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# **POPULISM AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – THE LEADERSHIP OF THE U.S. FEDERAL EXECUTIVE UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP**

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# Table of Contents

- List of Tables and Figures.....II
- 1. Introduction .....1
  - 1.1 Relevance of the Thesis .....2
  - 1.2 Structure of the Thesis.....5
- 2. Theory Chapter.....6
  - 2.1 Literature Review – Populism and Its Impact on Public Administration.....6
  - 2.2 Literature Review – U.S. Presidential Appointments.....12
  - 2.3 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses .....15
- 3. Methodology .....22
  - 3.1 Research Design .....22
  - 3.2 Studied Population.....22
  - 3.3 Measurement.....24
    - 3.3.1 Dependent Variables .....24
    - 3.3.2 Independent Variable.....26
    - 3.3.3 Control Variables .....27
  - 3.4 Research Methods A – Data Collection.....29
  - 3.5 Research Methods B - Analysis .....30
  - 3.6 Examination of Assumptions of Logistic Regression .....31
  - 3.7 Reflection on Validity and Reliability .....32
- 4. Empirical Findings .....36
  - 4.1 Descriptive Statistics.....36
    - 4.1.1 Correlations .....37
    - 4.1.2 Results of the Logistic Regression Models.....39
  - 4.2 Discussion .....47
- 5. Conclusion.....53
  - 5.1 Linking the Results Back to the Theory Chapter .....54
  - 5.2 Limitations of the Research.....56
  - 5.3 Possible Venues for Further Research .....58
- Appendix A.....61
- Appendix B.....63
- References.....76

# List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. *Predictions for Populism’s Impact on the Public Administration* ..... 11

Table 2. *Theoretical Propositions of This Thesis* ..... 21

Table 3. *Operationalization of Key Variables* ..... 27

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for All Key Variables* ..... 36

Table 5. *Correlations of All Variables in the Analysis*..... 38

Table 6. *Regression Models Comparing Trump’s Appointments to Bush’s and Obama’s Appointments* ..... 39

Table 7. *Regression Models Comparing Trump’s Appointments to Bush’s Appointments* ..... 39

Table 8. *Regression Models Comparing Trump’s Appointments to Obama’s Appointments* ..... 40

Table 9. *Empirical Analysis of the Theoretical Propositions* ..... 52

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*..... 21

Figure 2. *Regression Results for Comparison of Trump’s Appointments With Bush’s and Obama’s Appointments (Model 1-6)* ..... 45

Figure 3. *Regression Results for the Direct Comparison of Trump’s Appointments With Bush’s Appointments (Models 7-12)*..... 46

Figure 4. *Regression Results for the Direct Comparison of Trump’s Appointments With Obama’s Appointments (Models 13-18)* ..... 46

**Appendix B:**

Table B1. *Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members Appointed by Bush at 2004*..... 63

Table B2. *Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Bush at 2004*..... 64

Table B3. *Deputy positions (PAS) Appointed by Bush at 2004*..... 65

Table B4. *Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Bush at 2012* ..... 67

Table B5. *Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Obama at 2012*..... 67

Table B6. *Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Obama at 2012*..... 68

Table B7. *Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members Appointed by Obama at 2012* ..... 68

Table B8. *Deputy Positions (PAS) Appointed by Obama at 2012* ..... 70

Table B9. *Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Trump at 2020* ..... 71

Table B10. *Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Trump at 2020*..... 71

Table B11. *Chairpersons and Commissioners/Board Members Appointed by Trump at 2020* ..... 73

Table B12. *Connected Deputy Positions (PAS) Appointed by Trump at 2020* ..... 74

## 1. Introduction

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In the recent years, populism has risen from the edges of the political stage to its spotlighted centre position (Adler & Ansell, 2019). From the case of Italy, where populist parties now dominate the coalition government, to the Brexit of the United Kingdom, to South Korea's candlelight revolution, the rise of the AfD in Germany or the Sweden Democrats in Sweden, the populist Zeitgeist demonstrates its presence in the world's democracies (Peters & Pierre, 2020; Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). Moreover, the arguably most severe political manifestation of this trend can be found in the election of Donald Trump to the office of the President of the United States of America in November 2016.

Though these different populist movements vary in their objectives and goals (Adler & Ansell, 2019), nonetheless, certain shared ideological characteristics can be determined: The Manichean worldview, separating between the pure people on the one side and the corrupt elite on the other (Mudde, 2004), the pronounced distrust in the establishment (Peters & Pierre, 2019) as well as the internalized claim to be the only true representatives of the people against the corrupted system (Müller, 2017) constitute some of the common denominators of populists all over the world.

It is this particular mindset of the populist that sparked the research interest of this thesis. While the effects of populism on many areas of democracy have been well researched, the interplay between populism and the bureaucracy still largely remains a black box (Bauer & Becker, 2020). Since populists in power need the advice of their bureaucracy, but strongly distrust it (Peters & Pierre, 2019), the question arises how a populist government will interact with the bureaucracy and what kind of strategies it then applies.

One interesting example of this interplay can be found in the case of the USA. Within its federal bureaucracy, the USA provide the incumbent president with pronounced leeway in the steering of the federal administrative machine via the granted power to appoint up to 4,000 positions within it, inclusive of leadership offices (Lewis, 2011). How a populist president makes use of a system that provides such an extensive lever constitutes the focus of this thesis.

The centre of attention of this thesis will lie on the professional characteristics a populist president seeks in his presidential appointments to the leadership positions of the U.S. federal bureaucracy in comparison to those that nonpopulist presidents favour. To be more precise, the impact of President Trump on the characteristics and professional

backgrounds of appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy in comparison to that of President Bush and President Obama will constitute the subject of this analysis.

For this purpose, via the use of online available data (e.g. CVs, LinkedIn profiles, news reports), novel data on the biographical backgrounds of top civil servants appointed by President Trump, by President Bush and by President Obama will be gathered (N = 374). This data will be used to measure several variables depicting central characteristics and different professional backgrounds of the top civil servant appointees. The variables either measure competency (*'Fitting Professional Specialization'*, *'Educational Level'*, *'Eliteness of Education'*) or loyalty (*'Loyalty'*) or provide information on the kind of competency that is valued (*'Business Background'*, *'Political Craft Experience'*) and as such are essential to understand what a bureaucracy can expect from a populist head of government and what kind of characteristics he seeks in his top civil servants. Via logistic regressions theoretically derived hypotheses (see chapter 2.3), which assume that the populist President Trump, for various reasons, seeks different professional characteristics in the top civil servants he appoints, will be tested. It will show the influence the independent variable, President Trump as appointing president, has on the respective dependent variables that depict characteristics and professional backgrounds sought in top civil servants in comparison to President Bush and President Obama. The guiding research question of this thesis will be the following:

*How has Donald Trump's presidency affected the characteristics and professional backgrounds of appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy?*

## **1.1 Relevance of the Thesis**

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The research question for this thesis has been chosen in line with Bauer & Becker (2020), who emphasize that even though studies on the effects of populism on democracy are increasing, the particular impact of populism on public administration is still seldomly addressed and is scarce in empirical analyses, which in turn limits the overall scientific understanding of populism. This research gap was also highlighted by Peters & Pierre (2019), who found that the current scientific debate on populism is primarily focused “on its impacts on electoral parties, processes and politics, only marginally on legislatures and courts, and not at all on administrative institutions” (Green, 2019, p. 1519) as well as by

Richard Green (2019), who specifically underlined the societal importance of filling the research gap this domain currently demonstrates.

Though first evaluations of the relationship between bureaucracy and populism for the case of the USA have already been carried out (e.g. Peters & Pierre, 2019; Rockman, 2019), further systematic empirical analyses are still missing (Bauer & Becker, 2020). Furthermore, while studies on the differences in the professional backgrounds of appointed top civil servants between different U.S. presidents were conducted before (see e.g. Ouyang, Haglund & Waterman, 2016; Lewis & Waterman, 2013), due to its recency, only very few studies encompass the case of the Trump presidency and the valuable variation in populism it offers. Yet it is especially this range of variation in regards to populism that makes an analysis of this case especially intriguing and promising.

This thesis connects to the existing body of research concerning populism and its impact on public administrations, as well as to the research on presidential appointments in the USA. It bears scientific relevance in several aspects. Firstly, it expands the state-of-the-art by adding insights on the impact of Trump's populist presidency on public administration and on the professional characteristics he valued and prioritized in his presidential appointments. Secondly, the analysis of the administrative leadership he appointed and the strategies he applied contribute an empirical dimension to the theoretical papers in the area. That is, existing theories and assumptions on the effects and possible strategies of populists handling public administration (e.g. Bauer & Becker, 2020; Peters & Pierre, 2019; Peters & Pierre, 2020) are tested for the first time and hereby the ability to assess the made claims will be enhanced. Thus, this empirical gap currently present in the literature will be narrowed.

This scientific relevance and need was highlighted by several scientists in the field who specifically encourage studies on the topic of populism's impact on public administration in general (see Bauer & Becker, 2020; Peters & Pierre, 2019) and by scholars who underscore the importance of an expansion of analyses concerning the qualifications and backgrounds of appointed top officials (Askim & Bach, 2017), which underlines the analytical significance of the proposed research. Providing a basic research on Trump's presidential appointments and on the interplay between populism and public administration might further also help to stimulate and encourage a broader research agenda in this domain (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

The societal relevance of the research project on the other hand is given by the very nature of the subject of analysis, the interplay between the U.S. president and the public

administration. The U.S. president has a considerable leeway in the appointment of the federal agencies' leadership, which allows him to gain substantial control over the bureaucracy (Peters & Pierre, 2004). It is this power that makes these appointments potentially dangerous. As Lewis & Waterman (2013) demonstrate, the George W. Bush presidency provides an insightful exhibit of where a misuse of this power can potentially lead the public administration. During Bush Jr.'s administration, the Department of Justice discovered evidence that some of his presidential appointees were misusing their position in the administration to hire and promote those career civil servants that shared a similar political view and fired those that did not, essentially departing from the merit-based principle, which is a clear breach of the norms and regulations of civil service (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). This instance occurred under a nonpopulist president, so it is not difficult to imagine the potentially dangerous outcome a populist president who tries to test the limits of the appointment system and the control it provides over the administrative machinery could have, especially against the background that populism generally threatens established liberal democracies (Bauer & Becker, 2020) and pluralism (Müller, 2016) and seeks to transform the bureaucracy to a form that suits its agenda (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

As has been noted, public institutions, even though constitutional checks and balances exist, are not unlimitedly resilient when put under the pressure of an ill-intentioned government (Rockman, 2019). As Rockman (2019) notes, continuous assaults by a populist government are over time able to seriously weaken key governing institutions (Green, 2019). Assuming the worst case, if a populist president is able to create long-lasting changes in the federal bureaucracies, this will consequentially have profound effects on democracy and especially on policymaking, which by a large margin rely on the surrounding bureaucracies (Bauer & Becker, 2020). These changes could possibly even outlast the term of the populist government (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

It is therefore imperative to increase the research on the impact of populism on administrations, on the strategies populists apply and hence on the professional characteristics a populist president values in his appointees, in order to inform the civil servants on what to expect when a populist president assumes office and hereby to possibly help the public service grasp a better understanding on the role it should play so that the more deleterious effects of it can be muted (Green, 2019). If a populist president, for instance, places a substantially higher emphasis on loyalty in his appointees and less on competence, special vigilance on the side of the career civil servants might be advisable.

## 1.2 Structure of the Thesis

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The structure of this thesis is as follows: In order to create theoretically sound expectations and hypotheses on the impact a populist president has on the federal bureaucracy in regards to the expertise sought in his top civil servants, it is necessary to prior delve into literature on populism and presidential appointments. The theoretical chapter 2 will therefore provide an overview over the existing literature on populism and its impact on public administration as well as present the state of the art of research on U.S. presidential appointments. Based on a theoretical framework, which discusses and presents key characteristics of the populist mindset as well as insights on the logic and dynamics of presidential appointments, several hypotheses will be developed. Subsequently, the methodology chapter 3 will explain the research design of this thesis, provide an operationalization of the concepts that were presented in the hypotheses and convert them into measurable variables. It will further explain the studied population, the used methods of analysis as well as the applied data collection approach. In addition, the validity and reliability of the novel data and research approach, as well as the limitations of this thesis' research will be documented. Chapter 4 will report the findings of this research and provide an analysis of the results and evaluate whether the findings correspond to the theoretical expectations and formulated hypotheses that were provided in chapter 2.3 and what consequences these findings entail for the theories they are built upon. Finally, the conclusion chapter 5 will restate and summarize the main elements of the thesis and provide an answer to the research question. In addition, the contribution of this thesis to scientific knowledge will be presented, suggestions for future research will be given as well as the limitations of this thesis be discussed.



## 2. Theory Chapter

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In this chapter, for the purpose of answering the research question, a theoretical framework will be developed off of which several hypotheses will be derived. Prior, it is necessary to delve into the scientific literature on the topic of populism and its impact on public administration. Further, since this thesis examines the presidential appointments in the U.S. executive system, it is also necessary to shed light on the presidential appointment literature and locate this thesis within it, in order to avoid possible repetitions (McMenamin, 2006). For this purpose, the structure of this chapter is as follows: First, a definition of populism and a brief elaboration of the concept will be given. Subsequently, a summary of the existing literature on the impact of populism on the public administration will be provided. Afterwards a literature review on the research of presidential appointments will take place. Closing each respective literature review section, this thesis will be located within the particular domain and it will be demonstrated that it fills a significant empirical gap that is currently existing for both areas. Finally, the third part of the chapter will draw upon theoretical deliberations of various scholars on the topic and convert them into systematically testable hypotheses.

### 2.1 Literature Review – Populism and Its Impact on Public Administration

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Populism is a concept that is notoriously hard to define (Müller, 2017). However, the definition of populism that usually is resorted to in the literature, and that will be used in this thesis, is Mudde's (2004) definition of populism as "*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people*" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). This definition is justified to consider. Rooduijn (2013), for instance, has demonstrated that it is one of the few definitions that fulfils all of his empirically developed baseline criteria which a minimal definition of populism must fulfil.

As outlined in the introduction, the interplay between populism and public administration is of significant scientific and especially societal relevance. Yet, as Bauer & Becker (2020) underline, the literature in this domain is still sparse, with only a handful of papers dedicated to its topic. Therefore, it is for this research project both advisable and feasible

to provide a comprehensive overview over the relevant theoretical papers and summarize the claims that touch upon this thesis' research question, which will be done in the following section.

Peters' & Pierre's article (2019) is one of the seminal papers that discusses the possible implications a populist government entails for the public administration. They identify three possible scenarios of how populists, once in the halls of power, may affect the bureaucracy they are facing: Populists may either sideline the bureaucracy, (unintendedly) empower it, or actually use its faculties. The first scenario, Peters and Pierre (2019) note, entails the populist government sidelining the existing bureaucrats and aiming to replace them with individuals loyal towards them, whereby a substantial amount of expertise contained by the bureaucrats would get lost. The scenario of empowering, even though prima facie counterintuitive to the ideology of the populist, takes place when the populist decides to focus on a few policy areas and the corresponding departments only, over which he then tries to exert wide-ranging control, whereas other policy areas and the respective belonging agencies are left unattended (Peters & Pierre, 2019). Via this 'abandonment' of the remaining departments, the bureaucracies in the unattended policy field possibly may essentially be governed by the respective bureaucrats and hereby be empowered. The third scenario, 'using the bureaucracy' (Peters & Pierre, 2019, p. 1533), describes the possibility that the populist's desire to govern effectively could overcome his ideological distaste of insiders of the public sector, so that the populist eventually makes use of the existing bureaucrats and their expertise in order to implement his policy agenda and in order to govern effectively.

Evolving the claims they stated in the aforementioned article, Pierre & Peters (2020) advance their research by providing a fourfold typology of populism, inclusive of the implications that each subtype contains in regards to the public administration: Electoral populism, civic populism, electoral authoritarianism and consultative authoritarianism. Since this thesis is focussed on the case of the U.S., the implications they mention in regards to electoral populism contain the highest relevance for this research project. This electoral populism, Peters & Pierre (2020) note, entails two implications for the public administration: An excessive use of patronage, as well as a loss of competence in the civil service system.

Along similar lines, Bauer & Becker (2020) add to the discussion of the potential goals and strategies a governing populist might pursue in regards to the bureaucracy he is faced with. Their reasoning is the following: Since the core of the populist ideology is

not only anti-elitist but also anti-pluralist, they argue that the populist will be guided by the overarching goal to mould the pluralist bureaucracy of the liberal democratic system into a shape that suits his anti-pluralist agenda. The goals (or rather tactics) to achieve this bureaucratic reorganization, then, are contingent on the populists' perception of the public administration: If the bureaucracy is perceived as predominantly negative, the populist will aim to fully dismantle the bureaucratic apparatus. However, if the system is of considerable robustness the populist is left with the option to sabotage the bureaucracy in order to limit its potential of counteracting the populist government (Bauer & Becker, 2020). On the other hand, if the populist's perception of the public administration is of positive nature and the bureaucracy is inherently fragile, the populist will try to assume full control over its institutions in order to pursue his political agenda. Again, if the bureaucracy proves itself to be robust, the populist will eventually try to reform it incrementally in a way that fits his political agenda. Dependent on which of these goals the populists aim to pursue, Bauer & Becker (2020) argue, different strategies will be applied by the populist government.

According to Bauer & Becker (2020), the bureaucratic system of the U.S. can be seen as robust and as "embedded in a stable institutional and political system" (Bauer & Becker, 2020, p. 26), and populist president Trump demonstrated on several occasions that he views the state bureaucracy negatively (see e.g. Bauer, 2018). His main strategy then, according to Bauer & Becker (2020), is the impairment of the bureaucracy via sabotage, which can take on different forms and strategies, ranging from cutting resources to a change of staff and norms. Regarding the sabotage via a change of personnel, the U.S. system provides the president with ample room to do so: When assuming office, the president has the traditional prerogative to appoint 4,000 leading positions within the bureaucratic machine (Lewis, 2011). As Bauer & Becker (2020) anecdotally exemplify, sabotage can take place via the appointment of anti-leaders, i.e. obstructive personnel, leaders lacking of subject area expertise or simply through not reappointing skilled former appointees, all done with the aim to impair the performance of the agency.

Further implications for the bureaucracy can be found in Rockman (2019), who argues that the populist perceives the bureaucracy and its regulations as an "undesirable status quo" (Rockman, 2019, p. 1563) that obstructs the will of the people. Ultimately, the government, in the perception of the populist, must be unchained from these restrictions. Therefore, "shaking things up" (Rockman, 2019, p. 1563) will constitute a central part of his public administration policy as well as all other sources of authority within the

bureaucracy that potentially could compete with the populist will be aimed to be eliminated or delegitimized.

Based on an elaboration on the perception of the public administration by the populist, Arellano-Gault (2020) provides further implications. As he states, the populist sees the public administration as a bulwark of the elites, as “a technocracy serving elitist interests” (Arellano-Gault, 2020, p. 6), diverted from its original responsibility to serve the people and hiding behind the usage of technocratic jargon or “the cloak of complexity” (Arellano-Gault, 2020, p. 7) and essentially prioritizes its own interests over serving the people. As he argues and implies, the solution that the populist then sees is straightforward: Diminish complexity and expert knowledge and refocus the public administration to its original focus of serving the will of the people. As Arellano-Gault (2020) notes, this will of the people, of course, is defined and represented by the populist leader, hence the desired public administration in the perception of the populist is the one that obeys and implements his orders.

As Peters & Pierre (2019) rightfully note, Müller (2017) also contributes to the impact debate with two observations. First, he argues that populists, fuelled by their representative claim (see also Müller, 2016) and by seeing neutral civil servants as obstructors to the true will of the people, will aim to purge those individuals from the bureaucracy and aim to occupy it. Second, Müller (2017) hypothesizes that populist will make excessive use of openly visible patronage, as the populist sees this behaviour as morally justified by his self-perception as only true representative of the people.

It is now worthwhile to summarize where the congruencies and differences within these claims lie. To make these more visible and enhance their comprehension, the propositions of the different authors are summarized and compared in table 1 (see below). As can be seen, the notions of Bauer & Becker (2020), Rockman (2019), Arellano-Gault (2020) and Peters & Pierre (2019) all contain the element of ‘conquering’ the bureaucracy. When inspecting the implications for the public administration in regards to its personnel, a certain congruency can be documented: Peters & Pierre (2019), Peters & Pierre (2020), Bauer & Becker (2020) as well as Müller (2017) all note or imply that a populist in government may lead to an increase in patronage (i.e. appointment of loyalists or politicization) and loss of expertise (i.e. competence).

Concluding from this overview on the research on the impact of populism on public administration, it can be documented that several theoretical assumptions and expectations are presented. Yet, none of these expectations have so far been empirically tested.

Since no empirical study has been conducted yet, these claims are primarily built upon theoretical reasoning. Thus, their strength can potentially be enhanced through the conduction of a corresponding empirical analyses. Therefore, in relation to the existing scientific literature and knowledge on the impact of populism on public administration, this thesis is situated on the empirical side of the research and aims to reduce the empirical gap the literature currently demonstrates. By conducting the aforementioned systematic analysis, several of the claims made by the abovementioned authors will be tested. By this, their claims are either strengthened or weakened, which constitutes one important aspect of this thesis' novel contribution to the scientific knowledge in the domain.

**Table 1.** Predictions for Populism's Impact on the Public Administration

	<b>Peters &amp; Pierre (2019)</b>	<b>Peters &amp; Pierre (2020)</b>	<b>Bauer &amp; Becker (2020)</b>	<b>Rockman (2019)</b>	<b>Arellano-Gault (2020)</b>	<b>Müller (2017)</b>
<b>Overarching goal</b>	Diverse	-	Transform the bureaucracy Impair its performance	Unchain and detach the government from experts and the past	Restore the bureaucracy as an institution that serves the will of the people	Consolidation of power
<b>Strategies/effects regarding the bureaucracy</b>	<b>Scenario 1 – Sidelineing:</b> Increase in patronage Sidelineing or replacing of bureaucrats Loss of expertise	<b>Prediction for Trump's type of populism:</b> Increase in patronage Loss of competence Appointment of ordinary citizens instead of civil servants	<b>Dependent on the perception of the bureaucracy and its robustness:</b> Dismantlement -or- Sabotage -or- Assume control -or- Incremental reform	Elimination of all competing sources of authority	Diminish complexity and expert knowledge  Create an obedient and responsive bureaucracy	Excessive use of patronage  Purge of neutral civil servants  Occupation of the state/bureaucracy
	<b>Scenario 2 – Empowering:</b> Populist will focus on some policy areas, in which control is exerted, whereas others will be left unattended  Absence in other policy areas will lead there to a 'bureaucratic government' and thus empower the public administration in these fields					
	<b>Scenario 3 – Using:</b> Relying on career bureaucrats in order to govern effectively		Appointment of obstructive personnel			

## 2.2 Literature Review – U.S. Presidential Appointments

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The president of the United States of America, by Article II Section 2 of the U.S. constitution, has been granted the power to fill between 3000 and 4000 positions within the federal executive with personnel of his choosing, the so-called presidential appointments, which are usually nominated during the first years of his presidency (Bonica, Chen & Johnson 2015; Lewis, 2011; Lewis & Waterman, 2013). The highest rank of these positions constitute the so-called 'Presidential Appointments with Senate confirmation' (PAS), which primarily make up the leadership positions in the federal executive hierarchy and, in contrast to the following three appointment position types, require the confirmation by a simple majority of the Senate (Lewis, 2011; Rybicki, 2017). The second-ranking position type constitutes the middle management section of the executive, followed by Schedule C appointees who serve in confidential or policy-determining positions, but generally consist of subordinate roles (speechwriters, assistants etc.; Lewis, 2011). The final type of appointees comprises all others presidential appointees (Lewis, 2011). These presidential appointments present an important aspect of the respective presidency, provide the president with policy guidance and are crucial for the bureaucratic implementation of the president's priorities and agenda (Pfiffner, 2018).

Overall, the study of these presidential appointments is comparatively advanced, and a considerable amount of research has examined the qualifications and professional backgrounds of top civil servants in the past (see Lewis, 2011). Riddlesperger & King (1989), for instance, analysed the backgrounds of top civil servants from the Kennedy through the Reagan administration and were able to demonstrate that a significant share of those appointees belonged to either economic or political elites in society. A more recent example can be found in Krause & O'Connell (2015), who analysed the biographical traits of bureaucratic leadership appointees from 1977 to 2009 and showed that as presidents over time become more experienced in the management of the federal bureaucracy, their appointment strategies also change and increase in their effectiveness.

Another line of research examined the role that competence and loyalty play in presidential appointments (see Waterman, Bretting & Stewart, 2015; Waterman & Ouyang, 2020; Ouyang et. al, 2016; Lewis & Waterman, 2013). Hollibaugh, Horton & Lewis (2014), for instance, assessed the backgrounds of appointed civil servants in Obama's presidency in regards to their ideology, competence and patronage benefits. They documented, among others, that patronage appointments were more likely to be appointed to

government agencies that were lower on Obama's policy agenda, that had a congruence with his policy views or in positions of lesser influence. Krause & O'Connell (2019) analysed the trade-off that presidents make between competence and loyalty when deciding which individuals to appoint to bureaucratic leadership positions via a comparison of biographical information of presidential appointees ranging from the Carter trough to the G.W. Bush presidency. Parsneau (2012) analysed subcabinet appointments between 1961 and 2006 and found that in general, in low-priority departments, presidents tend to appoint more competent nominees, whereas in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, presidents tend to prioritize loyalists and appoint fewer individuals with prior agency experience.

In addition, a rather large body of scientific research has recently been dedicated to the inter-presidential comparison of presidential appointments. For instance, Lewis & Waterman (2013), based on resume data, compared the characteristics of presidential appointments for the lower echelons of the Department of Labor between the Bush Jr. and Obama administration and found that President Obama selected more appointees with higher levels of competence than President Bush. Anestaki, Sabharwal, Connelly & Cayer (2016) provide a comparison between the appointments of President Clinton, Bush Jr. and Obama in regards to gender and race representation and found indications that the gender and race of the appointed personnel mirrors the political stands of the incumbent president's party. Waterman et. al (2015) examined the background characteristics of ambassadorial appointments made by President Bush Sr. and President Clinton and found that both presidents prioritized loyalty over competence, yet differed in their applied style. Ouyang et. al (2016) recently looked into the role of loyalty and competence in President Bush Jr.'s and President Obama's presidential appointments and documented how Bush and Obama valued these two categories within their appointments. Most recently, Waterman & Ouyang (2020) assessed the loyalty and competence of over 3.000 appointees of the Bush Jr. and Obama administrations. They found that between the two, no statistically significant difference in regards to loyalty in their appointments could be found, but yet when it comes to competence, Obama was found to have appointed a higher share of individuals with high levels of competence than President Bush.

As can be seen, the research so far has yielded considerable insights into the dynamics of, and differences between appointments of different presidents, but this state of the art also contains one central weakness: All these studies have solely examined presidents that can be classified as non-populist. For all the dimensions in the focus of the studies



above (e.g. elitary affiliation, loyalty and competence), we still do not know how they play out under a populist president, which thus still constitutes an open gap in the literature. This is mainly due to the novelty of the phenomenon of a populist leader assuming the office of the President of the United States, as, arguably (see Peters & Pierre, 2019), Donald Trump represents the first such case.

Yet, due to the Manichean worldview (Mudde, 2004), anti-pluralism (Bauer & Becker, 2020) and hostility towards the establishment (Peters & Pierre, 2019), which is characteristic for populism, there is ample reason to believe that these dimensions will be subject to other dynamics under a populist president. The literature on populism, especially the body of literature dedicated to its possible impact on the public administration (see Müller, 2017; Peters & Pierre, 2019; Peters & Pierre, 2020; Rockman, 2019; Bauer & Becker, 2020), gives grounds to believe that a populist president might substantially depart from the appointment dynamics outlined above, since, as Bauer & Becker (2020), Rockman (2019) and Arellano-Gault (2020) hypothesize, populists in power will aim to substantially transform the bureaucratic apparatus. Exactly these peculiarities of the populist render the examination of this so far unexamined subject an attractive opportunity to see whether they led to a substantive departure from the characteristics and professional backgrounds that are sought by non-populist presidents.

The analytical exploration of populist President Trump's presidential appointments has so far only been advanced by a few studies which provide first insights on the subject: Lewis, Bernhard & You (2018) who reviewed Trump's performance as a manager during his first year in office, provide some insights on the matter. Based on an analysis of the staffing of the White House and the number of Trump's first year appointment confirmations, they argue that Trump in his first year neither follows a "politicizing nor a centralizing strategy to gain control over administrative policy making" (Lewis, Bernhard & You, 2018, p. 481). They further note that the number of his appointee nominations and confirmations is substantially lower than that of his predecessors Bush and Obama after their first year in office.

In addition, King & Riddlesperger (2018) found that Trump's secretarial cabinet consists of a comparably higher number of individuals with a lack of prior government experience than the cabinets of previous presidents. They further documented that Trump's appointees show substantial difficulties of receiving a confirmation by the Senate and showed that Trump's top civil servant appointees are considerably less diverse in

terms of gender and race than the top civil servant appointees of President Clinton, Bush and Obama.

As can be seen, these papers provide only limited first insights on Trump's presidential appointments and even less insights on the professional backgrounds and characteristics of his appointees, while simultaneously being limited to an analysis of only his first years in office. And yet, it is important to know whether the prior findings the presidential appointment literature offers apply to populist presidencies as well or if significant changes can be documented. Therefore, this thesis contributes to an important phenomenon only marginally illuminated by science and is located within the current literature on presidential appointments at the novel subdimension of 'populist presidential appointments' and will at least partially aim to close some of the identified literature gaps.

### **2.3 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses**

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The main hypotheses are built upon selected theoretical insights on populism's characteristics and its impact on public administration. These theories inform the following causal mechanisms, are converted into hypotheses, and compose the empirical focus of this research project, in aim to answer the overarching research question. All hypotheses are connected to the overarching research question in that they all depict the relation between President Trump and either concepts of competency of his appointees (see H3, H4, H6), the concept of loyalty (see H2) or the kind of competency that is sought (see H1, H5). As such, they all relate to and, if tested, reveal the characteristics and professional backgrounds of the top civil servants appointed by Trump and hereby are directly linked to the research question. An overview over the developed hypotheses is provided in table 2, the resulting conceptual model is presented in figure 1.

Mudde (2004) emphasized the populist's ideology of society as "separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite'" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). As he notes, this Manichean worldview, essentially separating reality in friend or foe, in which the populist views the elite and the establishment as his opposite and nemesis, results in the perception of the establishment as not just a competitor within the system, but as in fact an evil entity (Mudde, 2004). Compromises or collaboration with opponents, such as the establishment and its subunits, are impossible for the populist, since in his mindset this cooperation would seriously endanger his purity

(Mudde, 2004). Peters & Pierre (2019) point out that civil servants are perceived as part of this corrupt establishment and thus regarded by the populist as a “natural target for rejection and avoidance” (Peters & Pierre, 2019, pp. 1528-1529). They conclude, that due to the distrust in the bureaucracy, it is reasonable to expect that a populist government will use as many servants from outside of the system as possible, who can be trusted (Peters & Pierre, 2019).

Secondly, Mudde (2004) states that the populist supporters seek to be represented by individuals who truly represent them, opposed to the ‘alien elites’, whose policies do not integrate their desires and concerns. Since presidents are strongly incentivized to respond to their voters’ expectations (Lewis, 2011), it is hence reasonable to expect that the populist leader, in order to appeal to his supporters, will appoint more individuals who are recognizably from outside the system, who, by their supporters, can be identified as not belonging to those ‘alien elites’ of the establishment. Hence, taking Mudde’s argument as departure point, the assumption that a populist will appoint more individuals coming from outside the establishment is further strengthened.

Translated to the case of this thesis, these aspects all justify the assumption that populist President Trump would have put an emphasis on appointing individuals who come from ‘outside the system’. Simultaneously, all mentioned aspects are not inherent to nonpopulist presidents, since generally they neither distrust the system and bureaucracy as much as the populist, nor aim to appeal to their voters by the appointment of ‘outsiders’. Therefore, the likelihood that nonpopulist presidents, like President Bush or President Obama, appoint system outsiders is considerably lower. It is, hence, reasonable to expect the following hypothesis:

*H1: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush or President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of prior government-, parliamentary- or agency-related work experience of the top civil servants.*

Politicians tend to value loyalty highly in their appointments, though loyalty is not the only criterion that is considered (Bach & Veit, 2017). Politicians primarily do so to provide their government with politically responsive subordinates, since they on principle lack an assurance that the established bureaucracy will act and respond according to their needs (Peters & Pierre, 2004), especially given the fact the bureaucracy has served previous governments before and may also be pursuing its own goals (Bach & Veit, 2017). The

appointment of individuals who are loyal to the politician to senior positions then may increase the ability of the politician to politically handle and control the bureaucracy (Peters & Pierre, 2004). While this tendency holds true for all kinds of politicians, Peters & Pierre (2020) argue that this focus on loyalty and ideological congruency is especially strong in populists. This can be explained by the internalized distrust that populists hold in regards to the established bureaucratic machinery, seeing the neutral civil servants as out of touch with the virtuous citizens, which makes them aim to replace the corrupt elite with representatives of those noble people (Peters & Pierre, 2020).

Furthermore, Müller (2016) raises the point that populists generally aim to avoid intermediaries and seek a representation as direct as possible. This desire can again be explained by their self-perception: Since populists see themselves as the only ones who truly represent the people (Mudde, 2004), whereas the establishment is seen as corrupted, as only working to further their self-interest (Arrellano-Gault, 2020) and as being out of touch with the electorate, populists try to exert their power as directly as possible to avoid handing power to the corrupted cogs of the establishment (Peters & Pierre, 2020). Appointing loyalists then serves as a means to exert a more direct, more pure form of representation than the appointment of non-loyalists would provide.

In addition, as various scholars pointed out (see also Rockman, 2019), populists will ultimately aim to transform the bureaucratic apparatus. To showcase two: Arrellano-Gault (2020) states that populists perceive the public administration as “technocracy serving elitist interests” (Arrellano-Gault, 2020, p. 6) which diverted from its original responsibility to serve the people. The populist thus, so Arrellano-Gault, will aim to transform the bureaucracy and divert its focus back to serving the will of the people. Since this will of ‘the people’ is defined and articulated by the populist leader, the public administration needs to be transformed and reduced to an institution that obeys and implements the populist leader’s orders (Arrellano-Gault, 2020). Bauer & Becker (2020) convincingly demonstrate that the populist ideology, perceiving “a single will of the people” (Bauer & Becker, 2020, p. 21), is not only anti-elitist but also anti-pluralist in its core and thus naturally stands in contradiction to the pluralist bureaucracy of a liberal democracy. Thus, the populist will aim to mould the bureaucracy into a shape that fits his anti-pluralist agenda.

What these propositions have in common is that, taking this aim to change the bureaucracy as departure point, they justify the expectation that the populist will appoint individuals who will support him with this aim, who do not pose a threat of being a

potentially competing source of authority (Rockman, 2019) and who can be trusted, in other words: individuals who are loyal to their cause.

Taking the internalized distrust in the system (Peters & Pierre, 2020), the seeking of direct representation (Müller, 2016) and the aspiration to transform the bureaucracy into account (Bauer & Becker, 2020; Arellano-Gault, 2020; Rockman, 2019), it becomes theoretically justified to expect that a populist government will appoint a considerable number of loyalists. While it is true that non-populist governments also value loyalty and responsiveness highly in their appointees (Bach & Veit, 2017; Peters & Pierre, 2004), the non-populist governments do not possess a similarly pronounced distrust on the bureaucratic machinery, do not necessarily prioritize direct representation as highly as the populist does and finally in general do not aim to reshape the bureaucracy as deeply. Thus, the chances that in some cases, considerations of competency prevail over considerations of loyalty, are higher in a nonpopulist government. It is for these reasons, that it can be expected that the number of loyalists appointed to top official positions in a populist government, such as Donald Trump's, will be higher than in a nonpopulist counterpart, such as Bush's and Obama's administrations.

*H2: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of loyalty of the top civil servants.*

Given the abovementioned worldview of the populist with his distinct rejection of the establishment (Peters & Pierre, 2019), the feeling of being situated in a hostile system (Peters & Pierre, 2020), the seeking of direct representation (Müller, 2016) and its connection to the anti-intellectual narrative (Merkley, 2020), it can be expected that when populists run out of appointee candidates who possess both loyalty and competence and thus have to prioritize one of those characteristics in a candidate, that populists would favour the former over the latter. Since the number of potential appointees who are both loyal to the cause and qualified to fulfil the vacant positions may be inadequate for populists (Peters & Pierre, 2019), and given the aforementioned expected prioritization of loyalty, it can be expected that a populist president on average accepts more candidates who are loyal but not necessarily competent. It can be expected that they do this in order to exert unsullied control over the bureaucracy via trustworthy vassals and thus to avoid appointing candidates of the establishment who might be competent, but in the eyes of the populist certainly lack trustworthiness (Peters & Pierre, 2020). In other words, considerations

of loyalty trump considerations of competence and thus lower the overall average competence in the appointees, a dynamic that in a similar vein was documented for patronage appointees (Hollibaugh et al., 2014).

Nonpopulist governments on the other hand possess a bigger pool of potential appointees who are both loyal and competent, due to them trusting and not avoiding the system insiders, as they themselves are part of it. Furthermore, it can be expected that nonpopulist governments are less hesitant than a populist government to appoint candidates who are competent but not necessarily loyal to their cause. It can therefore be expected that the overall competence of individuals appointed by a nonpopulist president will be higher, indicated by both higher education levels as well as a stronger fit between their qualifications and the subject area (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). The appointments of the populist president on the other hand may shift from technically qualified individuals to individuals with few qualifications other than their political congruency with the president (Peters & Pierre, 2019).

Emphasizing a different aspect, Bauer & Becker (2020) note that the populist who views the bureaucracy negatively and is faced with a robust bureaucracy, will aim to sabotage it in order to weaken the bureaucracy's ability to obstruct the populist in power. This sabotage might take place via the appointment of obstructive personnel, of individuals that demonstrated loyalty to the populist cause or of individuals lacking subject area expertise or simply by not reappointing skilled former appointees. Arellano-Gault (2020) also notes that the populist may aim to diminish expert knowledge and Peters & Pierre (2020) point out, that the populist might also, in order to appeal to the ordinary citizens who are at the core of his ideology, appoint more ordinary citizens than career public servants. All these aspects in result reduce the overall competence in the appointees, hence the following hypotheses are derived:

*H3: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of fitting professional specialization of the appointed top civil servants.*

*H4: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the educational level of the appointed top civil servants.*

Postel (2007) outlines the populist's point of view of seeing the government as an entity that ideally should be organized like a business. In this perspective, the government suffers from politicians and would profit from professional business agents assuming central roles within the government (Postel, 2007). Taking this into account, it can be expected that once in the halls of power, a populist president would try to provide this stimulus via his appointments. Thus, he can be expected to place a high emphasis on appointing individuals with a corresponding business-related background, especially in the top civil service leadership positions where their impact would be of considerable extent. It is hence reasonable to expect the following:

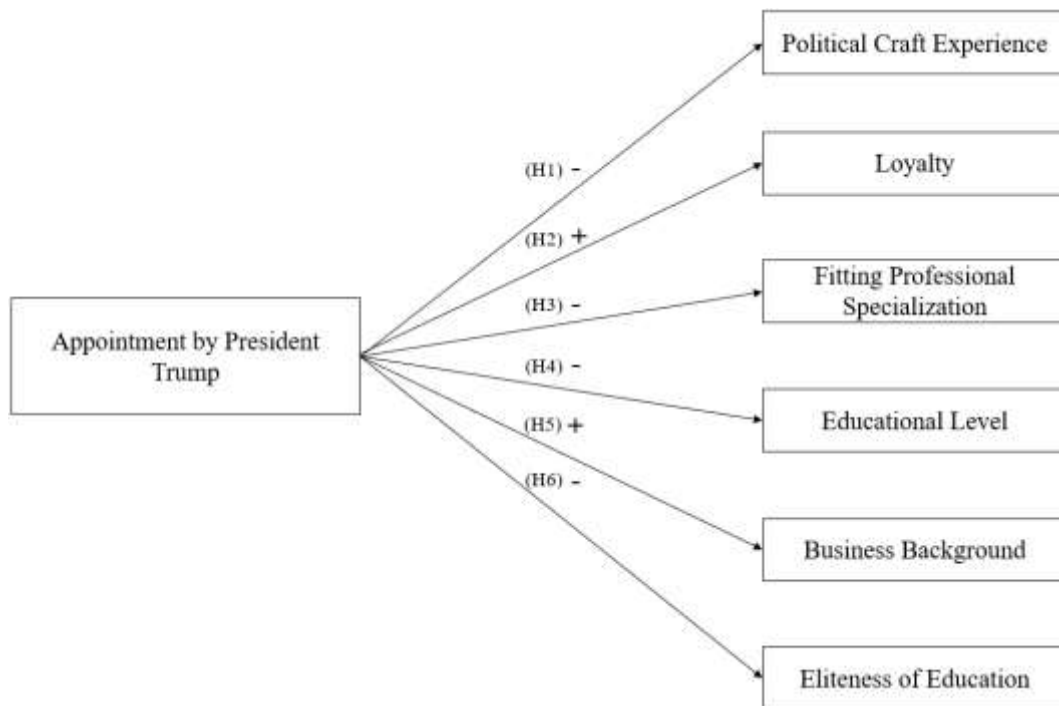
*H5: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of a business-related background of the appointed top civil servants.*

Merkley (2020) showed that populism is connected to anti-intellectualism, as the anti-intellectual narrative fits the populist ideology. Anti-intellectualism is “a generalized mistrust of experts and intellectuals” (Merkley, 2020, p. 25), and essentially sees experts as “dangerous because they occupy the halls of power and profess to know how citizens should better run their lives” (Merkley, 2020, p. 25). This shown possible connection to anti-intellectualism in combination with the aforementioned anti-elitism of the populist make it likely that a populist in power would try to avoid appointing individuals that are related to those intellectual elitist traits. One should expect that the populist president appoints individuals with degrees from on average lower ranking, less elitary institutions than a non-populist president.

The primary institutions of intellectual elites in the US are arguably the top-ranked universities. Graduates of those institutions are likely to be seen by the populist as expert intellectuals due to the entailed status. It is therefore hypothesized that under a populist president like Trump, there will be less appointees nominated to the top civil service rank that achieved a degree from one of those top-ranking universities than under non-populist presidents like Bush or Obama.

*H6: An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the eliteness of education of the appointed top civil servants.*

**Figure 1.** *Conceptual Model*



**Table 2.** *Theoretical Propositions of This Thesis*

	<b>Propositions</b>
1)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to President Bush or President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of prior government-, parliamentary- or agency-related work experience of the top civil servants.
2)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of loyalty of the top civil servants.
3)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of fitting professional specialization of the appointed top civil servants.
4)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the educational level of the appointed top civil servants.
5)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of a business-related background of the appointed top civil servants.
6)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the eliteness of education of the appointed top civil servants.



### **3. Methodology**

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The following section will explain the methodological framework of this thesis. First, the general research design will briefly be elaborated. Subsequently, the studied population, the dependent and independent variables as well as the control variables will be discussed and presented. Then, an extensive description of the data collection strategy and method of data analysis will be presented. Finally, a brief reflection on the reliability and validity of this research will be given.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

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The research of this thesis is X-Y-focussed. That is, it will analyse the impact the independent variable (*'Appointment by Trump'*) has on the dependent variables (*'Political Craft Experience'*, *'Loyalty'*, *'Fitting Professional Specialization'*, *'Educational Level'*, *'Business Background'* and *'Eliteness of Education'*). This thesis follows a deductive approach, that is, it will empirically test several hypotheses that are derived from theoretical deliberations. In order to do so, a quantitative statistical large-N analysis (N = 374) will be employed. The unit of analysis for this study are the appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy, which are analysed in their entirety, resulting in a considerable set of 374 observations made in three time periods: The appointed bureaucrats in the outlined top civil servant positions (see below) of the first George W. Bush administration (2001-2005), the first Obama administration (2006-2010) as well as of the Trump administration (2016-2020). The biographical data of the appointees will be used to demonstrate the nature of the relationship between Trump as appointing president and the characteristics and professional backgrounds of the top civil servants in comparison to the non-populist presidents Bush and Obama and thus will provide appropriate data to answer the hypotheses and research question.

#### **3.2 Studied Population**

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This thesis aims to analyse the characteristics and professional backgrounds of the population of top civil servants appointed by a populist U.S. president in comparison to that of non-populist U.S. presidents in regards to various variables. Prior, a short clarification of who will be considered as a top civil servant in the understanding of this thesis is needed.

The president of the United States of America, by Article II Section 2 of the U.S. constitution, has been granted the power to appoint individuals to four general types of positions (Bonica et. al, 2015; Lewis, 2011). This thesis will focus on one type of these positions only, the so-called Presidential appointments with Senate confirmation (PAS), which primarily constitute the leadership positions in the federal personnel hierarchy and, hence the name, without exception require a confirmation by the U.S. Senate (Lewis, 2011). The narrowed focus on leadership positions (see appendix A) has been chosen for several reasons.

First, given that bureaucratic leadership positions are the most important appointments of the U.S. president and highly influence the degree of control he will be able to exert and possess over the bureaucracy (Lewis & Waterman, 2013), an analysis of these appointments provides excellent insights in the characteristics a president values in his appointments (Krause & O'Connell, 2011; Lewis & Waterman, 2013). In other words, since these leadership positions are too important to be filled with candidates who do not meet the president's generally desired attributes, it is most likely that the criteria the president values are carried by these appointees. Thus, if differences in sought professional characteristics in comparison to nonpopulist presidents are existent, it can be expected to find them in those positions (Krause & O'Connell, 2011; Lewis & Waterman, 2013).

Second, the narrowed-down focus on the agencies' leadership makes a collection of comprehensive and entire data feasible and therefore circumvents using samples. Hereby the possibility of selection bias is substantially reduced which in turn increases the internal validity (Toshkov, 2016). Given the prominence and visibility that high-ranking bureaucratic positions contain (Cotta, 1991), it is also reasonable to assume that biographical information in various forms will widely be available in the media or on government websites, more available than data on appointees in the lower echelons of departments would be.

A study conducted by Krause & O'Connell (2011), which focusses on the analysis of the bureaucratic leadership of U.S. federal government agencies, provides a valuable point of orientation on which of the above-mentioned PAS positions to include in order to capture the leadership of the U.S. federal executive. In their study on the characteristics of presidential appointees in top official positions, the authors carve out an enumeration of those positions in federal government agencies, which they perceive as constituting the bureaucratic leadership (or in other words, the top civil servants). Their enumeration of

bureaucratic leadership will be used as a blueprint to determine the top civil servants whose backgrounds this thesis will analyse. That is, following their example, top civil servants will in this thesis be understood as “all Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries; Administrators and Deputy Administrators (if Senate-confirmed) of major executive agencies; Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members of major independent regulatory commissions/boards and all Senate-confirmed positions (and any connected deputy positions that require Senate confirmation) listed in Trattner (2000)” (Krause & O’Connell, 2011, p. 16), while positions that ceased to exist before or between the covered time periods were excluded. A detailed breakdown of these positions and agencies this study will collect data on can be found in appendix A.

### **3.3 Measurement**

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To test the formulated hypotheses, indicator variables that are plausibly related to the stated concepts of interest have to be developed (Krause & O’Connell, 2011). Subsequently, the biographical data will then be used to determine the values on the various variables for each top civil service appointee in order to empirically assess the aforementioned hypotheses.

#### **3.3.1 Dependent Variables**

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The dependent variables this study is interested in measure various attributes of the appointed top civil servants. These variables either measure competency (*‘Fitting Professional Specialization’*, *‘Educational Level’*, *‘Eliteness of Education’*) or loyalty (*‘Loyalty’*) or provide information on the kind of competency that is valued (*‘Political Craft Experience’*, *‘Business Background’*) and as such are essential to understand what a bureaucracy can expect from a populist head of government and what kind of characteristics he seeks in his top civil servants.

Inspired by Lewis’ & Waterman’s (2013) operationalization of agency and public management experience and Bach & Veit’s (2017) operationalization of loyalty towards the government, the variable *‘Political Craft Experience’* will distinguish between individuals that possess any prior agency experience on the federal, state or local level, have held political offices before or have worked for individuals in political offices (e.g. worked as an assistant to a Member of Congress, Member of State Parliament, Secretary) or in staff

units in federal or state parliaments (*Political Craft Experience* = 1) and those that do not (*Political Craft Experience* = 0).

'*Loyalty*' on the other hand is measured by a selection of proxy measures that Waterman & Ouyang (2020), Lewis & Waterman (2013) and Bach & Veit (2017) have outlined in their respective studies. That is, this variable will distinguish between appointees that have worked in the White House during the appointing president's term, have work experience for the political party of the president, have worked for a member of this party (e.g., as a private assistant to an MP) or assumed an elective office for the party (*Loyalty* = 1) and appointees that did not (*Loyalty* = 0; Lewis & Waterman, 2013). This limited number of elements was selected based on the chosen data collection method of this thesis, which does not allow for further loyalty measures such as prior work experience in the president's inaugural, campaign or transition team, since no reliable, feasible and comprehensive data sources for it could be determined.

The variable '*Fitting Professional Specialization*' is focused on the congruency between the appointees' prior work and educational experience and the tasks and subject of their respective departments, i.e. if the appointees work outside of the area of their specialization (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). '*Fitting Professional Specialization*' (or subject area fit) as a concept was defined and in a convincing way operationalized by Lewis & Waterman (2013), whose operationalization will be followed: It will be distinguished between appointees that have prior work experience or an educational degree that demonstrate a substantial fit to "the core policy mission" (Lewis & Waterman, 2013, p. 46) of the department or agency (*Fitting Professional Specialization* = 1) and those that do not (*Fitting Professional Specialization* = 0). For instance, if the biographic information of an appointee in the Department of Defense displays prior work experience in the armed forces, in an agency related to defense, a private organization or company related to defense and military or an educational background in a military-, security- or defense-related program, the individual would score '1', signalling that a fitting professional specialization is given (Lewis & Waterman, 2013).

The variable '*Educational Level*' is as a concept of interest organically so concrete, that the indicator (highest achieved educational level) pretty much is the concept of interest (Toshkov, 2016). In line with and taken from Lewis & Waterman (2013, p. 46), this variable will be measured by an analysis of the highest level of education the appointee has achieved in the subsequent form: The coding will be ranked, that is if the highest achieved education of an individual is a PhD, he will be coded with '4', if it is a MD/MPhil

with a '3', a MBA/MA/JD/MS with a '2' and if it is a BA with a '1'. If none of the like was achieved, this variable will be coded with a '0'.

The variable '*Business Background*' is constructed as a binary measure that distinguishes between individuals that have an academic background in a business-related degree (e.g. Business Administration) or have work experience as a businessman (*Business Background* = 1) and those that do not (*Business Background* = 0). Taking inspiration from the Merriam-Webster dictionary's definition of 'businessman' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), a businessman will be understood as an individual who had an upper-level executive role in a company or an entrepreneurial background.

The variable '*Eliteness of Education*' will be measured by the academic education of the appointees, i.e. by whether an appointee achieved a degree from one of the top-ranking universities in the US. These were defined as the top-20 universities in the USA as put forward by the Times Higher Education ranking of 2020. The operationalization thus is organized as the following. An appointee scores a '1' if he attended either Carnegie Mellon University, Chicago University, the CIT, Columbia University, Cornell University, Duke University, Harvard University, John Hopkins University the MIT, Northwestern University, New York University, Pennsylvania University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of California/Berkeley, University of California/LA, University of California/San Diego, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, University of Washington, or Yale University (Times Higher Education, 2020). In addition, if the appointee attended one of the top-20 universities from another country (e.g. LSE, Oxford, Cambridge for the case of the UK) he will score a '1' as well. In all other cases the appointee will score a '0'.

### **3.3.2 Independent Variable**

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The appointing president constitutes the independent variable in this study. This variable will be split in three dummy variables, in alignment with the three presidents whose timeframe was analysed, in order to allow more precise comparisons in the regression analyses. Therefore, the variables '*Appointment by Bush*', '*Appointment by Obama*', '*Appointment by Trump*' are three dummy variables which distinguish dichotomously between whether the named president was the appointing president or not. Top civil servants that were appointed by the named president score a '1', whereas appointees appointed by other presidents score a '0'.

**Table 3.** Operationalization of Key Variables

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
<b>Appointment by Trump</b>	The top civil servant was appointed by President Trump.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Appointment by Bush</b>	The top civil servant was appointed by President Bush.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Appointment by Obama</b>	The top civil servant was appointed by President Obama	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
<b>Political Craft Experience</b>	Prior agency experience on the federal, state or local level, no prior assumption of political offices, no work experience for individuals in political offices (e.g. as assistant to a Member of Congress, Member of State Parliament, Secretary) or in staff units in federal or state parliaments.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Loyalty</b>	Prior work experience in the White House <b>-or-</b> Prior work experience for the party of the president, for a member of the party (e.g., as a private assistant to an MP) or election into office for the party.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Fitting Professional Specialization</b>	Prior work experience or educational degree demonstrating a substantial fit to 'the core policy mission of the Department'.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Educational Level</b>	Highest achieved level of education.	Ph.D. 4 MD/MPhil 3 MBA/MA/JD/MS 2 BA 1 No academic degree 0
<b>Business Background</b>	Academic background in a business-related degree (e.g. Business Administration) or prior work experience as a businessperson.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0
<b>Eliteness of Education</b>	Degree of one of the top 20 universities in the USA.	Fulfilled/Not fulfilled - 1/0

### 3.3.3 Control Variables

Bonica et. al (2015) have found, that, though the president certainly has the upper hand in the appointment process of civil servants, he nonetheless reacts to the requirement of senatorial confirmation. He might include their preferences in his considerations and might be inclined to select “nominees who are likely to win the support of most Senators”

(Bonica et. al, 2015, p. 10). The authors furthermore note that the Senate committee chairs are playing “an important role in tempering the president’s ability to install ideological allies” (Bonica et. al, 2015, p. 35), and exert influence in the appointment process, which varies in its strength in periods of divided or unified governments. In other words, next to his personal preferences for competence, loyalty and other characteristics in appointees, the president also has to take the preferences of the Senate into account (Lewis, 2011). It can therefore not be ruled out that the U.S. Senate exerts a certain influence on the president in his appointment-related decision-making process regarding the PAS positions.

However, how much a president is influenced by a consideration of the Senate in his appointments is dependent on the party that holds the majority in the Senate (Bonica et. al, 2015). It has, for instance, been documented that periods of divided governments delay the filling of presidential appointment positions, since in such a setting, senators have fewer incentives to cooperate with the president and can also use this strategy to create campaign issues (Lewis, 2011). In a similar vein, it has been documented that periods of unified government lead to a significantly higher number of presidential appointees (Lewis, 2008). Therefore, if a president is facing a Senate majority of the opposition party, it can be expected that he will consider the senatorial acceptability of a candidate stronger than in times where the Senate is led by a majority of his own party.

To conclude, the majority of the U.S. Senate, for the reasons above, needs to be controlled for in this thesis, as it potentially exerts influence on the presidential appointment process and might influence the characteristics and professional backgrounds the president chooses in his appointment candidates. Following the approach of Bonica et. al (2015), it will statistically be controlled for confounding effects that may arise from differences in the Senate composition during the appointment period with the variable ‘*Senate Majority*’, which is measured dichotomously by whether the party of the appointing president hold the majority in the Senate at the time of the nomination of the particular appointee (‘1’) or not (‘0’). The Congressional Records search engine (see Library of Congress, n.d.), provided by the Library of Congress, contains detailed information on the presidential nominations and was used for information on the time an appointee was nominated, and hereby allowed to identify the context in which the nomination entered the Senate (Bonica et. al, 2015).

Since electoral calculations can affect the presidential decision-making (Parsneau, 2012), other studies also control for whether a president is facing an election in the upcoming years or not (see Parsneau, 2012). However, this variable is effectively already

controlled for in the generated dataset, as the time periods covered by the data collection of this study all exclusively feature presidents in their first term, presidents who thus were facing an upcoming election. Another potentially relevant control variable can be drawn from Parsneau (2012): The availability of potential nominees, which is operationalized by “the number of years in the previous 12 that a president’s party has held the executive branch” (Parsneau, 2012, p. 454), which, so Parsneau’s argument, increases the availability of loyal and experienced nominees for the appointing president. However, this factor is identical for all three presidents covered in this thesis, so that a control of this variable is as well rendered redundant.

### **3.4 Research Methods A – Data Collection**

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Following the approach laid out by Bach & Veit (2017), the first phase of data collection will consist of a mapping of the individuals that were holding the offices of the appointment positions of interest at the end of the first George W. Bush administration, the first Obama administration and the Trump administration. For the mapping of the appointees nominated by President Bush and President Obama, the corresponding government Plum Book will be consulted (see Committee on Government Reform U.S. House of Representatives, 2004; Committee on Government Reform U.S. House of Representatives, 2012). This Plum Book provides an official and comprehensive list of the appointees in the positions of interest at the respective year the Plum Book was created (2004 or 2012). Since the official Plum Book for President Trump’s presidency was not yet published at the point in time this thesis was created, alternative sources are drawn upon to determine the individuals that Trump appointed to the outlined PAS positions. That is, organizational charts, department and agency websites and annual reports will be drawn upon (Bach & Veit, 2017) and the officeholders at the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2020 will be mapped. The mapped officeholders can be found in appendix B. In the second phase, the biographical information of these presidential appointees (N = 374) will be gathered. Bach & Veit (2017) again provide a prime example of a feasible approach which will be followed in this thesis. That is, online sources (such as LinkedIn), press releases, biographical information from agency, personal or media websites will be used to collect the relevant information needed for the analyses and to avoid missing data.



### 3.5 Research Methods B - Analysis

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Since most of the dependent variables are dichotomous (except for '*Educational Level*'), the data will primarily be investigated using logistic regression as analysis method. This method is the appropriate statistical technique and method of analysis for this kind of variables and suitable to provide detailed insights on the relationships between the variables. For the variable '*Educational Level*', determined by its measurement scale, an ordered logistic regression will be applied. Furthermore, the Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> measures (in this thesis provided as adjusted McFadden's R<sup>2</sup>) of the regression models will be presented. This score will shed light on the percentage of variation that the included independent variables explain and hereby will provide information about the overall fit of the regression model (Kohler & Kreuter, 2012).

This course of action will enable this study to assess what significant influence and relation Trump as appointing president has on the probability that the respective dependent variables change and will yield the strength and direction of that influence. Through this, this study will be enabled to confirm or reject the formulated hypotheses and it will hereby provide the grounds for a detailed answer to the research question of how Trump's presidency affected the characteristics and professional backgrounds of appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy. To exemplify, hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between an appointment by President Trump and the loyalty of the appointees. If the respective regression models (in this case, models 2, 8 and 14) yield a significant and positive correlation coefficient for the '*Appointment by Trump*' variable this hypothesis then could be confirmed.

In order to understand the effects of an appointment by President Trump on the variables depicting characteristics and professional backgrounds of appointees, several regression models will be run. For each variable first a regression containing the full set of observations is run, essentially depicting a comparison between individuals appointed by President Trump and the individuals appointed by both President Bush and Obama simultaneously (models 1-6). The results of these regressions only allow to determine whether an individual appointed by President Trump is more or less likely to have a certain characteristic than individuals appointed by *both* President Bush and President Obama, but do not answer how an appointment by President Trump relates specifically to *just* individuals appointed by President Bush or *just* those appointed by President Obama. In order to get these more fine-grained and differentiated results, further

regressions are needed. Hence, an additional set of regressions with the same variables will be run which will either be supplemented by the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*', to see how appointments by Trump relate directly to appointments by Bush (models 7-12), or by the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*' to see how appointments by Trump relate directly to appointments by Obama (models 13-18; DeMaris, 1995). This proceeding provides detailed additional insights about whether or not an individual appointed by President Trump is significantly more or less likely to depict certain characteristics than *specifically* individuals appointed by President Bush and *specifically* individuals appointed by President Obama, rather than just documenting an overall comparison. This course of action further carries the advantage of providing insights valuable for the existing research body of interpresidential comparison of presidential appointments.

### **3.6 Examination of Assumptions of Logistic Regression**

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Stoltzfus (2011) states four basic assumptions that necessarily must be met when a logistic regression is conducted: First, the errors must be independent. That is, all observations need to be independent from each other and must not come from duplicate measurements. Second, if an independent variable is continuous (e.g., age) it should be linearly related to its respective logit-transformed outcome. Third, no multicollinearity must exist among the independent variables. Fourth, a lack of strongly influential outliers must exist in the dataset, which, if violated, would compromise the regression model's accuracy.

In the subsequent section, these assumptions will be examined for the planned regression models. Starting with the independence of errors, the models used in this thesis meet this criterion, since no duplicate responses were gathered or other violations of this assumption were detected. The second assumption can be assessed as met as well, since none of the used and presented independent variables are of continuous nature and the assumption therefore cannot possibly be violated.

The third assumption, absence of multicollinearity between the independent (and control) variables, demands a deeper discussion. Multicollinearity is present in a regression model when several variables are included that "are significantly correlated not only with the dependent variable but also to each other" (Shrestha, 2020, p. 39). It endangers the quality of the regression, may make significant variables statistically insignificant, "can prompt skewed or deluding results" (Shrestha, 2020, p. 39), is problematic for the

interpretation of coefficients and may render the findings from a model untrustworthy (Shrestha, 2020). For the case of this thesis, multicollinearity has to be assessed between the respective independent variables of the models (*'Appointment by Bush'*, *'Appointment by Obama'*, *'Appointment by Trump'*, that is) and the control variable *'Senate Majority'*.

The scientific literature offers several methods to test for collinearity and, as Dormann et. al (2012) note, one of the most commonly used tools to detect multicollinearity is the examination of the correlation coefficient. When examining the coefficient, they suggest a threshold between 0.5 to 0.7, as cut-off points within this range are commonly applied for the determination of multicollinearity. Donath et. al (2012) note that 0.5 acts as a good threshold that ensures a model that is lean and well operationalized and, following their reasoning, a correlation coefficient of 0.5 will be used as cut-off point for multicollinearity in this thesis.

As can be seen in the correlation matrix provided in table 5, the correlation coefficient between *'Senate Majority'* and the variable *'Appointment by Bush'* is  $\varphi = -.520$ , between *'Senate Majority'* and *'Appointment by Obama'* is  $\varphi = .252$  and between *'Senate Majority'* and *'Appointment by Trump'* is  $\varphi = .257$ . The correlation coefficient therefore does exceed the predefined threshold and hence indicates a harmful multicollinearity. Therefore, it was decided to omit the control variable *'Senate Majority'* from the used regression models.

The fourth assumption regarding the absence of influential outliers can, due to the nature of the independent variables, be assessed as met. Since the independent variables are coded in a dichotomous way, no strongly influential outliers are possible. Considering these examinations, it can be documented that all assumptions for logistic regression are met in the models and hence their conduction is justified.

### **3.7 Reflection on Validity and Reliability**

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External and internal validity, as well as reliability are important for any kind of research (Toshkov, 2016). It is therefore necessary to elaborate how these aspects play out in this thesis.

External validity refers to the generalizability of the findings of a research project to the larger population of cases (Toshkov, 2016), i.e. for the case of this thesis the generalizability to top civil servant appointments in democratic countries. Since this research is

only focussing on one country across different time periods, the external validity can be considered to be low. The respective findings of how a populist government impacts public administration cannot be generalized to all other countries facing a similar scenario. Yet, as Toshkov (2016) points out, this is not necessarily a problematic deal-breaker, as generalization might not be the overarching goal of a research project. This applies to the research of this study. As has been outlined in the justification of this research (see chapter 1.1), there is a scholarly and societal need to fill the gap of the particular case of the USA in regards to Trump's populist presidency and to test the assumptions made by researchers in the field (e.g. Peters & Pierre, 2020). Hence, this research primarily aims to close the aforementioned empirical gap, not necessarily to provide generalizable findings. Nonetheless, a discussion of the generalizability of the findings will be provided in the conclusion chapter.

Internal validity refers in its essence to “establishing that variation in an effect or outcome (the dependent variable) has been produced by changes in level or intensity of the independent variable and not by some other causal force” (Brewer & Crano, 2014, p. 13). First, internal validity can be threatened by “any *plausible* claim that the obtained variations in the outcome variable (Y) were actually produced by some third factor (usually unobserved or unmeasured) that happened to be correlated with the variations in the levels of X” (Brewer & Crano, 2014, p. 13). However, since the potential confounding variables were identified by a thorough review of existing literature and the theoretical reasoning within it and, in a second step, will be statistically controlled, this factor's threat potential for this research can be assessed to be low.

Second, internal validity can be threatened by insufficient indicators that do not cover all aspects of a concept and thus do not sufficiently measure what they are intended to measure (Toshkov, 2016, p. 119). However, this research will primarily use validated indicators that were established and used by researchers in comparable studies, which reduces the threat coming from this factor. It is nonetheless acknowledged that one of the chosen indicators does not capture the respective concept comprehensively. The measurement of loyalty is not a perfect capture and could be measured with additional variables, but due to a lack of reliable data that would allow this, the chosen operationalization is considered as the most adequate one and seen as sufficient to test the related hypothesis.

Third, systematic errors or biases threaten internal validity (Toshkov, 2016). Selection bias, for instance, is a threat to internal validity (Toshkov, 2016), but can be

disregarded for this project, since the entirety of the appointed top civil servants that in prior research were identified as constituting the bureaucratic leadership (see Krause & O'Connell, 2011; Trattner, 2000) is analysed for the chosen time periods.

Reliability refers to the condition that if different researchers applied the same measurement instruments or techniques to the same data source, the results and outcomes should be the same or at least very similar, independent of the researcher or time of application (Toshkov, 2016). The one area that was identified as potentially threatening the reliability of this research in this regard, concerns the coding phase of the research project. Dietz, Chompalov, Bozeman, Lane & Park (2000) note that intercoder reliability can decrease when the coding scheme is of high complexity. In other words, if different researchers apply the same methods to the same data but are to apply a complex coding scheme, the chances of differing interpretations and thus different outcomes increase. However, since most of the concepts in this thesis are operationalized and coded in a binary way, the room for such differences in interpretation by different researchers is substantially reduced. Moreover, in order to enhance the reliability of this thesis further, the operationalization section provides an extensive description of the criteria used for different codings, which reduces the chance of diverging interpretations even further (Bryman, 2012).

Reliability is further dependent on the used data source. Since this thesis exclusively uses publicly and online available biographic data, primarily derived from governmental websites or websites such as LinkedIn, this poses the threat that the presented information does not necessarily constitute a definitive list of all biographic milestones in the individual's life, for some might be omitted for various reasons (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). This is problematic, since when working with CV-like data, it is not clear, when a certain aspect is not listed, if this then constitutes a missing value or zero data (Dietz et al, 2000). In other words, if no prior agency experience is listed in the CV, does that mean that the individual has no prior agency experience or did he simply not list it (Dietz et. al, 2000)?

However, as Lewis & Waterman note, if "résumés are less complete, they still reflect what each individual considers to be the most important in terms of their education and prior experience" (Lewis & Waterman, 2013, p. 43). Transferring this to career websites such as LinkedIn, it can be assumed that the appointee will present all prior experiences that the individual regards as useful to secure future positions. To make it concrete: Regarding the data for the variables of prior government, parliamentary or agency

experience, prior business background in business, loyalty and subject area fit, it can be expected that individuals on LinkedIn will mention all those prior experiences that relate to these variables in order to showcase their expertise and skill (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). Therefore, it can be expected that data derived from LinkedIn for these dimensions is reliable. Prior work experience that is not mentioned is likely not to be relevant or substantive enough. Similar is the situation for governmental websites, which are likely to present all relevant past experiences of the appointee in order to showcase his skill level, expertise and fit to the agency.

Whenever possible, several sources for biographic data were used. Hereby, via triangulation, the threat that important prior experience is not observed, and an individual then would falsely be coded as, for instance, not having prior agency, government, or parliamentary experience, is substantially reduced. The reliability of this research project can thus all in all be assessed as high.

## 4. Empirical Findings

The upcoming section will present the empirical findings the data analyses yielded. First, the descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables will be provided, the results of the regression analyses be presented and simultaneously linked back to the formulated hypotheses. Subsequently, a discussion of the analysis results will be given and their implications for the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 3.3 will be discussed.

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

This section will briefly present the descriptive statistics for all variables in the analysis. Their exact values are provided in table 4. It will be briefly commented on the variables, focussing on the number of observations, their mean and share.

**Table 4.** *Descriptive Statistics for All Variables*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Political Craft Experience	368	.864	.343	0	1
Loyalty	364	.25	.434	0	1
Fitting Professional Specialization	369	.892	.312	0	1
Business Background	364	.253	.435	0	1
Eliteness of Education	367	.425	.495	0	1
Appointment by Bush	374	.340	.474	0	1
Appointment by Obama	374	.326	.469	0	1
Appointment by Trump	374	.334	.472	0	1
<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Share</b>			
Total	<b>366</b>	<b>100%</b>	-	0	4
Ph.D.	54	14,75%	-		
M.D. or MPhil	10	2,73%	-		
Master's degree	257	70,22%	-		
Bachelor' degree	44	12,02%	-		
No academic degree	1	0,27%	-		

The variable connected to an appointee's prior work experience in a government-, parliamentary- or agency-related field, '*Political Craft Experience*', yields a mean of 0.864, indicating that the vast majority of appointed civil servants displays such an experience. That is, 318 out of 368 appointees showed this characteristic (86.41%). The '*Loyalty*' variable has a mean of 0.25, which means that an exact quarter (25%) of the 364 appointees that were observed for this variable can be considered loyal to the respective appointing president. For '*Fitting Professional Specialization*', the mean of 0.892 indicates that a considerable majority of the top civil servants under observation (89.16%) shows a fit between the department of their appointee position and their professional background, with 329 out of the 369 appointees demonstrating the fit. The variable '*Business Background*' concerns prior work or academic experience in a business-related field and yielded a mean of 0.253, indicating that roughly one quarter, or 92 out of 364 appointees (25.3%), show such a prior work or academic experience in a business-related field. For the variable '*Eliteness of Education*', measuring whether or not appointees have attended an elite university, a mean of 0.425 can be documented, that is a considerable 42.5%, or 156 out of 367 appointees, have attended an institution of elite higher education. Regarding the variable '*Educational Level*', the majority of appointed top civil servants are highly educated, with 87.7% of the appointees having achieved at least master's degree. 54 out of 366 (14.75%) of the appointees received a Ph.D., 10 appointees an M.D. or MPhil (2.73%) and the most common degree is a master's degree, it being the highest achieved degree for 257 out of 366 appointees (70.22%). 44 appointees received a bachelor's degree (12.02%) and one sole appointee has no academic degree at all (0.27%).

#### **4.1.1 Correlations**

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In the following the correlations between the variables will be described in order to provide a better understanding of the bivariate relationships. The exact correlation coefficients are provided in table 5. Since they are of less importance for the research goal of this thesis, the correlations between the variables '*Appointment by Bush*' and '*Appointment by Obama*' and the respective dependent and control variables will only briefly be described.

The correlation coefficients show that various variables are significantly correlated to the '*Appointment by Trump*' variable: The variables '*Appointment by Trump*' and '*Loyalty*' demonstrate a  $\phi$ -correlation coefficient of 0.147, significant at the 1% level. That



means the two variables are, with a small-sized effect, highly significantly positively correlated (Allen, 2017). The variable ‘*Business Background*’ also demonstrates a correlation to the variable ‘*Appointed by Trump*’, significant at the 5% level, demonstrating a small-sized positive correlation ( $\varphi = 0.125$ ). ‘*Eliteness of Education*’ and ‘*Appointment by Trump*’ are significantly correlated at the 1% level with  $\varphi = -0.106$ , indicating a small-sized negative correlation (Allen, 2017). ‘*Educational Level*’ is significantly correlated to the variable ‘*Appointment by Trump*’, showing a small-sized negative correlation (Allen, 2011). Lastly, the control variable ‘Senate Majority’ shows a highly significant positive correlation to ‘*Appointment by Trump*’ with a moderate effect size ( $\varphi=0.257$ ). In regards to correlations of the independent variables ‘*Appointment by Bush*’ and ‘*Appointment by Obama*’, three results stand out: The ‘*Appointment by Bush*’ variable is only significantly negatively correlated to ‘*Fitting Professional Specialization*’, with a small effect size ( $\varphi = -0.105, p < 0.05$ ) as well as significantly negatively correlated to ‘*Senate Majority*’ with a large effect size ( $\varphi = -0.520, p < 0.01$ ; Allen, 2017). The variable ‘*Appointment by Obama*’ only shows one correlation, that is, it has a small-sized significantly positive correlation to the ‘*Senate Majority*’ variable ( $\varphi = 0.252, p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 5.** Correlations of All Variables in the Analysis

	Appointment Trump	Appointment Bush	Appointment Obama	Political Craft Experience	Loyalty	Fitting Professional Specialization	Business Background	Eliteness of Education	Educational Level	Senate Majority
Appointment Trump	1.000									
Appointment Bush	<b>-0.508**</b>	1.000								
Appointment Obama	<b>-0.493**</b>	<b>-0.499**</b>	1.000							
Political Craft Experience	-0.051	-0.026	0.077	1.000						
Loyalty	<b>0.147**</b>	-0.051	-0.098	0.101	1.000					
Fitting Professional Specialization	0.084	<b>-0.105*</b>	0.021	<b>0.116*</b>	<b>-0.185**</b>	1.000				
Business Background	<b>0.125*</b>	-0.042	-0.085	<b>-0.156**</b>	0.002	0.043	1.000			
Eliteness of Education	<b>-0.106*</b>	0.007	0.100	0.054	-0.037	-0.017	-0.026	1.000		
Educational Level	<b>-0.112*</b>	0.067	0.047	-0.081	<b>-0.205**</b>	0.108	<b>-0.123*</b>	<b>0.176*</b>	1.000	
Senate Majority	<b>0.257**</b>	<b>-0.520**</b>	<b>0.252**</b>	-0.009	0.077	<b>0.107*</b>	-0.002	0.081	-0.098	1.000

Note: The correlation between binary variables is measured via the phi-coefficient ( $\varphi$ ) (Ekström, 2011; Bortz & Schuster, 2011). The correlation between binary variables and the ordinal variable ‘Academic Degree’ is measured via biserial rank-correlation.

\* Significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*\* Significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

### 4.1.2 Results of the Logistic Regression Models

The findings of the regression analyses are reported in tables 6 to 8 and will be described in the following, their order determined by the outlined variables. An overview over significant correlations that were yielded by the regression analyses is provided in the figures 2, 3 and 4.

**Table 6.** Regression Models Comparing Trump's Appointments to Bush's and Obama's Appointments

	Model 1: Political Craft Experience	Model 2: Loyalty	Model 3: Fitting Professional Specialization	Model 4: Business Background	Model 5: Eliteness of Education	Model 6: Educational Level
<b>Appointment Trump</b>	-0.302 (0.312)	<b>0.691** (0.248)</b>	0.629 (0.396)	<b>0.587* (0.247)</b>	<b>-0.461* (0.227)</b>	<b>-0.524* (0.241)</b>
<b>Constant</b>	1.960	-1.360 (0.160)	1.927 (0.192)	-1.305 (0.158)	-0.149 (0.129)	-
<b>Observations</b>	368	364	364	364	367	366
<b>Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.003	0.019	0.011	0.014	0.008	0.007

Note: Cells report the regression logistic coefficients (left) and *standard errors* (parentheses).

\*Significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*\*Significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

**Table 7.** Regression Models Comparing Trump's Appointments to Bush's Appointments

	Model 7: Political Craft Experience	Model 8: Loyalty	Model 9: Fitting Professional Specialization	Model 10: Business Background	Model 11: Eliteness of Education	Model 12: Educational Level
<b>Appointment Trump</b>	-0.086 (0.353)	<b>0.605* (0.292)</b>	<b>0.856* (0.427)</b>	0.509 (0.290)	-0.327 (0.262)	<b>-0.559* (0.279)</b>
<b>Appointment Obama</b>	0.047 (0.397)	-0.175 (0.321)	0.506 (0.393)	-0.160 (0.316)	0.266 (0.258)	-0.069 (0.277)
<b>Constant</b>	1.744 (0.255)	-1.275 (0.222)	1.700 (0.249)	-1.226 (0.219)	-0.283 (0.184)	-
<b>Observations</b>	368	364	364	364	367	366
<b>Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.008	0.020	0.018	0.014	0.011	0.007

Note: Cells report the regression logistic coefficients (left) and *standard errors* (parentheses).

\*Significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*\*Significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

**Table 8.** *Regression Models Comparing Trump's Appointments to Obama's Appointments*

	Model 13: Political Craft Experience	Model 14: Loyalty	Model 15: Fitting Professional Specialization	Model 16: Business Background	Model 17: Eliteness of Education	Model 18: Educational Level
<b>Appointment Trump</b>	-0.557 (0.390)	<b>0.780**</b> (0.299)	0.350 (0.461)	<b>0.669*</b> (0.297)	<b>-0.594*</b> (0.261)	-0.490 (0.276)
<b>Appointment Bush</b>	-0.471 (0.397)	0.175 (0.321)	-0.506 (0.393)	0.160 (0.316)	-0.266 (0.258)	0.069 (0.277)
<b>Constant</b>	2.216 (0.304)	-1.449 (0.232)	2.206 (0.304)	-1.386 (0.228)	-0.017 (0.182)	-
<b>Observations</b>	368	364	364	364	367	366
<b>Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.008	0.020	0.018	0.014	0.016	0.007

*Note:* Cells report the regression logistic coefficients (left) and *standard errors* (parentheses).

\*Significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*\*Significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

### Set 1: Political Craft Experience

The first set of models (model 1, model 7, model 13) contains the dependent variable '*Political Craft Experience*' and the independent variable '*Appointment by Trump*'. In addition, model 7 also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 8 the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 368 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 1), comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 7) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 13).

None of these regression models yielded a statistically significant correlation between an appointment by President Trump and the prior government-, parliament- or agency-related work experience of the respective appointees. Hypothesis 1 is interested in the relationship between appointees nominated by President Trump and the prior government-, agency- or parliament-related experience of nominated individuals. The regression analyses tested this relationship and found no support for H1, which stated that an appointment by President Trump, in comparison to President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the appointees' prior experience in the government-, agency- or parliament-related field. The evidence indicates that an appointment by President Trump does not have a significant influence on prior experience of appointed

individuals in the outlined political areas. In other words, individuals appointed by Trump are not significantly more or less likely to have prior work experience in a government-, agency- or parliamentary-related area than appointees nominated by President Bush or President Obama. Hypothesis 1 is therefore rejected.

## **Set 2: Loyalty**

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The second set of models (model 2, model 8, model 14) consists of the dependent variable '*Loyalty*' and the independent variable '*Appointment by Trump*', whereas model 8 in addition also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 14 contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 364 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump either with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 2), or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 8) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 14).

The results from regression model 2 show that an appointment by President Trump has a highly significant positive influence on the score of the '*Loyalty*' variable of appointed individuals ( $p < .01$ ). The more fine-grained regression analyses of model 8 and model 14 further show that this significant relationship can also be confirmed for the direct comparison between individuals appointed by President Trump and just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 8;  $p < .05$ ) and just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 14;  $p < .01$ ). In other words, the results show that individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to be loyal to the appointing president than individuals appointed by President Bush and than individuals appointed by President Obama.

Hypothesis 2 expected a positive relation between individuals appointed by President Trump and the characteristic of loyalty to the appointing president and the regression analyses provide full support for H2. They indicate that a statistically significant positive relationship between an appointment by Donald Trump and individuals who are loyal to the appointing president exist, even in direct comparison. In other words, individuals appointed by President Trump are more likely to be individuals who are loyal to the appointing president than individuals appointed by President Bush and than individuals appointed by President Obama. Hypothesis 2 can therefore be confirmed.

### Set 3: Fitting Professional Specialization

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The third set of models (model 3, model 9, model 15) represents the conducted logistic regressions for the dependent variable '*Fitting Professional Specialization*' and the independent variable 'Appointment by Trump'. In addition, model 9 also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 15 contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 364 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump either with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 3), or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 9) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 15).

The results of model 3 demonstrate that no statistically significant relationship between an appointment by President Trump and the fitting professional specialization of appointed individuals can be determined. Moreover, the regression model directly comparing appointments by President Trump with appointments by President Bush (model 9) yielded a significant positive relationship between an appointment by President Trump and the fitting professional specialization of appointees ( $p < .05$ ). In other words, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to show a fitting professional specialization than individuals appointed by President Bush. The results of regression model 15, depicting the direct comparison to appointees of President Obama, show no significant relationship between an appointment by President Trump and a fitting professional specialization of individuals. That is, appointments by President Trump are not significantly more or less likely to show a lack of fitting professional specialization than individuals appointed by President Obama.

Hypothesis 3 is interested in the relationship between an appointment by President Trump and their fitting professional specialization. Opposite to the theoretical expectations, the regression analysis of model 9 showed that individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly *more* (and not less) likely to show a fitting professional specialization than individuals appointed by President Bush. Model 15 further showed that individuals appointed by President Trump are not more or less likely to lack a fitting professional specialization than individuals appointed by President Obama. Hypothesis 3 is therefore rejected, as individuals appointed by President Trump are not more likely to show a lack of fitting professional specialization than individuals appointed by President Bush or than individuals appointed by President Obama.

#### **Set 4: Business Background**

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The fourth set of models (model 4, model 10, model 16) depicts the regression models for the dependent variable '*Business Background*' and the independent variable '*Appointment by Trump*'. In addition, model 10 also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 16 in addition contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 364 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump either with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 4), or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 10) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 16).

The overall comparative regression analysis (model 4) demonstrates that an appointment by President Trump has a significant positive influence on the prior business-related experience of the respective appointees ( $p = 0.18$ ). However, the direct comparisons between individuals appointed by President Trump and just individuals appointed by President Bush or just individuals appointed by President Obama yield a more differentiated picture. While individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to have prior business experience than individuals appointed by President Obama (model 16;  $p < .05$ ) no such relationship could be determined in direct comparison with President Bush (model 10;  $p > .05$ ). In other words, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to have prior business experience than individuals appointed by President Obama, but they are not significantly more likely to have such experience than individuals appointed by President Bush.

This is inconsistent with the expectations formulated in hypothesis 5, as it shows that the expectation can only be confirmed in comparison to President Obama. That is, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly positively related to the characteristic of prior background in business in comparison to individuals appointed by President Obama, but not in comparison to individuals appointed by President Bush. Hypothesis 5 is therefore rejected.

#### **Set 5: Eliteness of Education**

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The fifth set of models (model 5, model 11, model 17) depicts the dependent variable '*Eliteness of Education*' and the independent variable '*Appointment by Trump*'. In addition, model 11 also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 17

in addition contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 367 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump either with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 5), or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 11) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 17).

The results of model 5 show that an appointment by President Trump has a statistically significant negative influence on the eliteness of education of appointees ( $p < .05$ ). However, it was found in the models 11 and 17 that this significant relationship can only be confirmed in direct comparison to individuals appointed by President Obama, whereas in direct comparison to individuals appointed by President Bush the relationship is found not to be significant. In other words, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly less likely to have attended an elite university than individuals appointed by President Obama but not than individuals appointed by President Bush.

Hypothesis 6 is interested in the relationship between individuals appointed by Donald Trump and their educational background, specifically whether they have attended an elite university or not. Based on the results above, hypothesis 6 in this form is rejected, since the results only show that President Trump did appoint significantly less individuals with a degree from an elite university ( $p < .05$ ) than President Obama but not less individuals than President Bush ( $p > .05$ ).

## **Set 6: Educational Level**

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The sixth and final set of models (model 6, model 12, model 18) contains the regression models for the dependent variable '*Educational Level*' with '*Appointment by Trump*' as independent variable. In addition, model 12 in addition also contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Obama*' and model 18 contains the dummy variable '*Appointment by Bush*'. All models contain 366 observations, comparing appointments by President Trump either with appointees by both President Bush and President Obama (model 6), or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Bush (model 12) or comparing individuals appointed by President Trump with just individuals appointed by President Obama (model 18).

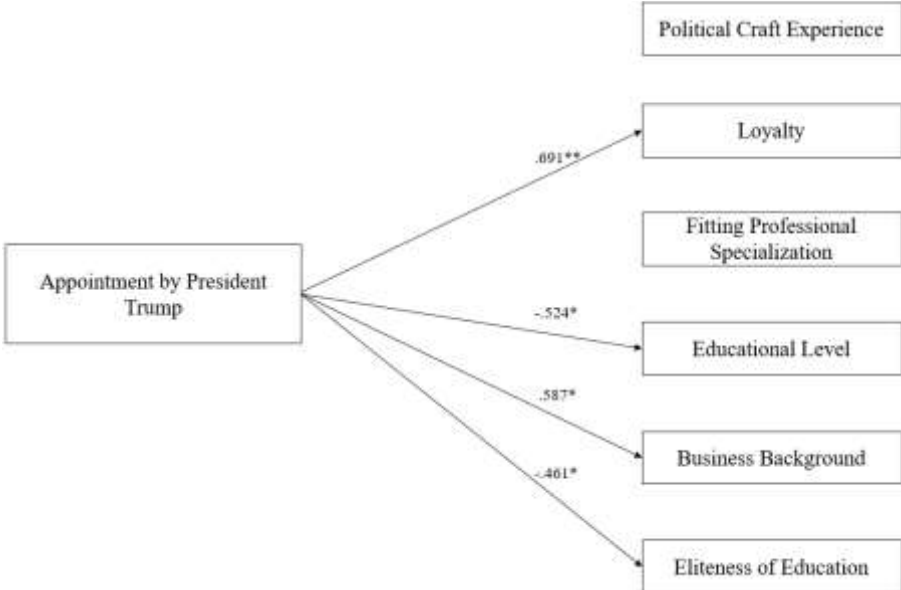
Regression model 6 showed a significant negative influence of an appointment by President Trump on the reached academic degree of the appointees ( $p < .05$ ). However,

the more fine-grained regression analyses of model 12 and model 18 show that this relationship is only significant in direct comparison with just individuals appointed by President Bush ( $p < .05$ ), not in comparison with just individuals appointed by President Obama ( $p > .05$ ). In other words, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to have a lower academic degree than individuals appointed by President Bush but not than appointments by President Obama. Hypothesis 4 is therefore rejected.

Regarding the Pseudo- $R^2$  scores for all regression models, it can be said that the scores are of rather low nature, ranging from 0.003 to 0.020 which indicates that the model fits are of limited nature (Kohler & Kreuter, 2012). However, they remain in a range similar to studies with comparable research objectives (see e.g. Parsneau, 2012).

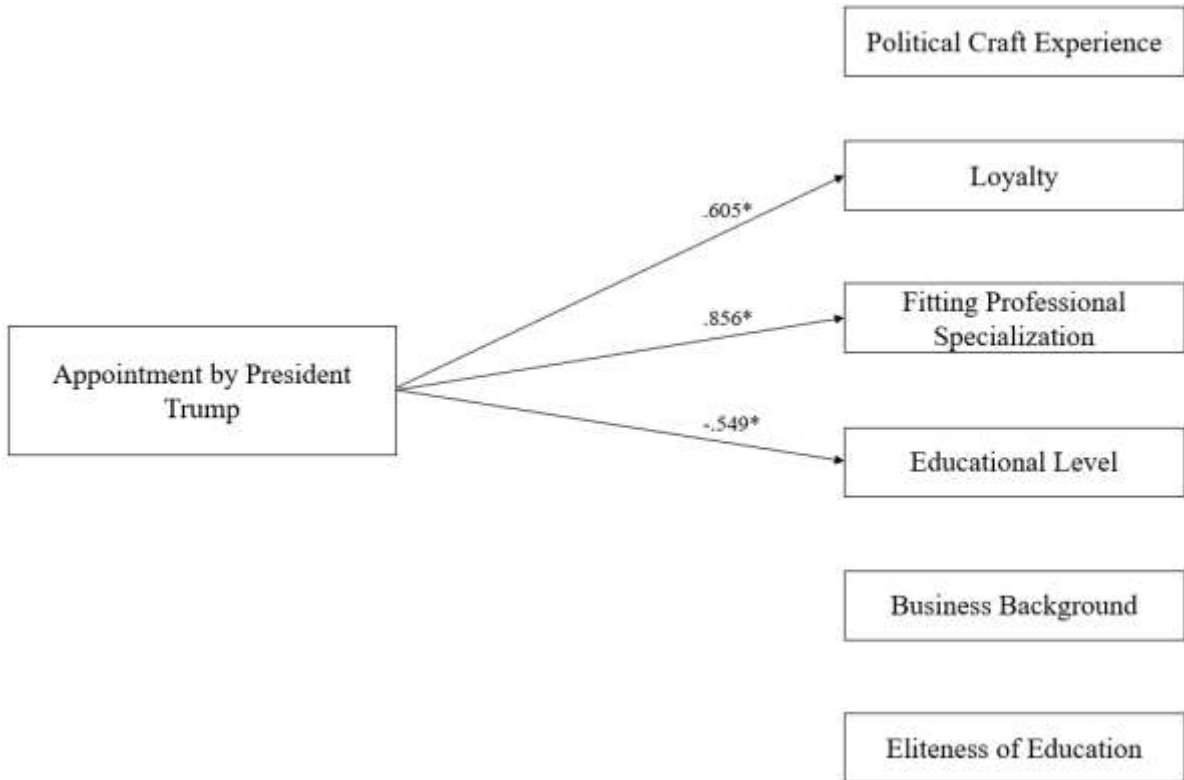
To summarize, individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to be loyal to the appointing president than individuals appointed by President Bush and than individuals appointed by President Obama. Moreover, in direct comparison it was found that individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly more likely to show a fitting professional specialization and to have a lower academic level than individuals appointed by President Bush. The direct comparison to individuals appointed by President Obama on the other hand yielded that Trump’s appointees are significantly more likely to have a prior background in a business-related work or study and are significantly less likely to have attended an elite university.

**Figure 2.** Regression Results for the Comparison of Trump’s Appointments With Bush’s and Obama’s Appointments (Models 1-6)

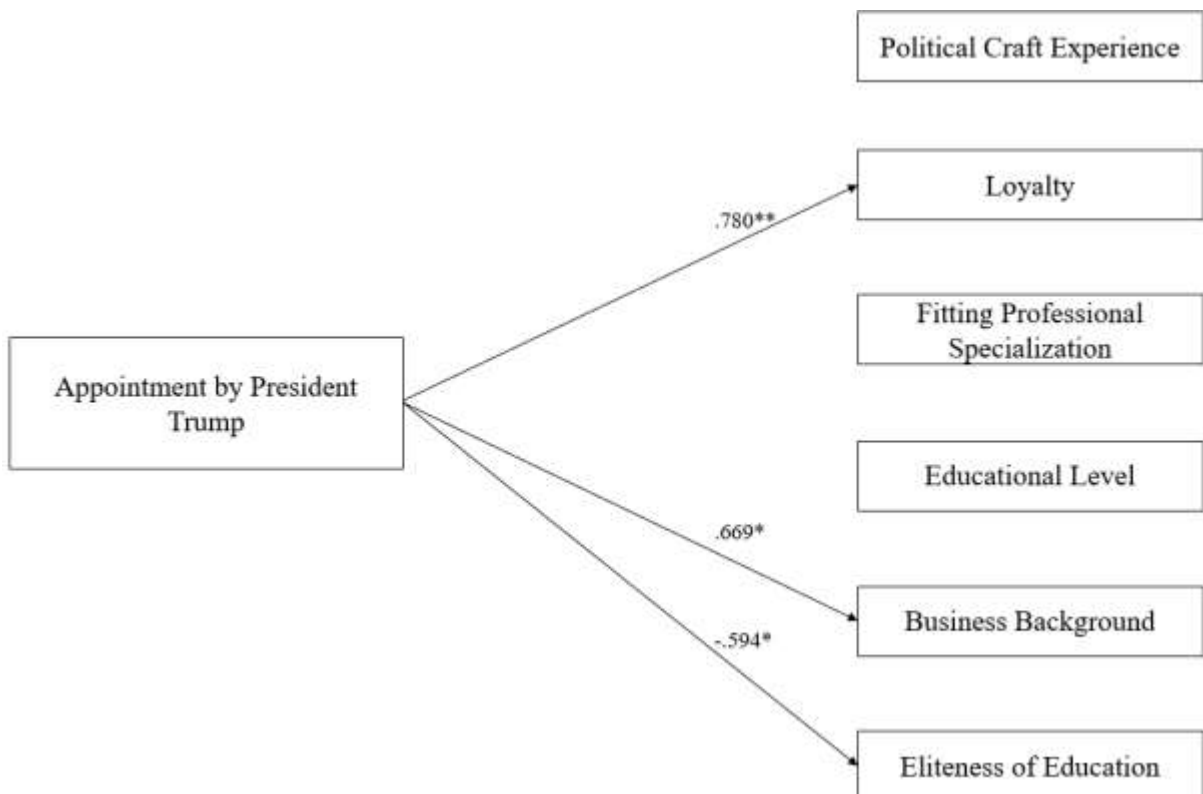




**Figure 3.** Regression Results for the Direct Comparison of Trump's Appointments With Bush's Appointments (Models 7-12)



**Figure 4.** Regression Results for the Direct Comparison of Trump's Appointments With Obama's Appointments (Models 13-18)



## 4.2 Discussion

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The following section will discuss the empirical findings of the regression analyses. In other words, the consequences of the findings for the underlying theoretical framework will be discussed and if a hypothesis was rejected, possible explanations for this finding will be provided. An overview over the consequences of the regression analyses for the hypotheses can be found in table 9.

### Hypothesis 1

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Since the findings of model 1, model 7 and model 13 are contrary to the formulated hypothesis 1, they entail consequences for the underlying theories this hypothesis was built upon (see Mudde, 2004; Peters & Pierre, 2019). Mudde (2004) pointed out that populists see the elite (i.e. the establishment) as a natural nemesis, with whom compromise would endanger their purity. Consequentially, this implies that populists, once in the halls of power, would appoint less individuals coming from within this establishment than their non-populist counterparts. Peters & Pierre (2019) also noted that the establishment, in the eyes of the populist, is set as a natural target for rejection and conclude that, due to the far-reaching distrust and despise of the bureaucratic machinery, a populist government would appoint a considerable number of servants from outside the 'system'.

However, contrary to their reasoning, no evidence for these assumptions could be found. Yet, the yielded evidence must be kept in perspective: This thesis exclusively analysed the leadership positions of the federal bureaucracy in the US, omitting the middle and lower echelons of the bureaucratic apparatus. It is therefore possible that Mudde's and Peters & Pierre's assumptions still hold true for those levels of bureaucracy that are set below the leadership section. However, the assumptions of the abovementioned authors cannot be confirmed for the particular section of the bureaucratic leadership that was analysed in this thesis.

A possible explanation for this finding might lay in the nature of the analysed leadership positions. The leadership section of the bureaucracy is of considerable importance for its functioning and hence plays a considerable role for the pursuit of the president's policy goals (Peters & Pierre, 2019). If a president would exclusively appoint individuals from outside the establishment, valuable competency in the form of political craft expertise would be lost and the pursuit of the president's policy goals would likely be impeded

(Peters & Pierre, 2019). The empirical finding seems to suggest that, even though classified as a populist, President Trump does not significantly abstain from appointing individuals coming from within 'the establishment', which possibly indicates his awareness of the value prior political experience holds for his policy goals.

Scholars have noted this possibility before: Peters & Pierre (2019) outlined the scenario that populists' desire to govern effectively could overcome their ideological distaste of insiders of the public sector. The populists then might actually collaborate with and use the bureaucracy and its personnel they are confronted with (and hence also appoint individuals that come from within the bureaucracy), instead of trying to sabotage and sideline it (Peters & Pierre, 2019). The appointment of individuals who have prior experience in the bureaucratic sphere by President Trump, contrary to hypothesis 1, can be seen as an expression of this scenario.

## **Hypothesis 2**

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Model 2, model 8 and model 14 found full support for hypothesis 2 which expected that individuals appointed by President Trump are significantly positively related to the characteristic of loyalty towards the appointing president in comparison to individuals appointed by President Bush and in comparison to individuals appointed by President Obama.

Various authors have outlined or implied the development that a populist government would appoint a high share of individuals loyal to their cause, due to distrust in the bureaucracy (Peters & Pierre, 2019), to avoid intermediaries and achieve a representation of the people as direct as possible (Müller, 2016) or to transform the bureaucratic apparatus (Bauer & Becker, 2020; Arellano-Gault, 2020; Rockman, 2019). Indeed, the evidence seems to support this view, for populist President Trump was found to have appointed a significantly higher share of loyal personnel than his non-populist counterparts. The theoretical claims this hypothesis was built upon thus are strengthened, as the evidence shows that Trump values loyalty highly in his nominees and does appoint more individuals who can be considered loyal to the appointing president than the nonpopulist presidents that were examined.

### **Hypothesis 3 & 4**

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The theoretical framework of hypothesis 3 and 4 assumed that due to populists prioritizing loyalty over competency in the bureaucracy (Peters & Pierre, 2019), their connection to the anti-intellectual narrative (Merkley, 2020), as well as them actively trying to sabotage the bureaucracy by appointing less competent individuals (Bauer & Becker, 2020), the general competency of their appointment nominations would be lower than that of nonpopulist presidents, for whom these factors do not apply.

While evidence gathered from model 12 confirmed the expected lower academic competence of individuals appointed by populist President Trump in comparison with appointees of President Bush, model 18 yielded no evidence for such a relationship when Trump's appointees are directly compared to individuals appointed by President Obama. The results are therefore mixed and do not point in a clear direction for the educational competence level of Trump's appointees and additional data including additional prior presidents is needed to see if a more reliable pattern emerges. Given these inconclusive results, no reliable consequences for the underlying theoretical framework can be drawn from these results.

Furthermore, the results of the regression models 3, 9 and 15 show that no evidence could be found for the expectation that Trump's appointees are negatively related to the characteristic of lacking a fitting professional specialization in comparison to appointees by President Bush or President Obama. By this the outlined theoretical expectation of hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Two possible explanations for these findings come to mind. First, the level of bureaucracy that was analysed, i.e. the leadership positions of the federal bureaucracy might explain the finding. This leadership is in parts one of the most visible loci political power (Cotta, 1991), receiving considerable media and public attention. This prominence and visibility might make it politically unwise or disadvantageous for a president to nominate individuals who evidently do not have expertise in the subject matter. If done so, negative media and public attention drawing awareness to this circumstance seem likely to be a consequence, creating a disincentive for the president to appoint individuals without any prior expertise in the domain of their desired appointment position.

The second factor that must be considered is the fact that the analysed positions have to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate, whereby each candidate is extensively discussed and questioned in Senate hearings. Even if the Senate is under the majoritarian control of

the party of the president, it cannot be assumed that every nominee will automatically be confirmed by the Senate. Rather it is likely that the Senate would oppose individuals who evidently show a lack of minimum programmatic fit to the aspired position, especially since the positions this thesis focussed on are located in the leadership sections of the federal bureaucracy and thus are of high importance for its functioning. These two considerations, then, might lead the president to consider and seek a minimum subject fit in the appointee for the aspired appointment position, regardless if he is populist or not.

## **Hypothesis 5**

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While the finding of model 16 showed that individuals appointed by President Trump are more likely to have a prior business background than individuals appointed by President Obama, no such relationship could be determined in the direct comparison to individuals appointed by President Bush, thereby rejecting hypothesis 5. While this seems *prima facie* to reject the underlying theoretical framework drawn from Postel (2007) who outlined the populists' vision of government as an entity that ideally should be organized like a business, the empirical result should be interpreted cautiously.

President Bush, prior to his career in politics, was active as a businessman in Texas, transacting commercial activities in a diverse set of areas (Bush, 2011). The finding that Trump's appointees are not significantly more likely to have a background in a business-related field than appointees by President Bush, that Bush's appointees show a similar level of prior business experience, might stem from this circumstance. It might be explainable by the possibility that President Bush, due to his prior business experience, might have gathered more connections to businesspeople to whom he would entrust a civil service position than presidents without such a background like President Obama (see Price, 2008).

Further, President Trump and President Bush are both members of the Republican Party, whereas President Obama belongs to the Democratic Party. It is also possible that Bush appointing a share of individuals with a business-background similar to that of President Trump is rooted in this circumstance, as the Republican Party is known to be more business-oriented which possibly could lead presidents of this party to appoint more people coming from within or connected to business areas (Pew Research Center, 2014a).

## Hypothesis 6

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Hypothesis 6 was built upon scholars who noted that populism is connected to anti-intellectualism (Merkley, 2020). However, the finding of the respective regression models only show that President Trump's appointees are negatively related to the characteristic of eliteness of education in comparison to appointees by President Obama, not in comparison to appointees by President Bush.

A possible explanation for this one-sided finding might be the special emphasis that President Obama placed on elite educational backgrounds in his administration (see e.g. Szabla, 2009; O'Reilly, 2016; Egan, 2014), which some authors even labelled a "valetocracy" (Brooks, 2008) of Ivy League alumni.

Further, a survey published by the Pew Research Center (2014b) demonstrates that Democratic voters tend to value educational backgrounds higher than their Republican counterparts, who in turn favor business experience stronger. Moreover, an identification with the Democratic Party is particularly strong among the highly-educated in the USA (Egan, 2014). The significant differences in the number of appointed individuals that graduated from an elite university between the Republican President Trump and the Democratic President Obama, but not between President Trump and the Republican President Bush, might then against this background be explainable by the party affiliation of the presidents. It seems likely that a Democratic president is more inclined to appoint a higher number of individuals that graduated from an elite university in order to appeal to the aforementioned cohort of voters, whereas this incentive is less strong for Republican presidents.

Linked back to the strategies and effects that were outlined in the theoretical chapter concerning the possible impact of populism on the public administration, the following can be concluded for the analysed case of this thesis. Taken together, the findings provide partial support for the theoretical expectation of this thesis that a populist president seeks different characteristics and professional backgrounds in his appointees than nonpopulist presidents. While President Trump, in comparison to President Bush and President Obama, did not seek an unambiguously different pattern in the characteristics and professional backgrounds of his appointees for most analysed categories, one major difference can be determined: The evidence clearly demonstrates that President Trump did apply the strategy of appointing a higher share of individuals loyal to him, which was

outlined by various authors (see Peters & Pierre, 2019; Peters & Pierre, 2020; Bauer & Becker, 2020; Müller, 2017), possibly to create an obedient and responsive bureaucracy as predicted by Arellano-Gault (2020), strengthening this particular element of the authors' outlined strategies.

**Table 9.** Empirical Analysis of the Theoretical Propositions

	<b>Propositions</b>	
1)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to President Bush or President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of prior government-, parliamentary- or agency-related work experience of the top civil servants.	<b>Rejected.</b>
2)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of loyalty of the top civil servants.	<b>Confirmed.</b>
3)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the characteristic of fitting professional specialization of the appointed top civil servants.	<b>Rejected</b>
4)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the educational level of the appointed top civil servants.	<b>Rejected</b>
5)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is positively related to the characteristic of a business-related background of the appointed top civil servants.	<b>Rejected</b>
6)	An appointment by President Trump, in comparison to both President Bush and President Obama, is negatively related to the eliteness of education of the appointed top civil servants.	<b>Rejected</b>

## 5. Conclusion

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This research project set out to retrospectively explore the impact of President Trump on the characteristics and professional backgrounds of appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy.

For this purpose, hypotheses depicting these characteristics were derived from theories on populism and its impact on public administration, which expected that Trump appoints more loyalists, more system outsiders, lower educated individuals, less individuals with fitting professional experience, more individuals with a business-related background and less individuals who graduated from an elite university.

For the purpose of testing these hypotheses and hereby ultimately providing an empirical answer to the research question, a novel large-N dataset of observations (N = 374), was generated which includes the first-term presidential appointees in the leadership sections of the U.S. federal bureaucracy of President Bush, President Obama and President Trump. Via online available sources, data on several variables depicting the concepts of the hypotheses was gathered. These variables either measured competency (*'Fitting Professional Specialization'*, *'Educational Level'*, *'Eliteness of Education'*), loyalty (*'Loyalty'*) or provided information on the kind of competency that is valued (*'Political Craft Experience'*, *'Business Background'*) and as such were essential to understand what kind of characteristics the populist President Trump sought in his top civil servants.

Through logistic regressions, the dataset was used to examine the relationship between President Trump and the characteristics of his nominated appointees in comparison to appointees of President Bush and President Obama. The regression analyses yielded that President Trump appointed significantly more loyalists than his two predecessors and showed various significant differences in the characteristics and professional backgrounds of his appointed officials in direct comparison to appointees by President Bush and respectively appointees by President Obama.

Based on these findings, the research question can be answered in the following way: President Trump affected the characteristics and professional backgrounds of appointed top civil servants in the U.S. federal bureaucracy in so far, as he appointed significantly more individuals who are loyalists than President Bush and President Obama, but apart herefrom, did not demonstrate unambiguous and clear deviations from his two predecessors in regards to the type or level of competency in his appointees.



## 5.1 Linking the Results Back to the Theory Chapter

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Several outcomes from this study are of interest for and contribute to the existing scientific literature. The contribution can be differentiated between a contribution to existing theoretical frameworks and a contribution to existing empirical studies about presidential appointments.

Regarding the former, this thesis addressed gaps in the domain of populism and its interplay with public administration through an advancement of the research field in general (as encouraged by Bauer & Becker, 2020 and Peters & Pierre, 2019). This research project enriches existing theories on populism and its interplay with public administration by addressing the lack of empirical analyses in the domain with its empirical testing of claims made by various authors on populism's impact on public administration (see chapter 2.1) and empirically testing hypotheses that were derived from existing theories on populism (see chapter 2.3). Some of those claims and underlying theoretical frameworks (e.g. those regarding loyalty in appointees) are now strengthened, as first evidence for them was found, whereas others are weakened by the findings of this thesis.

In detail, the results of this thesis pose the following implications and learnings for the literature on populism's impact on public administration that was outlined in chapter 2.1. Müller's (2017) prediction that populists in power will excessively use patronage and will try to occupy the state bureaucracy, while simultaneously aiming to reduce the number of neutral civil servants within the bureaucracy, is strengthened as the empirical findings seem to demonstrate such a development. Similar is the case for Arellano-Gault's (2020) expectation that the populist in power will aim to create an obedient and responsive bureaucracy, as the found strong emphasis on loyalty in appointees by President Trump can be seen as an expression of this strategy. Evidence for the expectation that the populist in power will diminish expert knowledge (Arellano-Gault, 2020), cause a loss of competence in the bureaucracy (Peters & Pierre, 2020) and will unchain the government from experts (Rockman, 2019) was not unambiguously found for the analysed leadership section of presidential appointees. In regards to Peters & Pierre (2020), the authors' prediction that a populist government will entail an increase of patronage in the bureaucracy is strengthened as corresponding evidence was found. Concerning Bauer & Becker's (2020) prediction that President Trump will apply a strategy of sabotage towards the public administration, two subdimensions of this strategy were tested within this thesis. While evidence was found for the assumption that Trump appointed a high share of

loyalists, no evidence was found for the predicted pronounced appointment of individuals with a lack of a fitting professional specialization.

For various claims and theories that were used to build hypotheses in this thesis (i.e. hypothesis 3 to 5), the results were too slim and too mixed to draw reliable consequences (i.e. a difference in comparison to one president but not the other), but these results nonetheless contribute to the knowledge about the theories they were built upon: Trump seeking characteristics different in some categories from one president but not the other, suggests that his impact as a populist on the public administration might not be as straightforward as initially expected. That is, at least for the leadership section of bureaucracy and at least in direct comparison to President Bush and President Obama, his appointments do not depart as much and as unambiguous from his predecessors as initially assumed.

Regarding the existing empirical studies about presidential appointments, the contribution of this thesis is considerable. As outlined in chapter 2.2, only a small number of studies has so far analysed President Trump's presidential appointments and especially studies comparing him to previous presidents are scarce. Furthermore, the existing research on presidential appointments largely lacks the analysis of a *populist* appointing president. Addressing these gaps, this research project expands the state-of-the-art by adding first comparative insights on the impact of Trump's populist presidency on public administration and on the professional characteristics he valued and prioritized in his presidential appointments. It hereby provides a basic research on Trump's presidential appointments and through this might help to stimulate a broader research agenda in the domain.

The detailed contribution to the existing empirical literature is threefold. First, this thesis adds the analysis of appointments of a so far unexplored *populist* president to the body of research dedicated to the exploration of the role competency and loyalty play in presidential appointments. This line of research is enriched by the finding that compared to President Bush and President Obama, the populist President Trump strongly emphasized loyalty in his appointees, while the competence of his appointees was found to be on a similar level as the competence of Obama's appointees and lower than that of President Bush's appointees.

Second, through the insights on various characteristics and professional backgrounds of the PAS appointments that have been analysed in the course of this study, this thesis enhances the research on the qualifications and professional backgrounds of top

civil servants, as asked for by Askim & Bach (2017). First light was shed on how dimensions that were previously only analysed for appointees of nonpopulist presidents (e.g. elitary affiliation, loyalty, level and type of competency) are valued by and play out under a populist president.

Third, by providing a comparison between President Trump's appointments and the appointments of President Bush and President Obama, displaying commonalities as well as differences, the literature on the interpresidential comparison of presidential appointments is advanced, for this was not done before to such an extent, and especially not including the dimensions this thesis covered. It is now known in which categories Trumps appointments significantly deviate from President Bush's appointments (i.e. educational level, fitting professional specialization, loyalty) and in which they deviate from Obama's appointments (i.e. business background, eliteness of education, loyalty).

Finally, this thesis contributes a novel and reusable dataset on the characteristics and professional backgrounds of the individuals in the leadership sections of the federal bureaucracy appointed by President Trump, by President Bush and as well by President Obama, respectively. This dataset is suitable for future research on presidential appointments, especially in regards, but not limited to the case of President Trump, and might also be valuable for future research on the leadership sections of the U.S. federal executive. The dataset, inclusive of all materials required to replicate this study, will be made available on the Harvard Dataverse Network.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Research**

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The research of this thesis is limited in several regards. The first limitation concerns the measurement validity of the variables this research project measured. Measurement validity refers to the correct operationalization of concepts into variables, realistically depicting the underlying concepts (Toshkov, 2016). Problematic is the operationalization of the variable '*Loyalty*', for it is limited to a capture of primarily partisan loyalty, as the underlying data source did not allow for a more tailored measurement that would focus on loyalty primarily towards the president. Such a measurement could have been undertaken by the coding and assessment of the appointees' prior work experience in the presidential campaign, inaugural or transition team (Lewis & Waterman, 2013). However, the available dataset was found not to be reliable enough to do so (see chapter 3.7). The

measurement of abstract concepts like loyalty is notoriously difficult for scholars, as even presidents or senators after interviewing appointees only gather a superficial idea of the true loyalty of a potential nominee (Parsneau, 2012) and furthermore other scholars have worked with operationalizations similar to the one used in this thesis (see Bach & Veit, 2017). Therefore, the way loyalty was measured in this thesis, though not a perfect capture, is still seen as appropriate, but nonetheless poses a limitation that has to be acknowledged.

The second limitation is posed by the population that was studied. This research project exclusively focussed on the top civil servants in leadership positions of the U.S. federal bureaucracy, hereby omitting the appointees in the lower and middle levels of the bureaucratic apparatus of the federal executive. While considerable internal validity for the research of the leadership section was reached, and the analysis of the leadership section yields valuable insights (see chapter 3.2), the analysis of those other echelons of the public administration will ultimately be necessary if the aim is to provide a full and comprehensive picture of the characteristics and professional criteria the populist President Trump sought in his appointments. Due to this limitation, it remains unclear what impact Trump had on the federal bureaucracy as a whole, an expansion of this research which certainly marks an interesting venue for future research.

The third limitation is posed by the number of presidents that were captured by the generated dataset. Appointments by President Trump were compared to appointees nominated by President Bush and President Obama, which limits the number of presidents and their appointees that the subject is compared to. As has been found, several of the findings are mixed and do not point into a clear direction, due to this limited comparison of President Trump to only two presidents. Future research could provide the base for a stronger claim via the inclusion of a higher number of presidents and might provide clearer patterns, although data collection problems might occur.

The fourth limitation is posed by the country this study focussed on. While this research project yielded results for the case of the USA, the findings provide little basis for a generalization to the top civil servant appointments in other countries. No general statements about the consequences a populist government might entail for public administrations in other countries can be made. However, first clues of how a populist head of government might interact with the public administration are gained and might stimulate corresponding research.

The findings travel best to administrative systems with a similar pronounced structure and number of political appointments, in which the senior levels of public administration are politically appointed as well (as opposed to hybrid or administrative appointment systems, see Ketelaar, Manning & Turkisch, 2007) and in which the government is facing political (e.g. through vetoplayer such as a coalition partner) or legal restrictions (e.g. legally required minimum educational level of the appointees) on a level as low as the president of the United States does. It is imaginable that populist heads of government in such systems exert a similar appointment behaviour to that found in President Trump and might put an equally strong emphasis on loyalty in top civil servants, an aspect that future research could examine and explore.

The fifth limitation is posed by the main data source that was used for this thesis' conduction. Mainly CV data was used, which is vulnerable in one main regard: As Dietz et. al (2000) elaborate, when a researcher analyses CV data, it is not clear if it constitutes a missing value or zero data when a certain aspect is not listed in the CV. In other words, if no prior presidential campaign experience is listed in the CV, does that mean that the individual has not worked in a presidential campaign or did he simply not list it (Dietz et. al, 2000, p. 432)? Via triangulation this thesis aimed to reduce the threat coming from this circumstance, however a residual risk of mismeasurement remains and has to be acknowledged.

### **5.3 Possible Venues for Further Research**

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Various venues for future research can be determined, which are primarily derived from the limitations that were identified. First, a logical area for future research is the expansion of the dataset to the middle and lower level of presidential appointees in the U.S. federal executive (similar to Ouyang et. al, 2016; N = 3000–4000) to provide a full and comprehensive picture of how President Trump affected the federal bureaucracy in the USA. It would be especially interesting to see if the hypothesis formulated in this thesis can be confirmed for these remaining sections of the bureaucracy and to identify where possible differences within the hierarchy lie.

Second, this study analysed the interplay between populists in power and the public administration they are facing in regards to the case of President Trump and the federal bureaucracy in the USA. An expansion of this kind of research to other democratic

countries in which the public administration is facing a populist head of government strikes as a worthwhile endeavour. Such an examination, which via comparison could shed light on whether the documented dynamic and impact can be found in other countries and scenarios as well is of substantial interest. Moreover, such a research could possibly increase the external validity of claims made and further would contribute and advance the so far scarce research on populism's impact on public administration (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

Such cases that against this background are suitable for investigation and that provide the necessary variation between populist and nonpopulist governments are, among others, the cases of Brazil, Poland and Hungary. These cases offer a comparison between before and after populists assumed office, contain a considerable number of political appointments in the highest rank of their bureaucracy and thus provide the necessary grounds to detect the effects populists in power entail for the respective characteristics and professional backgrounds of top civil servants.<sup>1</sup>

Third, this research project might also benefit from an expansion of the data sources in order to increase the possibility of triangulation and hereby reduce the threat coming from an unwitting omission of data or a false negative coding of appointees. By making use of the Freedom of Information Act and via contacting the respective agencies and departments manually, possibly complete, and comprehensive CVs could be gathered (see Lewis & Waterman, 2013) which would increase the validity of the study further. Further, this proceeding would also allow for a more tailored measurement of the '*Loyalty*' variable in the ways outlined above and hereby counter the weakness of this measurement that was identified.

Fourth, the probably most valuable and substantially interesting direction for further research lies within an expansion of the included number of presidents captured in the US dataset. Via this extension, the credibility of the finding of this thesis could possibly be increased and clearer patterns with conclusive consequences for the underlying theories might emerge. Further, the presidential appointments of President Trump have not yet received much analytical attention. By exploring this venue of future research, by

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<sup>1</sup> The Brazilian system contains the so-called 'DAS' appointments, which constitute the echelon of top civil servants in the Brazilian public administration and are exclusively appointed by the government (Praça, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011). Within the Polish public administration, 1500 to 1600 managerial posts of the higher civil service are filled via political appointments (European Commission, 2018a). In the Hungarian system, all permanent and deputy state secretaries, along with various other top civil servants are replaced when a new government assumes office (European Commission, 2018b).

comparing Trump's appointments to that of other preceding presidents not covered in this thesis, the research on interpresidential comparison of presidential appointments would also be substantially enhanced and thus seems worthwhile.

Fifth, the case of Trump's presidential appointments offers room for deeper within-case analyses. Similar to studies like Hollibaugh et. al (2014), who analysed to which departments and positions President Obama appointed the highest share of his patronage appointments, future research could in a similar manner examine which departments received the most appointments of individuals loyal to President Trump or which departments and agencies received the individuals with the highest qualifications.

## Appendix A

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The positions which's officeholders professional background are analysed are taken from Krause & O'Connell (2011, pp. 16-17), who enumerate the following:

- Cabinet Secretaries
- Deputy Secretaries
- Administrators (if Senate-confirmed)\*, Deputy Administrators (if Senate-confirmed) of major executive agencies\*
- Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members of major independent regulatory commissions/boards\*\*
- All Senate-confirmed positions (and any connected deputy positions that require Senate confirmation) listed in Trattner (2000)\*\*\*

\*These positions include:

- Central Intelligence Agency (Director, Deputy Director);
- Environmental Protection Agency (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);
- General Services Administration (Administrator);
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);
- Small Business Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);
- Social Security Administration (Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner);
- U.S. Agency for International Development (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);
- Office of Management and Budget (Director);
- U.S. Trade Representative.

\*\*These agencies include:

- Consumer Product Safety Commission;
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission;
- Federal Communications Commission;
- Federal Election Commission;
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission;
- Federal Reserve Bank;
- Federal Trade Commission;
- National Labor Relations Board;
- National Transportation Safety Board;
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission;
- Securities and Exchange Commission.

\*\*\*These positions include:

- Department of Agriculture (Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Under Secretary for Food Safety);
- Department of Commerce (Director of NIST, Director of Census, Under Secretary for Oceans and Director of NOAA, Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Director of PTO);
- Department of Defense (Secretary of the Army, Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary of the Navy, Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Director of Defense Research and Engineering);



- Department of Education (Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Assistant Secretary for Post Secondary Education, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education);
- Department of Energy (Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management);
- Department of Health and Human Services (Administrator of FDA, Director of NIH, Administrator of Health Care Financing Administration (now Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services), Assistant Secretary for Children and Families);
- Department of Homeland Security (Administrator of FEMA);
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (Assistant Secretary for Housing and Federal Housing Commissioner);
- Department of Justice (Solicitor General, AAG for Antitrust, Administrator of DEA);
- Department of Labor (Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training);
- Department of State (Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs);
- Department of Transportation (Administrator of NHTSA, Administrator of FAA);
- Department of Treasury (Commissioner of IRS, Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy, Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions). (Krause & O'Connell, 2011, pp. 16-17)

## Appendix B

**Table B1.** Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members Appointed by Bush at 2004

	id	Chairperson	id	Commissioner/ Board Member
Consumer Product Safety Commission	1	Harold D. Stratton, Jr.	12 13	Thomas H. Moore Mary S. Gall
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	2	Cari M. Dominguez	14 15 16	Naomi Churchill Earp Leslie E. Silverman Stewart J. Ishimaru
Federal Communications Commission	3	Michael K. Powell	17 18 19 20	Kathleen Q. Abernathy Michael J. Copps Kevin J. Martin Jonathan S. Adelstein
Federal Election Commission	4	Bradley A. Smith	21 22 23 24 25	David M. Mason Ellen L. Weintraub Danny L. McDonald Scott E. Thomas Michael E. Toner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	5	Patrick Henry Wood III.	26 27 28	Nora Mead Brownell Joseph T. Kelliher Suedeem G. Kelly
Federal Reserve Bank	6	Alan Greenspan	29 30 31 32 33 34	Robert W. Ferguson, Jr. Edward W. Gramlich Susan S. Bies Mark W. Olson Ben S. Bernanke Donald L. Kohn
Federal Trade Commission	7	Deborah P. Majoras	35 36 37 38	Orson G. Swindle Thomas B. Leary Pamela J. Harbour Jonathan D. Leibowitz
National Labor Relations Board	8	Robert J. Battista	39 40 41 42	Peter C. Schaumber Dennis P. Walsh Wilma B. Liebman Ronald E. Meisburg
National Transportation Safety Board	9	Ellen G. Engleman	43 44 45 46	Mark Rosenker Carol J. Carmody Richard F. Healing Deborah AP Hersman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	10	Nils J. Diaz	47 48	Edward McGaffigan, Jr. Jeffrey S. Merrifield
Securities and Exchange Commission	11	William H. Donaldson	49 50 51 52	Cynthia A. Glasman Roel C. Campos Harvey J. Goldschmid Paul S. Atkins

**Table B2.** *Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Bush at 2004*

	<b>id</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Deputy Administrator</b>
CIA (Director, Deputy Director)	53	Porter J. Goss	62	John E. McLaughlin
Environmental Protection Agency (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	54	Michael O'Leavitt	63	Stephen L. Johnson
General Services Administration (Administrator)	55	Stephen A. Perry		
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);	56	Sean C. O'Keefe	64	Frederick D. Gregory
Small Business Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	57	Hector V. Barreto	65	Melanie Sabelhaus
Social Security Administration (Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner)	58	Jo Anne B. Barnhart	66	James B. Lockhart III.
U.S. Agency for International Development (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	59	Andrew S. Natsios	67	Frederick W. Schieck
Office of Management and Budget (Director)	60	Joshua B. Bolten	68	Joel D. Kaplan
U.S. Trade Representative	61	Robert B. Zoellick	69	Peter F. Allgeier

**Table B3.** *Deputy Positions (PAS) Appointed by Bush at 2004*

<b>Department of Agriculture</b>	Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services	Under Secretary for Food Safety				
Name	Eric M. Bost	Elsa Murano				
id	70	71				
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	Director of NIST	Director of Census	Under Secretary for Oceans and Director of NOAA	Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Director of PTO		
Name	Arden L. Bement	L. Kincannon	Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.	Jonathan W. Dudas		
id	72	73	74	75		
<b>Department of Defense</b>	Secretary of the Army	Secretary of the Air Force	Secretary of the Navy	Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment)	Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering	Comptroller
Name	Vacant	Peter B. Teets	Gordon R. England	Vacant	Ronald M. Sega	Tina Westby Jonas
id	-	76	77	-	78	79
<b>Department of Education</b>	Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Post Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education		
Name	Raymond J. Simon	Sally L. Stroup	Vacant	Susan K. Sclafani		
id	80	81	-	82		
<b>Department of Energy</b>	Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management					
id	Vacant					
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	Administrator of FDA	Director of NIH	Administrator of Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services	Assistant Secretary for Children and Families		
Name	Vacant	Elias A. Zerhouni	Mark B. McClellan	Wade F. Horn		
id	-	83	84	85		
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	Administrator of FEMA					
Name	Vacant					
id	-					

<b>Department of Housing and Urban Development</b>	Assistant Secretary for Housing					
Name	John C. Weicher					
id	86					
<b>Department of Justice</b>	Solicitor General	AAG for Antritrust	Administrator of DEA			
Name	Vacant	R. Hewitt Pate	Karen P. Tandy			
id		87	88			
<b>Department of Labor</b>	Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health	Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training				
Name	John L. Henshaw	Emily S. DeRocco				
id	89	90				
<b>Department of State</b>	Under Secretary for Political Affairs	Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs				
Name	Marc Grossman	John R. Bolton				
id	91	92				
<b>Department of Transportation</b>	Administrator of NHTSA	Administrator of FAA				
Name	Jeffrey W. Runge	Marion C. Blakey				
id	93	94				
<b>Department of Treasury</b>	Commissioner of IRS	Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy	Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy	Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions		
Name	Mark W. Everson	Mark J. Warshawsky	Vacant	Wayne A. Abernathy		
id	95	96	-	97		

**Table B4.** *Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Bush at 2004*

	<b>id</b>	<b>Cabinet Secretary</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Deputy Secretary</b>
Agriculture	98	Ann M. Veneman	113	James R. Moseley
Commerce	99	Donald L. Evans	114	Theodore W. Kassinger
Defense	100	Donald H. Rumsfeld	115	Paul D. Wolfowitz
Education	101	Roderick Raynor Paige	116	Eugene Hickock
Energy	102	Spencer Abraham	117	Kyle McSlarrow
Health & Human Services	103	Tommy G. Thompson	118	Claude A. Allen
Homeland Security	104	Thomas J. Ridge	119	James M. Loy
Housing & Urban Development	105	Alphonso R. Jackson	120	Roy A. Bernardi
Interior	106	Gale A. Norton	121	J. Steven Griles
Labour	107	Elaine L. Chao	122	Stephen J. Law
State	108	Colin L. Powell	123	Richard L. Armitage
Transportation	109	Norman Y. Mineta	124	Kirk Van Tine
Treasury	110	John W. Snow	125	Samuel W. Bodman
Veterans Affairs	111	Anthony J. Principi	126	Gordon H. Mansfield
Attorney General	112	John Ashcroft	127	James B. Comey, Jr.

**Table B5.** *Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Obama at 2012*

		<b>Cabinet Secretary</b>		<b>Deputy Secretary</b>
Agriculture	128	Thomas J. Vilsack	142	Kathleen A. Merrigan
Commerce	-	Vacant	-	Vacant
Defense	129	Leon E. Panetta	143	Ashton B. Carter
Education	130	Arne Duncan	144	Anthony Miller
Energy	131	Steven Chu	145	Daniel B. Poneman
Health & Human Services	132	Kathleen Sebelius	146	William V. Corr
Homeland Security	133	Janet A. Napolitano	147	Jane Holl Lute
Housing & Urban Development	134	Shaun Donovan	148	Maurice A. Jones
Interior	135	Kenneth Salazar	149	David J. Hayes
Labour	136	Hilda Solis	150	Seth Harris
State	137	Hillary Clinton	151	William J. Burns
Transportation	138	Ray LaHood	152	John D. Porcari
Treasury	139	Timothy F. Geithner	153	Neal S. Wolin
Veterans Affairs	140	Eric K. Shinseki	154	W. S. Gould
Attorney General	141	Eric H. Holder, Jr.	155	James Michael Cole

**Table B6. Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Obama at 2012**

	<b>id</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Deputy Administrator</b>
CIA (Director, Deputy Director)	156	David H. Petraeus		-
Environmental Protection Agency (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	157	Lisa P. Jackson	163	Robert W. Perciasepe
General Services Administration (Administrator)	-	Vacant		-
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);	158	Charles F. Bolden, Jr.	164	Lori B. Garver
Small Business Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	159	Karen Gordon Mills	165	Marie Collins Johns
Social Security Administration (Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner)	160	Michael J. Astrue	166	Carolyn W. Colvin
U.S. Agency for International Development (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	161	Rajiv Shah	167	Donald Steinberg
Office of Management and Budget (Director)	-	Vacant	168	Jeffrey Dunston Zients
U.S. Trade Representative	162	Ronald Kirk	169	Demetrios James Marantis

**Table B7. Chairpersons and Commissioners/ Board Members Appointed by Obama at 2012**

	<b>id</b>	<b>Chairpersons</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Commissioners/ Board Members</b>
Consumer Product Safety Commission	170	Inez M. Tenenbaum	171 172 173	Nancy A. Nord Anne M. Northup Robert S. Adler
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	174	Jacqueline A. Berrien	175 176 177	Chai R. Feldblum Victoria A. Lipnic Constance S. Barker
Federal Communications Commission	178	Julius M. Genachowski	179 180 181 182	Robert McDowell Mignon L. Clyburn Jessica Rosenworcel Ajit V. Pai
Federal Election Commission			183 184 185 186	Cynthia L. Bauerly Caroline C. Hunter Donald F. McGahn Matthew S. Petersen

			187	Steven T. Walther
			188	Ellen L. Weintraub
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	189	Jon Wellinghoff	190	Anthony T. Clark
			191	Cheryl A. Lafleur
			192	John R. Norris
			193	Philip D. Moeller
Federal Reserve Bank	194	Ben Bernanke	195	Janet Yellen
			196	Jerome Powell
			197	Sarah Raskin
			198	Jeremy Stein
			199	Elizabeth Duke
			200	Daniel Tarullo
Federal Trade Commission	201	Jonathan D. Leibowitz	202	Maureen K. Ohlhausen
			203	– Julie S. Brill
			204	Edith Ramirez
			205	J. Thomas Rosch
National Labor Relations Board	206	Marc Gaston Pearce	207	Terence Francis Flynn
			208	Richard Griffin Jr.
			209	Sharon I. Block
			210	Brian E. Hayes
National Transportation Safety Board	211	Deborah A. P. Hersman	212	Christopher A. Hart
			213	Mark R. Rosekind
			214	Robert L. Sumwalt
			215	Earl F. Weener
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	216	Allison M. Macfarlane	217	Kristine L. Svinicki
			218	William D. Magwood
			219	IV.
				William C. Ostendorff
Securities and Exchange Commission	220	Mary L. Schapiro	221	Daniel M. Gallagher, Jr.
			222	Elisse B. Walter
			223	Luis A. Aguilar
			224	Troy A. Paredes



**Table B8.** Deputy Positions (PAS) Appointed by Obama at 2012

<b>Department of Agriculture</b>	Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services	Under Secretary for Food Safety				
Name	Kevin W. Concannon	Elisabeth A. Hagen				
id	225	226				
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	Director of NIST	Director of Census	Under Secretary for Oceans and Director of NOAA	Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Director of PTO		
Name	Patrick D. Gallagher	Robert M. Groves	Jane Lubchenco	David James Kappos		
id	227	228	229	230		
<b>Department of Defense</b>	Secretary of the Army	Secretary of the Air Force	Secretary of the Navy	Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment)	Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering	Comptroller
Name	John M. McHugh	Michael B. Donley	Raymond E. Mabus	Frank Kendall	Vacant	Robert F. Hale
id	231	232	233	234	-	235
<b>Department of Education</b>	Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Post Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education		
Name	Deborah S. Delisle	Vacant	Alexa E. Posny	Brenda Dann-Messier		
id	236	-	237	238		
<b>Department of Energy</b>	Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management					
Name	Vacant					
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	Administrator of FDA	Director of NIH	Administrator of Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services	Assistant Secretary for Children and Families		
Name	Margaret A. Hamburg	Fancis S. Collins	Vacant	Vacant		
id	239	240	-	-		
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	Administrator of FEMA					
Name	W. Craig Fugate					
id	241					

<b>Department of Housing and Urban Development</b>	Assistant Secretary for Housing					
<b>Name</b>	Vacant					
<b>Department of Justice</b>	Solicitor General	AAG for Antritrust	Administrator of DEA			
<b>Name</b>	Donald Beaton Verrilli, Jr.	Vacant	Michele M. Leonhart			
<b>id</b>	242	-	243			
<b>Department of Labor</b>	Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health	Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training				
<b>Name</b>	David Michaels	Jane Oates				
<b>id</b>	244	245				
<b>Department of State</b>	Under Secretary for Political Affairs	Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs				
<b>Name</b>	Wendy Sherman	Vacant				
<b>id</b>	246	-				
<b>Department of Transportation</b>	Administrator of NHTSA	Administrator of FAA				
<b>Name</b>	David L. Strickland	Vacant				
<b>id</b>	247	-				
<b>Department of Treasury</b>	Commissioner of IRS	Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy	Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy			
<b>Name</b>	Douglas H. Shulman	Janice C. Eberly	Vacant			
<b>id</b>	248	249	-			

**Table B9. Cabinet and Deputy Secretaries Appointed by Trump at 2020**

	<b>id</b>	<b>Cabinet Secretary</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Deputy Secretary</b>
Agriculture	250	Sonny Perdue	265	Stephen Censky
Commerce	251	Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.	266	Karen Dunn Kelley
Defense	252	Mark Esper	267	David L. Norquist
Education	253	Elisabeth Prince DeVos	268	Mitchell Zais
Energy	254	Dan Brouillette	269	Mark Menezes
Health & Human Services	255	Alex Azar	270	Eric Hargan
Homeland Security	256	Chad Wolf	271	Elaine C. Duke
Housing & Urban Development	257	Benjamin S. Carson, Sr.	272	Brian D. Montgomery
Interior	258	David Bernhardt	273	Katherine MacGregor
Labour	259	Eugene Scalia	274	Patrick Pizzella
State	260	Mike Pompeo	275	Stephen Biegun
Transportation	261	Elaine L. Chao	276	Steven G. Bradbury
Treasury	262	Steven T. Mnuchin	277	Justin Muzinich
Veterans Affairs	263	Robert Wilkie	278	Pamela J. Powers
Attorney General	264	William Barr	279	Jeffrey A. Rosen

**Table B10. Administrators and Deputy Administrators Appointed by Trump at 2020**

	<b>id</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Deputy Administrator</b>
CIA (Director, Deputy Director)	280	Gina Haspel	289	Vaughn Bishop
Environmental Protection Agency (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	281	Andrew Wheeler	290	Doug Benevento
General Services Administration (Administrator)	282	Emily W. Murphy		-
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator);	283	Jim Bridenstine	291	Morhard James Morhard
Small Business Administration (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	284	Jovita Carranza		Confirmed Vacant.
Social Security Administration (Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner)	285	Andrew Saul	292	David F. Black
U.S. Agency for International Development (Administrator, Deputy Administrator)	286	John Barsa	293	Bonnie Glick
Office of Management and Budget (Director)	287	Russell Vought	294	Derek Kan
U.S. Trade Representative	288	Robert Lightizer	295	Dennis Shea

**Table B11.** *Chairpersons and Commissioners/Board Members Appointed by Trump at 2020*

	<b>id</b>	<b>Chairpersons</b>	<b>id</b>	<b>Commissioners/ Board Members</b>
Consumer Product Safety Commission	296	Robert S. Adler	307 308 309	Peter A. Feldman Dana Baiocco Elliot F. Kaye
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	297	Janet Dhillon	310 311 312	Keith E. Sonderling Victoria A. Lipnic Charlotte A. Burrows
Federal Communications Commission	298	Ajit Pai	313 314 315 316	Michael O'Rielly Brendan Carr Jessica Rosenworcel Geoffrey Starks
Federal Election Commission	299	James E. Trainor III	317 318	Steven T. Walther Ellen L. Weintraub
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	300	Neil Chatterjee	319 320	Richard Glick James Danly
Federal Reserve Bank	301	Jerome H. Powell	321 322 323 324	Richard H. Clarida Randal K. Quarles Michelle W. Bowman Lael Brainard
Federal Trade Commission	302	Joseph J. Simons	325 326 327 328	Noah Joshua Philipps Rohit Chopra Rebecca Kelly Slaughter Christine S. Wilson
National Labor Relations Board	303	John F. Ring	329 330 331	Marvin E. Kaplan William J. Emanuel Lauren M. McFerran
National Transportation Safety Board	304	Robert L. Sumwalt	332 333 334 335	Bruce Landsberg Jennifer Homendy Michael Graham Thomas Chapman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	305	Kristine L. Svinicki	336 337 338 339	Jeff Baran Annie Caputo David A. Wright Christopher T. Hanson
Securities and Exchange Commission	306	Jay Clayton	340 341 342 343	Hester M. Peirce Elad L. Roisman Allison Herren Lee Caroline A. Crenshaw

**Table B12. Connected Deputy Positions (PAS) Appointed by Trump at 2020**

<b>Department of Agriculture</b>	Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services	Under Secretary for Food Safety				
Name	Vacant	Dr. Mindy Brashears				
id	-	344				
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	Director of NIST	Director of Census	Under Secretary for Oceans and Director of NOAA	Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Director of PTO		
Name	Walter G. Copan	Steven Dillingham	Dr. Neil Jacobs	Andrei Iancu		
id	345	346	347	348		
<b>Department of Defense</b>	Secretary of the Army	Secretary of the Air Force	Secretary of the Navy	Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment)	Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering	Comptroller
Name	Ryan D. McCarthy	Barbara Barrett	Kenneth J. Braithwaite	Ellen Lord	Michael Kratsios	Thomas W. Harker
id	349	350	351	352	353	354
<b>Department of Education</b>	Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Post Secondary Education	Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education		
Name	Frank T. Brogan	Robert L. King	Johnny Collett	Scott Stump		
id	355	356	357	358		
<b>Department of Energy</b>	Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management					
Name	Vacant					
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	Administrator of FDA	Director of NIH	Administrator of Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services	Assistant Secretary for Children and Families		
Name	Stephen M. Hahn	Fancis S. Collins	Seema Verma	Lynn Johnson		
id	359	360	361	362		
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	Administrator of FEMA					
Name	Pete Gaynor					
id	363					

<b>Department of Housing and Urban Development</b>	Assistant Secretary for Housing					
Name	Dana Wade					
id	364					
<b>Department of Justice</b>	Solicitor General	AAG for Antritrust	Administrator of DEA			
Name	Jeffrey B. Wall	Makan Delrahim	Timothy J. Shea			
id	365	366	367			
<b>Department of Labor</b>	Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health	Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training				
Name	Vacant	John P. Pallasch				
id	-	368				
<b>Department of State</b>	Under Secretary for Political Affairs	Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs				
Name	David Hale	Dr. Christopher Ashley Ford				
id	369	370				
<b>Department of Transportation</b>	Administrator of NHTSA	Administrator of FAA				
Name	Vacant	Steve Dickson				
id	-	371				
<b>Department of Treasury</b>	Commissioner of IRS	Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy	Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy			
Name	Charles P. Rettig	Michael Faulkender	David J. Kautter			
id	372	373	374			

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