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Educational and professional background of Indian top civil servants under Prime- Minister Modi

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Master Thesis
**Educational and professional background of Indian top
civil servants under Prime- Minister Modi**



MSc of Public Administration
Under the supervision of Dr. Johan Christensen

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Populism, a political movement that seems to oppose the political establishment, has been dominating the news headlines over the last several years. In 2018, four of the most populous democracies in the world were ruled by populists: Narendra Modi in India, Donald Trump in the United States, Joko Widodo in Indonesia, and Bolsonaro in Brazil” (Mounk, Y & Kyle, J. 2018). What can be seen in India, the United States, Indonesia and in Brazil, is that the popularity of the presidents is strongly linked of their critique of the establishment, elite, and their marginalization of minority groups in their countries. Because of the political agenda of these populist presidents in power, populist leaders have therefore been linked to taking undemocratic measures to gain and remain in power. Mounk & Kyle (2018) underline this in their article. According to Mounk & Kyle (2018), an astounding 50 percent of populists either rewrote or amended their country’s constitution when they gained power, intending to gain more control for the leader and, at the same time, reduce checks and balances on executive power.

The impact a populist leader can have on democratic institutions is also visible in India. India has slipped two places in the 2020 Democracy Index’s global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (The Economic Times, 2021). In the Indian case, PM Modi, from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has implemented measures that discriminate against non-Hindus and implemented measures on the public administration, with the result that the position of civil servants has come under fire.

While Modi has been democratically being elected, once in charge he implemented authoritarian and populist policies. Examples are the measures that have been taken under PM Modi to gain more control by limiting the rights for civil rights (Rizvi, 2021). Allowing the attacks on Muslims for eating cow meat and accusing Christians of practicing a religion that is foreign to India are also two notable examples of PM Modi’s anti-pluralist approach (Rizvi, 2021). Another controversial policy of Modi was the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in December 2019, which allowed people of all religions, with the exception

of those professing Islam, to become citizens, if they had arrived in India before 2015 (Das, 2020).

As a result, populism proves that even long-standing democracies like India can negatively impact the existing political institutions. An undemocratic tool that is linked with undemocratic measures is corruption. The data presented by Mounk and Kylie (2018) show that populist governments have seen their countries drop by five places on average on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. This makes it even more important to question why populist politicians in democratic countries are elected in the first place. After all, populist leaders are democratically elected, while voters (in)directly vote in favor of undemocratic measures by voting for them.

One important explanation that is often mentioned is that globalization mainly favored the elite instead of working-class citizens. Populist leaders tend to oppose the establishment and favor certain groups in society. The impact of this viewpoint is visible in the US, where President Trump accused federal workers that they were the enemy. This accusation never happened before by a US president towards public administration. Besides his disapproval of the elite, “civil servants complained that their expertise itself was under attack, along with the bedrock notion that career employees should be nonpartisan” (Badger, Bui & Parlapiano, 2021).

Therefore, there seems to be a trend that once a populist leader is in charge, that this negatively impacts political institutions, in particular the public administration.

1.2 Research question

While populism is not a new phenomenon in India, it is often described differently in the Indian literature. According to Rizvi (2021), before, populism before linked to the independence movement. However, in recent decades it has changed to the BJP's aspiration to transform India into a Hindu state. At the same time, 'populism is not used to describe a form of politics in India, invoking notions of popular sovereignty, a moralistic formulation about the purity or innocence of the masses and the degeneration of the elite, or for that matter, politics based on racial, religious, or ethnic majoritarian, something not uncommon in Europe and the USA'' (Varhney, Ayyangar & Swaminathan, 2021, p.198). Based on this, Varhney, Ayyangar & Swaminathan (2021) discussed the question of whether nationalism and populism are political cousins and argue that Hindu nationalism has not become right-wing populism. However, when analyzing whether Modi is a populist or not, it seems that authoritarianism and populism are often mentioned alongside one another in the literature.

While others underline the success of Modi through his identification with the people, others argue that the success of populism is the result of a political system. For instance, Kenny (2017) specializes in the history of populism and why populist leaders gained success in countries like India. In Kenny's (2017) study, where he labels India as a patronage democracy, he underlines that two decades of national and regional party coalitions resulted in a major victory of the populist political party of Modi, 'illustrating the inherent vulnerability of a vertically fragmented patronage-based system to populist appeals from above'' (p. 22). According to Rizvi (2021), the electoral success of PM Modi is the result of his 'identification with 'the people' and his characterization of the corrupt elite, especially those associated with the old bureaucracy and the intellectuals committed to the Nehruian social democracy'' (p. 143). At the same time, even during the election period, Modi made known that the focus of his campaign was on promoting Hindu nationalism.

When analyzing existing academic research, there can be argued that most of the academic research focuses on the effects of populism on mass politics and elections. There also seems to be a trend in Western Europe and the Americas that populist politicians gain success because of the absence or breakdown of more stable party-voter attachments (Bornschieer, 2016) (Kenny, 2017). From a more global viewpoint, there seem to be similarities between

patronage democracies when it comes to the success of populism. Kenny (2017) underlines this in his study by arguing that ‘‘decentralization is a major factor behind populist success in patronage democracies’’ (p. 19).

While understanding the causes of the success of populist politicians is important, the effect populism has on the bureaucracy can’t be underestimated either. This is important since the bureaucracy is responsible for implementing the policies of the cabinet. As Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021) underline in their book, ‘‘most populists coming into office have relatively little experience with the public sector and therefore prefer people in their administrations with limited experience as well’’ (p. 276).

Bauer and Becker (2020) are one of the few researchers who studied the effect of a populist president on bureaucracy. According to their study, when a populist leader is in charge, they will seek to transform the bureaucracy to effectively realize their agenda (Bauer & Becker, p. 21). As a result, anti-pluralist public administration policies would contribute to a democratic backslide (Bauer & Becker, 2020, p. 21). The effect populism can have on the bureaucracy is important, particularly in the case of democratic backsliding, because the appointed top bureaucrats are responsible for the implementation of policies of the populist government. However, in their research, Bauer and Becker (2020) have only focused on the US, Hungary, Peru, and Switzerland. With democratic backsliding already happening in India, it would be interesting to see whether democratic backsliding in India could be related to the election of Prime Minister Modi.

This impact of a populist leader on the bureaucracy is further underlined in the book of Bauer, Peters, Pierre, Yesilkagit & Becker (2021). In their book (2021) they focus on Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, the USA, Mexico, and Venezuela. According to these authors, populists all have in common that no matter the kind of political system they were in, they were able to ‘‘pursue all bureaucratic transformation strategies, from centralization of structure, over-centralization of recourses, politicization of personnel, politicization of norms, and reduction of accountability’’ (2021, p. 281). Politicization plays a key role in their success. ‘‘Their comparative evidence suggests that increasing the politicization of the bureaucracy- or increasing the number of politically appointed loyalists in strategic posts in the public service- is a common populist strategy to take control of the bureaucracy’’ (Bauer, Peters, Pierre, Yesilkagit & Becker, 2021, p. 272). With authoritarian and populist policies being

implemented by PM Modi, it is plausible to assume that his popularity is due to his loyal public service.

On the other hand, Peters & Pierre (2019) argue that while populist leaders ‘‘have produced significant disruption in established political practices and required some rethinking of how governance should be managed, but replacing it (the old order) with effective governance mechanisms appears not to be a success’’ (p. 1540). This means that populist leaders aren’t effective in changing the bureaucracy in their favor. However, Peters & Pierre (2019) only focused on the US under President Trump. Besides the democratic backsliding in India, the election of PM Modi already impacted the constitutional protections of civil servants in India (Chandel 2021).

As one of his first actions in charge, a surprising measure by PM Modi was to remove protection laws for civil servants, a feature that stripped any sense of legal protection available to civil services (Chandel, 2021). This means that civil servants could, from then on, be prosecuted. This implements that a populist can be effective in changing the bureaucracy in their favor because, with less protection, civil servants might be less inclined to speak out against Modi’s policies. After all, less protection means that only loyal civil servants will be rewarded.

Chandel (2021) notes that the measure ‘‘was followed by the removal of so-called ‘Red Beacons’, the only vestige of authority and prestige that was available to civil servants, in the field’’. Chandel (2021) goes on to argue that ‘‘because of the removal of constitutional protections is that civil servants in India now fail to speak their minds when it is required the most’’. However, this is not in line with one of the main functions of the civil servants’ committees, which, per Article 320 of the Constitution of India, is to advise the ‘‘government on any matter referred to the Commission by the President of India’’ (Union Public Service India). With the removal of constitutional protection, it is more likely that fewer civil servants will publicly oppose the policies of PM Modi. It is likely that when civil servants are not loyal to the Modi administration, this will negatively impact their position within the Indian public administration.

When analyzing existing literature on populism in India, there can also be argued that the focus lies more on the impact of populism on the electorate instead of the effect on public

administration. Based on the literature and the observed measures of PM Modi, it is plausible to assume that loyalty in terms of party affiliation is a populist leader's preference. Therefore, there can be assumed that under a populist leader, top civil servants are more selected on based their loyalty rather than their educational and professional background. This seems particularly likely since populist leaders oppose the elite, which in the political field are professionals with suitable degrees and experience in the public administration field.

Based on this, the focus of this research lies on the election of Prime Minister Modi and its effect on appointing civil servants. In addition, this thesis focuses on party loyalty, understood in terms of party affiliation, and professional and educational characteristics in appointments of top civil servants. In terms of party loyalty, the focus is on whether a top civil servant is a member of the governing political party or not. In terms of educational characteristics, the focus is on whether top civil servants have a University bachelor's degree or not. In terms of professional characteristics, the focus is on whether top civil servants have work experience in the public administration field or not. The characteristics and background information of top civil servants of the Modi administration from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (2014-present) are compared with those of the Singh (2004- 2014) from the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Vajpayee administration (1998- 2004) from the BJP.

Previous prime minister Singh is part of the Indian National Congress (National Informatics Centre), a political party that distinguishes itself from BJP by focusing on democratic values and the unity of India by allowing people to have religious freedom (Indian National Congress). From the creation of the party, the BJP has positioned itself as a right-wing political party focusing on religious beliefs. Former prime minister Vajpayee was a member of the BJP as well but was a Hindutva apologist rather than a populist (Hindustan Times, 2018) (Saleem & Yilmaz & Chacko, 2022). Saleem, Yilmaz & Chacko (2022) also argue that former PM Vajpayee, part of the BJP, was careful in propagating 'Hindu civilization' and was respectful to his opponents, even in his speeches. Therefore, both former prime ministers Sink and Vajpayee aren't labeled as populist leaders in this research.

While each of the three prime ministers had more than one cabinet and therefore replacements, there is opted to select the top civil servants of the current Modi cabinet and the last cabinet periods of Singh and Vajpayee. By comparing the Modi administration with the

administrations of his predecessors, there can be analyzed whether the election of Modi led to a different outcome regarding the appointment of public servants.

This leads to the following main research question:

Research Question: What is the impact of the election of PM Modi on the importance of loyalty/party affiliation, educational and professional background in appointments of top civil servants?

Via online available data, biographical backgrounds of top civil servants of both administrations will be collected. This comparison is interesting, because the Indian Prime Minister has significant power over national institutions.

Findings of this research will contribute to existing studies on the impact of populism on public administration. Therefore, the central theoretical question of this thesis is the effect that a populist Prime minister has on the appointment of top civil servants.

Before presenting the findings of this research, concepts of populism, loyalty, and the appointment of civil servants will be discussed in the following chapter.

2. Theory chapter

2.1 Literature review

Based on the research question, the concepts of populism, appointment of top civil servants and the impact populism has on top civil servants in the literature will be discussed in this chapter.

Populism

The term ‘populism’ has many meanings, and its interpretation has changed substantially throughout the decades. While some argue that populism is primarily anti-establishment, others underline this by stating that populism represents the voice of the unheard in society. The article by Fuentes (2020) underlines this statement by arguing that “populist movements are anti-pluralistic by nature, and juxtapose a ‘virtuous populace with a corrupt elite and view the former as the sole legitimate source of political power” (2020, pp. 49-50). Fuentes (2020) argues that ‘populism advocates the pure expression of popular will, without institutional or ideological detours, and resorts to symbolic and charismatic ways of achieving its redemptive conception of politics, quintessentially based on a ‘Machichean rhetoric’ (p. 50). As Fuentes (2020) puts it: “It is a politics of hope, a democratic promise of a better world, a dream of collective salvation as attractive as it is difficult to express in a specific program and to encapsulate in a satisfactory definition” (p. 50).

The support of populist parties has many causes. One popular assumption is that populist parties gain support because of their charismatic leaders, who tend to hold negative views on social change. Another assumption is that populist groups gain popularity among those who have benefited least from globalization. This is underlined by Mounk and Kyle (2019), who argue that “populist governments are united by two fundamental claims: elites and outsiders work against the interests of the true people, and since populists are the voice of the true people, nothing should stand in their way”.

Another definition of populism is that it focuses on identity politics by focusing on a particular group in society. At the same time, focusing on only one particular group can be a

threat to democracy. Min-Hyeok (2016) underlines this by arguing that the focus on identity politics can be a treat when it's combined with ‘its anti-pluralist tendency because, based on the dangerous fantasy of the authentic people, populists tend to treat their political opponents as ‘enemies of the people’ and seek to exclude them altogether’’ (p. 4).

In literature, the terms ‘populism’ and ‘authoritarianism’ are often treated interchangeably. However, Bauer and Becker (2020) proposed to distinguish these concepts, by arguing that strategies to transform bureaucracy by force should be classified as authoritarianism, while the main goal of a populist public administration policy is to eliminate pluralism in state bureaucracy.

How populism is viewed may differ in different during different periods and in different countries. Whereas populism may have been associated with right-wing populism in West-European countries and the U.S., other concepts than populism would apply to other regions of the world to describe nationalist movements.

Based on the different assumptions of the concept of populism in the literature, there can be argued that populism is a discourse in the sense it is interpreted differently. Acker (2019) underlines this by arguing that ‘populism can be a political, ideology, or a discursive style at the same time’’ (Gidron & Bonikowsky, 2013; Acker, 2019, p. 488). ‘As a political strategy, populism focuses on the organization of population mobilization and policy choices that are made to have a populist appeal’’ (Acemoglu et al., 2011; Weyland, 2001; Acker, 2019, p. 488). According to Acker (2019) ‘the discursive take on populism, in contrast, is mainly concurrent with text and speech analysis of populist politicians’’ (p.488).

When analyzing whether Modi is a left or right- wing populist, the distinction is important to clarify. Mounk and Kyle (2018) argue that while ‘right- wing populists victimize unpopular minorities and weaponize public anger for illicit goals, left- wing populists are supposedly far more likely to correct elite failures on behalf of the poor and downtrodden’’. The right- wing populist role seems to be the case in India under PM Modi, where minorities like Muslims faces oppression. At the same time, Rogenhofer (2020) argues that populism is also anti-pluralist because of its antidemocratic potential.

Finally, the focus of this research defines populism as “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonte generale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2004, pp. 149-150).

PM Modi's policies fit the description of populism of Mudde (2004). Modi seems to promote the idea that all other religions than Hinduism don't belong in India and his approach is that the Indian people must be protected from the corrupt elite. One popular slogan of PM Modi confirming this is “One nation, one people and one culture” (Engineer, 1995, p. 272) (Kenny, 2017). Irfan (2019) also argues in his article that the seven characteristics of populism, as described by Muller, apply to PM Modi of India (p.226).

Appointments of top civil servants including the role of loyalty

In the existing literature, there is a debate on whether civil servants are supposed to be a mere extension of politics. Wilson (1887) was one of the first to “discuss the issues of civil service reform and political appointments by the executive” (Praca, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011, p. 143). According to Wilson (1887, as discussed in Praca, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011, p. 143), bureaucratic administration and politics should be separate arenas. Weber (1968) supported the same argument when discussing three types of authority and domination: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal” (Praca, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011, p. 143). According to Weber (1968, as discussed in Praca, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011) fully-developed bureaucracies are characterized as impersonal, objective and indispensable” (p. 143).

Contradictory to the argument of Wilson (1887), Terry Moe (1985) was one of the first scholars to develop a rationale for presidential efforts to politicize the bureaucracy (Praca & Freitas, 2011, p. 144). As a reason for their efforts, Prada & Freitas (2011) argue that “presidents would be driven by the formidable expectations that citizens, politicians, and the media have about their office” (p. 144). Therefore, “presidents would seek an institutional system responsive to their needs as political leaders” (Praca, Freitas & Hoepers, 2011, p. 144).

In line with the argument of Moe (1985), there is a trend that bureaucratic administrations and politics are no separate arenas. Rouban (2003) underlines this, as cited in Thorbjornsrud, 2014), that “politicization of the administration, where the distinction between elected leaders and the civil service has become unclear, has been pointed to as one important trend” (p. 182).

According to Peters & Pierre (2004), politicization is typically viewed as “the substitution of political criteria for merit-based criteria, primarily in recruitment and promotion” (p. 2).

Staronova & Rybar (2021) argue that the concepts of civil service politicization and patronage are often used interchangeably in comparative literature (p. 652). For example, Peter & Pierre (2004, p. 2. as discussed in Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008; Staronova & Rybar, 2021) argue “that politicization also refers to changing behavior of the civil service, as it is the case in the so-called functional and administrative types of politicization” (p. 652).

According to Staronova & Rybar (2021), “public service jobs are used by party political actors to increase control, whereby policy-making capacities are strengthened, and policy implementation is seen as a key goal” (p. 652). “In new democracies, patronage is even higher (Meyer-Sahling & Veen, 2012) and often seen as a function of party-building (Grzymala-Busse, 2007), typically observable when governments terminate and are replaced by a different configuration of party-political actors” (Staronova & Rybar, 2021, p. 652). According to Staronova & Rybar (2021), “this suggests that parties use patronage as a resource for both control and reward for political support” (p. 652).

Staranova & Rybar (2021) argue that in countries where “civil service is strongly protected both by formal rules and the informal norms, bureaucratic turnover rates related to ministerial changes may reflect an established practice of senior civil servants voluntarily departing from their posts” (p. 656). According to Staranova & Rybar (2021), “this may happen because the civil servants may not want to work under the new leadership or prefer to let the new minister work with a fresh pool of administrators” (p. 656). In line with the anticipatory politicization of Peters (2013), “senior civil servants may departure when there is an unsatisfactory performance of the ministry” (Hollibaugh, 2015; Jiang, 2018) (Staranova & Rybar, 2021, p. 656).

The protection of the civil service is in line with maintaining an effective public governance in democracies. According to Peters (1996, as discussed in Kovac, Gajduschek, 2015.), the participatory state is described as followed:

‘ ‘Good, effective public governance helps to strengthen democracy and human rights, promote economic prosperity and social cohesion, reduce poverty, enhance environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources, and deepen confidence in government and public administration’ ’ (p.88).

The OECD (2007) studied the political involvement in senior staffing and senior civil servants. Their report ‘ ‘highlights that political involvement in administration is essential for the proper functioning of a democracy because without it an incoming political administration would find itself unable to change policy direction’ ’ (OECD, 2007). At the same time, the OECD (2007) also highlight the importance of the protection of the civil service against the government.

Political leaders may desire to implement a particular set of policies within their ministerial portfolio and realize that their political parties are unlikely to provide qualified and experienced candidates for patronage appointments. Professional traits and career backgrounds of top civil servants may explain why ministers prefer to keep some civil servants and fire others (Bach & Veit, 2017; Fleischer, 2016; Veit & Scholz, 2016).

Loyalty can also have the form of responsive competencies. As Mulgan (2008, p. 346) highlights, ministers (and therefore, secretaries) always operate within the context of the government’s program. Thus, Mulgan notes that “for responsiveness to occur, all that is needed is that public servants act in accordance with what they perceive to be the wishes of their political masters” (p. 346). After all, “experienced senior public servants are skilled in knowing what ministers will and will not want them to do and in acting accordingly” (p. 346).

However, Bach and Veit (2017) found evidence in their study about senior officials in German federal ministries that “partisan loyalty eventually trumps political craft and managerial competencies” (p. 266). More specifically, they’ve discovered the effect of partisan loyalty on the chance of promotion to be stronger than for other theoretically relevant criteria, suggesting that ministers are likely to trade off political loyalty against other qualifications (Bach & Veit, 2017, p. 266-267).

Focusing on the Indian case, it is more likely that only loyal civil servants will be rewarded and gain more chances of promotion under a populist PM. This is more likely because of the removal of constitutional protection by PM Modi. Therefore, it is likely that the theory of partisan loyalty by Bach and Veit (2017) applies to the Indian case. Based on this, their theory of political loyalty is applied in this research.

Populism and top civil servant's appointments

In the literature, there is a consensus that populist leaders have their preferences when it comes to the appointment of top civil servants. What distinguishes populist from non-populist governments is that non-populist governments don't have the same level of distrust when it comes to the functioning of the bureaucracy and generally do not aim to reshape the bureaucracy in their favor (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

In part, a populist leader's ability to effectively reshape the bureaucracy depends on the country they live in. As highlighted by Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021), "some administrative systems have a history of being more influenced by political control and by patronage appointments than others" (p. 276). They further argue that in many Latin American and European countries, shortly before the election of a populist leader, "patronage appointments are the norm rather than the exception" (p. 276). This means that even when civil servants oppose a populist leader, as mentioned by Kenny (2017), they will find more difficulties in systems with high patronage to resist the efforts of political control by the populist leader (Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit, 2021, p. 276). According to Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021), "the professionalism of the civil service and its commitment to public service (Vandenabeele, Brewer, and Ritz 2014) also influences how the institution as a whole, as well as individual public servants, respond to populist governments" (p. 274). This means that professional civil servants won't undermine any government, simply because they are determined to do what they are hired for, namely to serve the public (Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit, 2021, p. 275).

When it comes to the educational background of top civil servants, it is argued that populism is directed against a perceived elite, which includes academia. However, more and more countries now have begun to exhibit a trend of having populist politicians with academic backgrounds. At the same time, as highlighted by Bruhwiler & Goktepe, populist academics tend to change their behavior to gain support among populist voters (2021).

While the importance of good public governance and its protection is highlighted in the literature, the removal of constitutional protection by PM Modi means that there is no protection of the civil service in India. Based on these undemocratic measures of PM Modi, it is likely that loyalty is more rewarded and therefore more important than the educational background of top civil servants. This is in line with the statement of Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021), as mentioned in the previous chapter, that populist leaders, in general, have limited experience in government and therefore prefer civil servants with limited experience as well (p. 276).

Several theoretical assumptions and expectations are presented. At the same time, these expectations haven't been empirically tested. Based on the empirical analysis in the literature, the expectations of the impact of a populist leader on the bureaucracy in India are formulated. By testing the empirical analysis of the mentioned authors, their theoretical statements are either strengthened or weakened. Therefore, the findings of this thesis can contribute to the literature.

2.2 Hypotheses

Before formulating hypotheses in this chapter, the impact of loyalty and populism in Indian politics will be first discussed.

Idolizing political leaders is not a new phenomenon in Indian politics and leaders benefit from this. Sen (2020) goes on to say that “even after the death of the leader, it is the common party worker who is entrusted with the task of keeping the memory of the leader alive” (p. 31). Sen (2020) further argues that “while some party workers remain loyal to the party, others may find their loyalty in the leadership and not necessarily in the ideology of the party.” However, under loyalty to ideology is far more pronounced in right-wing political parties than to the individual political leadership (p. 33). Sen (2020) underscores his argument by observing that PM Modi has become the main headline, and that BJP doesn’t need party workers anymore (Sen, p. 31). Sen believes that “BJP now instead wants rich and loaded party workers” (Sen, p. 22).

What populist and non-populist governments share is that both find loyalty an important factor in appointing top civil servants. As an example, “an analysis of the party affiliation of top civil servants in the Dutch ministries (under a non-populist leader) confirms the ally principle and underlines the demand for ideological agreement as an important factor for top official selection” (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016a) (Bach & Veit, 2017 p. 257).

Based on the theoretical arguments presented above, a populist leader is likely to pay more attention to selecting loyal party members, and so there will be “less deflection of policy directions than in a system dominated by the career public service” (Guy & Jon, 2004, p. 7). Therefore, characteristics such as party affiliation and educational or work background of top civil servants under a right-wing populist Prime-Minister are expected to be in greater alignment with the party ideology, because their loyalty is more important than it would be under a non-populist Prime Minister. This means that the expectation is that under a populist prime-minister, more top civil servants are selected that are members of the same political party,

This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Under the far- right prime- minister president Modi, top civil servants are more selected on party loyalty than was the case under Singh and under Vajpayee

Arellano- Gault (2020) argues that populists view the public administration as a technocracy that looks after its own interests, and not the interests of the people. A solution would be to elimination of necessary requirements like specialized knowledge and complex expertise (Arellano- Gault, 2020). Arellano- Gault's (2020) theory is in line with Modi's identification with "the people" and his critique of the corrupt elite. This is in contrast with PM Modi himself, who has a professional background, serving in the secretariat of the BJP party from the 1980s (Elections.IN), a characteristic which seems to make him the very part of the corrupt elite whom he opposes so strongly. Despite this caveat and following the argument that loyalty is more important than other skills, it is still plausible to assume that the appointed top civil servants are less likely to be selected based on their professional background. This means that it is more likely that top civil servants under Modi have less experience in the public administration field than it's the case under a non- populist PM. This is line with the theoretical argument of Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021), that populist leaders in general have limited experience in government and therefore prefer civil servants with limited experience as well (p. 276). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Top civil servants under the far- right prime- minister Modi have less work experience in the public administration field than was the case under Singh and under Vajpayee

As mentioned earlier, it is argued that PM Modi opposes the elite, which includes the academics. At the same time, Modi fits the profile of Bruhwiler & Goketepe (2021) who argue that populist politicians tend to have an academic background. Modi himself has a degree in Political Science (Elections.IN). However, even though Modi is part of the academic elite that he strongly opposes, it is still plausible to assume that under the right-wing PM Modi, candidates are less likely to be selected based on their educational background and drawn, instead, from outside the academic field. It is therefore plausible that candidates under Modi are less highly educated than it is the case under a non-populist PM.

This is line with the populist thought that loyalty is at the end more important than having an academic background. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Top civil servants under the far- right prime- minister Modi are less highly educated than was the case under Singh and under Vajpayee

The purpose of the formulated hypotheses is to insight to answer the research question. What this study distinguishes from others, is that this research specifically focuses on the impact of the election of an Indian populist PM on bureaucracy. There have been studies where the trend of populism has been discussed in India, but not on the impact it has on bureaucracy. In terms of external validity, the findings of this study can apply to similar cases as well. In terms of internal validity, the findings of this study give a better understanding of the impact populism has on bureaucracy in India.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research design

The focus of this study is to analyze what the impact of the independent variable X (election of PM Modi) is on the dependent variable Y (loyalty, educational and professional background). Therefore, a quantitative analysis based on a deductive approach is applied. The purpose of quantitative analysis is to ‘‘describe and interpret objects statistically and with numbers’’ (University of Jyväskylä). ‘‘Quantitative analysis aims to interpret the data collected for the phenomenon through numeric variables and statistics’’ (University of Jyväskylä). This applies to this study because the purpose of this study is to find out the effect of a populist PM on bureaucracy. ‘‘Quantitative analysis starts with a descriptive statistical analysis phase, followed by a closer analysis of causality based on the descriptive statistical analysis’’ (University of Jyväskylä).

Case selection

For this study, India is selected as the case. The reason for this is that there is a gap in the literature regarding empirical analysis of the impact of populism on bureaucracy in India. This research focuses on the most influential political person in Indian politics, the prime minister. This study aims to analyze the characteristics and backgrounds of the top civil servants who served under a populist Indian prime minister in comparison to that of a non-populist Indian prime- minister.

India’s Prime Minister holds the most executive power in the country and is the leader of the Council of Ministers (Elections.in). In particular, ‘‘the President appoints the Prime Minister of India and on his advice, appoints the Council of Ministers’’ (Elections.in). The Prime Minister can remove a minister by asking for his or her dismissal or having him or her

dismissed by the President (Elections.in). “If any difference of opinion arises between the Prime Minister and any other minister, the opinion of the Prime Minister prevails” (Elections.in). This illustrates the influence of the Indian prime minister and its impact on bureaucracy. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is on the position of the prime- minister.

Population

The unit of analysis is the top civil servants who are formally appointed by the Indian President, but selected and nominated by the Indian Prime Minister (Elections. IN). The appointed top civil servants are selected from the current cabinet of Prime Minister Modi (2014- present), from the last cabinet of Singh (2004- 2014), and the last cabinet of former Prime Minister Vajpayee (1998- 2004) (National Informatics Centre).

The definition of top civil servants may differ in countries. Top civil servants are the senior civil servants within the government: “managers with final executive responsibility for both people and resources” (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties). The cabinet secretary is the highest-ranking civil servant in a country, as stated by OECD: “The senior civil service is the interface between politicians and the public administration” (OECD, 2008). In India, the cabinet secretary is the top executive official and most senior civil servant of the Government of India (Government of India).

While India has many agencies with top civil servants, there is chosen to focus on ministers of state (junior ministers) besides the cabinet secretary. While each cabinet has only one cabinet secretary, a cabinet has more junior ministers. The function of junior ministers is to serve the cabinet minister in their duties and are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister (Government of India). This means that junior ministers are like top civil servants responsible for the implementation of policies within their departments. Another main reason to focus on junior ministers is because of the availability of data from the three different cabinets under the three different prime ministers. What both groups have in common, is that junior ministers, as well as the cabinet secretary, are (in) direct appointed by the Indian PM (Government of India).

Data collection

All top civil servants of the three administrations (PM Modi, PM Singh & PM Vajpayee) will be analyzed. Therefore, there will be made three time periods. Biographical data of the appointed top civil servants will be used to analyze the characteristics' (party membership, educational and professional background) of the top civil servants of the three administrations. Online sources, biographical information from government websites, will be used to collect the relevant information.

To collect information from the three different Indian administrations, the Indian government website is consulted. In this particular study, the website of the Indian parliament 'Lok Sabha' was essential. The website of the Indian parliament is an official Indian government website, which makes information reliable. Their website is designed, developed, and hosted by the National Informatics Center, the premier ICT Organization of the Government of India. This makes the website of the Indian Parliament a primary source.

While each of the three prime ministers had more than one cabinet and, therefore, replacements when it comes to junior ministers and the cabinet secretary, there was chosen to select the top civil servants from the current Modi cabinet, and the last cabinet periods of Singh and Vajpayee. For the time under PM Modi, 46 top civil servants are analyzed, under PM Singh 31 top civil servants, and under PM Vajpayee 26 top civil servants are analyzed. Therefore, a quantitative statistical large- N analysis (N= 103) is employed.

There is a difference in the numbers of each cabinet because it seems to be a trend in India that with every new government, the numbers of government posts increase (Jha, 2021). However, such differences in size were not expected to have significant consequences, because the mean value of each administration is measured and compared in this research.

Background information on all top civil servants and other Indian parliament members could be found on the Lok Sabha website. However, the list of top civil servants per administration was found on other websites. For the Modi, Singh, and Vajpayee administrations, the list of the top civil servants on an online web archive website was found. The web archive contains information of Indian governments, different cabinets and names of the junior ministers are

included. A limitation of the website is that it is not known where the information is from. A mitigating factor is that the information on the website was confirmed on the Indian parliament website by checking each top civil servant individually.

3.2 Operationalization

In this section, the operationalization of this research is discussed. In Table 1, the independent variables are presented.

Because the focus of this study is to analyze the effect of a populist PM on bureaucracy, the independent variable is split into three dummy variables. Each category in the dummy variable is labeled as yes or no. Therefore, the independent variables are ‘the election of PM Modi’, ‘the election of PM Singh’, and ‘the election of PM Vajpayee’.

Table 1

Independent variables	Data collection
Election of Prime Minister (PM) Modi	all 46 current junior ministers and cabinet secretary are selected
Election of Prime Minister (PM) Singh	all 31 junior ministers and cabinet secretary are selected from the last Singh cabinet
Election of Prime Minister (PM) Vajpayee	all 26 junior ministers and cabinet secretary are selected from the last Vajpayee cabinet

The dependent variables are party loyalty, educational level and professional background. By correlating the independent and dependent variables with one another, the hypothesis is tested.

The theory of Bach & Veit (2017), that partisan loyalty plays a crucial role in appointing candidates, is tested for the first hypothesis. Based on the theoretical arguments about loyalty

in the literature, it is likely that a populist PM will focus more on loyal civil servants. It is therefore plausible to assume that under a populist PM, the percentage of top civil servants being a member of the governing party is high. Therefore, party loyalty will be measured by analyzing whether a top civil servant is a member of the governing political party or not. Party loyalty is measured by first looking at which party the PM is a member of. Then follows an analysis of whether the top civil servant is a member of the governing political party or not.

The theories of Arellano- Gault (2020), Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021) and of Bauer & Becker (2022), that a populist leader prefers a party member with no specialized knowledge so that they can transform the bureaucracy effectively, are tested with the second hypothesis. There seems to be a consensus that populist leaders oppose the establishment because they are not concerned with the interests of the people. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the professional background of a civil servant is less important under a populist PM. Furthermore, it is plausible to assume that top civil servants are often selected from outside the existing public administration base. Therefore, the professional background is measured by analyzing whether a top civil servant has work experience in the public administration field or not. Experience is measured as whether a top civil servant has work experience of at least one month in the public administration field.

The theory of Bruhwiler & Goktepe (2021) that populists oppose elites, which includes academia, is tested with the third hypothesis. As mentioned in the theory chapter, it is plausible to assume that the educational background of top civil servants under a populist PM is less important than it's the case under a non-populist PM. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that top civil servants under a populist PM are less highly educated. Based on this, the educational level is measured by analyzing whether a top civil servant has a university degree or not. While obtaining a college degree is often considered as being highly educated, there is chosen to focus only on top civil servants with a university degree because they stand more for the elite, which populist tend to dislike. The variable 'university degree' is measured by identifying the civil servants with at least a bachelor's degree.

Each category of dependent variables is dichotomous: receiving a score of 1 when an indicator is applicable and a score of 0 when it is not applicable. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Dependent variable	Indicator	Measurement
Loyalty	Member of the governing political party	Yes: 1 No: 0
Professional background	Work experience in the public administration	Yes: 1 No: 0
Educational level	Possession of an university degree	Yes: 1 No: 0

Names and data results are added in the Appendix in chapter 6.2.

An independent sample T-test is applied for each indicator to determine whether the differences in the means between the Modi administration are significantly different from the Sink administration and the Vajpayee administration.

An independent sample T-test is applied to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and one of the two groups of top civil servants under PM Singh and PM Vajpayee. The two groups are independent. The unequal sample sizes don't pose a problem to the performed T-test because only the mean value of each group is only essential.

H0: the average value between the two populations is equal

H1: the average value between the two populations is not equal

3.3. Reflection on validity or reliability

The importance of validity and reliability can't be denied in a research. Internal validity examines whether the analyses and study design answer the research questions without bias (Andrade). External validity is the opposite of internal validity and examines whether the study results are applicable for other cases (Andrade).

Reflecting on external validity, a main limitation of the applied research method is the lack of generalization because of the limited numbers of subjects. However, the aim of this research is not to generalize findings but to provide more in- depth information on the effect of a populist prime minister on the appointed bureaucracy.

In terms of reliability, the findings are replicable as all data and sources are listed in the Appendix. Data and background information of top civil servants has been collected from government websites and online news websites, which are openly accessibly.

The expectation is that the findings of this in- depth thesis increases the internal validity. At the same time, not the entire population of Indian top civil servants from different departments is included. As a result, it remains unclear what the impact of the election of PM Modi is on the bureaucracy as a whole. Secondly, the measurement can also be a treat for internal validity. Comparing and testing whether there is a significantly difference between the cases means that an alternative hypothesis is excluded. As a result, more theories are considered before answering the research question.

4. Analysis

4.1 Results

In this chapter, the results of the administered independent sample T-test will be presented and discussed with the goal of rejecting or accepting the null hypothesis, which asserts that there are no significant differences in the mean values between the relevant groups.

In this independent sample T-test, the sample mean is aligned with the population mean, because all top civil servants from the population are included in the samples.

In each table, 'N' is the number of observations. Important note is that the number of observations may be different under the three administrations because of missing values. Probabilities in a T-test are expressed as p values, which state the probability that the data put into the statistical test arose by chance. A p value of '1' means that it is completely certain that the results arose by chance. Conversely, a p value of '0' means that it is impossible that the result arose by chance. With a 95% coefficient fall, the null hypothesis will be rejected when p is less than 5%. So, when p is less than 5%, it can be inferred that the result is statistically significant.

The p value is denoted by "Sig. (2-tailed) in each table. Important note is the p value is 2-tailed, which means that there is a 50% probability for the p value to find a difference $<$ -test value or $>$ test value (Berg, R.G.)

With a 95% coefficient fall, the 0 hypotheses will be rejected when p is less than 5%. In other words, when p is less than 5%, it can be said that there is significantly difference. "The standard error of the mean (SE) is an estimate of the standard deviation of the sampling distribution of the t-statistic (Data Analytics)".

Before the results of the T- test will be discussed, descriptive statistics of the results will be presented.

Descriptive statistics

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present the descriptive statistics of the three hypotheses under the three Indian administrations. Table 3 represents the group of PM Modi, and the mean values on the indicators ‘possession of an university degree’, ‘member of the governing political party’ and ‘work experience in the public administration field’. Table 4 represents the group of PM Singh, and the mean values on the indicators ‘possession of an university degree’, ‘member of the governing political party’ and ‘work experience in the public administration field’. Table 5 represents the group of PM Vajpayee, and the mean values on the indicators ‘possession of an university degree’, ‘member of the governing political party’ and ‘work experience in the public administration field’.

To illustrate the differences in mean values between the three different administrations, bar charts are added for each group. In tables 6, 7 and 8, the means of each group on the indicator ‘being a member of the governing political party’, are presented in different bar charts. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Modi is 0.95, which asserts that 95% of the group of PM Modi is a member of the governing political party. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Singh is 0.83, which asserts that 83% of the group of Singh is a member of the governing political party. Under the group of PM Vajpayee, the mean of the group top civil servants is 0.92, which asserts that 92% is a member of the governing political party.

Table 3

		Statistics		
		Possession of an university degree under PM Modi	Member of the governing political party under PM Modi	Work experience in the public administration field under PM Modi
N	Valid	45	44	45
	Missing	0	1	0
Mean		,87	,95	,29

Table 4

Statistics				
		Member of the governing party under PM Singh	Possession of an university degree under PM Singh	Work experience in the public administration field under PM Singh
N	Valid	35	36	36
	Missing	1	0	0
Mean		,83	,97	,28

Tabel 5

Statistics				
		Member of the governing political party under PM Vajpayee	Possession of an university degree under PM Vajpayee	Work experience in the public administration field under PM Vajpayee
N	Valid	25	24	25
	Missing	1	2	1
Mean		,92	,83	,24

Table 6

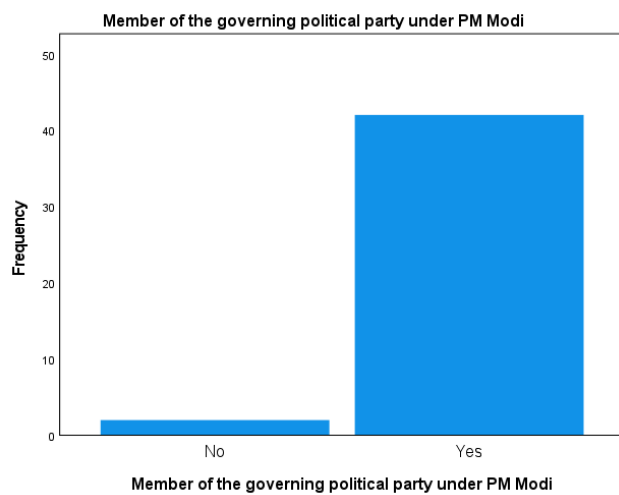


Table 7

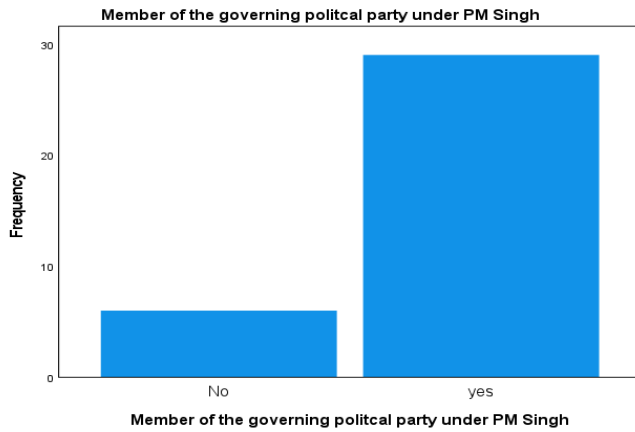
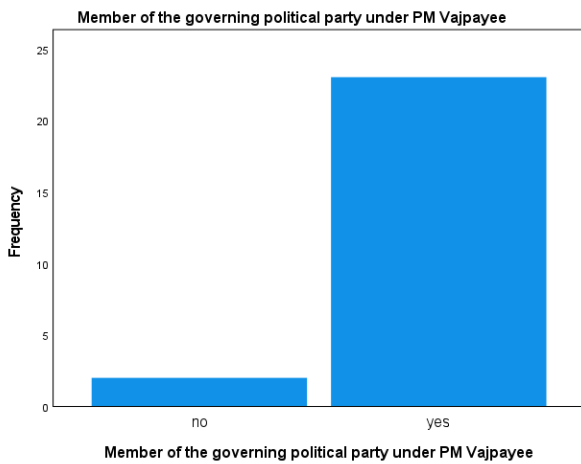


Table 8



In tables 9, 10 and 11, the means of each group on the indicator ‘possession of an university degree’ are presented in different bar charts. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Modi is 0.87, which asserts that 87% of the group of PM Modi is in the possession of an university degree. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Singh is 0.97, which asserts that 97% of the group of Singh is in the possession of an university degree. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Vajpayee is 0.83, which asserts that 83% of the group of Vajpayee is in the possession of an university degree.

Table 9

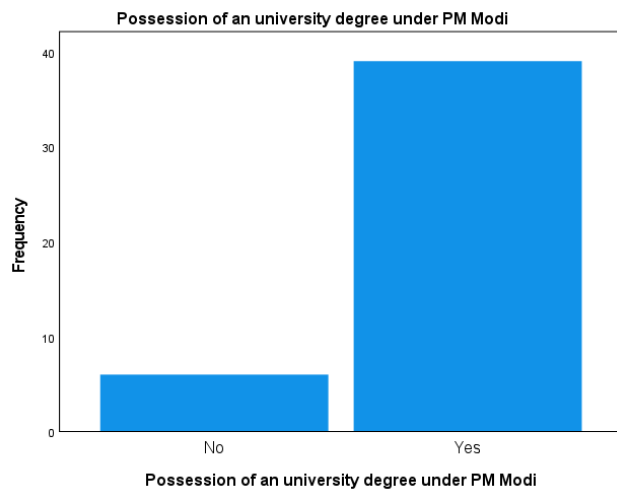


Table 10

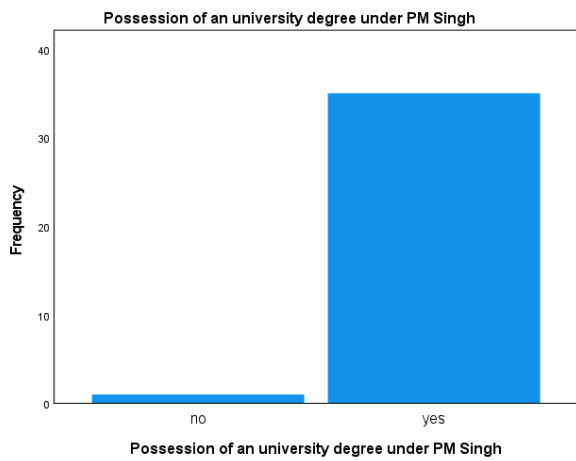
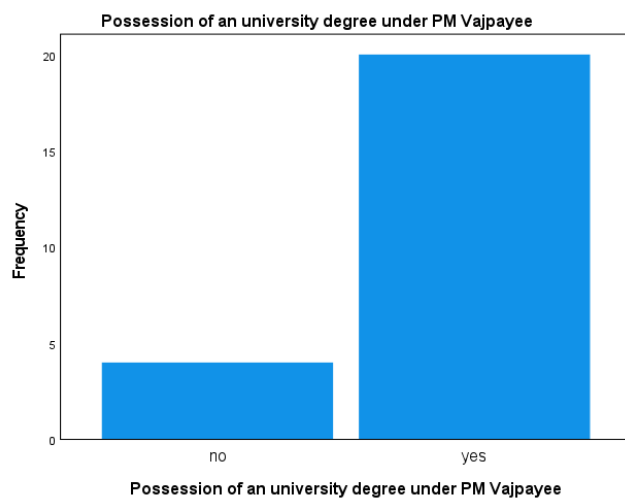


Table 11



In tables 12, 13 and 14, the means of each group on the indicator work experience in the public administration field are presented in different bar charts. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Modi is 0.29, which asserts that 29% of the group of Modi has work experience in the public administration field. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Singh is 0.28, which asserts that 28% of the group of Singh has work experience in the public administration field. The mean of the group top civil servants under PM Vajpayee is 0.24, which asserts that 24% of the group of Vajpayee has work experience in the public administration field.

Table 12

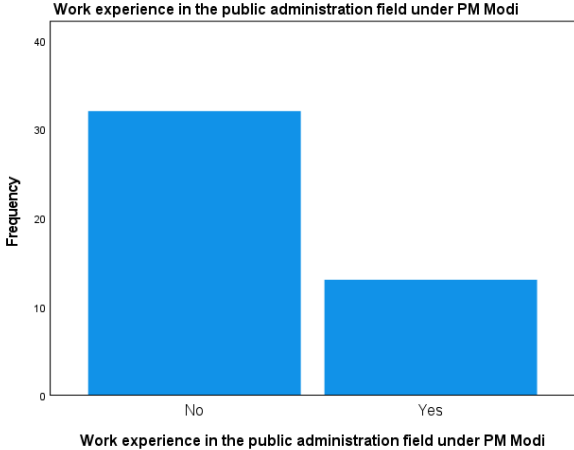


Table 13

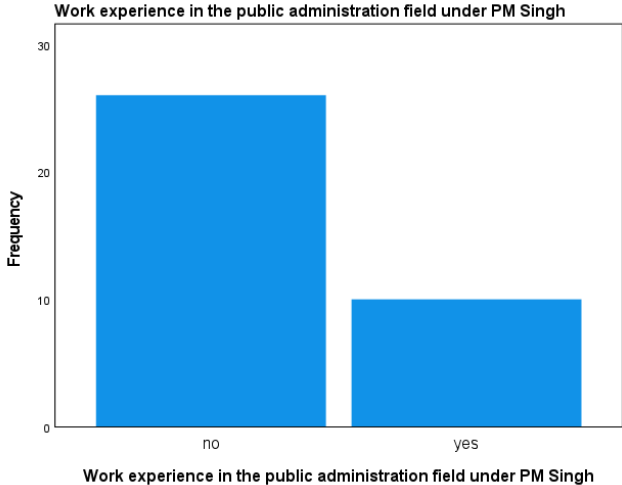
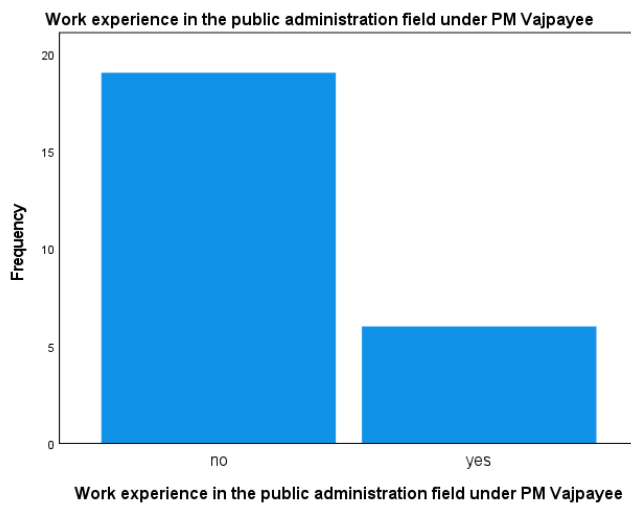


Table 14



Based on the descriptive statistics, there can be concluded that the differences between the mean values, on the three indicators, of each group is small. However, this doesn't tell us if the mean values of the three groups are significantly different. With the independent sample T- test, there will be tested whether the differences between the groups are significantly different or not. This gives us the opportunity to reject or accept the null hypothesis.

Results of the independent sample T- test

Party loyalty

In table 15, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Singh are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 2 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Singh. If top civil servants are members of the governing political party, they are labeled as 1. If top civil servants are not members of the governing political party, they are labeled as 0.

Since the p-value of the Levene's Test is 0.000, the null hypothesis for the Levene's test is accepted, which means that the variance in being a member of the governing political party under Modi is significantly different from that of the group of PM Sing. This tells us that the 'the equal variances not assumed' row is applicable. The p-value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.086 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the means for the 't-test for equality of means' is not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 15

Group Statistics

	Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Member of the governing political party	1	44	,95	,211	,032
	2	35	,83	,382	,065

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Member of the governing political party	Equal variances assumed	15,688	,000	1,861	77	,067	,126	,068	-,009	,261
	Equal variances not assumed			1,749	50,097	,086	,126	,072	-,019	,271

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Member of the governing political party	Cohen's d	,299	,421	-,029	,869
	Hedges' correction	,302	,417	-,028	,860
	Glass's delta	,382	,329	-,124	,778

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

In table 16, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Vajpayee are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 3 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Vajpayee. If top civil servants are members of the governing political party, they are labeled as 1. If top civil servants are not members of the governing political party, they are labeled as 0.

Since the p-value of the Levene's Test is 0.248, the null hypothesis for the Levene's test is accepted, which means that the variance in being a member of the governing political party under Modi is significantly different from that of the group of PM Vajpayee. This tells us that the 'the equal variances not assumed' row is applicable. The p-value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.591 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the means for the 't- test for equality of means' are not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 16

Group Statistics										
		Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Member of the governing political party	1		44	,95	,211	,032				
	3		25	,92	,277	,055				

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Member of the governing political party	Equal variances assumed	1,356	,248	,583	67	,562	,035	,059	-,084	,153	
	Equal variances not assumed			,541	39,976	,591	,035	,064	-,094	,164	

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Member of the governing political party	Cohen's d	,237	,146	-,346	,637
	Hedges' correction	,239	,144	-,342	,630
	Glass's delta	,277	,125	-,369	,616

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

From this can be concluded that there is no significant difference concerning being a member of the governing political party between the Modi, Singh, and Vajpayee administrations.

Educational level

In table 17, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Singh are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 2 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Singh. If top civil servants are in the possession of an university degree, they are labeled as 1. If top civil servants are not in the possession of an university degree, they are labeled as 0.

Since the p- value of the Levene's Test is 0.000, the null hypothesis for the levene's test is accepted which means that the variance in the possession of having a university degree under PM Modi is significantly different than that of the group of PM Singh. This tells us that the 'the equal variances not assumed' row is applicable. However, the p- value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.075 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the means for the 't- test for equality of means' are not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 17

Group Statistics

	Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Possession of an university degree	1	45	,87	,344	,051
	2	36	,97	,167	,028

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Possession of an university degree	Equal variances assumed	13,526	,000	-1,689	79	,095	-,106	,063	-,230	,019
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,811	66,443	,075	-,106	,058	-,222	,011

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Possession of an university degree	Cohen's d	,280	-,378	-,819	,066
	Hedges' correction	,282	-,374	-,811	,065
	Glass's delta	,167	-,633	-1,092	-,167

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

In table 18, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Vajpayee are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 3 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Vajpayee. If top civil servants are in the possession of an university degree, they are labeled as 1. If top civil servants are not in the possession of an university degree, they are labeled as 0.

Since the p- value of the Levene's Test is 0.468, the null hypothesis for the Levene's test is accepted which means that the variance in the possession of having a university degree under PM Modi is significantly different than that of the group of PM Vajpayee. This tells us that the 'the equal variances not assumed' row is applicable. However, the p- value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.722 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the

means for the 't- test for equality of means' are not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 18

Group Statistics

	Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Possession of an university degree	1	45	,87	,344	,051
	3	24	,83	,381	,078

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Possession of an university degree	Equal variances assumed	,534	,468	,370	67	,713	,033	,090	-,147	,213
	Equal variances not assumed			,358	43,095	,722	,033	,093	-,154	,221

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Possession of an university degree	Cohen's d	,357	,093	-,403	,589
	Hedges' correction	,361	,092	-,398	,582
	Glass's delta	,381	,088	-,409	,583

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

From this it can be concluded that there is no significant difference concerning the possession of a university degree between the Modi, Singh and Vajpayee administration.

Professional background

In table 19, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Singh are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 2 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Singh. If top civil servants have work experience in the public administration and/or politics field, they are labeled as 1. If top civil servants don't have work experience in the public administration field, they are labeled as 0.

Since the p- value of the Levene's Test is 0.828, the null hypothesis for the Levene's test is rejected which means that the variance in professional background in the public administration field under PM Modi is not significantly different than that of the group of PM Singh. This tells us that the 'the equal variances assumed' row is applicable. However, the p-value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.914 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the means for the 't- test for equality of means' are not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 19

Group Statistics

	Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	1	45	,29	,458	,068
	2	36	,28	,454	,076

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	Equal variances assumed	,048	,828	,109	79	,914	,011	,102	-,192	,214
	Equal variances not assumed			,109	75,430	,914	,011	,102	-,192	,214

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	Cohen's d	,457	,024	-,414	,463
	Hedges' correction	,461	,024	-,410	,458
	Glass's delta	,454	,024	-,414	,463

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

In table 20, the differences between the groups of PM Modi and PM Vajpayee are presented. Group 1 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Modi and group 3 represents the group of top civil servants under PM Vajpayee. If top civil servants have work experience in the public administration field, they will be labeled as 1. If top civil servants don't have work experience in the public administration field, they will be labeled as 0.

Since the p- value of the Levene's Test is 0.373 the null hypothesis for the Levene's test is accepted which means that the variance in professional background in the public administration/ politics field under PM Modi is significantly different than that of the group of PM Vajpayee. This tells us that the 'the equal variances not assumed' row is applicable. However, the p- value of the 'equal variances not assumed' is 0.661 (p is more than 0,05), which indicates that the value of the means for the 't- test for equality of means' are not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypotheses, which asserts that the average value in means between the two groups is equal, is rejected.

Table 20

Group Statistics

	Top civil servants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	1	45	,29	,458	,068
	3	25	,24	,436	,087

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	Equal variances assumed	,805	,373	,435	68	,665	,049	,112	-,175	,273
	Equal variances not assumed			,441	51,868	,661	,049	,111	-,173	,271

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Work experience in the public administration/ politics field	Cohen's d	,451	,109	-,381	,597
	Hedges' correction	,456	,107	-,377	,591
	Glass's delta	,436	,112	-,379	,601

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

From this can be concluded that there is no significant difference concerning having work experience in the public administration field between the Modi, Singh, and Vajpayee administrations.

4.2 Discussion

This section discusses the empirical findings of the T-test will be discussed.

Table 21

H1	Under the far- right minister president Modi, top civil servants are more selected on characteristics like party loyalty than it's the case under both Singh and under Vajpayee	Rejected. No significant differences between Modi and the Singh and Vajpayee administration.
H2	Top civil servants under the far- right prime- minister Modi have less work experience in the public administration field than it's the case under Singh and under Vajpayee	Rejected. No significant differences between Modi and the Singh and Vajpayee administration.
H3	Top civil servants under the far- right prime- minister Modi are less highly educated than it's the case under Singh and under Vajpayee	Rejected. No significant differences between Modi and the Singh and Vajpayee administration.

Hypothesis 1:

As noted in chapter 2, the expectation was that under a populist PM, loyalty in the form of party affiliation would weigh higher than it would under a non-populist Prime Minister. However, as seen in the Table 21, this hypothesis is rejected, because no significant difference was found in the mean values between the Modi administration and the Sink and Vajpayee administration. A possible explanation for the rejection of the first hypothesis is that, in this case, the respective competency of the civil servants may have been more important than loyalty to Modi's cause. Regarding competency, as Mulgan (2008) argues, ministers and their secretariats are habituated to doing what is expected from the governing party. The enhanced popularity and respect of political leaders in India compared to other cases could also play a role. Therefore, when relating statistical results on loyalty to a theory presented by Bach & Veit (2017), who argue that partisan loyalty plays a bigger role than other competencies (such as management skills), there can be concluded that their theory does not apply to this research. On the other hand, their theory proposes that the ideological agreement of top civil servants is an important factor in all government types, which does seem to be the case in this research as well.

Hypothesis 2:

As noted in chapter 2, the expectation was that under a populist PM, civil servants have less work experience in public administration than it's the case under PM Singh and PM Vajpayee. However, no statistical differences had been found between the three administrations. This means that the theories of Arellano- Gault (2020), Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021) and of Bauer & Becker (2022), that a populist leader prefers a party member with no specialized knowledge so that they can transform the bureaucracy effectively, don't apply to this research. A possible explanation is that the competencies of the civil servants may have been more important. Other explanations could account for why no differences were found between the populist Modi administration and the non-populist Vajpayee administration. However, further research is required to determine the factors determining the lack of difference.

Hypothesis 3:

As noted in Chapter 2, the expectation was that under a populist PM, top civil servants are less highly educated than it's the case under PM Singh and PM Vajpayee. However, no statistical differences have been found between the three administrations. This means that the theory of Bruhwiler & Goktepe (2021), which asserts that populists oppose elites (which includes academia), does not apply to this research. A possible explanation is that competency (Mulgan, 2008) may also play a bigger role in appointing top civil servants. Another possible explanation is how higher education is measured. For instance, top civil servants with only a college degree were excluded in this thesis. However, further research is required to determine if the theory of Mulgan (2008) applies to this case.

A possible explanation for why all three hypotheses were rejected is because of the professionalism and loyalty of Indian top civil servants. As highlighted by Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021), "this implements that professional civil servants will resent any attempts to undermine their involvement in, or control, over policy and management within the public sector" (p. 274). This is also in line with the statement of Sen (2020), who argues that it is common in India for people to idolize and respect their leaders (p. 31). As a result, populist leader in India doesn't need to critically examine their public service, since they can rely on the support of the existing public service. It is also important to consider that this research focuses on the Indian case and that an investigation of other cases may lead to different results.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to analyze the effect that the election of prime minister Modi has had on the characteristics and professional and educational background of top civil servants. For this reason, three hypotheses were formulated with the purpose to test whether they were aligned with existing theories about populism and their effect on the positioning and background of top civil servants.

The expectation was there would be a difference in the background of top civil servants between populist and non-populist governments, because, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the importance of rejecting the bureaucratic elite by imposing rules in the favor of populist to gain control and therefore would benefit more from loyalty than other indicators.

However, the independent sample T-test results indicated that the three hypotheses should be rejected because there were no statistical differences found between the Modi administration and the Sink and Vajpayee administration. Therefore, the answer on the research question is that the election of Modi hasn't resulted in statistical differences when it comes to more top civil servants being a member of the governing party, more top civil servants with no university (bachelor's) degree and less top civil servants with a professional background in the public administration and/ or politics field.

A possible explanation for the fact that the hypothesis has been rejected is because of the Indian culture and their attitude towards leaders. As Sen (2020) argues, it is common in India for people to idolize and respect their leaders. The professionalism of the civil service is also underlined in the article of Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021). Their theory that professional civil servants won't undermine any government, simply because they are determined to do what they are hired for, namely to serve the public (Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit, 2021, p. 275), is a plausible explanation as well. As a result, both a populist- and a non- populist Indian PM can rely on the support of the existing top civil servants. Another possible explanation is that competency (Mulgan, 2008) may also play a bigger role in appointing top civil servants. However, further research is required to determine if the possible explanations applies to this case.

The rejection of the three hypotheses means that the existing theories of Arellano- Gault (2020), Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit (2021) and of Bauer & Becker (2022), that a populist leader prefers a party member with no specialized knowledge so that they can transform the bureaucracy effectively, don't apply to this research. This also means that the theory of Bruhwiler & Goktepe (2021), which asserts that populists oppose elites (which includes academia), does not apply to this research. The findings of this thesis also illustrate that the theory of Bach & Veit (2017), who argue that partisan loyalty plays a bigger role than other competencies (such as management skills), does not apply to this research.

However, the rejection of the existing theories about populism and their effect on the bureaucracy in this research doesn't mean that the theories aren't applicable in other cases. For instance, Mohniham argued (in the book of Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit, 2021), that the Trump administration was accused of weakening the bureaucracy by "sideling administrative expertise and scientists in many areas" (151). "As further underlined by Mohniham (in the book of Pierre, Peters, Bauer, Becker & Yesilkagit, 2021), Trump chose public leaders whose lack of qualification was frequently matched only by their disdain for their organizational mission" (p. 151).

Looking at external validity, this research could provide helpful information for similar cases, but remain not generalizable. A limitation of this thesis is that not all Indian top civil servants have been analyzed. This research exclusively focussed on the highest civil seniors, the cabinet secretary, and the junior ministers. Therefore, not the entire population of Indian top civil servants from different departments is included. As a result, it remains unclear what the impact of the election of PM Modi is on the bureaucracy as a whole. While the aim of this thesis was not to generalize the findings to similar findings, providing more analysis of the whole bureaucracy can contribute to the existing theories about populism and their effect on public administration.

Reflecting on this thesis, conducting interviews would be helpful to collect data. After all, there are numerous of civil servants' agencies in India, but there is a lack in data when it comes to biographical information about (previous) top civil servants. Conducting interviews could therefore provide more information of the Indian bureaucracy as a whole.

Another important aim of this research is to stimulate further research. Another example for further research could be to investigate how the reduced protections of civil servants in India by PM Modi have affected their performance and their ideology and views on politics.

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6.2 Appendix

1: Yes

0: No

99: missing variables

PM Modi	Top Civil Servants	Member of the governing political party	Possession of a University Degree	Professional background in public administration/politics
1	Raosahab Danve	1	1	1
2	Darshana Jardosh	1	1	0
3	Faggan Singh Kulaste	1	1	1
4	Sadvi Niranjan Jyoti	1	0	0
5	Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar	1	1	0
6	Arjun Ram Meghwal	1	1	1
7	V Muraleedharan	1	1	1
8	Meenakshi Lekhi	1	1	1
9	General V.K. Singh	1	1	1
10	Pratima Bhoumik	1	1	1
11	Ashwini Kumar Choubey	1	1	0
12	Nisith Pramanik	1	1	0
13	Shobha Karandlaje	1	1	0
14	Sanjeev Kumar Baylan	1	1	0
15	Dr. L. Murugan	1	1	0
16	Dr. Subhas Sarkar	1	1	0
17	Bisheswar Tudu	1	1	0
18	Anupriya Patel	0	1	1
19	Rameswar Teli	1	0	1
20	Dr. Mahendra Munjapara	1	1	0
21	Pankaj Choudhary	1	1	0
22	S.P. Singh Baghel	1	1	0
23	Shripad Naik	1	1	1
24	Ajay Bhatt	1	1	0
25	Bhanu Verma	1	1	0
26	Bhagwanth Kuba	1	1	0
27	Prahlad Singh Patel	1	1	0
28	Devusinh Jesingbhai Chaubhan	1	1	0
29	John Barla	1	0	0
30	Kapil Patil	1	1	0
31	Kaushal Kishore	1	0	0
32	Krishan Pal	1	1	0
33	Rajeev Chandrasekhar	1	1	0

34	Shantanu Takur	1	1	0
35	Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh	1	1	0
36	Dr. Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad	1	1	0
37	Ajay Kumar	1	1	0
38	A. Naryanaswamy	1	1	1
39	Annpurna Devi	1	1	0
40	Kailash Choudhary	1	1	0
41	Renuka Singh Saruta	1	0	0
42	Som Parkash	1	1	1
43	Nityanand Rai	1	1	0
44	Ramdas Athawale	0	0	0
45	Rajv Gauba	99	1	1

Source: The Hindu (2021, July 8). 'List of Ministers and their portfolios in Narendra Modi's cabinet'. *The Hindu Net Desk*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/list-of-ministers-and-their-portfolios-in-narendra-modis-cabinet/article35202248.ece>

PM Singh	Top civil servants	Member of the governing political party	Possession of a University Degree	Professional background in public administration/politics
46	E. Ahamed	0	1	1
47	S. Gandhiselvan	0	1	1
48	D. Napoleon	0	1	0
49	Shri Jitin Prasada	0	1	0
50	Dr. Shashi Tharoor	1	1	0
51	Shri Ramachandran Mullapally	1	1	0
52	Shri V. Narayanasamy	1	1	0
53	Smt. Daggubati Purandeswari	1	1	0
54	Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury	1	1	1
55	Shri Kotla Jaya Surya Prakash Reddy	1	1	0
56	Smt. Lakshmi Panabaka	1	1	1
57	Shri Namu Narain Meena	1	1	0
58	Shri S.S. Palanimanickam	1	1	0
59	Shri Sathyanarayana	0	1	0
60	Smt. Preneet Kaur	1	1	0
61	Dr. Charan Das Mahant	1	1	0
62	Tariw Anwar, Shri	1	1	1
63	Smt. Raneer Narah	0	1	1
64	Shri Porika Balram Naik	1	1	0
65	Shri Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury	1	1	0
66	Shri Tushar Amarsingh Chaudhary	1	1	0
67	Shri Millind Mrli Deora	1	1	0
68	Dr. (SMT) Kruparani Kili	1	1	0
69	Shri Pratik Prakashbapu Patil	1	1	0
70	Shri Ninong Ering	1	1	1

71	Shri Pradeep Kumar Jain Aditya	1	1	0
72	Shri Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh	1	1	1
73	Shri Rajeev Shuka	1	1	0
74	Shri Srikant Kumar Jena	1	1	0
75	Smt. Deepa Dasmunsi	1	1	0
76	Shri Suresh Kodikunnil	1	1	1
77	Shri K.C.Venugopal	1	1	0
78	Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar	1	1	0
79	Shri Jitendra Singh	1	1	0
80	Shri Lalchand Kataria	1	0	0
81	Ajit Seth	99	1	1

Source: India Government. 'Council of Ministers'. *India Government*. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20121031002719/http://india.gov.in/govt/cabinet.php#state>

PM Vajpayee	Top Civil Servants	Member of the governing political party	Possession of a University Degree	Professional background in public administration/politics
82	Swami Chinmayanand	1	1	0
83	Shripad Naik	1	1	0
84	O. Rajagopal	1	1	1
85	Vinod Khanna	1	1	0
86	Hukmdev Narayan Yadav	1	1	1
87	Subhash Maharia	1	1	1
88	Santosh Gangwar	1	1	0
89	Satyabrata Mookherjee	1	1	0
90	Gingee N. Ramachandran	0	1	0
91	P.C. Thomas	0	1	0
92	Ramesh Bais	1	0	0
93	Sanjay Paswan	1	1	0
94	Vallabhai Kathiria	1	1	0
95	Pon Radhakrishnan	1	1	0
96	Basangouda Patil Yatnal	1	1	0
97	Dilipumar Ghandi	1	0	0
98	Krishnam Raju	1	0	0
99	Ashok Kumar Pradhan	1	0	0
100	Bijoya Chakravarty	1	1	0
101	Prahlad Singh Patel	1	1	0
102	Ravi Shankar Prasad	1	1	0
103	Dilip Singh Judeo	1	1	1
104	Sumitra Mahajan	1	1	1
105	Jayawantiben Mehta	1	99	0
106	Chhatrapal Singh Lodha	1	99	99
107	T.R. Prasad	99	1	1

Source: Parliament of India. 'Biodata'. *Parliament of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/lok13/biodata/13BI34.htm>