

# IDEOLOGUES OR PRAGMATISTS?

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## **Abstract**

We study a model of electoral control where the politician is a policy expert, but the voter is not. First, we focus on the case of an “ideologue”, i.e., a politician who always wants the same policy implemented regardless of the state. We show that the voter’s lack of policy expertise comes at no cost to him, but may come at an electoral cost to the politician. Next, we turn to the case of a “pragmatist”, i.e., a politician whose preferences are state contingent. We show that the voter’s lack of policy expertise does come at a cost to him. As a consequence, the voter may fare better with an ideologue than with a pragmatist. This can occur even if the pragmatist’s preferences are arbitrarily close to and perfectly correlated with the voter’s. (JEL: C72, D82, D86)