.

Admittedly, despite this general philosophy, a certain degree of ambiguity has always existed in cabinet government, as the legal model which came to prevail in the twentieth century was often the result of concessions which monarchs made, more or less willingly, to the democratisation process. Thus, while all cabinet governments came to be politically responsible to parliament,

heads of State (and their prime ministers) succeeded in some cases in retaining the right to select ministers in a more independent manner. The requirement that ministers be drawn from parliament is therefore far from universal; there can even be the requirement, as in France, the Netherlands or Norway, that ministers cease to be members of the legislature when they come to office. Indeed, though cabinet government can be said to proceed from parliamentary government (and this is sometimes the case historically), it is also the case that cabinet government stands in opposition to parliamentary government in that the latter is viewed as being more dependent on the legislature than the former, a development which seemed increasingly necessary in the twentieth century if the whole mechanism was to remain effective.

As a matter of fact, while past traditions may still influence the characteristics of modern cabinet government, and specifically do so with respect to the personal linkage between cabinet and legislature, the requirements of policy-making to-day may be viewed as having an even greater impact and thus to create a new and strong element of tension in the system. The question no longer seems so much to assert the relative autonomy of the executive vis-a-vis the legislature as to ensure that the government has the administrative and technical skills to achieve its goals and in particular to give an effective lead to the civil service. In this respect, the representative character of cabinet

government has come under attack, as it seemed at least as important to ensure that ministers be able to do their departmental job as to see that they remain in touch with parliament, parties, and interest groups. Managerial and technical skills seem therefore to become part of the equation, although they may still not become part of the legal requirements or of the underlying philosophy of the system.

These questions have obviously a direct impact on the recruitment and career of ministers. Where the 'traditional' conception of cabinet government might suggest that ministers be drawn from parliament and indeed constitute a representative cross-section of the community, a managerial or technical emphasis would suggest that ministers be drawn from occupations where managerial and technical skills are at a premium. Managerial and technical requirements also seem to entail that ministers remain in the same post for a substantial period, as it appears unrealistic to expect effective influence on the part of transient or even short-term ministers.

Such a suggestion in turn appears to affect, not just the parliamentary and representative nature of cabinet government, but also its collective character: ministers remaining in the same post for a number of years are unlikely to be prepared, indeed are

unlikely to be willing to place a marked emphasis on decision-making in the group as a whole. This may play in the hands of strong prime ministers who may prefer their ministers to remain confined within the province of their departments, though there will also be an effect, at the implementation level, as administrative coordination, and not just collective decision-making, may be seriously impaired.

There are thus contradictory pressures on cabinet government: these are likely to affect, not only decision-making processes, but patterns of recruitment and of composition of governments. To these contradictions have to be added the nature of the political scene and, in particular, the party configuration. Whether cabinet government should stress representation or administrative skills may be in part the result of ideologies and traditions in a particular country as well as of the 'technical' characteristics of the contemporary world; but such a development is also likely to be the result of the constraints imposed by the distribution of party strengths in parliament. Thus the duration of ministers, the rotation of ministers from one post to another as well as the selection of government members from certain occupational groups may depend markedly on the extent to which the process of formation of the government is narrowly constrained or relatively open.

Given the variety of these influences, it would be surprising if the recruitment of ministers and the shape of ministerial careers were to follow only one model of cabinet government; it is indeed not surprising that we should have found major differences between Austria and Belgium in this respect. A general analysis should lead to the discovery of more complex patterns. It is to be expected that party configurations, on the one hand, and the tension between 'representative' and 'managerial' tendencies, on the other, will lead to a variety of combinations which will be materialised in terms of differences in the original background of ministers, in terms of differences in the proportion of parliamentarians, as well as in terms of differences in duration and turnover.

On some of these matters, we can attempt to speculate what the role of party systems or of 'representative' or 'managerial' traditions may be; it would seem for instance that a complex party system will lead to greater weight being given to the representative element. But the ramifications of the influence of these factors are too numerous and too subtle to be easily determined in an a priori manner. It seems therefore better to attempt to map out, on a country basis, the characteristics of the ministerial careers with respect to a number of variables, and specifically duration, positions, parliamentary origins, and professional background. Having seen the extent to which careers

patterns vary across Western European countries, we will then be able to return to an examination of the possible 'causes' of these variations and assess the role of party systems and of the 'representative-managerial' dimension in shaping ministerial careers in contemporary Western Europe.

The analysis which is presented here is based on ministers in sixteen Western European countries from the end of the Second World to the end of 1984. The only Western European countries not included in this analysis are Portugal, Spain, and Greece, where the parliamentary system has either been in existence for a much shorter period (Spain, Portugal) or been interrupted (Greece); moreover, as there are considerable differences in the nature of the French system before and after 1958, the careers of French ministers are analysed since 1958 only.

1. The characteristics of ministerial duration in Western Europe.

The most obvious characteristic of a ministerial career is its duration. This is particularly true at the two extremes: someone who is in office for less than a year can scarcely be

regarded as having been effectively in government; someone who has been in office for over a decade can almost be regarded as a 'professional' minister. In Western Europe, most ministers are in an intermediate situation: a majority are in government over two years and less than a decade; and between a third and a half are in government between four and ten years (except in Finland and in Fifth Republic France where the proportions were respectively 16 and 27 percent). These men and women are neither transient members of the government nor 'old hands'. One can therefore say that, in every country, with the possible exception of Finland, there is a substantial group of ministers whose longevity is such that they ensure basic stability to the government as well as continuity of patterns of behaviour over time; as a matter of fact, as careers in Finland may be extended over a long period because of frequent interruptions, there is there, too, a substantial degree of continuity among ministers.

The situation at both extremes is rather interesting, however, as it shows greater differences among the countries: both the percentage of ministers who were in office less than a year and the percentage of ministers in office for a decade or more varies markedly between a minimum of two percent and a maximum of thirty percent (Table 1). In both cases, countries tend to fall into two groups. With respect to the proportion of short-term ministers, in one group of eight countries, the proportion is very

low (7.5 percent or less); in six other countries, it is substantial (11-16 percent); Austria alone stands between the two groups with 9 percent and Finland is at the top with 24 percent of its ministers having lasted less than a year. There are also two clearly distinct groups with respect to the proportion of ministers having lasted in office over ten years. The proportion is 7 percent or less in seven countries (the lowest being Finland with 2.5 percent) and between 10 and 17 percent in eight countries, with Switzerland, alone, being markedly above, as 29 percent of its ministers had high longevity.

Thus a first impression based on these measures suggests an interesting contrast. On the one hand, there is a large group of ministers whose duration in office is near the average of about five years, the only exceptions being Finland (where many ministers last about three years) and possibly the French Fifth Republic (but in part because the period of analysis ended in 1984, a point when ministers of the 1981 Socialist government had lasted only three years). On the other hand, among the minority of ministers who had a very short or a very long tenure, differences are sharp, and on both aspects: countries cluster into clearly-defined groups. These clusters need to be examined.

To begin with, the countries which have a high proportion of transient ministers are also those which have few long-term

ministers. This, of course, is to be expected in view of the fact that there is everywhere a large group in the middle. In practice, if countries are plotted on a graph by reference to both the percentage of one-year ministers and the percentage of ministers having been in office at least ten years, the distribution follows closely the curve of a hyperbola with ten countries being neatly located at four points; and these points are symmetrically distributed with respect to the two axes (Diagram I). Thus the two most distant positions (30 percent - 2 percent) are occupied by Switzerland and Finland; the more central positions are occupied by the other countries, with Britain, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Malta, and Iceland having 10-15 percent of their ministers lasting over ten years in office and 5 percent or less lasting less than a year, while, in five other countries (Belgium, Italy, 5th Republic France, Norway, and the Netherlands), the situation is the reverse.

This leaves only three countries outside these four positions, Austria, Luxembourg, and Denmark. In Austria and Luxembourg the proportion of long-standing ministers is 15-16 percent, as it is in Germany, Malta, or Iceland, but the percentage of short-term ministers is also rather high - about 9 percent in Austria, 13 percent in Luxembourg: this means that, in these two countries, the proportion of ministers remaining in office between two and nine years is appreciably lower than it is

in other Western European countries. However, in both cases, an unusually large number of new ministerial appointments were made in 1984, the last year of this analysis: it was pointed out in the paper devoted to Austria and Belgium that the 'real' proportion of one-year ministers in Austria was close to five percent. The same is true of Luxembourg: in that country, three of the five ministers who lasted in office less than a year were appointed in 1984; they remained in office beyond the end of 1985. There were therefore only two 'real' one-year ministers in post-World War II Luxembourg - about four percent of the total (of 52 ministers). Thus it seems justifiable to claim that, were it not for reshuffles having occurred in 1984, both Austria and Luxembourg would occupy the same position on the graph as Germany, Malta, or Iceland. In Denmark, on the other hand, the proportions of one-year ministers and of ministers having been in office ten years or more are both very low: Denmark is thus the only true 'exception', in that its ministers tend to stay in office for periods which are very close to the average.

With the exception of Denmark, therefore, the duration of ministers in Western European countries falls into four distinct groups: it is worth examining these four groups of countries somewhat more closely. First, the fact that they are located along a hyperbola reinforces the impression which the examination of the proportion of 'intermediate-duration' ministers had suggested. In

Western Europe, governments are not run by small numbers of ministers lasting in office for very long periods with a very large 'tail' of office-holders who are mere 'passengers': this situation characterises some Third World countries; it can be described as one in which an oligarchy of ministers is likely to dominate the decision-making process, since the many who have been in power for short periods cannot be expected to carry much weight in confrontation with a few old hands. In Western Europe, the situation is almost uniformly different, the majority of ministers having been in office for substantial periods; specifically, contrary to what is sometimes believed, Italy is not different from other Western European countries in this respect: the proportions of long-standing ministers are not particularly large, nor are these confronting large numbers of one-year ministers. As can be seen from the graph, Italy is located alongside Belgium, Fifth Republic France and the Netherlands.

Second, the countries are located on the graph at four points only, and in a symmetrical manner. This suggests that there is, not only a general inverse relationship between proportions of long-term and short-term ministers, but a detailed inverse relationship as well, Denmark being, as we noted, the only 'true' exception. On the one hand, Switzerland and Finland are almost the mirror-images of each other in this respect, while, on the other hand, Austria, Britain, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Iceland,

Luxembourg and Malta are the mirror-images of Belgium, the Netherlands, Fifth Republic France, Italy and Norway.

Finland and Switzerland are at the extreme opposites of the spectrum in terms of proportions of short-term and long-term ministers: yet they have, in a number of respects, similar political characteristics; in particular, they both have a fractionalised party system and they therefore both have multi-party coalitions. The difference is at the level of the institutions and the practices of coalition-building. While, in Switzerland, the grand coalition is the norm, it is extremely rare in Finland; while the Swiss constitutional system leads to the individual selection of federal councillors on a regular four-year term, the Finnish semi-presidential system leaves considerable leeway to the Head of State in fashioning the government. The consequences on ministerial duration are striking: Switzerland has by far the highest proportion of long-term ministers and only had one short-term minister (indeed this is a case of a minister appointed in 1984 but who remained in office beyond the end of 1985); Finland, on the contrary, has the highest proportion of short-term ministers and the smallest proportion of long-term ministers among Western European countries.

The distribution of countries in the other two groups also deserves to be noted. One of the groups includes all the very

small Western European countries as well as Britain, Germany, Austria and Sweden. It seems difficult to believe that it should be accidental that the three smallest countries - Iceland, Luxembourg (if one discards, as suggested above, the 1984 appointments), and Malta - should be located at the same point; it seems at least permissible to suggest that the smallness of the polity - and of the political elite, reflected in the small size of the parliaments - accounts in part for the low turnover and the relatively high proportion of long-standing ministers.

On the other hand, Britain, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, and Austria differ sharply from Belgium, the Netherlands, Fifth Republic France, Italy and Norway, both with respect to the proportions of short-term ministers (again if, in the Austrian case, the 1984 appointments are discarded) and of long-standing ministers. Britain has a two-party system; Germany and Austria have both been characterised throughout the period by near-two party systems and by the very stable nature of their coalitions; Swedish governments have been dominated by the social-democratic party while in Ireland Fianna Fail single-party governments have alternated with coalitions dominated by Fine Gael. On the other hand, in Belgium, Fifth Republic France, Italy and the Netherlands, a strong and truly central party may have dominated political life during all or most of the period, but that party has had to be in coalition with a variety of smaller parties at

different points in time; in Denmark and Norway, the dominance of one party (the social democratic party) has gradually given way and been replaced by complex and somewhat unstable coalitions.

The following overall conclusions can therefore be drawn. First, there is an inverse relationship between transient ministers and long-term ministers among Western European governments (Denmark alone being different and having both few one-year and few long-lasting ministers). Thus, on the whole, Western European governments are ruled by ministers who have some experience of office, but not very long experience. Second, very small countries are likely to have a high proportion of long-term ministers and a low proportion of short-term ministers. Third, where the system is parliamentary in the technical sense, the proportions of long-term and correspondingly of short-term ministers appear related to the existence of the number of parties in the government: with one party governments and coalitions of two parties only, countries are likely to have a relatively high proportion of long-term ministers and a relatively low proportion of short-term ministers; when coalitions are more complex, but there is a dominant party, the proportions of long-term ministers remain significant and those of short-term ministers not overly high; when there is no dominant party, there are almost no long-term ministers and (except in Denmark) many short-term ministers. Fourth, these conditions apply if there are no arrangements among

the parties, as such arrangements may altogether abolish the effect of party fractionalisation. The Swiss case is an example: the different constitutional context favours such arrangements, which are unlikely to occur in a parliamentary system in the strict sense.

2 Complexity of career.

Ministerial careers, whatever their duration, can vary markedly in complexity. The simplest career is that of the minister who belongs to one government only and holds only post ever: such a simple career is not necessarily short; while comparing Austria and Belgium, we found that a number of Austrian ministers had remained more than ten years in the same post, never to hold office again.

There are three ways in which a career can be said to be complex. Ministers may only come once to the government, but may hold successively two or more posts. They may join successive governments at different points in time: in the first case, ministers can be said to be mobile; in the second, they have interrupted careers. Finally, ministers may both be mobile and have an interrupted career, if during one of their spells in the

government they hold successively more than one post. This four-fold distinction - simple careers, continuous but mobile careers, interrupted careers, mobile and interrupted careers - helps to identify broad groups. One could of course go into greater detail and consider separately the cases of ministers who had three, four, or more posts, as well as the case of those who interrupted their career in two, three, or more occasions: in a first overview, a four-fold distinction seems justifiable, however, since, as we shall see, cases of mobility and of interruption are, in most countries, minority cases.

It is interesting to examine the spread of these different types of careers of Western European ministers for two types of reasons. The first is that the distribution of ministers in these categories provides an impression of the extent to which Western European ministers tend to have or not to have a wide experience. Ministers who are mobile or interrupt have manifestly a different experience from those who have only one post. One-post ministers tend to be specialists; ministers who move and interrupt will tend to have a broader interest in governmental affairs. One might therefore hypothesise that, by and large, countries in which mobility and/or interruptions are frequent are more likely to be run on the basis of the traditional principle that ministers are amateurs than countries where ministers tend to have only one

post, although further empirical studies are required to assess the precise effect of these differences.

In the second place, the distinction between simple and other careers also provides an insight into the nature of the government formula which countries adopt, by accident or design. In this respect, three factors play a part. First, there are electoral factors: whole governments may change as a result of a change of parliamentary majority; in ministerial terms, this is likely to lead to interruptions of career. The second factor is the parliamentary factor: the parliamentary majority may change, for instance if a new coalition comes to office; this is likely also to lead to career interruptions as well as, to an extent at least, to changes in the departmental positions held by some ministers, though a number of their colleagues may stay in the same post, provided at least one party remains in office; this is of course often the case, for instance in Belgium or Italy, where one party (the Christian party) can be regarded as pivotal as it is central to almost all the coalitions. The third factor is confined to the government itself and can be regarded in part as 'cultural'. There may be a view that ministers should change posts after a relatively brief spell, either because the minister wants to change positions or because the prime minister wishes to reshuffle his or her cabinet, as is often the case in Britain.

These three factors are reflected in the form of the governmental careers. Simple careers correspond to cases where, on the whole, little 'alternance' occurs, either of the electoral or of the parliamentary variety and there is a limited tendency to switch ministers from post to post. Countries in which only interruptions are frequent correspond to cases in which electoral or parliamentary forms of 'alternance' often occur but the propensity to reshuffle is low. Where mobility predominates, on the other hand, the propensity to reshuffle is relatively high. Where both interruptions and career mobility occur, governments are simultaneously affected by alternance (electoral and/or parliamentary) and by a high propensity to reshuffle (2).

Let us first see how ministers are distributed among the four categories in the sixteen countries which are examined here. The first characteristic which emerges is the predominance of the simple career. On average, over half the ministers have one post and only one (the sixteen country average is 56 percent). In six countries, 65 percent of the ministers had only one post: these are Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Sweden; in five countries, the proportion of one-post ministers is about average - between 50 and 60 percent - : these are Luxembourg, Finland, Denmark, Fifth Republic France, and Belgium; only in five countries, Malta, Italy, Britain, Ireland, and Iceland, is the proportion of one-post ministers below 50 percent

and it is never below one-third. Given the impression which prevails that cabinet ministers are likely to move appreciably from post to post, it is striking to note that, as a matter of fact, the ministerial career in Western Europe is more likely to be a career in one position than in two or more. Indeed, only a small minority of a fifth (19 percent exactly) had more than two posts ever, whether by means of interruptions or in succession.

The ministers who had more than one post are distributed rather unevenly among the three groups in which they are divided here - those who are mobile, those who interrupt, and those both are mobile and interrupt. Overall, the group of the mobile ministers is the largest (21 percent is the sixteen-country average) with a maximum of over half of the ministers falling in this category in Malta and a quarter or more in four other countries, Iceland, Fifth Republic France, Britain, and West Germany). The group of the ministers who only interrupt is somewhat smaller (13 percent is the sixteen-country average), with four countries (Ireland, Finland, Britain, and Denmark) having a fifth to a quarter of the cabinet members in this category. Finally, only a small minority (under 10 percent) both were mobile and interrupted, Ireland and Italy, and, but less so, Belgium being the countries in which the proportion is substantial (15 to 25 percent), while in most countries this group is very small (in ten countries it is under 6 percent). Thus one interesting and

perhaps at first sight surprising conclusion is that, in the large majority of Western European countries, ministers who have more than one post either change positions but come to office only once or interrupt; it is very rare for ministers to have experienced both changes of positions and interruptions in the course of their career. It is consequently interesting to examine where the exceptions lie.

Let us consider this matter in the more general context of the other types of career and let us divide countries into three groups - high, medium, and low - with respect to each of the four characteristics - simple careers, continuous but mobile careers, interrupted careers, and careers which are both continuous and interrupted. The six countries which have a higher than average proportion of simple careers show some similarities but also some differences with respect to the other three characteristics. All had few ministers who had both continuous and interrupted careers, but, while in three countries (Austria, the Netherlands, and Norway) the proportion of ministers who were mobile but had a continuous career is low, it is average in Switzerland, Sweden, and Germany (and indeed a little above average in Germany); while, in four countries, the proportion of ministers who had an interrupted career is low, it is average in Norway and Sweden.

This suggests that, while there are similarities among the careers of ministers in these six countries, Sweden in particular is somewhat different from the rest as it differs from them with respect to two characteristics, while Norway and Germany differ on one characteristic: Germany 'should' have had somewhat fewer ministers who were mobile and Norway somewhat fewer ministers who interrupted. This is indeed reflected in the fact that Norway, Sweden, and Germany have an appreciably lower proportion of ministers who have only one post (around 65 percent instead of around 75 percent for the other three countries). It is none the less permissible to suggest that, with the probable exception of Sweden, the countries in which ministers mainly have a simple career form a broad cluster.

Among the five countries which have an average proportion of ministers who had a simple career - from 50 percent in Belgium to 60 percent in Luxembourg -, differences are larger. Finland and Denmark are relatively similar (they have both many interrupting ministers and few mobile ministers, though they differ with respect to the proportions of ministers who both were mobile and interrupted). Fifth Republic France has almost the opposite profile with a high proportion of ministers who are mobile and a low proportion of ministers who interrupt. Belgium is about average for two of the characteristics, but its proportion of ministers who both interrupt and are mobile is high, while

Luxembourg is relatively similar to Belgium, being average in terms of the proportion of mobile ministers and of interrupting ministers, but the proportion of its ministers who both are mobile and interrupt is appreciably lower (3).

Before attempting to see how these countries can be characterised, let us consider the five remaining cases, those where the proportion of ministers who had a simple career is low - less than half of the total. It seems at first sight that no regularity at all can be found among them. For instance, in two of these countries, Italy and Ireland, the proportion of ministers who both were mobile and interrupted is high; but it is low in two others (Iceland and Malta) and average in the fifth (Britain). Three countries had a high proportion of mobile but continuous ministers (Malta, Britain, Iceland), but in one it was low (Ireland) and in the fifth (Italy), it was average, while the proportion of interrupting ministers was high in Britain and Ireland, low in Malta, and average in Iceland and Italy.

Thus, except perhaps for the group of countries in which the proportion of ministers having had a simple career is large, variations do not seem to suggest any clusters. Yet the situation becomes somewhat clarified if one concentrates first on the proportion of ministers who are mobile. Of the ten countries which we are considering (those where the proportion of ministers with

simple careers is average or low), four (Malta, Iceland, France, and Britain) have a high proportion of ministers who are mobile; three have a low proportion (Finland, Denmark, and Ireland): but one of these, Ireland, and two of the remaining three (Belgium and Italy) have also a high proportion of ministers who both are mobile and interrupt, leaving only Luxembourg to be average in terms of the proportion of mobile ministers and low in terms of ministers who are both mobile and interrupt. If we take into account both indicators - which is justified since those who both are mobile and interrupt are mobile - we therefore find seven countries where there is a substantial proportion of ministers who change posts in a successive manner, two countries in which this proportion is small, and one in which it is average.

These differences acquire meaning when they are restated in political terms. Careers which are mobile but continuous tend to occur when the position of a given minister is changed, by means of a reshuffle, within the same government or through a change of government resulting from a somewhat altered majority in parliament. The fact that seven of the ten countries score relatively high in terms of the proportion of ministers who are mobile, whether they also interrupt or not, suggests that these seven countries are characterised either by a high reshuffle rate or a relatively high sequence of governments based on partially different parliamentary majorities. This second characteristic

obviously applies to Belgium and Italy; it appears to apply to Iceland; it does not apply to Fifth Republic France, Britain, Ireland, or Malta. What makes these four countries similar is therefore their relatively high reshuffle rate. On the contrary, reshuffles are rare in Denmark and Finland, and relatively rare in Luxembourg.

We can now turn to the examination of the proportion of ministers who interrupt their career. It is, not surprisingly in view of what we just noted, high in Finland and Denmark; it is also high in Britain and Ireland, while it is low in Fifth Republic France and Malta and average in Luxembourg, Belgium, and Italy. These differences show the contrast between Britain and Ireland, where alternance between the parties has taken place periodically, and Malta and Fifth Republic France, where no alternance has occurred or alternance has occurred only once. In Iceland, Italy, and Belgium, where changes have resulted not so much from elections as from parliamentary behaviour, 'pure' interruptions are also rare, though they have been, as we saw, many cases of ministers who both were mobile and interrupted their career.

These characteristics can therefore be summarised by taking into account two basic dimensions - the propensity to reshuffle and the extent to which alternance has occurred. As we

expected, ministers tend to have simple careers in countries in which alternance has been non-existent or rare (once or twice over the last forty years) and where the propensity to reshuffle is low, as in Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway (which has changed somewhat, but in the relatively recent period) and West Germany; Sweden and Luxembourg can also be included in this group as they come very close to having these characteristics: in fact, in Sweden, a low propensity to reshuffle under the long period of social Democratic rule has been offset by a higher rate of mobility during the 1976-82 period of 'bourgeois' governments. Ministerial careers have a relatively high rate of mobility, but a low rate of interruptions, where reshuffles are frequent but alternance rare or non-existent, as in Malta, Fifth Republic France, and Iceland. Where reshuffles are rare, but changes of majority frequent, the rate of interruptions is high; the proportion of ministers with simple careers and with continuous careers is average or low: this occurs in Finland and Denmark. Where reshuffles are frequent and alternance occurs, the proportions of interrupting and of mobile ministers are high; they are highest where the alternance results from electoral changes of majority, since the whole government is replaced, as in Britain and Ireland; they are somewhat lower in Belgium and Italy where alternance results from partial changes of majorities in parliament. (Diagram II).

The characteristics of the party system and the 'cultural' propensity to reshuffle have thus a significant effect on the proportion of ministers who have a complex career. This conclusion does therefore confirm the view that there are substantially different types of parliamentary governments. Indeed, if types of duration patterns and the extent of complexity of the ministerial career are both taken into account, certain groupings of countries begin to emerge: this is in particular the case of Austria and Germany, Belgium and Italy, Britain and Ireland. As there are also countries which do not fall within these groupings, we need to turn to other characteristics before being able to assess fully what clusters exist among Western European cabinet systems.

3. Parliamentarians and non-parliamentarians among the ministers.

Cabinet government is often described, as is well-known, as parliamentary government, even though, as we noted, the two are somewhat distinct in origin and in emphasis. At any rate, cabinet government is the only form of government in which the executive as such is constitutionally dependent on the legislature; it is therefore natural that there should be personal links between the executive and parliament: thus it can seemingly be reasonably

asserted that parliament is the 'normal' route through which one becomes a minister in the cabinet system of government (4).

The examination of the origins of cabinet ministers in Western Europe since the end of World War II does indeed confirm the view that a parliamentary career is in the majority of cases at the origin of the ministerial career: there is no country in which more than half the ministers come to office without having been first in parliament. In this respect, the Fifth French Republic does not differ from other Western European countries; as a matter of fact, the country in which the proportion of non-parliamentarians is the highest is not France, but the Netherlands.

Thus it is probable that cabinet government continues to deserve to be labelled parliamentary government, not just because of the juridical bond of the confidence motion, but because of the linkages of personnel. Although the empirical evidence has not as yet been collected and although it seems that, in some presidential systems, the personal link between legislature and executive is closer than is usually believed on the basis of the American experience, it seems likely that at most very few governments approximate the proportions of ex-parliamentary ministers which can be found in cabinet systems.

Yet, within the broad framework of a parliamentary career being 'normally' a prerequisite to a ministerial career, substantial differences can be found among Western European countries; as a matter of fact, the range is almost exactly half the possible range, since, in the Netherlands, only about half the ministers were drawn for among ex-parliamentarians while, in Britain, Ireland, or Italy, nearly all - 97 percent - had had a parliamentary experience before coming to ministerial office. We are therefore not confronted with small differences which might be attributed to accidents: these undoubtedly exist, admittedly, and they have the effect of diminishing somewhat the proportion of ex-parliamentarians. In some countries (as in particular in Austria, but also in Germany and in Italy), the total reconstruction of the polity after World War II made it impossible for many parliamentarians to come to office at the time: there had been no parliament for over a decade. Similar situations, though on a smaller scale, occurred in several Western European countries after 1945. Second, a party victory of a sweeping character may lead to the appointment to the executive of at least a number of men and women who had not been in parliament before, even though they might be elected to the legislature at the same moment as they become ministers. Third, there are also cases of crises which are felt to require special responses: the whole government may be composed of 'technicians' to cope with the crisis, as has occurred

in Finland; or some particular posts may be entrusted to 'technicians'.

These circumstances appear to associate the presence of non-parliamentarians with the failures of the cabinet system; they seem therefore also to suggest that parliamentarians 'should' normally be appointed to the government, while concurrently indicating, perhaps somewhat cynically, that a parliamentary origin may not be adequate when the country faces major difficulties. The experience of Western European countries makes it difficult to reject this standpoint altogether since, even in Britain, where, as it was noted, the proportion of non-parliamentarians is tiny, a few have been appointed from outside the legislature to solve problems which the prime minister of the day felt parliamentarians could not meet: this was the case for instance when Churchill wished to achieve a structural reorganisation of the cabinet on a more hierarchical basis, with some 'superministers' being in charge of broad areas of government.

Yet the existence of substantial proportions of non-parliamentarians in a number of countries does not stem only - nor indeed even mainly - from the need to handle a 'crisis' situation. The proportion of non-parliamentarians is negligible in three countries - Britain, Ireland, and Italy -, and small, though not

insignificant in six others - Belgium, Iceland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, and Malta - where it ranges between 12 and 19 percent; but it reaches around a third in West Germany, Austria, the French Fifth Republic and Finland, about 40 percent in Norway and nearly 50 percent in the Netherlands. Thus in over a third of the Western European countries, non-parliamentarians called to office are an important minority. This suggests that the overall system is of an apparently different 'type' from that of the 'pure' parliamentary system; the characteristics of governmental decision-making are also likely to be affected (Table 3).

Countries fall into two broad groups, with a gap of 12 points between the country at the top of the bottom group (Sweden) and the country at the bottom of the top group (Germany). There are two sub-types within each group, moreover, with a gap of 6 percent between Italy and Belgium and of 9 percent between the French Fifth Republic and Norway. Clusters do therefore emerge, with the 'truly' parliamentary type at one end - which includes Britain, Ireland, and Italy and to which can be associated Belgium, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, and Malta - and the 'two-third' parliamentary type at the other end - to which Austria, Finland, Norway, Fifth Republic France, Germany and the Netherlands belong (Diagram III).

In this respect, Fifth Republic France does not appear to be a special case, contrary to what is widely believed. De Gaulle may have had a presidential vision of a government divorced from the legislature; if that was the case, he did not succeed in achieving his aims, indeed not even during his own presidency: a majority of French ministers are ex-parliamentarians. What he seems to have achieved is simply to move France away from a position which was previously analogous to that of Britain or Italy (only 3 percent of the Fourth Republic ministers were not parliamentarians) to a position near that of Germany, Austria, Norway, or the Netherlands. This group of countries thus shares a tradition or a convention by which it is recognised that a third or more of the ministers (from all parties) come to office without parliamentary experience. This is manifestly an important feature of what might be called the Continental or 'Middle-European' cabinet system.

The majority of ministers, however, and indeed the immense majority of ministers in some countries, has had parliamentary experience before coming to office. But that experience is not the same if the minister has been in parliament for only a few months or even a few years, on the one hand, and a decade or more, on the other. It seems permissible to suggest that one becomes a 'true' parliamentarian, on average, after one legislature or about five years. At that point, one is no longer a

'junior': a new cohort of 'younger' parliamentarians has arrived. It seemed therefore interesting to examine how long ministers who have been previously parliamentarians took on average to reach the cabinet.

It does appear that a form of parliamentary 'training' constitutes some kind of requirement. Except in Malta, where ministers had little previous experience as legislators, at least half of those who came to office with a parliamentary background had been in parliament for at least five years, and in many cases much longer. It is of course true that such a duration may be the result of unfavourable electoral circumstances: French socialist parliamentarians had no opportunity to come to office between 1959 and 1981; German CDU/CSU parliamentarians had no occasion to be in government between 1969 and 1982; British Labour MPs could not be ministers between 1951 and 1964, to take some of the better-known examples. But this is in part offset by the fact that some ministers came to office very shortly after having been elected, as a result of a sudden and large victory.

Overall, variations appear to be substantial across countries with respect to the duration of the pre-ministerial parliamentary career, but this only because of four countries which are at the two extremes: in Malta, not too suprisingly since the country was so new, cabinet members with five years

parliamentary experience were rare; in Austria, five-year parliamentarians constituted only 51 percent of the total; on the other hand, both in Switzerland and in Britain, about 90 percent of the ministers had been in parliament for a longer period. But the large majority of European countries are grouped closely together: in exactly half of them, the percentage of ministers with five years parliamentary experience (among ministers who did have parliamentary experience) is close to two-thirds, and in the five remaining ones it was about 80 percent.

There is some tendency for countries in which the percentage of non-parliamentarians among the ministers is large to choose their members of the cabinet among parliamentarians with less experience: Austria, the Netherlands and Fifth Republic France are characterised both by a low percentage of parliamentarians and by a relatively low percentage of five-year parliamentarians among the cabinet ministers. But this is not a universal trend: In Germany and Finland, the percentage of longer-standing parliamentarians is over two-thirds. By and large, therefore, when ministers are drawn from parliament, they are usually drawn from among parliamentarians with substantial experience in the chamber. Western European cabinet governments do not always draw their ministers from parliament; but for those who are drawn from parliament, some seniority in the legislature is customary. The non-parliamentary route coexists with the

parliamentary route in a substantial number of continental countries, but the rules to be followed by those who take the parliamentary route are not appreciably different if the cabinet is 'fully' parliamentary or if it is 'two-thirds' parliamentary (Diagram III).

4. A managerial or a representative background ?

Cabinet government is often viewed as the 'amateur' government par excellence, ministers being chosen for their political ability rather than for their specialist skills. This is because, in principle at least, cabinet government, being linked to parliament, is meant to emphasize the representative character of the ministerial profession. Yet this representative principle is often regarded as inadequate in a world in which governments are expected to take difficult decisions implying an understanding and even a detailed knowledge of the economy, of social affairs and even of technical developments while being asked to run complex administrative organisations. Does the training of ministers in cabinet government equip them to these tasks?

The question has two aspects, those of technical specialisation and of managerial competence: both of these aspects are difficult to assess. Strictly speaking, one should

monitor ministers during their work in order to pass a truly informed judgement: this is obviously highly impractical. One has therefore to rely mainly on past training, as this can at least be expected to provide some clues as to the potential competence of ministers. But past training also gives some indication about the philosophy of government which characterises a particular country. Where there is emphasis on representation, one would expect ministers to be recruited without having any specialist expertise or background in administration. As a matter of fact, as we are concerned here to discover whether there are different models of cabinet government, it is this kind of information, rather than the specific achievements of ministers, which is primarily required.

An 'administrative' government would be one in which ministerial positions are filled by men and women who have the specific skills required to run the departments of which they are the heads: such a government would therefore be composed of managers - having had training in and experience of running large organisations - and of specialists - relating to the particular departments with which they are concerned. In the present analysis, we shall refer only to the first of these requirements, which is the more general of the two and could be said to be a sine qua non for an administrative conception of government: in a situation in which, as we know, many ministers hold more than one

job in succession, one could not expect them to be specialists; but one could expect them to be managers.

To assess whether cabinets are primarily composed of managers or not, we need to be able to characterise precisely the prior career of ministers. This is more complex than it might seem, both because the information about these careers is often vague and because the classification of the various occupations in the managerial and non-managerial categories is somewhat problematic. By and large, Western European ministers are drawn from six broad groups of occupations; these are the civil service, the intermediate echelons of private business (cadres), the leadership of firms, the leadership of associations and of trade unions, teaching, and the legal profession. The only other occupation which is significant, but is rather vaguely described, is that of 'professional politician'. On the other hand, few ministers come from occupations such as journalism, or medicine; they also rarely come directly from ordinary white-collar or manual jobs: trade union positions are typically the intermediary.

Even if one concentrates on the six categories from which most ministers are drawn, it is impossible to come to a clear-cut division between those which provide a managerial training and those which do not. It is true that the law and teaching can be regarded as primarily not managerial; the law is indeed the

'representative' profession par excellence, from which parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are expected to have been drawn traditionally. On the other hand, the civil service and the intermediate echelons of business can probably be regarded as providing 'pure' forms of managerial training. But there is ambiguity as far as the leadership of businesses, of associations and of trade unions: these jobs are clearly managerial, but they are not only managerial: they are also, often at least, representative or even 'political' positions in the common usage of the word. The dichotomy between a 'managerial' and a 'representative' background does therefore appear to be somewhat blurred: the distinction should therefore be regarded as being in the nature of a continuous dimension rather than as a simple dichotomy.

Let us look at the way in which ministers are distributed across Western Europe with respect to these six main groups of occupations (Table 4). If the most extensive definition is given to management (that is to say if one includes all four of the categories which appear to provide at least some managerial training), the proportion of managers varies substantially. It ranges from about 20 percent in West Germany, Italy and Switzerland to 50 percent or over in Finland, the Netherlands, Fifth Republic France, and Austria. It is about a third to two-fifths in the other countries. Thus, although there are major

differences among the countries and even if one takes the broadest possible construction of management, Western European cabinet governments do not appear to be primarily managerial. Indeed, while managers are nearly everywhere a minority, there are also, almost everywhere, large numbers of teachers and lawyers, although variations are important across the countries with respect to both groups. Lawyers constitute only 10 percent or less of the ministers in all five Scandinavian countries, Fifth Republic France, and the Netherlands, but a quarter to a third in Britain, Italy, Germany, and even over half in Switzerland; under 10 percent of the ministers in Germany and Austria are teachers, but these form about 30 percent of the total in Belgium and Italy. While the numbers of men and women with administrative experience are significant in the large majority of countries, nowhere are they overwhelming. To this extent, the conception that cabinet government is based on 'amateurs' appears to be mostly correct.

If the overall conclusion must be that cabinet government in Western Europe remains on the whole 'political' rather than 'administrative', the differences across countries need also to be explored. In the first place, the proportion of managers appears to be broadly speaking inversely correlated with the proportion of lawyers, but not to be correlated at all with the proportion of teachers. As we saw, countries with the largest proportions of managers are, not altogether surprisingly, Finland, the

Netherlands, Fifth Republic France, and Austria; the countries with the smallest proportions of managers are Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The first five countries are also among the six where the proportion of lawyers is smallest - the other being Iceland; Germany, Switzerland and Italy are the three countries where the proportion of lawyers among ministers is highest. On the other hand, teachers appear to be distributed at random with respect to lawyers and managers: Fifth Republic France and Finland, which are two of the four countries with the highest proportions of managers and the lowest proportions of lawyers, are almost exactly at the middle of the range in terms of the proportion of teachers, while the Netherlands is among the countries with the highest proportion of teachers and Austria is among the countries with the lowest proportion of teachers.

Western European countries can thus apparently be divided into three or four groups from the point of view of the extent to which ministers have a 'managerial' or a 'representative' background. These groupings correspond to an extent to those which we discovered while examining the parliamentary character of cabinets, but, while they appear to confirm the fact that Fifth Republic France is not markedly different from a number of other countries, such as Austria, the Netherlands, Finland, where the government can be described as partially 'administrative' in

character, they also differ from the parliamentary- semi-parliamentary distinction in two important respects. First, West Germany could have been expected to have many managers among its ministers: it has few and, on the contrary, has many lawyers. Norway, too, could have been expected to have more managers, given the other characteristics of the ministerial career in that country. Second, Britain and Belgium have appreciably more managers than might have been predicted: Belgium differs appreciably from Italy in this respect, while these two countries were found to have similar characteristics with respect to other variables; Britain could also have been expected to score rather lower, given the reputation of 'amateurism' of her ministers and given the way in which these ministers score according to other variables.

The cases of these four countries need to be accounted for, as these 'exceptions' seem to suggest that the distinction between 'fully' parliamentary and 'semi'-parliamentary government only partly coincides with the distinction between 'representation' and 'management' in ministerial recruitment. To do so, it is worth looking into more detail at the composition of the 'managerial' group in the various countries (Diagram 4). To begin with, there are almost no civil servants among Italian, Swiss, and Maltese ministers; Belgium and Germany have very few - under 10 percent. Among the other countries, those which have by

far the largest proportion of managers (Austria, Finland, Fifth Republic France and the Netherlands) have over 20 percent of civil servants, but some Scandinavian countries - Sweden, Denmark - have between 15 and 20 percent. Thus the high proportion of managers does not necessarily correspond to a truly large number of civil servants. Indeed, only France has truly many civil servants: what makes the Fifth Republic remarkable is therefore not so much that it has more managers than other countries, but that these managers are primarily civil servants, even if this is only an accentuation of a trend which also exists in Finland and the Netherlands. In contrast, the proportion of civil servants is markedly lower than expected in West Germany: not only is it somewhat surprising that this proportion should not be higher than it is, but also that it should not be higher than in Britain and Belgium.

If private sector managers are added to civil servants, the picture changes somewhat. Fifth Republic France is still at the top with nearly half its ministers drawn from these two groups, but Finland comes very close. The Netherlands also comes relatively high, but, somewhat surprisingly, even the two groups together still only constitute a small proportion of the ministers in Norway and Germany - indeed less than in Belgium or Britain. Only when business leaders and association and trade union officials are taken into account, does the picture change somewhat, in particular with respect to Austria and Germany. It is

because of these groups of ministers that Austria has such a large proportion of managers overall and it is, conversely, because there are so few in Germany that ministers from the Bonn Republic do not appear to be drawn from among managers in substantial numbers.

As numbers are small, one cannot draw too precise an inference from all these variations. But the characteristics of the ministerial background are appreciably different in a number of countries from what might have been expected on the basis of the examination of career complexity and of the role of the parliamentary background. In particular, one would have expected Belgium and even more Britain to have fewer managers, while Germany and indeed also Norway might have been expected to have appreciably more. In the British and Belgian cases, the combination of a significant number of civil servants with a substantial proportion of business leaders, interest group and trade union officials results in sizeable number of managers reaching the cabinet; but these managers are somewhat different from the administrators who are numerous in Fifth Republic governments, as well as in the governments of Finland, the Netherlands, and even Austria. British and Belgian managers are mostly at the same time representatives, because they run an interest organisation or a trade union or because they are business leaders. Britain and Belgium are thus in the middle of

the range of 'managerial' governments among Western European countries both because of the proportion and because of the type of managers who can be found in these two countries.

Western European cabinets are thus mainly composed of a substantial proportion of teachers (about a fifth on average) and of a varying combination of managers and of lawyers. These cabinets fall mainly into three types, those in which the proportion of purely administrative managers is large, those in which it is low, and those in which there is a substantial proportion of managers who are also 'representative'. Fifth Republic France, Finland, the Netherlands, and probably Austria belong to the first group; Switzerland, Iceland, Malta, Italy, and West Germany belong to the second; Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Britain belong to the third. A 'full' parliamentary system thus leaves room for marked variations in the proportions of managers, though probably only if one adopts a broad definition of this category, for a 'true' parliamentary system is probably not compatible with large numbers of civil servants; there are opportunities for other types of managers, however, specifically those who are at the head of business or even workers' organisations.

The presence of managers who are also 'representatives' in 'full' parliamentary systems suggests that the division between

'political' and 'administrative' cabinets is more blurred, with respect to the background of ministers, than might have been thought; it also indicates that, even in a country such as Britain, 'amateurism' is compatible with at least some injection of managerial skills. It shows above all that, since ministers are drawn from the political parties, types of party recruitment have to be taken into account alongside the distinction between a 'representative' and an 'administrative' tradition. The parliamentary-non-parliamentary divide suggests that ministers may, to an extent at least, by-pass the legislature to come to office; but the type of party recruitment can still vary. In some countries, parties tend to recruit primarily men and women who come from the traditional representative professions, and from the legal profession in particular: Italy is a case in point; so is the United States; so was France under the Fourth Republic. But, in other countries, such as Britain or Belgium, party recruitment mechanisms bring to the government other types of 'representatives': they can be business or association leaders or trade union officials, while yet in other countries, such as Austria, Finland, or the Netherlands, administrative managers are more likely to come to the top.

In five countries and to a more limited extent in another two, however, cabinets also include ministers who had another background, that of professional politician, while, in the other

nine countries, this group is very small and indeed negligible. Professional politicians thus form a third of the ministers in Norway, a quarter in Malta, and a sixth to a fifth in Denmark, Germany, and Austria (while they are a tenth of the ministers in Sweden and Iceland). The presence of such a large group in these five countries does go some way towards accounting for the fact that 'ordinary' managers form such a small proportion of the ministers in Norway and Germany in particular, although, in the German case, even the addition of full-time politicians still leaves the group of managers relatively small. Moreover, by and large, a full-time political career does not constitute an original occupation: nowhere did even 10 percent of the ministers begin their career in this way. In Austria, Germany, and Norway, in particular, it is almost exclusively a second career, lawyers being the group which became reduced as a result, while there was also a transfer from business in Germany.

It may not be altogether accidental that West Germany, Austria, and Malta should be among the countries in which substantial numbers of cabinet ministers were professional politicians: this may reflect the need for these countries to build or a rebuild afresh a political elite, Malta since it was a genuinely new country, Austria and Germany because they were fully reconstructed after the Second World War. But the cases of Denmark and even more Norway are clearly different: they seem to indicate

that a process of diversification is under way in some parliamentary systems, 'professional politicians' becoming perhaps the substitutes for the leaders of associations, the business leaders, even the cadres of industry and commerce, and, above all, the civil servants.

On the other hand, it is probably because parties were relatively weak in France that civil servants became so numerous in Fifth Republic governments. In the Fourth Republic, few civil servants joined the French cabinet: the panorama of ministerial recruitment then resembled that of Italy or Switzerland. With the Fifth Republic, this recruitment altered drastically to the detriment of lawyers and to the advantage of civil servants, because lawyers and the traditional 'representative' ministers were associated with the failings of the previous regime: but, as parties continued to have limited strength, civil servants became an essential element, as they were considered to be synonymous with efficiency and continuity.

Thus, while cabinet government results in the selection of ministers who are primarily drawn from among representatives and only secondarily from among managers, its composition does vary appreciably: the recruitment patterns of political parties combine with the tendency towards greater or lesser traditions of 'administrative' government to bring to high office a substantial

number of men and women who can be described as managers, both from the public and the private sectors. Although differences are subtle and there are gradations, there are also appreciable distinctions. The overall picture of cabinet government is complex, diverse, and flexible. It is to this overall picture that we need now to turn.

5. Are there clearly distinguishable models of Western European cabinets?

The examination of the career characteristics of ministers in Western European countries shows that there are significant differences among cabinet systems. Is it permissible, however, to claim that these differences correspond to two, and only two types? A first approximation does admittedly suggest that, if we exclude Switzerland, which is not parliamentary in the full constitutional sense of the word, as well as the three smallest countries which, because of their size, may be expected to display some idiosyncrasies, the other countries which have been examined here divide unevenly into two groups: four of them - Britain, Ireland, Belgium, and Italy - appear to come close to the ideal-type notion of the parliamentary system, with ministers

being drawn from parliament, a relatively small proportion of managers, though, in two cases, not a very small proportion, and a relatively high propensity for ministers to move from post to post, though, in the Irish case, more because of interruptions than because of genuine mobility; six other countries - Austria, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Fifth Republic France, and West Germany - appear to constitute an alternative model, which is only 'two-thirds' parliamentary, with, except for Germany and to a more limited extent for Norway, a high proportion of managers and, except for Fifth Republic France, a tendency for ministers to remain in the same post. But this division into two groups leaves aside two countries, Sweden and especially Denmark, which do not fit neatly into either group. The dichotomy is obviously an oversimplification.

Nor can these two groups be even considered as the two poles of a single continuum. It is not as if Belgium and Britain were intermediate cases between Italy and the Netherlands, nor as if France and Germany could be located also somewhere in the middle. The criteria which make these countries 'exceptions' are not the same in each case. France is 'exceptional' because its ministers are more mobile than they 'should' be; the other three countries are 'exceptional' in that the proportions of managers are not those which might have been expected. Yet even these three cases are not along one continuum, since Germany has fewer

managers - and fewer managers of all kinds - than Belgium and Britain. If there was really a continuum along one dimension, Germany would have at least as many managers than these two countries.

One has therefore to accept that, if there are types of cabinet government, these types have to be determined with respect to more than one dimension. Indeed, this conclusion becomes inescapable if one takes into account a further variable which has so far not been brought into the picture, namely the duration of ministers in office. For while Finnish and Austrian or German ministers all have a low propensity to move from post to post, the average duration of ministers is so much lower in Finland that it is virtually impossible for movements from post to post to take place without interruptions in office.

Thus one has to consider at least two dimensions in order to build a typology of Western European cabinet governments. One of these dimensions helps to account for the duration of ministers in office as well as some aspects of the complexity of the career: this dimension could be labelled the dimension of continuity; it is related to the characteristics of the party system. For patterns of duration show that there are principally two groups of countries, especially from the point of view of the distribution of short-term and long-term ministers: the countries which

include the largest proportion of long-standing and the lowest proportion of ephemeral ministers are the three smallest nations - Iceland, Luxembourg, and Malta - as well as Britain, Ireland, West Germany, Austria and Sweden; three of these last four countries had, during the period of analysis, two-party or near two-party systems and the fourth, Sweden, was dominated by the social-democratic party during the period. Four countries, Fifth Republic France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy, form the 'mirror-image' group, with the reverse proportions of long-standing and short-term ministers from those of the other six countries: these countries all have a dominant party which, however, have to negotiate with other parties, whose ministers typically are in office for substantially shorter periods and among which, therefore, the proportions of short-term ministers is higher and that of long-term ministers lower. Norway and Denmark are in the middle, having moved from one-party dominance on the Swedish model to somewhat more unstable coalitions. Switzerland and Finland are the two outliers - but are also mirror-images of each other: their characteristics show that countries without a dominant party do have the potential for long ministerial tenure if they are organised on the lines of a permanent coalition, but that, otherwise, the proportion of short-term ministers is likely to be very high and that of long-term ministers very low.

The party system dimension also accounts in part for the extent to which the careers of ministers are of one piece or are interrupted: these interruptions are at their highest where there is a multi-party system, especially if there is no dominant party (Finland), and at their lowest where there is a two-party or a near two-party system. But the extent to which ministers are likely or not to move from post to post has to be accounted for by another dimension, which can be labelled the 'representation-administration' dimension. Ministers from Norway, Austria, West Germany, the Netherlands, or Luxembourg are not as mobile as those from Belgium or Italy. British ministers, on the other hand, have been as mobile as Belgian or Italian ministers. In all these cases, there appears to be a tradition according to which ministers change or do not change posts, irrespective of the character of the party system. There is, in the governments of Malta, Britain, Iceland, Belgium, or Italy, an inherent 'liking' for reshuffles which does not exist in Sweden, Norway, even Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, and West Germany, nor indeed, perhaps more surprisingly, Ireland, given that British practices might have been expected to obtain in that country. This 'need' or lack of 'need' for reshuffles scarcely can be said to be objectively justified; it remains therefore without an explanation unless it is related to the dimension of 'parliamentarianism' and, conversely, to a relatively low premium given to 'management' and administration. In this context, the only 'exception', among the

countries which have been examined here, is that of the Fifth French Republic, where the logic of an 'administrative' form of cabinet government would have suggested few interruptions as in the cases of Germany, Austria, or the Netherlands. In the French case, perhaps the habits of the Fourth Republic lingered on to an extent, indeed both with respect to interruptions of career and to mobility in a continuous context: despite a cabinet based in substantial part on civil servants and despite an ethos of 'administrative effectiveness', the 'liking for reshuffles' may well have been a remnant of the habits of the previous regime.

Greater or lesser career mobility is only one aspect of the effect of the 'representative-administrative' dimension on the composition of Western European governments. As a matter of fact, this effect is even more striking on the extent to which parliamentary experience is demanded of cabinet ministers. Nearly all the British, Irish, or Italian ministers are parliamentarians; a similar trend can be found in Switzerland, Iceland, and Malta. At the other extreme, in Finland, Norway, Austria, the Netherlands, West Germany, as well as in the Fifth French Republic, a large minority of the ministers did not come from parliament. In between, a substantial number - about a sixth - of the ministers were not drawn from parliament in Sweden, Denmark, Malta and even Belgium.

This distinction is sharp; it is often associated to the greater or lesser propensity for cabinets to be reshuffled; to a substantial extent as well, it is associated with the presence of public and private sector managers in the cabinet. This is why it seems correct to suggest that a 'representative-administrative' dimension accounts for the characteristics of ministerial careers. It seems indeed permissible to relate the existence of this tradition to the different historical origins of Western European democracies. For the 'administrative' group is composed of countries which became parliamentary after 1918 only - Austria, Germany, and Finland -, while the first group includes countries which were parliamentary for a much longer period - Britain, Belgium, and Italy. The 'administrative' group also includes the Netherlands, where the monarch resisted for much longer the development of parliamentarism than in Belgium, and it includes naturally Fifth Republic France, where the 'excesses' or parliamentarism were forcefully repressed by De Gaulle in 1958, indeed repressed to such an extent that it is perhaps surprising that the proportion of parliamentarians in French Fifth Republic cabinets should be as high as it is. It includes also, though to a varying degree, the Scandinavian countries, which seem to be - especially Sweden - intermediate cases, in that longer traditions of representative government have been associated to long traditions of strong State administration. While the party system gives rise to a 'continuity' dimension which accounts for the

duration of ministers and the extent of interruptions of ministerial careers, matters relating to mobility from post to post and to the strength of the parliamentary connection are connected to the extent to which cabinet government is representative or administrative. In this context, the Scandinavian countries appear to constitute the converse case to that of France: the French cabinet would seem to have inherited both traditions or, more specifically, to have inherited a parliamentary tradition which proved unworkable and against which an effort has been made to impose, on the contrary, albeit unwittingly, some of the semi-parliamentary characteristics of Austria or Germany.

The 'representation-administration' dimension also accounts in general for the characteristics of the occupational background of Western European ministers: countries in which 'representation' is at a premium have a low proportion of lawyers, while more 'administrative' cabinets have a high proportion of managers, as is the case in Finland, the Netherlands, and Austria, as well as, of course, Fifth Republic France; Italy and Switzerland are at the opposite extreme. The 'exceptions' are so important, however, that it is necessary to consider at least the possibility that a third dimension might play a part in the characteristics of careers in cabinet government. These exceptions are principally three: Britain and Belgium, because these

countries might have been expected to have fewer managers in view of their 'fully' representative character; West Germany, which, in view of the more 'administrative' character of its cabinet system, 'should', on the contrary, have had more managers and in particular more civil servants among its ministers.

The nature of the third dimension which might account for these exceptions is somewhat problematic, however. The 'unexpected' characteristics of the occupational background of ministers are related principally to the party structure, whereby, in some countries, such as Britain and Belgium, a 'tradition' of interest representation exists while this tradition does not exist everywhere; it is also related indirectly to the structure of the party system in the German case, since the high proportion of professional politicians, on the one hand, and the low proportion of managers, on the other, may be in part the result of the historical circumstance of the total reconstruction of the political system: the recruitment into the political parties came to be modified as a result; but, in the German case, the party structure was not altered by way of a 'natural' evolution: 'political engineering' was the original cause. Overall, however, the existence of variations in the proportions of managers does seem to depend both on the extent to which 'administrative efficiency' is one of the main historical goals of government and on the extent to which the characteristics of the parties allow,

or not, for types of 'representation' which indirectly enable managers to become parliamentarians and cabinet ministers. While it is therefore manifest that two main dimensions based on the party system and on the relative role of representation and administration account for the characteristics of ministerial careers, it seems at least probable that a third dimension, based on the type of recruitment into the political parties characterising each country, modifies at least in part the effect of the 'representative-administrative' dimension on these ministerial careers.

* * * * *

It would be exaggerated to claim that the analysis of ministerial careers in contemporary Western Europe demonstrates the existence of clearly defined and highly distinct types of cabinet government; but it is not exaggerated to state that the differences in ministerial careers suggest that there are tensions between different goals - or different trends - and that, among cabinet governments, there are groups of countries in which the solution of these tensions has been found to be similar. It is in the nature of cabinet government, so to speak, that there should be tension between the desire to 'represent' and the desire to 'administer': this is reflected in a number of ways in the manner

in which contemporary European governments are composed. Ministers are 'amateurs' up to a point; they are also up to a point managers, perhaps even technicians. But the traditions of a country such as Britain are not the same as those of a country such as Austria and this is reflected in the particular mix of 'representatives' and 'administrators' which one finds in each country. It is also in the nature of cabinet government that it should be responsive to the composition of parliamentary majorities and in particular to the configuration of the party system in the legislature: this is reflected in some detail in ministerial careers, not just by the extent to which governments are 'stable' or 'unstable', as has often been claimed, but also by the proportions of long-standing and short-term ministers as well as by the extent to which the careers of ministers are or not interrupted by periods on the backbenches.

An analysis of types of ministerial carers is of course not an end in itself, however valuable it may be to achieve a better understanding of the way in which the political life of those who rule Western European countries can develop. What is also required is to discover the relationships between these careers and the conditions under which cabinets operate: questions such as the collective character of the cabinet, the influence of prime ministers, or the effectiveness and efficiency of the decision-making process are all affected by the characteristics of

the background and careers of government members. Since it is manifest that these carers vary in ways which can at least be distinguished and, to a substantial extent, accounted for by a number of general dimensions, it seems also to follow that the life of the cabinet in general will be affected by the factors which play a part in shaping ministerial careers. Thus the next step of the analysis must be, alongside a further and deeper examination of the complex of forces which account for the broad characteristics of ministerial careers, to see in what ways the nature of these careers affects decision-making in Western European cabinets.

NOTES

1. J. Blondel, " Ministerial Careers and the Nature of Parliamentary Government: the Cases of Austria and Belgium" European University Institute Working Paper, n 87/274, 1987, pp.42. This paper is to appear in a slightly amended form in the European Journal for Political Research. As the analysis on the paper referred here, the present work is based on an ongoing research project which is undertaken at the European University Institute in Florence in collaboration with a group of scholars from thirteen European countries. I wish to thank the European University Institute for the facilities which have been given for the preparation of this paper.

2. This analysis is of course based on the situation up to and including 1984. As some ministers have changed posts, or have returned to office since then, the 'real' proportions may be somewhat different, but these differences are likely to be very small.

3. One can see immediately that only with respect to interruptions are Austria and Belgium quite distinct and even constitute two polar opposites: the percentage of ministers who change posts on a continuous basis is about the same in the two countries, while there are substantial differences between these two countries and other Western European nations.

4. This is the expression used by D.V. Verney, in The Analysis of Political Systems, (1959), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 76.

TABLE I

Duration of Ministers in Office

	Average (1945-1981)			
	'Crude'	'Real'*	% Under 1 year	% Over 10 years
Austria	5.09	5.82	9.3	16.5
Belgium	3.33	3.74	15.5	7.0
Denmark	3.79	4.17	6.0	3.3
Finland	2.80	2.96	24.2	2.5
France 5th Rep	3.39	5.25	14.3	4.8
Germany	5.61	6.48	5.0	10.7
Iceland	5.28	6.75	4.3	17.0
Ireland	6.25	7.65	7.6	16.2
Italy	3.85	4.31	14.8	5.2
Luxembourg	5.37	6.41	13.5	15.4
Malta	6.55	10.73	3.0	15.2
Netherlands	3.99	4.40	11.1	4.6
Norway	4.34	4.93	11.8	2.6
Sweden	6.11	7.51	6.3	15.9
Switzerland	7.84	9.69	2.6	28.9
United Kingdom	4.62	4.99	6.9	15.9

* The 'real' index is calculated on the basis of the numbers of ministers who are replaced, as the 'crude' average does not reflect the fact that some ministers had been in office before the beginning of the period of analysis while others may still be in office after the end of that period. For details of this calculation, see J. Blondel, Government Ministers in the Contemporary World, (1985), London and Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 81-5.

TABLE 2

Distribution of types of ministerial careers

(percentages)

	Simple	Continuous but mobile	Interrupted	Continuous or Interrupted
Austria	78.1	15.6	4.1	2.1
Belgium	50.2	17.8	15.5	16.4
Denmark	67.0	10.1	22.1	10.8
Finland	57.0	8.6	27.3	4.5
France (5th Rep)	53.1	29.9	8.0	9.0
Germany	66.9	24.0	7.4	1.7
Iceland	33.3	39.2	13.7	5.9
Ireland	33.3	12.7	28.4	24.5
Italy	39.7	21.0	14.4	23.6
Luxembourg	60.0	18.2	14.6	5.5
Malta	42.4	57.6	0	0
Netherlands	75.2	12.4	9.2	3.2
Norway	67.7	10.3	14.2	3.9
Sweden	65.1	17.4	11.9	4.0
Switzerland	79.0	21.0	0	0
United Kingdom	38.6	26.8	23.8	8.4

TABLE 3

Parliamentarians and non-parliamentarians
among ministers
(percentages)

	Non- parliamentarians	Parliamentarians		
(1)		Under five years' experience	with five years' or more experience	Ratio (3)/(2)+(3)
		(2)	(3)	(4)
Austria	32	32	33	51
Belgium	13	31	56	64
Denmark	17	16	64	80
Finland	36	11	52	82
France (5th Rep)	34	25	41	62
Germany	31	19	48	72
Iceland	14	22	60	73
Italy	4	28	67	70
Luxembourg	17	23	60	72
Malta	15	80	5	6
Netherlands	46	22	28	56
Norway	44	17	37	68
Sweden	19	14	65	81
Switzerland	0	10	90	90
United Kingdom	4	9	83	90

TABLE 4
Distribution of ministers by occupation*
 (six main occupations only)

	(1) Civil Service	(2) Private Sector Management	(3) Business leadership	(4) Management of Associa tions or Trade Unions	(5) Total	(6) Teaching	(7) Law	(8) Full-time politicians
Austria	19.1	6.0	8.3	32.1	65.5	6.0	8.3	16.7
Belgium	7.9	8.7	12.3	8.7	36.7	30.4	17.3	5.8
Denmark	18.1	1.6	8.7	3.1	31.5	17.4	7.1	20.5
Finland	26.5	19.7	7.5	5.2	58.9	15.7	4.0	2.3
France (5th Rep)	40.1	9.2	13.4	0.7	63.4	16.9	7.0	2.0
Germany	5.9	6.8	5.1	2.5	20.3	6.8	26.3	18.6
Iceland	9.3	-	9.3	7.0	25.6	21.0	4.7	9.3
Ireland	11.2	2.0	16.3	5.1	34.6	19.3	17.3	1.0
Italy	2.2	2.6	10.9	3.5	19.6	27.3	33.6	0.4
Luxembourg	22.6	3.2	9.7	6.5	42.0	12.9	22.6	3.2
Malta	0	4.2	16.7	8.3	29.2	16.7	25.0	25.0
Netherlands	26.8	5.8	10.9	7.9	51.4	24.7	11.6	2.2
Norway	14.7	1.6	10.1	9.4	35.8	11.7	2.3	31.0
Sweden	24.7	1.1	4.5	7.9	38.2	24.7	6.7	11.2
Switzerland	3.0	12.1	3.0	-	18.9	18.2	48.5	3.0
United Kingdom	12.7	2.4	17.5	9.7	42.3	9.7	24.3	4.4

* Based on the last occupation of the minister before coming to office.

DIAGRAM I
 Distribution of short- and long-term ministers
 in 16 Western European countries
 (percentages)

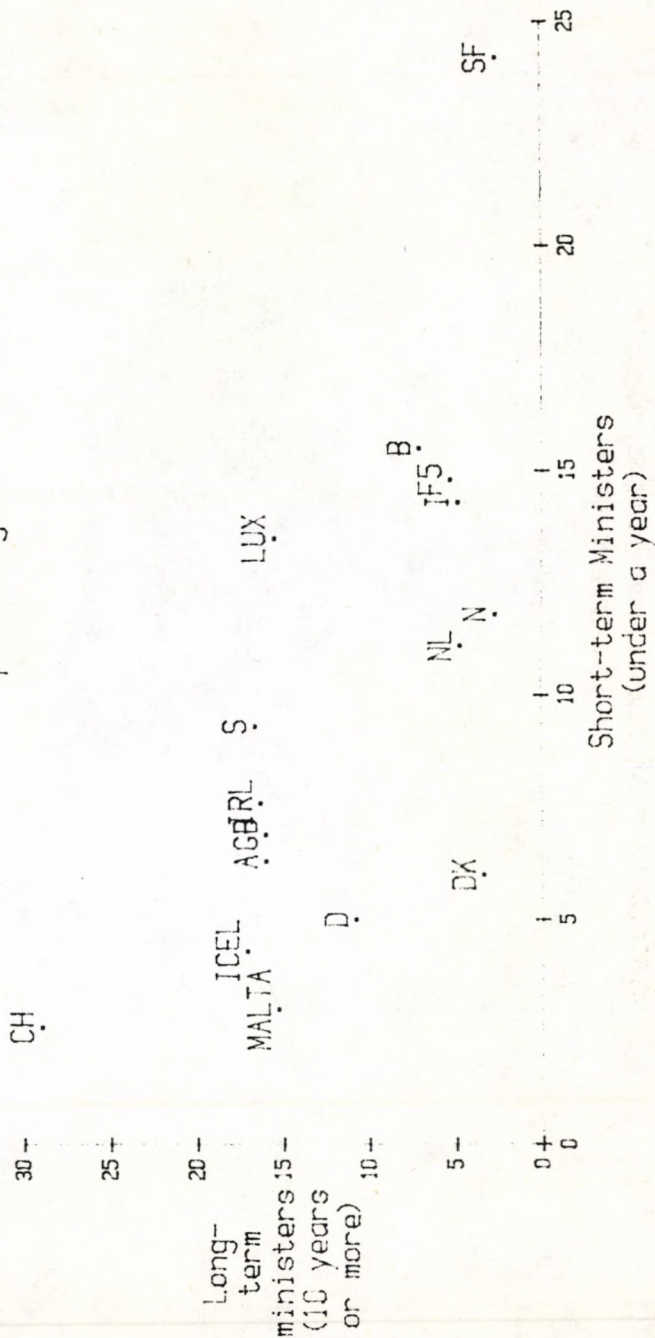


DIAGRAM II
 Distribution of simple and complex ministerial careers
 (percentages)

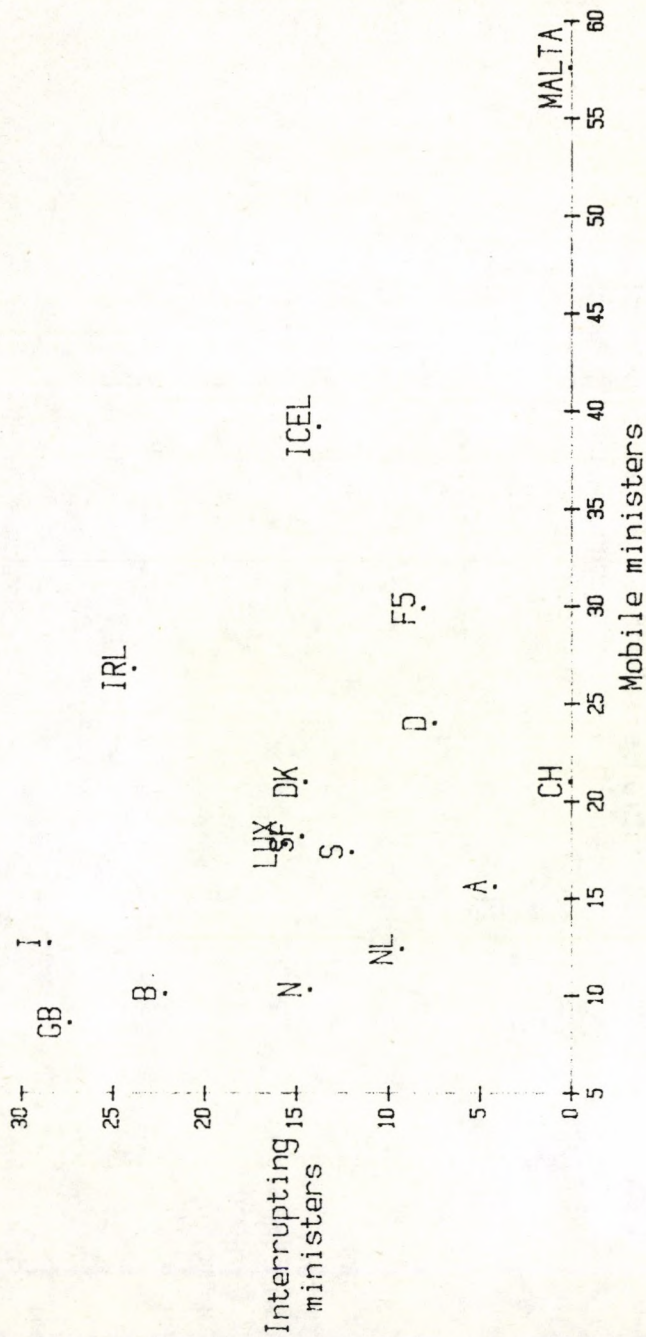
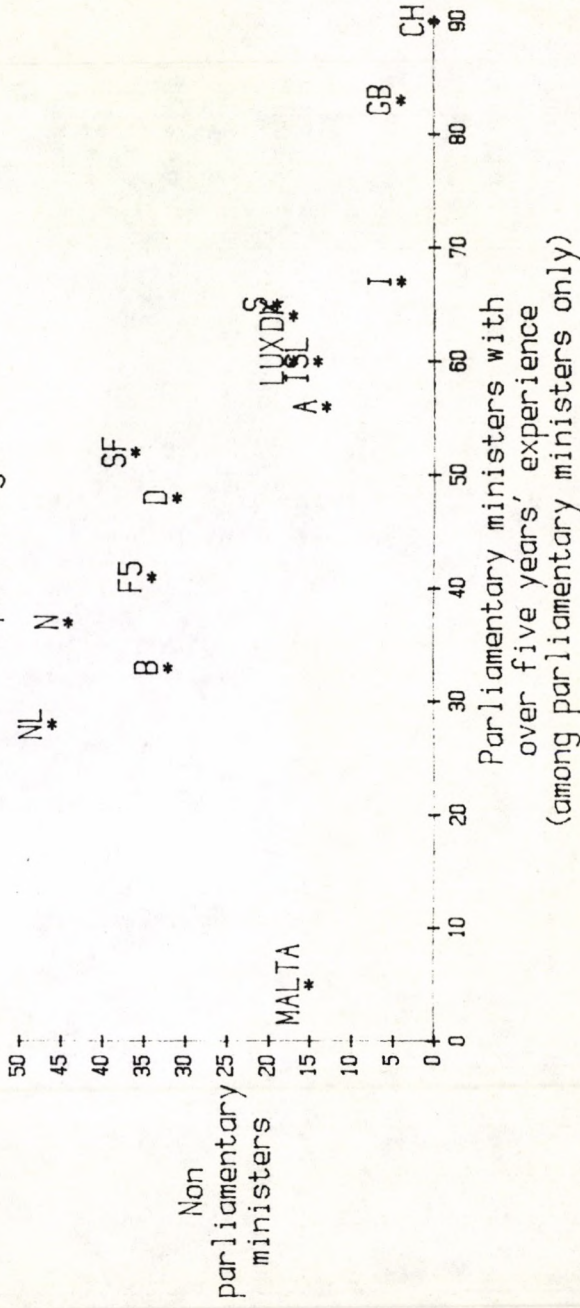
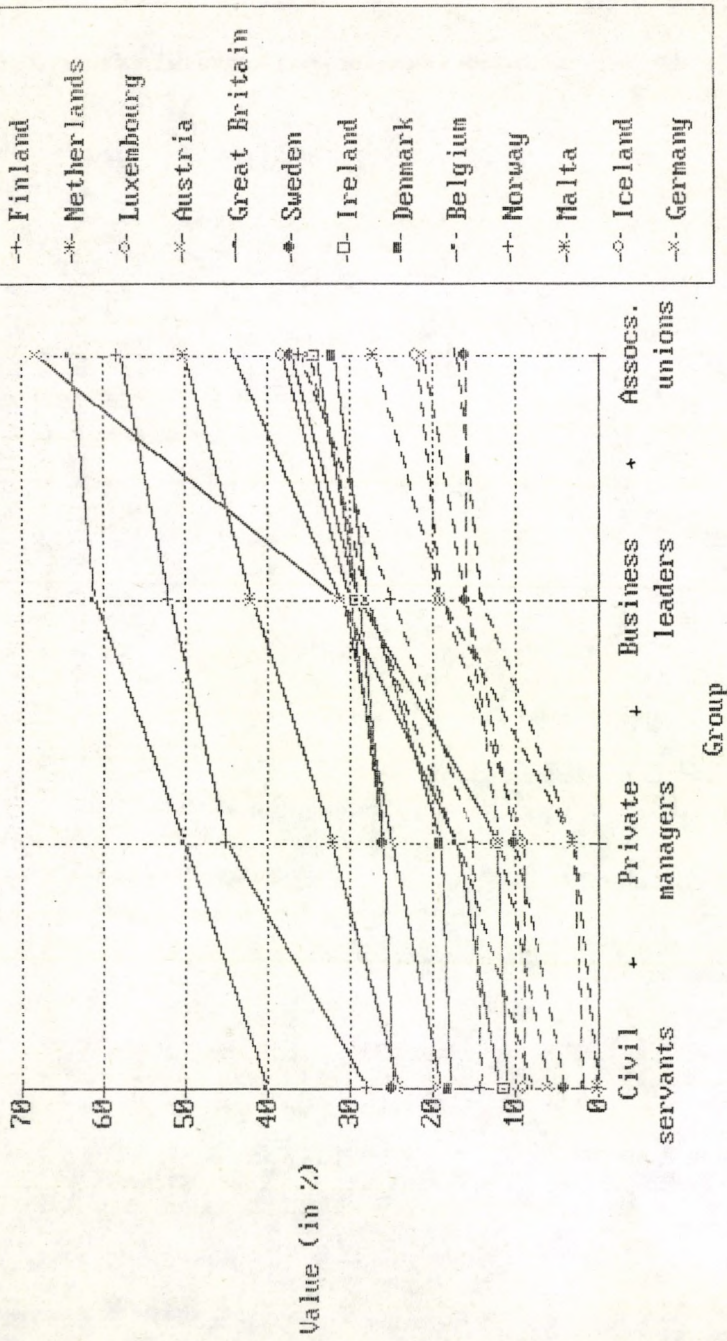


DIAGRAM III

Non-parliamentary ministers
and experience in parliament
of parliamentary ministers
(percentages)



Distribution of Managerial Groups among Ministers





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