

Priorities, Personal Characteristics, and Performance:
Presidents and Their Appointees

By

Evan Thomas Haglund

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Political Science

August, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

David E. Lewis, Ph.D.

Bruce I. Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

Tae-Youn Park, Ph.D.

Alan Wiseman, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2014 by Evan Thomas Haglund
All Rights Reserved

To T, Q, A, Z, and I.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Vanderbilt's Graduate School, Department of Political Science, and the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions for fellowship support for my studies; and again to the Graduate School for a dissertation enhancement grant that made additional interviews possible.

David Lewis is an example of what I am striving to become—a dedicated husband and father who is also a world-class scholar and teacher. His work on the executive branch is what drew me to Vanderbilt; and, even more importantly, his friendship and guidance are what made my time here so enjoyable and productive. Whether in seminars or as dissertation committee members, Bruce Oppenheimer and Alan Wiseman constantly pushed me to learn and improve with their insightful, challenging, and incredibly helpful questions. And I am grateful to Tae-Youn Park for his willingness to step outside of his discipline and contribute his perspective throughout the process from prospectus to dissertation.

Along with these dissertation committee members, I am indebted to many others in the department for their academic and personal support. From the first seminar meeting of my first semester to the final draft of my dissertation, Giacomo Chiozza provided constant encouragement as well as a keen eye for how I could improve my research. Though studying bureaucracy, I could not have navigated the academic bureaucracy to get grant funding, meet institutional review board requirements, and even finalize graduation paperwork without the diligent help of Cindy Kam. Josh Clinton exemplified the department's informal open-door policy, as he always took time to listen to and improve half-formed ideas as well as methodological questions. Liz Zechmeister, Larry Bartels, and Jon Hiskey were omnipresent at Graham symposia and gave detailed, useful feedback on earlier versions of these chapters and my conference presentations. I am thankful for personal and professional conversations with Brett Benson, Marc Hetherington, and Suzanne Globetti, whether in the office, at

church, or while watching our kids play soccer. Jayne Cornwell's tireless work and friendship made CSDI a wonderful hub of research and camaraderie. Tina Bembry, Darlene Davidson, and Natasha Duncan provided outstanding administrative support. And thanks to Cari Drinnon for her (still ongoing) research assistance on the ambassador project.

I am grateful to an amazing group of graduate students, with special thanks to John Hudak, Jason Husser, Sydney Jones, Scott Limbocker, Mark Richardson, and Jen Selin for their listening ears and kind words at critical times.

Many thanks to Mom and Dad, and Dave and Mary Jane for their love and prayers. Thanks to QAZI for all the surprise visits in the office, early morning runs, fun soccer seasons, family trips, dance recitals in the living room, and a million hugs and kisses. And all my love and gratitude to Tara, for making our time in Nashville a fabulous part of our eternal adventure together!

Table of Contents

DEDICATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
Introduction	1
At the Center of Attention: Presidents and Their Appointees	1
Chapter Overview	3
Implications and Future Research	6
1 <i>Help Wanted: Presidential Priorities in the Appointments Process</i>	9
1.1 Literature Review	13
1.2 Presidential Priorities in Appointed Positions	19
1.3 Data, Measures, and Methods	28
1.4 Results	31
1.5 Conclusion	38
2 <i>The Dynamics of Appointee Characteristics over Intra-Presidential Time</i>	42
2.1 Literature Review	46
2.2 Why Appointee Characteristics Change During an Administration	52
2.3 Data, Measures, and Methods	65
2.4 Results	69
2.5 Conclusion	77
3 <i>Striped Pants vs. Fat Cats: Ambassadorial Performance of Career Diplomats and Political Appointees</i>	80
3.1 Choice and Consequence: Presidential Personnel Choices and Performance	84
3.2 Ambassadorial Advantages for a New Approach to Appointments and Performance	92
3.3 Data, Measures, and Methods	103
3.4 Results	115
3.5 Conclusion	120
REFERENCES	123
Appendix A Survival Estimates by Appointing President	132
Appendix B Codebook for Appointee Resume Project	134

List of Tables

Table	Page
1.1 First Year Appointments by Type, Agency, & Appointing President	30
1.2 First Year Appointments by Office and Appointment Type	34
1.3 First Term PAS Appointments by Office Type	36
2.1 Comparing First and Second Term Appointee Characteristics	70
2.2 Substantive Expertise over Intra-Presidential Time . . .	74
2.3 Political Experience over Intra-Presidential Time	76
3.1 Sentences Referencing & Evaluating Embassy Leadership	106
3.2 Ambassadorial Performance Scores by Type	110
3.3 Ambassadorial and Embassy Characteristics	112
3.4 Ambassadorial Performance Scores	116
3.5 Ambassadorial Performance in Interagency Coordination	118
3.6 Embassy Reporting Quality	119

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1.1 Survival Estimates for First Term Appointments by Office	32
1.2 Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments .	37
2.1 Reagan Transition Team’s Appointee Selection Criteria	56
2.2 New Appointee Resumes by Appointment Type, 2001-2008	67
2.3 Appointee Substantive Qualifications, 2001-2008	72
2.4 Appointee Political Qualifications, 2001-2008	73
2.5 Predicted Probabilities for Appointee Characteristics (1)	75
2.6 Predicted Probabilities for Appointee Characteristics (2)	77
3.1 Embassy Organization	96
3.2 Department of State Personnel in an Embassy	97
A.1 Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments by President (Bush)	132
A.2 Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments by President (Obama)	133

Introduction

At the Center of Attention: Presidents and Their Appointees

Describing the president’s appointment power, Alexander Hamilton argued in Federalist 76 that “it is not easy to conceive a plan better calculated than this to promote a judicious choice of men for filling the offices of the Union; and it will not need proof, that on this point must essentially depend the character of its administration” (1788c). This plan for filling key executive branch positions has stirred political controversy and prompted scholarly inquiry ever since its inception at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and its initial operation in George Washington’s first administration. Some of the earliest and most potent intra- and inter-branch conflicts centered on the appointment power and appointees—whether between competing factions within an administration (Cunningham 2000), or between the president and Congress¹ or the courts.²

For modern presidents, the appointment power has become even more significant due to the parallel growth of both the expansive executive branch establishment and the civil service system that makes direct political control of that establishment more difficult. These appointees matter because they can influence both what agencies do—who gets services or goods or where agencies direct their effort and attention—and how well they do it. Appointees in the modern institutional presidency have helped presidents design and implement history-changing policy such as the Marshall Plan for rebuilding Europe after World War II (Fossedal 1993), as well as having mired presidents in scandals like Watergate and the Iran-contra affair (Milkis and Nelson 2003). And more recent events such as the debate over

¹As an example of conflict between the president and Congress, the “decision of 1789,” in which Congress passed laws creating the first cabinet departments and implied in those statutes that the Constitution granted presidents the power to remove appointed officials, was just the first skirmish in a continuing battle over this removal power (Calabresi and Yoo 2009).

²See e.g. *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137 (1803), which arose from a dispute about an appointment during the presidential transition from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson.

the State Department’s review of the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline³ and the president’s controversial appointments to the National Labor Relations Board and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau⁴ highlight the continued centrality of appointments in the political and policy arenas.

Scholars have examined some aspects of this critical role of appointees in the modern executive branch. Both theoretical and empirical research looks at the vetting, formal nomination, and confirmation processes for Senate-confirmed appointees. Other work evaluates the trends in appointee numbers over time, the placement of appointees across agencies, the occurrence of extended vacancies, what the personal skills or characteristics are that presidents value most in potential appointees, and appointees’ influence on agency-level performance. Yet this foundation of theoretical and empirical work does not explain how presidents prioritize their initial appointments at the beginning of an administration, what limitations there might be on the qualifications and characteristics of appointees over an administration, and how individual-level characteristics could influence individual and organizational performance.

My dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of appointment priorities, appointee characteristics, and appointee and agency performance. The first chapter examines how presidential political and policy goals influence which appointed positions get filled first; I analyze a new dataset on appointment timing in the first terms of presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama to test how electoral motivation combines with desire for policy outcomes to dictate appointment priorities. Drawing on an original dataset of the background characteristics of appointees across a complete presidential administration, the second chapter evaluates how appointees’ education, political experience, substantive expertise, and other background characteristics vary due to limited pools of potential candidates

³Eilperin, Juliet. 2013. “How much does EPA’s objection to Keystone XL matter? A lot.” *Washington Post*. April 23, 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2013/04/23/how-much-does-epas-objection-to-keystone-xl-matter-a-lot/> (April 14, 2014).

⁴Savage, Charlie, and Steven Greenhouse. 2013. “Court Rejects Obama Move to Fill Posts.” *New York Times*: A1. January 25, 2013.

and changing political contexts over “intra-presidential” time. The third chapter connects the personal characteristics of agency leaders with bureaucratic performance, comparing appointee and careerist performance at the individual and organization levels using a new dataset built from embassy inspections conducted by the State Department’s Office of Inspector General. These chapters, described in more detail below, extend our understanding of how presidents make decisions in the appointment process and how these decisions affect the performance of the federal executive establishment.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1: Help Wanted: Presidential Priorities in the Appointments Process

In October 2010, President Obama signed into law the Pre-Election Presidential Transition Act to provide resources and authority for major party nominees to begin transition planning between the parties’ conventions in late summer and the election in November. Upon its introduction in April 2010, one of the act’s sponsors, George Voinovich, argued that, “candidates taking deliberate steps to ensure a smooth transition should not be criticized as arrogantly ‘measuring the White House drapes’ before Election Day. Such planning should be encouraged and supported.”⁵ A primary motivation for the act and its predecessors is the challenge of shifting from campaigning to governing. Once elected, presidents have to make the transition from directing campaign organizations and managing budgets of less than \$1 billion to guiding the sprawling federal executive establishment with its 15 cabinet departments, more than 80 independent agencies, approximately 2.6 million civilian and 1.4 million uniformed personnel,⁶ and annual discretionary budgets exceeding \$1.3 trillion.⁷

⁵Jochum, Elizabeth Newell. 2010. “Legislation aims to improve presidential transitions.” *Government Executive*. April 14, 2010. <http://www.govexec.com/oversight/2010/04/legislation-aims-to-improve-presidential-transitions/31276/> (May 3, 2014).

⁶Lewis, David E., and Jennifer L. Selin. 2012. *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies*. Washington DC: Administrative Conference of the United States.

⁷Congressional Budget Office. 2012. “A Closer Look at Discretionary Spending.” http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/BS_Discretionary_print.pdf (May 3, 2014).

A key tool for presidents to make this transition is the appointment of over 3,000 executives and support staff throughout the executive branch. Yet even as the *Washington Post* keeps a running scorecard of the pace of appointments and scholars have detailed the challenges of presidential transitions and initial appointments, we still know little about how presidents systematically choose which positions get filled first. This chapter describes how electoral motivation, together with presidents' desire for political control of the bureaucracy, and an emphasis on management teams of both high- and low-level appointees explains *why* and *how* presidents prioritize appointments within agencies. To evaluate the expectations for which positions presidents prioritize, I use two new sources of data: 1) interviews of personnel officials in the Obama and Bush administrations and members of the putative Romney transition team in 2012; and 2) original data on the timing of all 1,926 appointments made to 6 large agencies in the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. I find that presidents prioritize the secretary's immediate management team and the offices for public affairs and congressional relations over more specific policy or functional offices. These results suggest that, instead of isolating policy preferences from political or electoral needs, understanding presidential prioritization and selection of personnel requires attention to both electoral and policy motivations.

Chapter 2: The Dynamics of Appointee Characteristics over Intra-Presidential Time

A simple notecard from the Reagan transition team, entitled "Criteria in Selecting Appointees," listed the key characteristics for evaluating prospective appointees: "1. Commitment to Governor Reagan's Philosophy, Policies, Objectives; 2. Integrity (background); 3. Competence (demonstrated skill & ability); 4. Team Work (no personal or political ambition); 5. Toughness (cope with pressure)."⁸ All presidents want appointees who are

⁸Thanks to Andrew Rudalevige for generously sharing this and other treasures from his archival research. This notecard is located in the Annelise Anderson papers at the Hoover Institution (Stanford University), Accession Number 90032-266267, Box 27, Folder: "Ronald Reagan presidential transition team,

committed and competent, possess integrity and toughness, and can work in teams; but there are not limitless pools of potential appointees with high levels of each of these characteristics. There are constraints on the choices that presidents have in the appointments process, and these choices can ultimately determine how well presidents and executive agencies perform at a given time in an administration.

Building on the literatures on appointee characteristics and presidential capacity over time within an administration, I explain how the perspective and availability of potential appointees constrain presidents in the appointments process. To evaluate how the background characteristics of presidential appointees change over the course of an administration due to these constraints, I analyze a new dataset of over 1,400 resumes of political appointees during the George W. Bush administration. With these resumes, I measure the changing capabilities and experience of appointees at all appointment levels and across multiple executive branch agencies from 2001-2008. I find that the level of appointees' substantive expertise declines over time, while political experience and education levels remain fairly constant. These findings highlight how presidential appointment power is limited by the pools of potential appointees and what the potential consequences might be of declining appointee and agency capacity over the course of an administration.

Chapter 3: Striped Pants versus Fat Cats: Ambassadorial Performance of Career Diplomats and Political Appointees

In his January 2014 confirmation hearing for appointment as ambassador to China, Senator Max Baucus epitomized the stereotype of a political appointee getting in over his head when he said, "I'm no real expert on China."⁹ Ambassadorial nominees such as Baucus have long been a flashpoint in the political and scholarly discourse on appointments and

1980-1981: Basic Documents." See Figure 2.1 for image of notecard.

⁹Kamen, Al. 2014. "Presumptive ambassador to China Baucus: 'I'm no real expert on China.'" *Washington Post*. January 31, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/in-the-loop/wp/2014/01/31/presumptive-ambassador-to-china-baucus-im-no-real-expert-on-china/> (May 3, 2014).

bureaucratic performance. Although there is a growing and increasingly sophisticated literature on how appointees might affect performance, the difficulty of defining and measuring performance has also limited what we know systematically about how federal executives, whether appointees or careerists, influence bureaucratic performance in different contexts.

This chapter contributes to our understanding of appointees and performance with both new performance measures and an initial analysis of individual- and organization-level differences in performance due to the influence of either careerist or appointed leadership. Based on the historical role of ambassadors in the debate over appointees and performance as well as methodological advantages to studying this specific class of appointment, I test the personal and institutional characteristics that affect ambassadorial performance using a new dataset of embassy inspection reports by the State Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and State Department biographies. I find that the traditional dichotomy of careerists versus appointees explains some performance differences in comparable institutional settings, but that the individual-level characteristics such as language or regional experience that are expected to affect performance are not influential. The results have important implications for presidents in their approach to appointee selection, for agencies in how they measure and evaluate performance, and for our understanding of the influence of leaders, both careerists and appointees, on agency performance.

Implications and Future Research

If, as Alexander Hamilton argued in 1788, the “true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration” (1788a), the appointment power remains an important tool for presidents attempting to meet that test. Contributing to the scholarly literature on presidential priorities, appointee characteristics, and bureaucratic performance, the preceding chapters highlight some of the incentives and constraints that presidents face in making appointments and the consequences of their choices. These chapters also raise sig-

nificant questions for both political leaders and scholars about how the current institutional environment shapes the choices of appointees and the performance of the agencies that they lead.

Just as Hamilton outlined the ambition and motivation that could influence presidential choices in the appointment process, the first chapter describes the role of electoral goals combined with presidential policy preferences in how presidents set appointment priorities. Yet by focusing on those positions that get filled, are we ignoring important reasons why presidents might deliberately delay filling certain positions or leave many vacant for long periods of time? Scholars have begun to highlight the trends and problems of vacancies overall while noting the prevalence of vacancies in positions that are primarily operational or technical, such as inspectors general or assistant secretaries for administration and management (e.g. O’Connell 2009; Lewis 2011; Dull and Roberts 2009). But are some vacancies intentional, and if so, who prefers vacancies to filling positions and why? What are the short- and long-term political and policy consequences of these vacancies? Future research on priorities could evaluate those positions that *are* prioritized as well as those that are *not*.

When positions are filled, whether prioritized early in the administration or not, what are the substantive qualifications or political experience of the appointees who fill them? According to Hamilton, presidents, in comparison to a legislative body, would feel “under stronger obligations, and more interested to investigate with care the qualities requisite to the stations to be filled” (1788b). But, as the second chapter shows, even if presidents want to select only appointees with the “qualities requisite” to their positions, they are limited in their choices—especially later in their terms and for lower-level positions that do not require Senate confirmation—because of varying pools of potential appointees. The result is that the overall substantive qualifications of appointees decline over intra-presidential time. Could institutional changes in the presidency and broader executive branch deepen the pools of potential appointees or help presidents find, recruit, and then retain more qualified appointees from the existing limited pools?

And the third chapter on ambassadorial performance buttresses Hamilton’s claim that “the character of [an] administration” depends on presidents making “judicious choice[s]” (Hamilton 1788b) in their appointments. Both political appointees and careerists can be excellent, effective leaders, but presidents and agencies need to be more judicious in how they select, train, and evaluate them. Combining scholarship on the presidency and executive branch with research on human capital in economics, sociology, and organizational behavior could yield important insights into how to select better agency leaders, whether appointed or career civil servants, in different agency contexts.

Independent strands of the presidency literature address priority appointments, characteristics, and performance; but these surely related topics are commonly treated separately. We know some positions matter more than others, but are uncertain about what the relevant differences are and how these differences influence if and when positions get filled, with what kinds of people, and to what effect. By partitioning the appointment process into discrete stages, isolating appointments by type and time in term, and focusing primarily on presidential desire for control, we have glossed over the influence of a president’s electoral goals on the entire process and how initial appointment decisions dictate subsequent appointments, the characteristics of appointees, and ultimately appointee and agency performance. The chapters above provide conceptual and empirical analyses to more closely connect the previously disparate literatures on appointment priorities, characteristics, and performance as we seek to further understand presidents and their appointees.

CHAPTER 1

Help Wanted:

Presidential Priorities

in the Appointments Process

Abstract

With the election of a new president, the leadership of the expansive executive branch establishment is in flux. Presidents have to identify the priority appointed positions in each agency to direct agency action toward presidential policy and political goals; but because of the scale of the executive branch and limited time during the transition between administrations, presidents cannot easily fill all the positions quickly. Even with the ritual scoring of how newly-inaugurated presidents fare in matching the appointment rates of previous administrations and extensive scholarly description of appointment choices made by new administrations, we still know little about how presidents systematically choose which positions get filled first. This paper outlines how presidential electoral motivation, combined with a desire for political control of the bureaucracy to pursue policy goals, and an emphasis on management teams of all appointee types rather than a dominant focus on individual high-level appointments that require Senate confirmation explains why and how presidents prioritize appointments within agencies. I evaluate these claims about which positions presidents prioritize using two new sources of data. The first source of data is 8 new interviews of personnel officials in the Obama and Bush administrations and members of the putative Romney transition team in 2012. The second is new original data on the timing of all 1,926 appointments made to 6 agencies in the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. Analyzing these data, I find that presidents prioritize the secretary's immediate management team and the offices for public affairs and congressional relations. The paper draws out implications of the findings for our understanding of appointment politics and the presidency more generally.

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 2014 annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 3-6; I appreciate Tony Madonna's excellent discussion and feedback at the conference. I thank the former White House staffers and Romney Readiness Project contributors for sharing their insights and experiences with me, and the Graduate School at Vanderbilt for its grant that made those interviews in March 2014 possible. And I'm also grateful for helpful comments from my colleagues at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and participants in Vanderbilt's Graham Symposium.

Introduction

In March 2009, just two months into President Barack Obama’s first term, with “the economy plunging into its deepest recession since the early 1980s,” a *New York Times* headline blared that “[Treasury secretary Timothy] Geithner, with Few Aides, Is Scrambling.”¹¹ Though he had tasked the Treasury department with “rescuing the financial system, the housing market and the automobile industry,” President Obama had not even nominated a deputy secretary to work with Geithner, and many of the other top positions in the department were vacant: “Of the four major federal departments—State, Justice, Defense and the Treasury—the Treasury has had the fewest nominees even though it is dealing with probably the most significant problems facing the government.”¹² This seeming lack of presidential emphasis on filling important positions at the Treasury Department while making appointments at other agencies highlights an important question of why presidents prioritize some positions over others. In attempting to answer this question, the *New York Times*’ scrutiny of President Obama’s initial appointments in the Treasury Department, like much of the media coverage and scholarly literature on appointments, focuses on the comparative placement of high-level Senate-confirmed appointees such as cabinet secretaries and their deputies across agencies and administrations.

But presidents, with limited time and resources, also have to prioritize appointments within, and not just across, agencies. Along with the secretaries and deputy secretaries, presidents have to choose Senate-confirmed appointees to lead individual agencies and bureaus as well as lower level officials to manage agencies’ administrative needs, specific policy areas or programs, and functions such as public affairs or congressional relations. The justified journalistic and academic focus on high-level Senate-confirmed positions thus misses two essential components of why and how presidents prioritize different positions within

¹¹ Andrews, Edmund L., and Stephen Labaton. 2009. “Geithner, With Few Aides, Is Scrambling.” *New York Times*: B1. March 8, 2009.

¹²Ibid.

agencies. The first component is the electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) in the presidential context, or why presidents might prioritize appointments to agency offices—such as public affairs or congressional liaison—which contribute as much to credit claiming, position taking, and inter-branch negotiation as they do to political control of the bureaucracy or policy implementation.

The second component explains how presidents combine high-profile Senate-confirmed (PAS) appointments with lower level Senior Executive Service (SES) and Schedule C (SC) appointments to fill management teams within agencies rather than concentrating just on each PAS appointment in isolation.¹³ For example, by the time of the *New York Times* article, just 48 days into the Obama administration, President Obama had made more appointments to Treasury (33) than to either Justice (26) or State (23).¹⁴ But of these 33 appointments, just two required Senate confirmation; seven were non-career SES appointments and 24 were SC appointments. Along with senior advisors to the secretary, these priority non-PAS appointments included a director and deputy assistant secretary for public affairs and two deputy assistant secretaries for legislative affairs.¹⁵ These initial appointments to the management team also included what I call “preemptive” appointments: SES or Schedule C appointments of individuals who are preparing to be or have already been nominated to a position requiring Senate confirmation.

¹³Across the executive branch, presidents can appoint approximately 4,000 PAS, SES, or SC appointees, excluding judicial and advisory committee appointments (Lewis 2011a). PAS appointments account for roughly 1,000 of the total, while SES (around 700), SC (about 1,600), and other appointments not requiring Senate-confirmation (typically in the Executive Office of the President) make up the remainder. Cabinet secretary positions are constitutionally specified as PAS positions, while deputy, under, and assistant secretaries in many agencies are designated as PAS by statute. For all cabinet agencies and some independent agencies, inspectors general and general counsel positions are also PAS. SES positions include chiefs of staff, senior advisors, and many directors or deputy directors at the office level within agencies. SC positions are often advisors or support staff for functions such as advance and scheduling, press relations, or congressional liaison.

¹⁴Appointment types and start dates come from the Office of Personnel Management.

¹⁵Position details for the appointments come from a separate dataset compiled from a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Treasury Department; I used the FOIA data to match specific positions with the OPM data (which do not include position titles) based on appointment date, appointment authority, and type. See Data, Measures, and Methods section for further details on OPM dataset.

Though there is extensive scholarly description of appointment choices made by new administrations (Lewis 2008; Mackenzie 1981; Parsneau 2013; Pfiffner 1996; Weko 1995), as well as the ritual scoring of how newly-inaugurated presidents fare in matching the appointment rates of previous administrations (Lewis 2011b),¹⁶ we still know little about how presidents systematically choose to fill positions at all appointment levels—rather than just presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed positions. Presidents rightfully concentrate on PAS positions, with their legal authority and public and political prominence; but presidents also understand that lower level SES and SC appointees are critical for extending presidential influence deeper into the bureaucracy as well as providing support to more senior appointees. In this paper, I argue that presidents are motivated by a combination of electoral goals and the desire for political control to pursue the president’s policy agenda through both legislative and unilateral action; because of these motivations, presidents prioritize offices that can produce political as well as policy benefits and emphasize teams of PAS, SES, and SC appointments rather than individual PAS appointments.

After reviewing the appointments and presidential transition literature below, I outline how presidents balance policy and electoral goals while making appointments in groups instead of isolated individuals; I then specify expectations for which positions presidents prioritize within agencies. To evaluate these expectations, I use two new sources of data. The first source of data is 8 interviews of former Presidential Personnel Office staffers in the Obama and Bush administrations and staffers of the putative Romney transition team. The second is a new dataset on the timing of all 1,926 appointments made to six agencies in the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. Analyzing these data, I find that presidents prioritize the secretary’s immediate management team and the offices for public affairs and congressional relations. I conclude by discussing the implications of these results

¹⁶See e.g. Kamen, Al. 2010. “Obama didn’t break Bush record for speed of appointments.” *Washington Post*. January 20, 2010.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/19/AR2010011904506.html>
(March 24, 2014).

and highlighting further research to extend our understanding of presidential prioritization of appointments.

1.1 Literature Review

With each new administration, journalists and presidency scholars turn their attention to presidential appointments. Websites track the pace of appointments, and Washington insiders speculate about who might end up in which position. Scholars have examined presidential transitions and appointments from historical and quantitative perspectives, evaluating how presidents have gained and use institutional leverage in the modern appointments process to direct executive branch efforts toward achieving their policy goals—especially through unilateral actions such as executive orders and rulemaking. I review this literature below and highlight three critical areas about which we know relatively little: how a president’s electoral motivation and need for inter-branch cooperation—and not just a desire for political control and unilateral action—factor into presidential prioritization of positions in the broader executive branch; how presidents recognize the importance of and prioritize SES and SC as well as more prominent PAS appointments; and how presidents make appointments, especially to PAS positions, in teams rather than in isolation.

Political Control of the Bureaucracy and Priority Appointments in the Modern Presidency

Until the mid-twentieth century, presidential motivation—whether primarily electoral or policy-oriented—did not matter much for appointments, particularly at the lower levels in Washington and the many positions outside of Washington. The national party committees and state and local party organizations dominated both the nomination of presidential candidates themselves and then the distribution of federal jobs in the administrations of their victorious nominees (Lewis 2008; Milkis 1993; Thompson and Brown 1997; Weko 1995).

Three major institutional transformations, however, shifted the locus of power in appointments away from parties and into the White House: 1) civil service reform, begun in the late nineteenth century (Lewis 2008); 2) the creation of the Executive Office of the President and the growth of institutional capacity in the White House itself (Rudalevige and Lewis 2005; Weko 1995); and 3) the end of nominee selection by party elites at national conventions to the direct selection of nominees through primaries and caucuses (Thompson and Brown 1997).

Over the course of the twentieth century, institutional changes weakened party dominance of appointments by reducing the number of appointed positions, creating systematic minimum requirements for jobs, fostering information-gathering capacity in the White House, and freeing presidents from party control in the electoral arena. The first of these major developments—civil service reform—began with the Pendleton Act of 1883. This legislation, whether intentionally or not (Theriault 2003), initiated the slow decline of party influence of appointments by introducing merit-based exams and creating a route for entry into government service separate from the traditional appointment system. Presidents immediately used the Pendleton Act’s authority both to “blanket in” favored appointees into the merit-based protections and to resist party demands and remove positions from the traditional party-controlled patronage system (Johnson and Libecap 2007). With fewer positions subject to appointment, the parties’ extensive networks became less important for filling positions (Mackenzie 1981; Weko 1995) even as they continued to do much of the appointments legwork for presidents and kept an office dedicated to handling appointments near the White House as late as Eisenhower’s administration (Lewis and Moe 2009).

While civil service reform reduced the number of appointments subject to party control, presidential efforts to cope with rising public expectations for presidential action (Neustadt 1990) and increases in the size of executive branch agencies and the complexity of their responsibilities (Hecl 1977; Light 1995) led to the presidential efforts to control the executive branch agencies. Presidency scholars have made the connection between appointments and

this desire for control, examining presidential strategies such as centralization and politicization (Moe 1985). Centralization is the use of appointees in the Executive Office of the President (EOP),¹⁷ rather than civil servants in the cabinet departments, to gather information and develop policy (Rudalevige and Lewis 2005; Rudalevige 2002). Politicization is increasing the number and depth of appointees in agencies to spread presidential control (Lewis 2008).

Although presidents have always held formal constitutional responsibility for high-level appointments and other congressionally designated positions in the bureaucracy, it was not until the development of the modern presidential institutions such as the EOP (which includes the Presidential Personnel Office) that presidents began to be seen as effective rivals to Congress or the parties in control of appointments and the bureaucracy more broadly. In its modern form, the appointment power is perhaps a president's most potent tool for achieving political control of the bureaucracy and unilaterally pursuing policy goals (Moe 1985). And with the informational resources available from centralization, presidents can now politicize agencies by finding, vetting, and selecting personnel who share specifically presidential—rather than party—policy or electoral goals (Lewis and Moe 2009). The institutional capacity for this recruiting, screening, and placing appointees has increased as the Presidential Personnel Office in the White House has expanded and become more corporate (Lewis 2012; Patterson and Pfiffner 2001; Weko 1995).

Combined with the compressed transition schedule created by the ratification of the 20th Amendment in 1933, these institutional changes mean that presidents have to move faster and exert more effort in making appointments.¹⁸ Presidency scholars have taken several

¹⁷The EOP itself emerged from Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to control the rapidly growing executive branch agencies of the New Deal. He appointed three professors of political science and public administration to lead the President's Committee on Administrative Management (also known as the Brownlow Committee after one of the three professors) (Dickinson 1997); the Committee's conclusion—that "the president needs help" in managing the expanding executive establishment—was the impetus behind the Reorganization Act of 1939 and the subsequent creation of the EOP (Dickinson 1997). Prior to the EOP, presidents had minimal staff resources, either in terms of formal organization or budgetary appropriations from Congress.

¹⁸The 20th Amendment specified that presidents would enter office on January 20th following an election

approaches in their study of presidential transitions generally and early-term appointments specifically. Focusing on the problems of selecting the transition team and then managing the personnel staffers in the transition period and then in the PPO after inauguration, scholars have sought to provide new administrations with a better template for the organization of their transition teams and processes (e.g. Burke 2000, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan 2003; Kumar 2008; Pfiffner 1996). For example, one lesson learned relating to the prioritization of appointments came from the Clinton transition in 1992: by placing greater priority on picking cabinet secretaries rather than solidifying White House staff and processes, the president-elect hindered both the early pursuit of his policy agenda and his subsequent appointments, too (Burke 2001).

Along with these guides on lessons learned from past transitions, scholars have also evaluated appointment priorities in light of presidential agendas. Drawing on the variation in issue areas of importance to different presidents (e.g. Light 1999), this line of research on prioritization has described how presidents evaluate both positions and potential appointees for prioritization. At the agency level, presidents might prefer filling positions first in the White House Office and Executive Office of the President compared to cabinet departments and independent agencies. They might also distinguish among these agencies (Lewis 2009), with Republican presidents less concerned about positions at the Department of Labor or Democrats in less of a hurry to fill Commerce Department positions (Lewis 2008b). At the position level, presidential priorities might vary based on specific issues; for example, Reagan personnel officials determined the “key 87” positions that could influence Reagan’s economic policy agenda (Lewis 2008b, 28). Parsneau (2013) also highlights how this prioritization shapes the characteristics of appointees, showing how presidents choose more “loyalist” and fewer “expert” appointees in agencies high on the presidential agenda.

in November of the previous year, rather than the prior practice of inauguration taking place on March 4th, four months after the election.

Making the Executive Electoral Connection

These literatures on political control of the bureaucracy and prioritization of appointments do not, however, emphasize the role of electoral and other political motivations in a president's decision calculus for appointments. For example, Moe argues that presidential concerns differ from legislators' constant worry about the next campaign: "Presidents are not driven by reelection More than anything else, they are fundamentally concerned with governance" (Moe 1990, 237). Other scholars reinforce this characterization of governance trumping reelection concerns by highlighting presidential policy preferences and the policy effects of presidential appointments (e.g. Hecla 1977; Nathan 1975; Wood and Waterman 1994). More recent work emphasizes the role of ideological preferences in presidential choices to fill appointed positions (Clinton and Lewis 2008; Clinton et al. 2012; Lewis 2008).

Scholars have made this executive electoral connection in other contexts; as Faughnan and Hudak (2012) argue, it is a question of how, not if, executives use institutional powers for electoral gain. Research has demonstrated how the electoral motive factors into presidential policy decisions such as where and when to distribute funds (Berry, Burden, and Howell 2010; Hudak 2012), what enforcement actions executive branch agencies take (Hudak and Stack 2013), and when and how to appeal to the public (Canes-Wrone and Shotts 2004; Canes-Wrone 2005). Some formal models and empirical work on appointments (e.g. Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.; Lewis and Waterman 2013) do include patronage considerations as factors in presidential decisions in the appointments process, but the electoral element of patronage is primarily discussed as a function of who is appointed rather than how specific positions and functions could serve electoral or other political purposes (Mackenzie 1981; Pfiffner 1996; Tolchin and Tolchin 1971, 2011; Weko 1995).

Spotlight on Senate-confirmed Appointees

Both journalistic and scholarly scrutiny of appointments has predominantly emphasized only Senate-confirmed appointees. The *New York Times* article on Obama’s appointments to the Treasury Department exemplifies how much of the journalistic commentary centers on just PAS appointees, describing the more than 30 SES or SC staffers, all presidential appointees, as “a skeleton crew of unofficial senior advisers.”¹⁹ Much of the scholarly literature on appointments—whether on nomination and confirmation (e.g. Binder and Maltzman 2009; McCarty and Razaghian 1999; Parsneau 2013) or appointee characteristics (Aberbach and Rockman 2009; Burstein 1977; Krause and O’Connell 2011; Nixon and Bentley 2006)—also justifiably concentrates on Senate-confirmed appointees because of their importance and the availability of data on their nominations, confirmations, and characteristics (Lewis and Waterman 2013).

More recent work has highlighted the importance of lower level appointees as well as the top layer of Senate-confirmed appointees for politicization and performance (e.g. Gallo and Lewis 2012; Lewis and Waterman 2013; Lewis 2008b). Yet both strands of the literature—whether on just PAS appointments or also including lower level positions—still struggle to explain an important aspect of how presidents make appointments. By assuming that, “in principle, each appointment is a separate action” (Moe 1985, 152), scholars have not examined how presidents could make appointments as teams, rather than isolated individuals, to balance levels of skills and characteristics among appointees to achieve their policy or political goals (Lewis 2011a).

Broadening Our Approach to Prioritization of Appointments

The predominant focus in the literature on presidential prioritization of appointments has been on top-level PAS appointees, their role in providing presidents with political control

¹⁹Andrews, Edmund L., and Stephen Labaton. 2009. “Geithner, With Few Aides, Is Scrambling.” *New York Times*: B1. March 8, 2009.

of the bureaucracy, and the specific challenges of making PAS appointments and navigating the confirmation process. Yet in this literature there is not much focus on priority generally, and, more specifically, the influence of electoral motivation and legislative policy goals on priority. Additionally, the literature focuses on individuals not teams, and on PAS rather than SES or SC appointments. I explain below a conceptual framework and new data that could contribute to our limited understanding of these aspects of presidential prioritization of appointments.

1.2 Presidential Priorities in Appointed Positions

Presidential candidates and their advisors understand that appointments are a key mechanism for gaining political control of the executive branch and for pursuing electoral goals; and so they begin planning for appointments long before inauguration day. The Presidential Transition Act of 1963 first authorized the provision of office space and equipment, salaries for staff, travel expenses, and postal expenses for newly-elected presidents and vice presidents, with expenditures beginning “the day following the date of the general elections held to determine the electors of the President and Vice President.” A 2010 amendment to the Presidential Transition Act allows candidates to use office space and purchase equipment to begin transition planning even before the general election;²⁰ and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) must provide each major party presidential nominee, within 15 days of the nominating conventions, details on all presidentially appointed positions, including information on current appointees and vacancies (5 U.S.C. 1101). These expense accounts and briefing books represent the most tangible beginnings of the shift from campaign to administration and the most basic resources for presidents faced with the challenge of iden-

²⁰Bill Hagerty, who worked on appointments for the transition planning teams of both the John McCain campaign in 2008 and the Mitt Romney campaign in 2012, said that this legislation made a crucial difference in how the Romney team could prepare compared to McCain’s. Everyone on the McCain team was “paranoid” about the planning becoming public because of the perception, Hagerty noted, even if careful preparation for a transition “was the right thing to do” regardless of which party held or would enter the White House (personal interview, May 9, 2014).

tifying priority positions and potential appointees for the more than 1100 positions requiring Senate confirmation and the more than 2000 other presidentially appointed positions.

The three main types of appointment available to presidents are Senate-confirmed appointees (PAS), Senior Executive Service positions (SES), and Schedule C (SC) appointments. The location and titles of all executive branch positions that are eligible for appointment outside of the traditional civil service hiring process are compiled every presidential election year by either the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform or the Senate’s Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee; the positions are then listed and published in the “Plum Book,” so-called for its cover’s color and officially titled “United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions.”²¹ The appointed positions requiring Senate confirmation (PAS appointments) include both high-level agency leadership roles—e.g. cabinet secretaries, agency administrators, and other upper level management positions—as well as part-time advisory commission posts for which appointees might not even be compensated, such as members of the board of directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Senior Executive Service positions, filled by a mix of career civil servants and non-career appointees, are the “the key positions just below the top Presidential appointees,” serving as the “major link between these appointees and the rest of the Federal work force.”²² SES personnel direct many offices, advise PAS appointees as chiefs of staff or policy experts, and encumber substantive technical or managerial positions. Schedule C appointees can be subject or policy experts, too, but also fill roles traditionally associated with patronage, such as staff assistants responsible for event planning or scheduling and congressional affairs.

²¹Another type of appointment, called PA for presidential appointment without Senate confirmation, is primarily for positions in the Executive Office of the President and is not a focus of this paper. For SES appointments, there are limits on the percentage of non-career appointees in SES positions by agency (no more than 25%) and across all agencies in the aggregate (no more than 10% of all SES positions); and some SES positions are designated each year as “career-reserved” positions that cannot be filled by non-career appointees. SC appointments are nominally made by agency heads, but presidents and their Presidential Personnel Offices exercise substantial control over these positions (Lewis 2008).

²²From U.S. Congress. House. 2012. Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. *Policy and Supporting Positions*. 112th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 43.

Presidents are motivated by a number of goals, but arguably chief among them is their desire to be reelected. This is necessary both for personal and political fulfillment but also the accomplishment of other goals such as achieving policy change and building a legacy. Including the electoral perspective along with policy or ideological preferences in an examination of presidential decision-making provides both theoretical leverage and practical simplicity. Building on the axiom of self-interest, Downs distinguishes between the formal purpose of parties—to develop and implement policy—and their informal motivation or private ambition as “a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election” (1957, 25). Presidents, just as Downs argues for parties, “treat policies purely as means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach only by being elected” (1957, 28). Presidents and parties often take vague positions to provide flexibility in electoral contests, giving candidates space for adjusting to the preferences or whims of voters in order to gain the necessary majority or plurality for victory (Downs 1957). Mayhew articulates four reasons to emphasize the electoral motive:

First, I think it fits political reality rather well. Second, it puts the spotlight directly on men rather than on parties and pressure groups Third, I think politics is best studied as a struggle among men to gain and maintain power and the consequences of that struggle. Fourth—and perhaps most important—the reelection quest establishes an accountability relationship with an electorate, and any serious thinking about democratic theory has to give a central place to the question of accountability (1974, 6).

Mayhew’s scholarly perspective echoes how an aide to Lyndon Johnson put it, saying that, “I don’t think there is any doubt that the principal goal of the president, any president, is to win enough votes in November of an election year to have a second four-year term The reelection caravan is provisioned every day. Anybody who tells you differently tells you wrong” (quoted in Light 1999, 64).

Instead of isolating policy preferences from political or electoral needs, understanding presidential selection of personnel requires attention to both electoral and policy motiva-

tions. Faced with limited prospects of getting their legislative programs through Congress (Rudalevige 2002), presidents are acutely aware of the potential of working through the bureaucracy to unilaterally set policy (Moe and Howell 1999). As President Obama, frustrated by congressional inaction on his policy priorities, told a group of students in October 2011, “we can’t wait for Congress to do its job. So where they won’t act, I will. We’re going to look every single day to figure out what we can do without Congress.”²³ Presidents know that appointees can influence or set policy in many ways, including establishing agency priorities, directing rulemaking processes, manipulating procurement decisions and grant distributions, and determining enforcement agendas (e.g. Gordon 2011; Hudak and Stack 2013; Hudak 2012; O’Connell 2008; Wood and Waterman 1991).

Just as presidents pursue political control of the bureaucracy to achieve broad policy outcomes, the pressure of producing policy and patronage benefits for important constituencies in a limited time is also a key factor in their decision making; and PPO as an organization is “far less an instrument of ‘policy control’ . . . and far more a ‘political organization’” (Weko 1995, 155). With the election night celebrations still fresh in mind, presidents-elect are already looking ahead to the next election in four years as they determine their appointment strategies. Both reelection and policy goals dictate their decision calculus as they think about how to reward supporters and their potential reelection constituency (Fenno 1978) with policy outcomes, patronage appointments, and general performance—all in less than four years. Reelection, according to a staffer in President Obama’s Presidential Personnel Office (PPO), was a major concern when making appointments, as PPO had to “protect the brand of the president” ahead of the next election by bringing good people in while simultaneously keeping those turned down for jobs “happy enough to still vote for the president at reelection time.”²⁴

Just making isolated appointments to top-level PAS positions is insufficient; these exec-

²³Office of Personnel Management description of SES,

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/> (April 15, 2014).

²⁴Personal interview with Linda Jamison, formerly special assistant in PPO, March 5, 2014.

utives need support teams that can provide political and policy guidance, plan and execute internal meetings and external travel and events, handle relationships with key congressional allies, monitor the implementation of the principals' directions within the agency, and spread the word about agency accomplishments to important constituency groups and the general public. These needs mean that presidents do not look at appointed positions in isolation, whether across appointment types or agencies (Lewis 2011a). Bill Hagerty, appointment director for Mitt Romney's transition planning team in 2012, outlined his view of potential cabinet members and other appointees as part of "logical groupings," noting that he was "loath to present to Mitt a series of one-off picks" and avoided searching for the lone "rock-star" appointee.²⁵ Instead of appointments as individuals, presidents appoint a mix of highly visible PAS and "invisible" SES and SC appointees (Lewis and Waterman 2013) to form teams that maximize a combination of policy performance, patronage needs, and political benefits. Unlike positions that are designated by statute (primarily PAS), the rules for SES positions and Schedule C appointments give presidents the flexibility to make initial appointments quickly and then shift people to where they are needed or most useful (Lewis 2008). And even with increased presidential capacity to search for appointees, presidents can also delegate much of this initial search for lower level appointees to the principal PAS appointees.²⁶

In the absence of the limits imposed by the scale of the task and a fixed quantity of time, presidents could investigate how each appointed position could best contribute to achieving their electoral and policy goals, and then conduct a thorough search for the most qualified and willing person to fill each position. But there are too many appointments in the sprawling executive establishment, too many external forces competing for influence over

²⁵Personal interview, May 9, 2014.

²⁶The willingness of PPO to delegate the selection of lower level appointees to PAS principals seems to vary by president. One former PPO staffer who served in the Reagan, H.W. Bush, and Bush administrations described a strong need for PPO control, as they would tell PAS appointees, "we want to make these selections with you, not for you." In the Obama PPO, by contrast, staffers described it as much more of a "negotiation" and that PPO "held an absolute veto" on any choices of the cabinet secretaries—but rarely, if ever, used it. Personal interviews, March 2014.

appointments and policy outcomes generally, and too little time for presidents to examine appointed positions and match their ideal candidates to them—for all positions at the same time. If presidents are motivated by electoral goals and inter-branch coalitions as much as by policy preferences, their prioritization of positions should reflect this combination of motivations rather than just their policy preferences.

So which of the varied positions by function or type are more valuable to presidents for political or electoral, rather than policy, purposes? The primary factor that influences how presidents, regardless of motivation, value a specific position is the legal or policymaking authority of a position. This makes the priority for appointing cabinet secretaries clear; but what about positions such as assistant secretaries for policy, management or administration, public affairs, congressional affairs, or other specialized bureaus or offices? Two key secondary factors for an electorally motivated president could include the position's visibility to key political actors or the general public, and its role in coordinating information or action across agencies or branches of government. The visibility of a position or its influence over messages transmitted to the general public, the media, other agencies or branches of government, and interest groups allows presidents to project their influence. Highly visible positions command media attention both at the time of nomination and throughout an administration; they can help presidents convey their agendas and perspectives to audiences in Washington, throughout the country, and across the globe. Such visibility enables presidents to undertake the activities Mayhew (1974) associated with electorally-driven members of Congress: advertising, credit claiming, and position taking.

While scholars have focused on the visibility of presidential acts of “going public” to shape public opinion in support of policy change (Canes-Wrone 2005; Kernell 2007), presidential communication strategies—and the appointees charged with carrying out those strategies—are just as critical for reelection. Presidents expend effort and resources to “create the appearance of success” as they look toward reelection (Lowi 1985, 11), using the White House press office and the public affairs offices in agencies—all guided by appointees. These offices

are an extension of White House communications efforts and serve as platforms for electoral as well as policy messaging, presenting the president as electorally attractive to the general public, more narrowly targeted constituency groups, or key elite audiences. Don Gips, the first PPO director in the Obama administration, highlighted that appointed positions in the executive branch agencies dealing with the media were priorities for PPO's early efforts.²⁷ Echoing Neustadt (1990), Kumar argues that because "presidential persuasion is so central to presidential accomplishments," a president who does not integrate communications into all aspects of governance "risks failure of his political, electoral, and policy goals" (2010, xv).

Presidents also want to coordinate the collection and dissemination of information across agency boundaries; and they want policy development and implementation to reflect their broader priorities rather than narrow agency preferences. Because of this need for information and coordination, presidents have focused on liaison positions in the White House Office and in cabinet departments. Modeled after the Department of the Army's legislative liaison unit with which he was familiar, President Eisenhower created the Legislative Liaison Unit (now called the Office of Legislative Affairs) in 1953 to manage the White House's relationship with Congress (Collier 1997); and by the early 1960s, each cabinet agency also had a dedicated congressional liaison office (Pipe 1966). Appointees in these positions can filter and shape the policies or information transmitted by agencies to the White House, Congress, or other agencies by inserting the preferences of specific policy-demanding interest groups or of key electoral constituencies. In setting priorities, Gips described legislative affairs offices as a "constant [priority] across all agencies," noting that "we tried to get those done quickly for everyone because we had to deal with Congress starting from day 1."²⁸ Thus even as presidents pursue unilateral action through the bureaucracy, they still value relationships with co-partisans in Congress for political and legislative goals. The combination of a position's visibility or informational capacity and the electoral connection lead to the main

²⁷Personal interview, March 5, 2014.

²⁸Personal interview, March 5, 2014.

hypothesis about presidential prioritization:

H1: Presidents will make appointments to public affairs and congressional relations offices earlier than appointments to policy-oriented offices.

Along with these electorally motivated appointments, presidents appoint lower level appointees to help cabinet secretaries begin to implement their agendas. Typically the first appointments made to an agency, cabinet secretaries and agency administrators then get priority for the appointment of their own immediate staffs. This focus on management teams leads to prioritization of SES and SC appointments in the office of the secretary even before the assistant secretary positions for policy or management offices are filled. With plenty of campaign or congressional staffers with experience in handling campaign events, media relations, and political outreach, there is a readily available supply of potential appointees to fill positions on a secretary's team. And because these "invisible appointments" do not require senatorial confirmation or receive the same media scrutiny of PAS appointments, they can be made quickly:

H2: Presidents will appoint SES and SC appointees in the office of the secretary before making PAS or other appointments in policy-oriented offices.

Within these management teams, presidents use SES and SC appointment authority to get key people into agencies even if these same appointees are destined for PAS appointments. Such "preemptive appointments" are most likely when presidents have already selected specific individuals with specific skills for high priority issues or tasks; presidents and cabinet secretaries want these individuals on board and operating within an agency even if they have to wait for the more formal mantle of a PAS position. By using an alternate appointment authority that is more flexible, presidents preempt the delay of the confirmation process. For example, the New York Times article on Treasury department appointments noted that Geithner was working with a "skeleton crew of unofficial senior advisers" and that he had already hired "about 50 senior advisers" even as nominations to PAS positions were stalled.²⁹

²⁹Andrews, Edmund L., and Stephen Labaton. 2009. "Geithner, With Few Aides, Is Scrambling." *New*

By solely focusing on appointment type, however, the article underestimates the importance of the specific people for the president's agenda compared to the position itself as well as presidential utilization of the various appointment authorities. Of the three nominees for assistant secretary (PAS) positions in Treasury announced in March 2009, all three were already working in the agency as either SES or SC appointees.³⁰

In other cases, the preemptive appointment might not result in eventual confirmation for the intended nominee. President Obama appointed Elizabeth Warren, slated to head the newly-created Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as a special assistant to the President and special advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury in September 2010.³¹ But Warren's apparently inevitable nomination never happened because of increasing likelihood of Senate opposition to her confirmation.³² And presidents can also make an SES and SC appointment to head an important office without ever making the PAS appointment for the formally designated leadership role, such as the appointment of Carl Fillichio to lead the Department of Labor's public affairs office.³³ Fillichio was appointed as a non-career SES senior advisor for public affairs early in 2009, and no assistant secretary for public affairs, a PAS position with formal control of the Office of Public Affairs, was ever nominated. In August 2012, President Obama signed the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act, which eliminated the Senate confirmation requirement for many assistant secretaries for public affairs, including that position in the Department of Labor. As of April 2014,

York Times: B1. March 8, 2009.

³⁰The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. 2009. "President Obama Announces Key Treasury Appointments." [Press Release]. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/president-obama-announces-key-treasury-appointments>

³¹"President Obama Names Elizabeth Warren Assistant to the President and Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau," September 17, 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/17/president-obama-names-elizabeth-warren-assistant-president-and-special-a> (April 15, 2014).

³²Dorning, Mike and Carter Dougherty. "Obama Said to Eliminate Warren as Consumer Bureau Nominee," *Bloomberg News*, July 16, 2011. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-07-15/obama-eliminates-warren-as-consumer-head.html> (April 15, 2014).

³³See Carey, Maeve P. 2012. "Presidential Appointments, the Senate's Confirmation Process, and Changes Made in the 112th Congress," Congressional Research Service, October 9, 2012. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41872.pdf> (April 15, 2014).

Fillichio remains the head of public affairs in his original SES appointment.

1.3 Data, Measures, and Methods

To empirically evaluate how presidents prioritize positions, I analyze a new dataset from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The dataset includes 1,926 PAS, non-career SES, and SC appointments made during the first terms of the Bush (from January 20, 2001 until December 31, 2004) and Obama (from January 20, 2009 to December 31, 2012) administrations in the General Services Administration and the cabinet departments of Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. The OPM data for these agencies include subagency codes for appointments in separate offices of interest such as the office of the secretary, general counsel's office, office of communications or public affairs, and congressional or legislative relations offices.³⁴ Along with these subagency codes, each observation contains the beginning and ending date of an appointment, type of appointment (PAS, SES, SC, or other appointment not requiring Senate confirmation), pay plan, and grade.³⁵ While I also have observations for over 16,000 appointments in 110 agencies from 2001-2012, these data do not, however, include any position titles, and, except for the six agencies above, do not specify where in the agency hierarchies the positions are located. Thus for the analyses below, I examine appointments made to the six agencies that provided enough detail in their personnel data submissions to OPM to determine where appointees work down to the office level.

From this dataset, I focus on two specific subsets. The first subset contains all appointments made to the six agencies in the first year of each respective administration (see Table 1.1 below), based on the assumption that presidents get their initial teams in place by the start of their second year in office. I examine first year appointments specifically for substantive and methodological reasons. Because many policy changes take time for a

³⁴There is not, however, a subagency code for the congressional affairs office in the Department of Agriculture.

³⁵Observations have a unique identifier for each appointment, but do not include position titles.

new administration to implement, “early personnel selections are seized upon as significant indicators of the priorities and intentions of a new President” (Mackenzie 1981, 5). The attention to appointments in general wanes after the first year, as high profile appointments dwindle and media and scholarly websites tracking appointments get less frequent (if any) updates.³⁶ Thus for an analysis of prioritization, data on appointments from the first year of each administration—especially for SES and SC appointments—are the most reliable because promotions, conversion from one type of appointment to another, and turnover begin to muddle the picture.

This focus on the first year, however, is limited in three important ways: 1) The entire team might not be complete by the end of the first year, and thus any analysis of priority based on the first year suffers from a selection problem of not including positions not filled in that time frame; 2) SES positions can change from excepted or non-career to career-reserved status, meaning only career civil servants can fill those positions;³⁷ and, similarly, 3) Schedule C positions do not exist until an agency requests approval for a specific position from OPM. These last two factors hamper analysis because there is not a consistent set of SES or Schedule C positions across years or administrations to evaluate time to fill. Thus I analyze a second subset of the data that includes the 142 PAS appointments to the six agencies during the entire first terms of the Bush and Obama administration. Because these positions are established by statute and require Senate confirmation, I can account for positions that were either never filled during the first term or had multiple appointees in the position as the initial appointees left. And even though the OPM data do not include position titles, there are multiple data sources such as the Congressional Record and agency histories that allow me to match the individual observations in the OPM data with specific PAS positions.

³⁶For example, see the *Washington Post's* Head Count and WhoRunsGov blogs; the Head Count page no longer exists and the WhoRunsGov blog has not been extensively updated since 2011.

³⁷As Don Gips, the first director of the PPO in Obama's administration, noted in our interview, PPO has an extremely difficult task of determining how many non-career SES positions are allocated to each agency, as cabinet secretaries and other stakeholders vie for these valuable slots to bring in key advisors.

Table 1.1: First Year Appointments by Type, Agency, & Appointing President

<i>Agency</i>	PAS	SES	SC	<i>Total</i>
Agriculture				
Bush	13	15	108	136
Obama	10	41	148	199
<i>Total</i>	23	56	256	335
Education				
Bush	11	12	61	84
Obama	12	16	94	122
<i>Total</i>	23	28	155	206
General Services Administration				
Bush	2	17	7	26
Obama	0	5	18	23
<i>Total</i>	2	22	25	49
Housing and Urban Development				
Bush	12	15	55	82
Obama	9	9	34	52
<i>Total</i>	21	24	89	134
Labor				
Bush	9	20	81	110
Obama	10	22	59	91
<i>Total</i>	19	42	140	201
Veterans Affairs				
Bush	10	7	9	26
Obama	7	11	8	26
<i>Total</i>	17	18	17	52
Total	105	190	682	977

As a measure of presidential priority, I calculate the number of days from inauguration to the appointment start date for each appointment. The two features of interest are the position's location or function. In these data, I use office type as a proxy for location and function: office of the secretary, public affairs office, congressional relations office, general counsel's office, and all other offices.

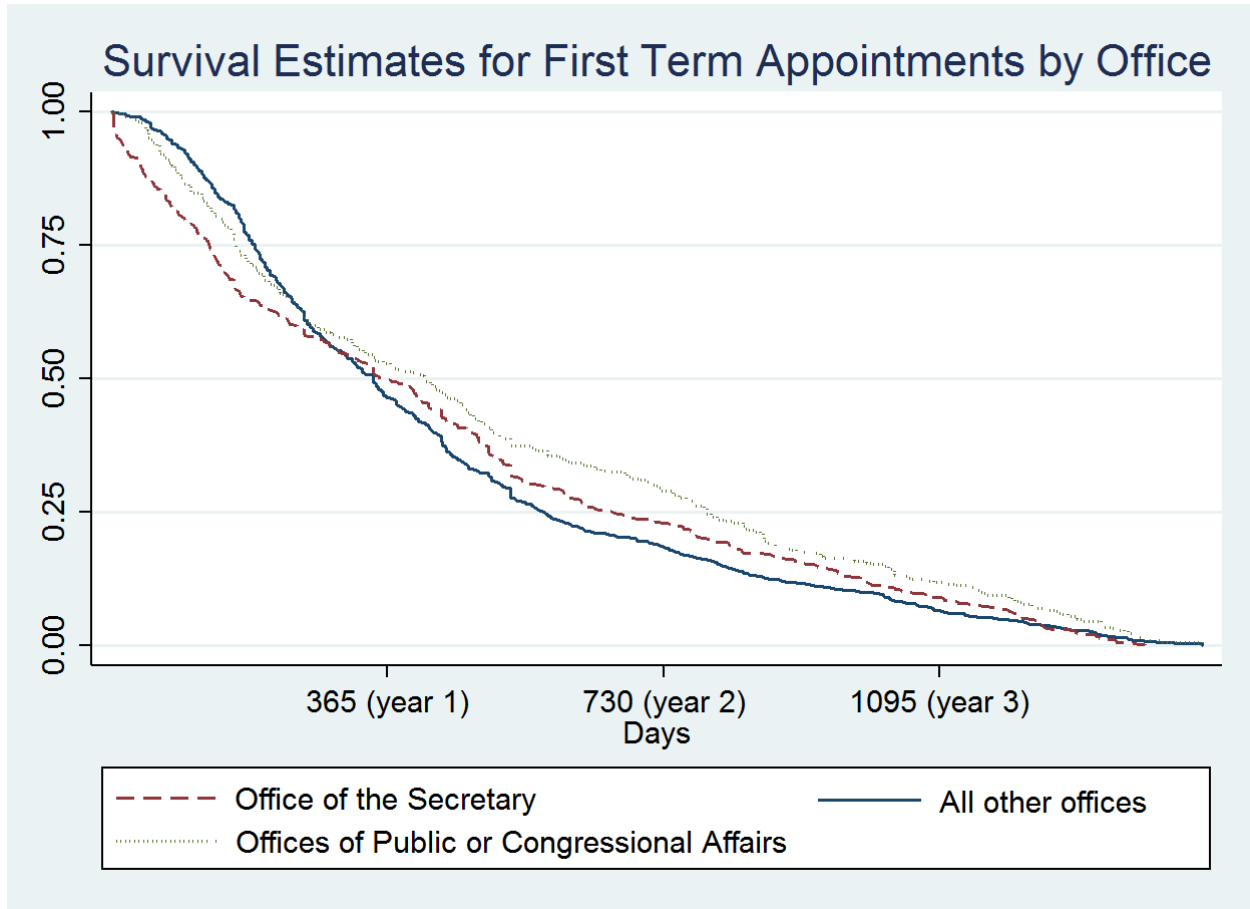
I use survival analysis to estimate the effects of office and appointment type on time to appointment. With Kaplan-Meier survival functions, I evaluate the change in probability of appointment with the passage of time. I then estimate Cox proportional hazard regression models to more precisely examine the influence of office type, appointment type, agency-level effects, and appointing president on the time to appointment. Because each appointment is not necessarily independent, I use robust standard errors to adjust for the violation of the assumption of independence.

1.4 Results

To test the first hypothesis about the prioritization of placement of appointees into public affairs and congressional relations offices before more policy-oriented offices, I first estimate a Kaplan-Meier survival model for all appointments in the full first terms. As Figure 1.1 highlights, the secretary's offices are filled quickly and the public affairs and congressional relations offices get early attention, too. The differences in probability of survival, i.e. an appointment having not yet been made at a given time, between an appointment in the secretary's office, the public affairs or congressional relations offices, and all other offices are significant at the 0.05 level until over 200 days into the term. As time increases above 300 days into the term and the initial surge of appointments slows, however, the probability of appointment in offices other than that of the secretary or the public or legislative affairs offices increases.

To provide greater precision on the relative speed of appointments, I first estimate Cox

Figure 1.1: Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimates by Office Type



proportional hazard regression models for all appointment types in the first year (see Table 1.2 below). These estimates, separated into the first 100 days of an administration and then the full year, reinforce the primacy of the offices of the secretary and the highly visible public affairs and congressional relations offices in an administration’s appointment prioritization while also highlighting the differential pace of PAS appointments compared to SES and SC appointments. The baseline category for office type is all offices other than the immediate office of the secretary, the public and congressional affairs offices, and the general counsel’s office. For appointment type, the baseline category is PAS appointments; and for agency fixed effects, the baseline agency is the Department of Agriculture. Given an appointment in the first 365 days of an administration, an appointment to the secretary’s office in the basic model has a 61% higher hazard rate or chance of getting filled at a given time than an

appointment to any other office; for public affairs or congressional relations, appointments have a 59% higher rate of occurring at a given time in the first year than appointments to other offices.

The estimates for the proportional hazard ratios for SES and SC appointments are higher than PAS in the first 100 days, likely due to both the nomination/confirmation process itself for PAS appointees and the greater supply of potential appointees at lower levels. The lower proportional hazard ratios for SES and SC over the full year, however, could stem from the delayed appointment of many of these personnel who only enter agencies after the PAS assistant secretary of a given office is confirmed. Bob Nash, director of presidential personnel during President Clinton's second term, described this process: "you really wouldn't start working hard on Schedule C's and SES's outside the secretary's office until the sub-cabinet member was confirmed [Y]ou wouldn't want to fill [the office] up with SES's and Schedule C's and have an assistant secretary [then] walk in" (Nash 2000).³⁸

I further distinguish between office types in a Cox model (columns 3 and 4 in Table 1.2), adding a variable for positions in the general counsel's office and separating positions in public affairs from those in congressional relations offices. I include the general counsel's office as a measure of how PPO might prioritize positions for political control compared to electoral or political benefit. Katja Bullock, a key staffer for Republican personnel operations going back to Reagan's first term, highlighted positions in the general counsel's office as high priorities for political control and unilateral action; these offices were key "watchmen" at the start of a new administration as they looked for pending regulations or other agency actions that conflicted with the new president's agenda.³⁹ But, as the estimates suggest, public affairs offices are prioritized even more. The lower hazard ratios for congressional relations offices are surprising given the expectations from both the presidential demand for early legislative

³⁸Interviews with former PPO staffers in the Reagan, H.W. Bush, W. Bush, and Obama administrations suggest that this deference to PAS appointees on both timing and selection of lower level appointees could be greater in Democratic administrations than Republican ones.

³⁹Personal interview, March 4, 2014.

Table 1.2: First Year Appointments by Office and Appointment Type

	100 days (1)	365 days (1)	100 days (2)	365 days (2)
<i>Office Type</i>				
Secretary's Office	2.61*	1.68*	2.67*	1.71*
	(0.41)	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.15)
Public & Congressional Affairs	1.13	1.59*		
	(0.21)	(0.14)		
Congressional Relations			0.97	1.42*
			(0.23)	(0.15)
Public Affairs			1.32	1.95*
			(0.29)	(0.23)
General Counsel			1.49	1.64*
			(0.42)	(0.33)
<i>Appointment Type</i>				
SES	2.54*	0.61*	2.55*	0.59*
	(0.81)	(0.08)	(0.81)	(0.08)
SC	2.51*	0.77*	2.56*	0.77*
	(0.60)	(0.08)	(0.61)	(0.08)
<i>Agency</i>				
Education	1.37	0.67*	1.36	0.66*
	(0.29)	(0.06)	(0.29)	(0.06)
GSA	0.80	0.59*	0.80	0.59*
	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.08)
HUD	2.98*	0.84	3.07*	0.82*
	(0.54)	(0.10)	(0.58)	(0.09)
Labor	0.94	0.66*	0.96	0.66*
	(0.21)	(0.06)	(0.22)	(0.07)
VA	2.36*	0.75*	2.27*	0.73*
	(0.70)	(0.12)	(0.67)	(0.12)
<i>President</i>				
Obama	0.72*	1.27*	0.72*	1.24*
	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.09)
<i>N</i>	243	977	243	977

Note: The baseline category for office type estimates is all other offices; for appointment type, the baseline is PAS positions; for agencies, the baseline is the Department of Agriculture. * indicates significance at 0.05 level. Estimates are proportional hazard ratios and robust standard errors, in parentheses, from Cox proportional hazard regression models.

coordination⁴⁰ and the large available supply of campaign and congressional staffers with the background characteristics of interest for those positions.

For the subset of PAS appointments across the entire first term (Table 1.3 below), appointments for secretaries, deputy secretaries, and agency administrators occur much faster than any other appointments, in line with expectations. The appointments for assistant secretaries of public affairs and congressional relations are faster than for other offices, but the difference is not statistically significant (see model 1 in Table 1.3). The estimates in the second model distinguish between congressional relations and public affairs offices, with the hazard ratio for assistant secretaries for congressional relations suggesting significant emphasis on those positions and less emphasis on PAS positions in public affairs offices.⁴¹

These results from the Kaplan-Meier survival functions and the Cox hazard models indicate that presidents prioritize positions around the cabinet secretary and highly visible positions in the public affairs and congressional relations offices. While these relatively crude distinctions between public affairs or congressional relations and all other offices could conceal important variation in how presidents might emphasize different policy areas, it clearly highlights that presidents are not solely focused on policy positions.

This further suggests that labor market factors are likely important in how presidents make appointments. A common assumption is that presidents always get their preferred candidate for appointed positions, as if there were an absence of constraints on the pool of potential appointees (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.). This assumption, however, highlights how little we know about the labor market or human capital limitations that presidents confront when trying to fill positions. Such labor market constraints could include a limited number of individuals with the required skills or capabilities for a certain

⁴⁰Both Gips, speaking about the Obama administration, and Bullock, from the Republican perspective, articulated the importance of an early emphasis on legislative affairs positions.

⁴¹The estimates for public affairs positions in this model are heavily influenced by the low number of appointments (7 total PAS appointments) and a vacancy throughout President Obama's first term in the assistant secretary for public affairs slot (until the position's requirement for Senate confirmation was removed by legislation). In this case, Obama made a non-career SES appointment to head the office rather than nominate someone for the PAS assistance secretary position.

Table 1.3: First Term PAS Appointments by Office Type

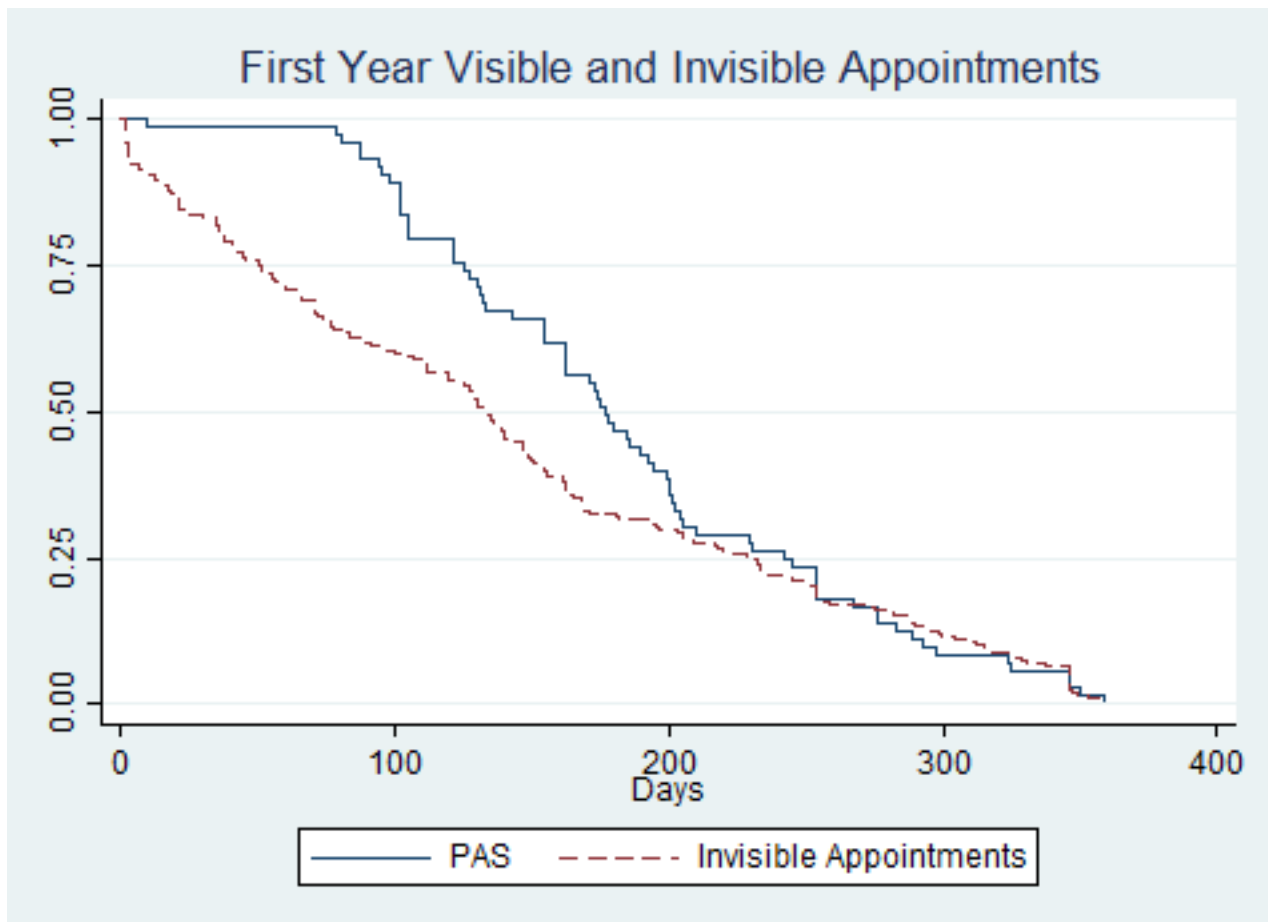
	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Office Type</i>		
Secretary's Office	6.94* (2.09)	7.53* (2.27)
Public & Congressional Affairs	1.26 (0.36)	
Congressional Relations		3.13* (0.74)
Public Affairs		0.80 (0.30)
General Counsel		1.00 (0.45)
<i>Agency</i>		
Education	0.57* (0.16)	0.54* (0.15)
GSA	0.15* (0.08)	0.14* (0.07)
HUD	0.44* (0.13)	0.45* (0.13)
Labor	0.54* (0.14)	0.55* (0.14)
VA	0.59 (0.18)	0.58 (0.18)
<i>President</i>		
Obama	0.75 (0.13)	0.77 (0.13)
<i>N</i>	142	142

Note: The baseline category for office type is all other offices; for agencies, the baseline is the Department of Agriculture. * indicates significance at 0.05 level; robust standard errors are in parentheses.

appointed position, a lack of information or interest on the part of qualified individuals, or large disparities in prestige or compensation between similar positions in the private sector compared to the appointed position. These limited labor markets could make certain positions, such as more technical or specialized policy positions, more difficult to fill compared to spokesperson, speechwriting, or congressional liaison positions regardless of how great a priority PPO might place on filling them quickly.

For the placement of management teams composed of lower level or “invisible” SES and SC appointments, Kaplan-Meier survival estimates indicate that SES and SC appointments in the secretary’s office (238, 76.5%) are made significantly before PAS appointees (73, 23.5%) in other offices (Figure 1.2 below).

Figure 1.2: Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments



One element of this discrepancy is likely due to greater scrutiny both from the White

House in the pre-nomination internal vetting and from the media and Senate in the formal confirmation process for PAS appointees. Another possible factor is that the cabinet secretaries have their own trusted staff and advisors ready for appointment, reducing the time and effort required from the Presidential Personnel Office to find and vet potential appointees. Just as presidents have key campaign advisors who transition immediately to presidentially appointed staff in the White House Office or Executive Office of the President, cabinet secretaries have their own retinue ready to make a similar transition into agency management positions.⁴² These management teams also include the preemptive appointments of individuals who can begin exerting influence on agency actions even without completion of the formal process for PAS positions.

1.5 Conclusion

Though most press accounts about appointments emphasize the highly charged nomination and confirmation process for PAS positions, presidents invest time and political capital, both before and after election day, to put their teams in place in executive branch agencies by using all available appointment types. The results above contradict the typical narrative of presidential neglect of important PAS positions and highlight that presidential priorities at the beginning of an administration are not limited to high-level policy positions; instead, presidents and their personnel operations focus on the cabinet secretary's management team, including preemptive appointments for key policy roles, and positions that contribute to advertising, credit claiming, and position taking. As scholars have long argued, presidents want political control of the executive branch agencies to enable them to undertake unilateral actions; but this is not the only factor in their appointment choices. Making the executive electoral connection between appointments and reelection concerns contributes to a broader

⁴²Additional survival estimates (Appendix A) on appointments made by Bush and Obama in their first years of office suggest some possible differences in approach; see also note 38 above on how this could be a function of greater latitude extended by Democratic presidents to their cabinet and subcabinet PAS appointees on selection of SES and SC personnel.

understanding of how presidents seek both political and policy benefits under challenging time and institutional constraints.

By looking at appointments in groups, we also gain insight into what the possible limits are to presidential control over appointments. Much of the descriptive literature on appointments has documented increasing White House control of appointments, but how much influence do presidents still cede to cabinet secretaries on the composition of their management teams and the other appointees in their agencies? For effective control of an agency, secretaries and administrators need their management teams to be in sync with their goals, styles, and perspectives. Because of this, these high-level PAS appointees still have a role in choosing specific appointees, and presidential personnel staff outsource some of the work involved in finding potential appointees to these PAS appointees. Just as Mayhew (1974) describes voters choosing between not just executives but also their retinues of advisors as well, presidents, by selecting specific PAS appointees, are also choosing the advisors and confidants of those appointees.

The appointment dynamics described above could also shift as a result of two recent developments. The first is the passage of the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act (PAESA) in 2012; this act removed more than 160 positions from Senate confirmation and created expedited confirmation procedures for another group of appointed positions. The second is the so-called “nuclear option,” a rule change in the Senate that allows for a simple majority vote, rather than supermajority to invoke cloture and end debate, on most nominations. Though the premise of PAESA was to lower the Senate’s workload and, at least nominally, improve presidential ability to get key appointments into place, the positions from which the confirmation requirement was removed are not likely to change in their relative priority for presidents. And combined with the nuclear option, the streamlining could in fact exacerbate the problems of Senate-confirmed positions as senators might work harder to leverage their control over the remaining appointments that require confirmation in their inter-branch squabbles with the president. Senators will continue to bottle

up appointments in committee, delay or extend vetting, and pursue their own interests in the battle for final confirmation. These reforms are unlikely to speed up nominations or make other PAS appointments easier for presidents; and they will not limit the incentives for “preemptive” appointments at the SES and SC levels. The appeal of appointing policy “czars” and other advisors to increase capacity within the White House and the Executive Office of the President (Rudalevige 2002) might also grow.

The findings above also lead to other important questions relating to both the reasons for and the consequences of prioritization: First, how does this prioritization of appointments influence what does or does not get accomplished early in an administration? Does the pool of potential appointees constrain presidential prioritization or influence which positions remain vacant for long periods of time? And are there differences in approach across presidents as individuals or by party that affect the pace and prioritization of appointments? As several former Presidential Personnel staffers noted in interviews, the Bush and Obama administrations differed in several important respects: the level of attention given to personnel by the presidents themselves, the nature of the relationship between the director of presidential personnel with the president and other key White House staffers, and distinct approaches to the relationship with executive branch agencies as friends or foes. These differences affected the planning processes for transition and early-term appointments, the rate of turnover among Presidential Personnel Office staff, and the administrations’ attitudes of either reluctance toward or acceptance of agency officials filling vacant appointed positions in acting capacities.

Further exploration of these questions is critical to understanding presidential prioritization of appointments. Though often seen as simply fodder for inside-Washington gossip games, these decisions can have enormous national and international consequences. Whether a presidential transition occurs during a period of economic turmoil, war, natural disaster, or other crisis, presidential appointment decisions dictate how executive branch agencies work toward solutions, how Congress and the president interact, and how the public learns about

and responds to such challenges. By looking at presidential electoral motives in conjunction with policy goals, lower-level SES and Schedule C appointees as well as the more visible Senate-confirmed appointees, and the appointment of teams rather than individuals, journalists and scholars alike can better illuminate the appointments process as one administration gives way to the next.

CHAPTER 2

The Dynamics of Appointee Characteristics over Intra-Presidential Time

Abstract

Whether in press accounts of an exhausted administration or discussions of a “lame duck” president, there is a common narrative of declining presidential influence over the course of an administration. Scholars have also found systematic evidence of the ebbs and flows of presidential capacity for policy making in “honeymoon” and “Cinderella” phases of a presidency. To explain one possible factor in this perceived decline of presidential influence over “intra-presidential” time, I first outline how the perspective and availability of potential appointees constrain presidents in the appointments process. I then evaluate how the background characteristics of presidential appointees change over the course of an administration due to these constraints. Drawing on a new dataset of appointee characteristics collected from over 1,400 resumes of political appointees during the George W. Bush administration, I measure the changing capabilities and experience of appointees at all appointment levels and across multiple executive branch agencies. I find that levels of appointees’ substantive expertise decline over time, while political experience and education remain fairly constant. The paper draws out the implications of these findings for our understanding of how labor markets for appointees constrain presidential choices and could affect presidential and agency performance.

I thank the former White House staffers and Romney Readiness Project contributors for sharing their insights and experiences with me, and the Graduate School at Vanderbilt for its grant that made those March 2014 interviews possible. I also express gratitude to my colleagues at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions for their data collection and coding efforts in the appointee resume project.

Introduction

The oft-repeated title—“The Incredible Shrinking President”—of a *Time* magazine cover story on George H.W. Bush,⁴⁴ Bill Clinton’s plaintive press conference asserting his continued relevance after the 1994 mid-term elections,⁴⁵ and recent articles about Barack Obama’s lame duck presidency⁴⁶ are just a few of the many examples that bolster the narrative of declining presidential influence on the content or implementation of public policy over the course of an administration. This decline includes diminishing public support and rising congressional resistance after an initial “honeymoon” phase of legislative productivity and cooperation. Yet a conflicting narrative simultaneously highlights a seemingly inexorable increase in presidents’ institutional strength as they act unilaterally to overcome congressional opposition or gridlock. In a series of speeches leading up to and including the 2014 State of the Union address to Congress, President Obama repeatedly articulated both his willingness and capacity to pursue policy goals without waiting for congressional action.⁴⁷ The multiple delays and waivers for elements of the Affordable Care Act provide recent examples of such unilateral executive action.⁴⁸

These apparently contradictory narratives illustrate two important and interconnected factors that constrain or enhance presidential policy influence: time and institutional capacity. Each year of a presidential administration is not the same, as the first year gives way to

⁴⁴Duffy, Michael. 1992. “The Incredible Shrinking President.” *Time*. June 29, 1992.

⁴⁵The American Presidency Project. “The President’s News Conference,” April 18, 1995. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=51237> (February 8, 2014).

⁴⁶See e.g. Milbank, Dana. 2014. “America Doesn’t Need a Lame Duck President.” *Washington Post*. January 30, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dana-milbank-america-doesnt-need-a-lame-duck-president/2014/01/30/110c90ac-8a04-11e3-916e-e01534b1e132_story.html (February 10, 2014).

⁴⁷For one such speech a few weeks before the State of the Union address, see Dann, Carrie. 2014. “Obama on exec action: ‘I’ve got a pen, and I’ve got a phone.’” *NBC News*. January 14, 2014. http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2014/01/14/22302586-obama-on-exec-action-ive-got-a-pen-and-ive-got-a-phone?lite (February 10, 2014).

⁴⁸“The Obama administration has a mandate on the health-care law, too.” *Washington Post*. February 11, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-obama-administration-has-a-mandate-on-the-health-care-law-too/2014/02/11/f001df36-9361-11e3-84e1-27626c5ef5fb_story.html (February 13, 2014).

the mid-term election; the end of the first term is consumed by a reelection campaign; and then another mid-term election year precedes the final phase of an administration. The differing policy and political contexts across “intra-presidential time” (Lewis and Strine 1996) demand unique presidential actions, even as external events and other political forces also shape the political landscape.

To meet these distinct phases and challenges, the institutional capacity of the modern presidency has adapted in formal and informal ways. From the establishment of new agencies and organizations, such as the Executive Office of the President or the Department of Homeland Security, to the increasing output of executive orders and agency regulations, presidents have more organizational capacity and scope for action. They also have informal means to wield influence, whether through relationships with the media or innovative forms of public outreach.

Scholars have studied time and institutional capacity both across and within presidential administrations, and there is a growing literature on how these factors interact over the course of a president’s term in office to influence formal presidential actions—such as agency regulations, executive orders, and vetoes—and informal relationships with Congress, the press, and the public. But we know relatively little about how one significant component of both formal and informal forms of presidential policy influence changes over intra-presidential time and affects institutional capacity throughout the executive branch: the characteristics of presidential appointees. These appointees help design and implement presidential policy choices, such as the Affordable Care Act waivers issued by the Treasury Department;⁴⁹ and presidents also make appointments as rewards for campaign work or financial support. Few of these appointees stay for an entire term or across two terms for a reelected president, requiring presidents to make new appointments throughout terms.

If these appointees are consistently capable and effective over the course of an adminis-

⁴⁹Pear, Robert. “Further Delays for Employers in Health Law.” *New York Times*. February 11, 2014: A1. Print.

tration, presidents could counter the perceived decline in influence over congressional action or in public support. But if a president’s concern for reelection and emphasis on patronage hinders good governance or the administration’s initial momentum toward achieving policy goals gives way to executive branch exhaustion and diminished capacity with new appointees later in a term, the decline in presidential or executive branch performance could be both real and significant—even as presidents rely on them to carry out increased unilateral action. The consequences for policy and performance, in areas from education to national security, could range from simply frustrating and embarrassing⁵⁰ to devastating.⁵¹

In this paper I evaluate how and why the background characteristics of presidential appointees change over the course of an administration to explain one possible factor in the decline of presidential capacity over “intra-presidential” time. I draw on a new dataset of appointee characteristics collected from the resumes of political appointees during the George W. Bush administration to measure the changing capabilities and experience of appointees at all appointment levels and across multiple executive branch agencies. I find that levels of appointees’ substantive expertise—except for education and task experience—decline over time, while political experience spikes immediately following elections and then also declines. These findings suggest that the characteristics of appointees are not only a function of presidential choice, but also depend on the motivations and the size of the market of potential appointees from which presidents choose appointees. Because of these constraints on presidential appointment power and any consequent decline in agency performance, a president’s capacity to dictate policy through unilateral action could diminish over the course of an administration even as the president’s reliance on such action increases.

⁵⁰For a recent example of a donor-turned-ambassador who focused on decorating her residence more than diplomacy, see: Lee, Matthew. “Big Obama donor Cynthia Stroum quits envoy job amid criticism.” *Associated Press*. February 4, 2011.

⁵¹The most prominent recent example of unqualified appointees performing badly in a critical situation is the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s appointee leadership during the response to Hurricane Katrina (Lewis 2008b). For another perspective on why even some apparently qualified groups of appointees fail because of a lack of balance of skills and backgrounds, see David Halberstam’s *The Best and the Brightest* (1993).

2.1 Literature Review

The relationship of both time and appointees to presidential capacity has received significant attention in the popular press and academic literatures; yet the connection between time and appointee characteristics—and the consequent challenges for presidential action and influence across intra-presidential time—remains unexplored. I first define the element of time that is the focus of this paper and describe the different ways in which scholars have examined its effect on presidential power. I then review the literature on presidential appointments, focusing on the research on the characteristics of appointees. While we know a lot about time and appointees separately and have anecdotal evidence of their interaction, there has been no systematic study of why or how appointee characteristics might vary over time within presidential administrations. Connecting these two disparate literatures could then shed light on how appointee characteristics and agency performance could vary depending on both presidential choices and underlying labor markets for potential appointees.

Defining Time and Its Effects on the Legislative Agenda, Unilateral Action, and the Public Presidency

Presidency scholars have examined multiple facets of time in relation to presidential power. One focus has been on linear or “secular” time (Lewis and Strine 1996), with presidential power growing, in fits and starts, from Washington’s election in 1789 to the present—especially in comparison with the power of Congress (Cooper 2009). Presidents have also been categorized as parts of different “regime” times, corresponding with the ebb and flow of parties, issues, and historical events (Skowronek 1993). With Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s presidency designated as the beginning of a new presidential era—though the case could be made for the inflection point occurring with the presidency of either his distant cousin Theodore or fellow Democrat Woodrow Wilson—presidents are distinguished as “early” or “modern” based on their position relative to Roosevelt’s four-term marathon (e.g. Neustadt

1990).

For the present analysis, I focus on “political” or “intra-presidential” time: “This time framework focuses on time within a presidency, both in terms of the year within a term and whether it is a president’s first or second term” (Lewis and Strine 1996). Within political time, presidents go through “honeymoon” and “Cinderella” periods at the beginning and end of their terms, with mid-term elections an important turning point. This calendar of “policy cycles” based on political context means that presidents are most influential just after winning election or reelection and then spiral downward in a “cycle of decreasing influence” even as presidents are becoming more effective through increasing expertise (Light 1999). Intra-presidential time is not itself causal, but is rather a proxy for the changing circumstances inherent to the political world in which presidents operate: rising congressional opposition, the need to focus on the next election rather than longer-term governance, a growing number of disappointed supporters frustrated by the gap between campaign rhetoric and actual policy achievements, and the related and natural decline in approval as public excitement and attention wane.

Even before the first presidential administration of George Washington, there was extensive consideration of the effects that this concept of time in office would have on presidential power and influence. As Alexander Hamilton argued in the Federalist Papers, sufficient duration of presidential terms and the potential for multiple terms were crucial for promoting “the energy of the Executive authority” (Hamilton 1788a). He worried about how approaching elections might change executive behavior and how the zeal of a new president could lead to excessive change and a “disgraceful and ruinous mutability in the administration of the government” (Hamilton 1788b). These concerns are echoed in Lowi’s “law of effort,” in which presidents “spend the first half of their terms trying sincerely to succeed” and then “devote the second half of their terms to create the appearance of success” just in time for reelection (1985, 11).

To empirically evaluate changes in presidential power across this “intra-presidential time,”

Lewis and Strine (1996) examine presidential vetoes and find little effect. But other theoretical and empirical work on different types of presidential action has highlighted the role of time on the choices available to presidents in pursuing both political and policy goals. The legislative sphere is traditionally considered the area in which the possibility for presidential policy success declines most precipitously due to structural features (Krehbiel 1998); other theoretical work emphasizes the incentives for presidential effort during the “honeymoon” period (Beckmann and Godfrey 2007). This emphasis on the beginning of a term is borne out by empirical analysis demonstrating that failure on items on the president’s legislative agenda increases as time (measured by months-in-term) passes (Rudalevige 2002).

The legislative agenda is not, however, the only means by which presidents can achieve their goals; thus failure of that agenda is not necessarily definitive evidence of declining influence. As Howell and Mayer note, “[b]y ignoring important policy options outside of the legislative process, scholars have exaggerated the frailty of outgoing presidents and underestimated the influence they continue to wield. Presidential power does not reduce to bargaining, negotiating, and convincing members of Congress to do things that the president cannot accomplish on his own. Presidents can (and regularly do) act alone” through executive orders, agency guidance and rulemaking, directives, and proclamations (2005, 534).

Scholars have found both beginning and end of term effects on the issuance of executive orders (Mayer 1999; but see Krause and Cohen 1997). For “midnight” or late-term activity including executive orders and other regulatory actions, the effects are especially strong when there is party change in the White House (Howell and Mayer 2005). Agency rulemaking is another avenue for presidential policymaking that demonstrates strong “Cinderella effects” of increased rulemaking generally at the end of presidential terms (de Rugy and Davies 2009). O’Connell finds that there is variation across executive branch agencies in both the promulgation and withdrawal of rules early or late in terms, and even while Congress was in lame duck sessions after mid-term elections changed party control of Congress (e.g. the Clinton administration in late 1994) (O’Connell 2008). McLaughlin (2010) suggests that

two mechanisms for this increased regulatory output are both higher rates of submissions of economically significant regulations and expedited review by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Along with the presidential legislative agenda and executive branch policy decisions, researchers have examined changes in the public presidency over intra-presidential time. Presidents adjust their rhetoric to be more or less congruent with public opinion based on the proximity of elections, either presidential reelection or mid-terms (Canes-Wrone and Shotts 2004; Rottinghaus 2008). Their relationship with the media also reflects the influence of time in office. Grossman and Kumar characterize the “phases” of this relationship as alliance, competition, and detachment: “The phases usually appear in sequence. The period of alliance coincides with the early months of a new administration. The period of competition is generally in full swing by the end of the first year. The start of the period of detachment depends upon the sequence of events that leads both White House officials and reporters to give up on their efforts to mold the other’s behavior.” (1979, 40)

Presidential Appointees and Their Characteristics

From this research, we know that there are predictable changes in the political context over a president’s time in office that significantly influence many aspects of the modern presidency. In the literature on presidential appointments and their characteristics, however, intra-presidential time is understudied both theoretically and empirically. The normative and descriptive work on appointments and appointee characteristics is extensive, and recent research has begun providing greater empirical analysis of appointee characteristics. Changes in presidential appointments across secular time also feature in this literature, but work on intra-presidential time and appointees is limited. And the early work on changing appointee characteristics examines only presidential motivation or choice, ignoring the role of differences in the availability and motivations of potential appointees.

Scholars have long studied the various characteristics, skills, and experience of presidential

appointees, including personal connection to the president or other high-level politicians, issue or functional expertise, ideological alignment, campaign or other work for the party, ascriptive or demographic characteristics, or interest group affiliation (Burstein 1977; Heclo 1977; Lewis 2008; Mackenzie 1981). At a theoretical level, there is a long-running debate over the normative standards that should apply to the appointments process. One perspective on the bureaucracy argues that “neutral competence” (Heclo 1975) is the goal for which presidents should aim, while other work claims that presidents should and do take into account loyalty to select appointees for “responsive competence” (Moe 1985).

There is a detailed descriptive literature of the various characteristics or traits that presidents want in appointees that would make appointees more responsive as well as more competent (Mackenzie 1981; Pfiffner 1996; Weko 1995). Building on this descriptive work, empirical studies have conceptualized appointee characteristics as located on two distinct dimensions of varying importance to presidents: loyalty versus competence.⁵² And just as presidents seek to evaluate either the loyalty or competence of a potential appointee, they also look to place patronage appointees as a reward for their support (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.; Lewis and Waterman 2013).

Scholars have recently begun seeking explanations and evidence for how presidents match characteristics with specific positions (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.; Krause and O’Connell 2011; Lewis and Waterman 2013; Lewis 2011) or with specific agencies (Parsneau 2013); but especially for positions that are not Senate-confirmed, the lack of data and journalistic or other scrutiny makes progress difficult (Lewis and Waterman 2013). As Lewis and Waterman (2013) argue, however, it is precisely these positions where more scrutiny is needed, as these mid-level appointees are playing an increasingly important role in presidential strategies for bureaucratic control. Many of these mid- or low-level appointments are made with the input of higher-level appointees (Weko 1995), who view them as management teams rather than individual appointments.

⁵²Or “compliance” versus “expertise” in Krause and O’Connell’s formulation (2011).

The literature addresses changes in appointments across secular time, including trends in overall appointment numbers and the agencies in which appointees are placed (Lewis 2008), as well as how presidents have tried to centralize recruitment and control of appointed positions (Weko 1995). For appointments in intra-presidential time, there are popular press accounts about first-string versus second-string appointees⁵³ or interest group tracking of appointee characteristics⁵⁴ to go with studies on turnover among PAS appointees (O’Connell 2009) and EOP staff (Dickinson and Tenpas 2002). There is also evidence about declining confirmation rates on Supreme Court nominees and PAS appointees in presidents’ second terms (Bond, Fleisher, and Krutz 2009). Krause and O’Connell have begun evaluating a model of presidential learning in the appointments process with a dataset of PAS appointee characteristics across multiple administrations (Krause and O’Connell 2013). Yet even though their approach is the most direct effort yet on appointee characteristics and intra-presidential time, their primary focus is on how presidents might change their appointment choices without considering that there could be important constraints on such choices due to the differences in the pools of appointees available for different positions, especially below the PAS level.

Connecting Appointee Characteristics and Intra-Presidential Time

While we know a lot about different actions that presidents take over time as well as about the people who develop and implement presidential actions, there is much to learn about how the characteristics of these appointees change over an administration. Given the findings in the literature on how time constrains presidents and the effects of appointee characteristics on agency performance, connecting these two literatures could illuminate a critical element of presidential influence and provide a better understanding of what incoming and reelected

⁵³Allen, Mike and Jim Vandehei. “Obama second term: Team of insiders.” *Politico.com*. September 14, 2012. <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81199.html> (February 17, 2014).

⁵⁴See e.g. “President Obama’s Second-Term Ambassadorial Nominations.” *American Foreign Service Association*. <http://www.afsa.org/secondterm.aspx> (February 17, 2014).

presidents need to take into consideration as they approach the appointments process. Even if presidents and their personnel operations are becoming more corporate and professional (Lewis 2011) and subsequently learning and improving over intra-presidential time (Krause and O’Connell 2011), their appointment choices might still be limited by the depth of the labor pool from which they select appointees. By examining the changing characteristics and capacity of appointee leadership in the executive branch agencies from both the presidential and potential appointee perspectives, this paper can contribute to our understanding of variation in presidential capacity over intra-presidential time.

2.2 Why Appointee Characteristics Change

During an Administration

Whether developing and shepherding their legislative agendas through the congressional gauntlet (Rudalevige 2002), gaining political control of the executive branch establishment to act unilaterally (Moe and Howell 1999; Moe 1985), or “going public” to shape or pander to public opinion (Canes-Wrone 2005; Kernell 2007), presidents need help as they attempt to achieve desired policy and political outcomes—and they hope to get that help from appointees. If those appointees are more or less capable over intra-presidential time, presidents could consequently become more or less powerful and effective in achieving their goals. In this section I outline why appointee characteristics could vary over time as a result of potential appointees’ motivations and limited pools of potential appointees from which presidents can reasonably choose; and I lay out expectations for how specific appointee characteristics vary both over time and by appointment type as a result of these factors.

Presidential versus Appointee Perspectives

Scholars have primarily examined appointee characteristics from a presidential perspective and have assumed that variation in those characteristics results from presidential preferences

and choices. Other models of the appointments process focus on institutional veto points such as the formal White House vetting process or Senate confirmation procedures that could shape appointee characteristics because of the conflicting goals between presidents and other political actors with influence over an appointment (e.g. Hollibaugh 2013; McCarty and Razaghian 1999). But because of this emphasis on the presidential perspective, the literature has not closely analyzed the preferences or motivations of potential appointees themselves. Just as presidents recognize and pursue the benefits of the appointment power, potential appointees have their own reasons for accepting an appointment. Presidents get zealous campaign workers who hope for a follow-on appointment in the administration (Weko 1995), competent policy experts to staff cabinet agencies, politically experienced operatives to shape and coordinate the efforts across the administration, and, at the conclusion of an administration, a cohort of sympathizers with an incentive to protect “their” president’s legacy. Appointees get status and position, an opportunity to make or influence policy, an important line on a resume, and connections throughout the party and Washington to use later in their careers (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.).

This apparent win-win situation does not mean, however, that presidents always get the appointees they want. Though much of the appointments literature assumes that presidents are simply picking from a pool of willing applicants, there are limitations on presidential exercise of the appointment power that come from the human side of the appointments process. Theoretical and empirical work on the motivations and types of careerists—which has colorfully characterized them as “slackers” or “zealots” (Gailmard and Patty 2007), or as “climbers,” “conservers,” “zealots,” “advocates,” or “statesmen” (Downs 1967)—could equally apply to appointees. Potential appointees, like careerists, vary in their own ideological and policy preferences, expectations for current or potential future earnings, and distinct career trajectories (Lewis 2009), whether as ambitious and experienced politicians looking for cabinet-level positions (e.g. Nicholls 1991) or eager college students volunteering for a campaign. The self-interest axiom that underpins the assumption of presidential, party, and

congressional electoral motivations (Downs 1957; Mayhew 1974) also applies to potential appointees. Even if the president and the potential appointee share party affiliation or ideology, their own self-interest often leads to a divergence of goals or of opinions of how to achieve shared goals. As Cyert and March explain, “people (i.e. individuals) have goals; collectivities of people do not” (1963, 30).

Based on such self-interest, potential appointees can wield an absolute veto on their appointment if their own goals or preferences conflict with those of the president. Potential appointees can refuse an appointment preemptively or at any point in the White House formal or informal vetting process or during Senate confirmation. The reasons for such refusals are many, even for potential appointees who have served previous presidents, donated money to presidential campaigns, or share similar ideological or policy goals:

American presidents face numerous obstacles in retaining the ‘best and brightest’ in the service of their administrations. One important obstacle is the service of many masters by the political appointee. Members of Congress, interest groups, and the agency itself may try to influence the appointee in a way that conflicts with the administration’s goals. Navigating this minefield can make service for the president quite unattractive. A second obstacle is the appointee’s numerous outside opportunities in both the private and public sectors that may make their service on behalf of a president transitory at best (Chang, Lewis, and McCarty 2001).

While some potential appointees might see the opportunity presented by an appointed position, some see an onerous vetting process, which, for prospective appointees with extensive business ties or financial holdings, could cost over \$200,000 in legal and accounting fees—without a guarantee of even being appointed.⁵⁵ Others are deterred by the prospect of lower compensation, the hassle of relocating to Washington or a regional office for what could be a short stay, the lack of decision-making authority, or other constraints of the bureaucracy. In one such circumstance just before President Obama’s inauguration in January 2009, Susan Tierney was reported to be President Obama’s nominee for deputy secretary

⁵⁵Bill Hagerty, appointments director for the Romney Readiness Project in 2012, personal interview, May 9, 2014.

of energy after having previously served as an appointee in the Clinton administration and as the leader of Obama’s transition team for the Department of Energy.⁵⁶ Yet less than six weeks after the speculation about her imminent nomination, the *Washington Post* reported that Tierney, in the midst of the vetting process, chose to withdraw from consideration for the position.⁵⁷ Just a few days later, in March 2009, prominent neurosurgeon and television commentator Sanjay Gupta announced that he was no longer a candidate for appointment to the position of Surgeon General. Gupta cited a desire to continue his medical practice and media role and his concern about losing control of his schedule for family reasons.⁵⁸

Other well-qualified candidates might simply not want to work in Washington or for a particular president. As Lewis argues, “presidents need loyalty” in the bureaucracy, yet “many of the people whose expertise, reputation, or political connections make them eligible for a position will have no particular loyalty to the president” (2011, 55). Some potential appointees might foresee the damage to their reputations or future career prospects that could result from loyalty or responsiveness to a president—and balk at paying such a high cost for a relatively short-term appointment. For example, former colleagues have vigorously criticized current State Department legal advisor Harold Koh for policy positions he has espoused in the State Department that contradict much of his scholarly output prior to appointment. Koh himself noted in an interview that, “the longer I serve in government, I get questions of the following form: ‘You’re a hypocrite, aren’t you?’” (Johnson 2011).

Even as those most capable might not be interested for reasons articulated above, those most interested—campaign workers, donors, friends and relatives of other politicians—might

⁵⁶Kamen, Al. “Susan Tierney to Become Energy Dept. Number Two.” *Washington Post*.
http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2009/01/15/susan_tierney_to_become_energy.html (April 18, 2014).

⁵⁷Shear, Michael D. and Philip Rucker. “Picks for Key Government Posts Play Long Waiting Game.” *Washington Post*.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/03/AR2009030303970_pf.html (April 18, 2014).

⁵⁸Shear, Michael D. and Howard Kurtz. “CNN’s Gupta Decides Against Surgeon General Position, Cites ‘Timing’.” March 6, 2009. *Washington Post*.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/05/AR2009030503310_pf.html (April 18, 2014).

not have even minimal qualifications (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.). They see an appointment as a rung in the ladder leading to power and position in a political party or interest group arena. For this reason, these job seekers could prefer appointments in agencies that match their partisan or ideological preferences; this in turn complicates the White House’s task of filling positions in ideologically divergent agencies (Lewis 2008, 2009).

How Pools of Potential Appointees Vary by Position

In addition to generally qualified, motivated, and loyal appointees who share similar goals, presidents want appointees with specific substantive and functional expertise who can provide counsel and implement policy initiatives in complex institutional and political contexts. The Reagan transition team, for example, distilled onto a single notecard (Figure 2.1) what they wanted in appointees.⁵⁹

Figure 2.1: Reagan Transition Team’s Appointee Selection Criteria

⁵⁹Thanks to Andrew Rudalevige for generously sharing this and other treasures from his archival research. This notecard is located in the Annelise Anderson papers at the Hoover Institution (Stanford University), Accession Number 90032-266267, Box 27, Folder: “Ronald Reagan presidential transition team, 1980-1981: Basic Documents.”

CRITERIA IN SELECTING APPOINTEES

1. Commitment to Governor Reagan's
Philosophy
Policies
Objectives
2. Integrity (background)
3. Competence (demonstrated skill & ability)
4. Team Work (no personal or political
ambition)
5. Toughness (cope with pressure)

But even if presidents and their PPOs are learning and improving in the appointments process, there might not be better appointees to select if the pools of potential appointees are limited and every appointee cannot meet all criteria of interest to presidents: “Presidents would prefer that all appointees be loyal, competent, and satisfy key political considerations, but the pool of available appointees rarely satisfies all three considerations and presidents must make tradeoffs” (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.). For some appointed positions, the talent pool is deep and presidents have many options among potential appointees; for other positions, however, the pool is limited due to the position’s managerial or substantive demands or a higher level of public or media scrutiny because of the political salience or appointment type, i.e. whether the appointment requires Senate confirmation or not.

Along with an increase in the number and size of executive branch agencies, the expansion of the executive branch has also led to greater complexity and more technically demanding positions. As a result, “postwar Presidents found that they needed people who were not just generally competent, not just good politicians. They needed people who had specific

kinds of professional background and technical training” (Mackenzie 1981, 84). Technical positions with certain skill requirements—an engineering background for the National Science Foundation’s Engineering Directorate or meteorological or oceanographic training for the chief scientist’s position at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—can limit the pool of potential appointees and make evaluating the qualifications of any aspiring appointees difficult. As one PPO official related, “to the extent [positions] are technical, [PPO] will defer to the agency” (quoted in Weko 1995, 125) because they do not have the means to understand how to make use of the position or whom to put into it. For technically demanding positions, the PPO struggles to both find additional applicants—especially ones who meet the basic criteria valued by the president and required for the position—and then gather more detailed information on any that seem promising. Compared to a low-level staff assistant position, it takes “more than a political hack to provide adequate service as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Research and Development, as an Atomic Energy Commissioner, or as head of the Antitrust Division in the Department of Justice” (Mackenzie 1981, 84).

The combination of an immense work load and the background of PPO’s own personnel (Mackenzie 1981) also suggests that it is difficult for PPO to make precise *ex ante* distinctions between loyalty, competence, and patronage. PPO staff have greater political than substantive or technical expertise (Mackenzie 1981; Weko 1995) and depend somewhat on the recommendations of the higher-level appointees to fill subordinate positions (Nash 2000; Weko 1995). Specifically highlighting PPO’s lack of capacity to evaluate technical requirements, Weko notes that, while “the technical complexity of positions subject to appointment may be marginally greater” since Kennedy’s or Johnson’s relatively informal personnel operations, “the president’s appointment staff made no more extensive efforts to master the technical demands of appointive posts in 1981 than it did in 1965” (Weko 1995, 166 note 51).

For most positions, members of Congress, governors, or party leaders often have long lists of people to either recommend for specific jobs or for whom they request any job, as these political actors can reap policy influence from getting their preferred appointee into place or electoral benefit from patronage. Likewise, interest groups with policy demands often provide highly motivated potential appointees with substantive expertise. For example, Weko (1995, 142) describes how the Reagan administration relied on professional and other external groups in its search for a director of the National Institutes of Health. But these traditional sources of potential appointees, like the president, have little to gain from placing someone in a demanding technical role for which they have few, if any, candidates at hand. Senators might lack sufficient expertise to evaluate possible effects on agency performance and have few recommendations for possible nominees, while interest groups might not have expertise in areas that are not directly relevant to their policy priorities.

Related to but distinct from both the technical requirements of a job and its political, policy, or administrative function is the level of specialization of functions. This distinction exists in career positions as well (e.g. Foreign Service Specialists or Generalists). An appointed position better suited for a generalist might require both technical understanding and broader management capabilities, while another job in the same office with the same appointment authority might be more narrowly focused on a substantive or administrative area. For example, in the State Department's office for arms control, the principal deputy assistant secretary (a more general, managerial position) and the special envoy for nuclear nonproliferation (a more specialized position) are both SES positions and were filled by non-career appointees in the Bush administration. The Prune Book series, published from 1988 to 2004 by Brookings Institution Press,⁶⁰ details some of the most difficult and important appointed positions that combine substantive or specialized complexity with extensive managerial responsibilities.

⁶⁰The series was also online following the 2008 election until early 2012:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20090210055918/http://excellenceintransition.org/>

Conversely, one factor that could broaden the pool for a given position is the incidence of similar positions either across the executive branch or within an agency; a need for common skill sets across positions could mean that applicants need not be limited to consideration for one position in one agency; instead, the PPO could consider them for various appointments. Candidates for the positions on one cabinet secretary's advance team are also in the running for the same function in another agency. For such positions the challenge is not finding a sufficient supply of potential applicants; rather, it is narrowing down the field of hopefuls. The incidence of a position might also interact with location, such as for U.S. attorneys. While each regional or state-level position requires anticipating the preferences of important stakeholders such as home state senators or influential local party or interest groups, presidents can essentially outsource much of the search to these stakeholders, who both expect more value from these positions and better understand the local dynamics. Bob Nash, director of presidential personnel for President Clinton from 1995-2000, highlights the contrast in effort required for common, compared to unique, positions:

So you [PPO] don't really spend a lot of time unless there's a specific challenge—for example, over at the USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] there was an SES. The position was in the rural utility service. I knew that the Secretary of Agriculture and the person who ran the Rural Utility Service were looking for somebody who could help implement this water 2000 project This person needs to know about water projects and water improvement districts. So you know that you have to have somebody who has worked with local governments and financing. Whereas, if you were going to get an SES for congressional affairs, you've got a hundred people walking around who have worked on the Hill and you don't spend much time (Nash 2000).

This comparative difficulty of finding someone from the pool of potential appointees for more demanding SES positions like that in the Rural Utility Service is similar to the challenge of filling PAS positions; some estimates suggest that, on average, presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS) positions do not have confirmed appointees for almost 25% of an administration (O'Connell 2009).

All of these factors indicate the importance of both presidential and potential appointee perspectives in any examination of the appointment process, even though the institutional features of the process, such as the president's constitutional appointment authority and the Senate's advice and consent role, are more visible. Rather than a straightforward choice made by the president without constraints, there are tensions between what presidents might desire and what is available to them.

The Interaction of Intra-Presidential Time and Appointee Characteristics

These tensions are then exacerbated over time due to the limited pools of appointees and the changing incentives and constraints for presidents and potential appointees. As their time in office advances and key junctures such as reelection approach, presidents emphasize different goals and desires over others; and their actions reflect this changing emphasis in areas such as regulatory decisions (de Rugy and Davies 2009), grant allocation (Hudak 2012), appeals to the public (Canes-Wrone 2005), and agency enforcement decisions (Hudak and Stack 2013). In the case of appointments, both presidents and potential appointees are similarly aware of and react to differing points in intra-presidential time.

With reelection already in mind at the beginning of their first terms, newly-inaugurated presidents will want to get the most capable people right from the start. And with the excitement of an election victory still fresh, potential appointees are most interested and ready to make the transition an appointment would require. This convergence of interests at the beginning of a new administration should thus translate into the initial appointee roster having the highest qualifications, both politically and substantively:

H1: The general qualifications—political or substantive expertise and experience—of appointees are at their highest in the first year of intra-presidential time.

If all initial appointees remained in place throughout a term, only this initial level of characteristics would be of interest to presidents and scholars alike. But because the turnover of appointees is high (Chang, Lewis, and McCarty 2001; Dull and Roberts 2009; Hecl 1977;

O’Connell 2009; Wood and Marchbanks 2007), especially at lower appointment levels, presidents cannot rely on just the first round of appointments. From a presidential perspective, the initial selection of the most qualified potential appointees from limited pools of available talent means that the eventual replacements for the initial appointees will have less substantive or functional capacity. And if potential appointees hold the conventional perception that presidents are more powerful early in their administrations, there could be a negative feedback loop that makes this perception self-fulfilling. Presidents choose their top picks early on, then other qualified potential appointees choose not to pursue or accept an appointment later in the term because they see less potential for fulfilling their own personal, professional, or political goals under a weakened president. And as the end of a term approaches, the shortened time horizon diminishes the value of a position for potential appointees and makes recruiting well-qualified candidates more difficult for the Presidential Personnel Office.

H2: The general qualifications—political or substantive expertise and experience—of appointees decline over intra-presidential time.

This general decline of qualifications or experience is likely, however, to affect political and substantive expertise differently. For substantive experts outside government, the uncertainty of an appointment—especially for Senate-confirmed positions—and the hectic pace of Washington might become less attractive over time. Some who would have served initially have moved on to other jobs or career paths instead of waiting patiently for an appointment; and for positions with significant substantive or technical requirements, this further limits an already shallow initial pool of candidates.

By contrast, there is a perception that there are legions of political hacks, campaign staffers, and donors simply waiting for their commissions as appointees from the White House. Given the historical losses in congressional elections for the party of the president in mid-term elections and generally higher pay of executive branch positions compared to jobs on Capitol Hill, there are hundreds of ambitious congressional staffers who might be looking for work. And even if every campaign worker or former congressional staffer already

has a job, there are think tank analysts, state legislative and executive branch personnel, and interest group affiliates ready to take an appointment. For young, ambitious political operatives, frequent job changes are the norm rather than the exception,⁶¹ so a short stint as an appointee could be appealing at almost any point in an administration. Such an appointment is the perfect stepping stone in anticipation of a long career in Washington—it gives them opportunities to build their networks of contacts, adds cachet to a resume, and pays better than many entry-level political jobs in Washington.

Based on this perception of a much deeper pool of potential appointees with more political and less substantive backgrounds, political experience and connections of appointees might not see the same decline as appointees' substantive qualifications over time:

H3: The substantive qualifications of appointees decline over time.

H4: The political experience of appointees remains constant or increases over time.

An additional factor that might influence the greater decline in substantive qualifications over intra-presidential time is the possibility of more persistent vacancies in technical or challenging positions that require higher levels of substantive expertise. If initial appointees leave prior to the end of a term, presidents could see potential benefits of leaving certain positions vacant and using current appointees or careerists to fill those positions on an acting basis. While allowing careerists to fill acting positions provides expertise advantages, shifting appointees into acting roles might give presidents greater political responsiveness while skipping the vetting and confirmation processes that delay the entry on duty of many political appointees. And for openings late in a term, careerists face little of the learning curve typical for political appointees, who spend much of the time in the position simply figuring out what they are supposed to do and how to get it done. Unlike many unexperienced appointees, careerists have “expertise in specific policy areas, familiarity with key stakeholders, an understanding of the folkways and informal power relationships of the agency and its

⁶¹One Senate staffer I interviewed described how he had just moved to his third different position in just over three years on the Hill, noting that this was fairly typical (personal interview, March 5, 2014).

policy arena, and aspects of federal work as mundane as how the accounting, records, and personnel systems work” (Lewis 2008, 144).

Do Presidents Improve Their Choices over Intra-Presidential Time?

Even if the pools of appointees are constrained, presidential selection of qualified appointees might increase throughout a term. Some scholars have argued that presidents learn on the job and develop some expertise that can slow or counteract other factors that diminish presidential effectiveness over time. Just as there is the “cycle of declining influence,” Light highlights the opposite cycle of increasing expertise (Light 1999). Specifically focusing on appointments and the White House Presidential Personnel Office, Krause and O’Connell (2013) suggest that this improvement results from leadership in the Presidential Personnel Office that is getting better at its job; a more savvy PPO can, as an administration progresses in intra-presidential time, find and select more substantively qualified or competent appointees rather than those who are seen as more loyal or “compliant.”⁶²

But both my interviews with recent PPO staffers and earlier descriptive work on the PPO suggests that the evidence for learning is, at best, mixed. This learning is contingent on stability and continuity, yet turnover in PPO itself precludes such a learning environment. One staffer from the George W. Bush PPO cited an example of the disruption in PPO, noting that most of the appointment staffers from the Obama transition team that she worked with just before and shortly after the 2008 election were no longer working on appointments after inauguration.⁶³ A former staffer in the Obama PPO described the experience as “climbing

⁶²Krause and O’Connell (2013) argue that learning overcomes the challenge of starting from scratch with each new administration: “For example, the Presidential Personnel Office, which plays a critical role in agency staffing, turns over with each administration. Directors of the PPO at the start of a president’s term often look for better plum jobs for themselves But as the term wears on, leadership settles and the PPO staff becomes better at finding and vetting potential appointees.”

⁶³Personal interview, March 4, 2014. This turnover included the initial personnel director for the transition team, Jim Messina, who switched positions less than two weeks after election day to become deputy chief of staff (see “President-elect Obama announces additional key White House staff,” press release, November 16, 2008. http://change.gov/newsroom/entry/president_elect_barack_obama_announces_additional_key_white_house_staff/ (April 25, 2014)). Don Gips, Messina’s replacement, had been working on the agency review teams for the Obama-Biden transition and was already slated for

onto a treadmill that constantly accelerates;” another echoed this perception, comparing the pace of work in PPO as much faster and more challenging than the pace at the highest levels of the campaign organization in the run-up to the 2008 election.⁶⁴ And Bob Nash, director of PPO under Bill Clinton, recalled how little time and effort he could dedicate to evaluating PPO’s collective performance; any time the PPO staff took to regroup and recharge was spent on forward-looking strategy for pressing needs rather than systematic analysis of what was working and what was not (Nash 2000).

2.3 Data, Measures, and Methods

To evaluate how presidential appointee characteristics change over time within an administration, I analyze a dataset of the background characteristics of appointees in the George W. Bush administration. These characteristics are coded from resumes of appointees obtained by Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to almost 100 government agencies in late May 2011. 53 agencies responded to the request for the names and resumes of all political appointees in these agencies from January 2001 to May 2011, providing resumes for at least some of the political appointees during the period of study. I focus on the 1,418 resumes for appointees during the Bush administration, as these resumes provide a sample of appointee characteristics for two full presidential terms.

This set of resumes, while extensive, is an incomplete sample of all appointees for several reasons. While some agencies responded quickly and thoroughly to the FOIA request for resumes, other agencies never responded to this specific request and other concurrent requests for basic lists of current and past appointees or information on inspector general investigations (Lewis and Wood 2012). Though some agencies responded to the requests, they

an ambassadorship (personal interview, March 6, 2014). Gips was officially named as personnel director on January 5, 2009 (see “Additional White House staff announced,” press release, January 5, 2009. http://change.gov/newsroom/entry/additional_white_house_staff_announced/ (April 25, 2014), even as his tenure’s end was already planned for summer 2009.

⁶⁴Personal interviews, March 2014, with Linda Jamison and Joanna Martin, both former special assistants to the President in PPO.

redacted most information—including the names of appointees and their qualifications for the position—from the resumes, in direct contradiction of Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance that describes the type of information that agencies should release after receiving FOIA requests.⁶⁵ Another limitation on getting background details on appointees is that agencies are not required to keep the personnel records after an appointee (or any employee) leaves the agency; they are supposed to send any such records to the National Personnel Records Center within 120 days of an employee leaving an agency. These records do not necessarily include the original resumes submitted by appointees when applying for the appointed positions.⁶⁶ And for Senate-confirmed appointees, the agencies do not necessarily have resumes; some responded to the FOIA request by printing out the appointees' biographical sketches from the agency websites.

The dataset includes information on the appointees' positions—gathered from agency-provided lists as well as from the Plum Book,⁶⁷ the Federal Yellow Book leadership directories, and web searches—and appointee backgrounds from the agency-provided resumes. Position details include the position title; start date for the appointment; agency, office or bureau; appointment type (see Figure 2.2 below: presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed (PAS: 147; 10.4%), non-career Senior Executive Service (SES: 330; 23.3%), Schedule C (SC: 904; 63.8%), or other excepted appointment (XS, PA: 37, 2.6%)); and pay plan and

⁶⁵The DOJ guidance states that “civilian federal employees who are not involved in law enforcement generally have no expectation of privacy regarding their names, titles, grades, salaries, and duty stations as employees or regarding the parts of their successful employment applications” (*Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act, 2009*, p. 430-31).

http://www.justice.gov/oip/foia_guide09/exemption6.pdf (April 22, 2014).

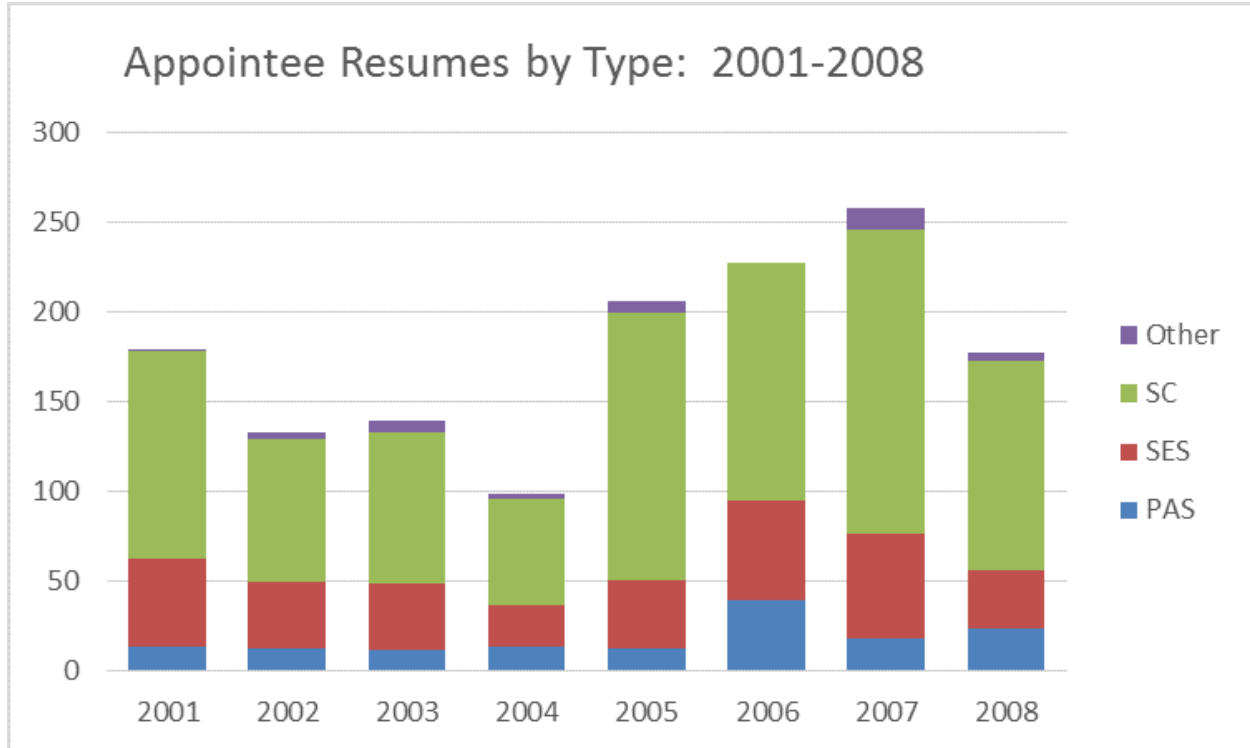
⁶⁶The Official Personnel Folders (OPF) sent to the NPRC contain the standard Office of Personnel Management forms used by agency human resource offices, but not necessarily original resumes. Access to the OPFs of former federal employees, including appointees, is slightly more restricted than what records are nominally available from agencies through FOIA. See “Official Personnel Folders (OPF), Federal (non-archival) Holdings and Access,”

<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/civilian-personnel/index.html> (April 22, 2014).

⁶⁷The Plum Book, so called for its cover's color, is officially titled *United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions*, and is produced each presidential election year by either the Senate's Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs or the House of Representatives' Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. It includes a listing of positions that can potentially be filled by presidential appointment outside the traditional civil service selection process for executive branch agencies.

grade. These counts are for new appointments made in each year rather than changing composition of the appointee team.

Figure 2.2: New Appointee Resumes by Appointment Type, 2001-2008



The resumes provide details on the backgrounds of appointees prior to their work in the administration; thus an appointee moving from one appointed position in the administration to another position would not get credit for the experience or expertise gained through the initial appointment in the administration. The dataset includes measures of education level (0-4; 1.52); subject or policy area expertise (0,1; 42.1%); specific task experience (0,1; 73.2%); previous federal or agency work (0,1; 25.2%); appointment in previous administration (0,1; 11.5%); work for the Bush/Cheney campaign (0,1; 25.8%), transition teams (0,1; 2.2%), or inauguration committees (0,1; 6.7%); prior experience working for the Republican Party at the local, state, or national level (0,1; 34.5%); number of previous campaigns (0-25; 1.1); and whether the appointee's previous job immediately before the appointment was political in nature (0,1; 63.1%). Another measure indicates whether the appointee worked in the White

House of the Bush administration prior to appointment to an agency (0,1; 7.8%). I excluded resumes on which the most relevant information had been redacted, such as education or prior work experience; most agencies redacted relatively little information, but others, such as the Department of the Navy, systematically redacted all substantive content, leaving only the category headings (Education, Work Experience, Honors/Awards, etc.) on the resumes. I included resumes that included most information but had one or two areas blank, coding those categories as missing rather than 0.⁶⁸

The sample of resumes is also limited in that there are more from the second term (868, 61.2%) of the Bush administration than the first (550, 38.8%), suggesting that the estimates for second term characteristics are more precise than for the first term. There is a broad sample of agency types and sizes among those that did respond, but there could be some systematic bias due to the selection effect of agencies that did not send resumes.

Methods

From the measures of experience gleaned from the resumes, I distinguish between those that contribute to either substantive or political expertise. For substantive qualifications, I group together characteristics that are associated in the presidency literature primarily with competence (e.g. Lewis and Waterman 2013), whether such competence is the result of specific work experience or educational training: education level, subject and task experience, or previous positions in the federal government (especially if in the same agency as the current appointment).⁶⁹ For political experience or expertise, I include the measures that indicate whether or not the appointee's previous job was of a political nature; work for the presidential campaign, transition team, or various inauguration committees; a White House position in

⁶⁸Coding details for both the resumes and position details are in the appendix.

⁶⁹I do not distinguish here between those appointees in the Bush administration with prior federal experience due to a presidential appointment in prior administrations or because of a career position in a federal agency; of the 327 appointees in the data who have federal experience, about half (159) were appointed in a prior administration. Regardless of the circumstances of prior federal experience, these appointees have at least some substantive experience based on that service.

the Bush administration or congressional staff experience prior to any appointment in the administration; or work for the Republican party at a local, state, or national level.

I compare the proportions of appointees with these characteristics in the first and second term, and then provide additional detail on how they change year by year across a full 8-year administration. I also estimate probit models of whether or not appointees have certain characteristics using first and second terms and post-election year indicators as key independent variables. These models include controls for level of appointment (PAS, SES, or SC) and agency fixed effects; and I use robust standard errors to adjust for the violation of the assumption that all observations are independent.

2.4 Results

The analyses generally confirm the expectations that appointees are less substantively qualified over the course of intra-presidential time and that political experience is fairly constant across an administration. The results also suggest that appointments made immediately following elections emphasize political experience or are simply patronage rewards for supporters and campaign personnel. And if these appointees are a key source of presidential influence or capacity, the findings suggest that presidents suffer from declining appointee effectiveness, especially in the second term.

First Look

The first broad hypothesis builds on the general perception that there are first-string and second-string appointees due to differing motivations between presidents and potential appointees, especially as an administration's power waxes or wanes. A comparison of appointee characteristics from Bush's first term to second term (see Table 2.1) shows that this perception is correct in certain areas of experience or expertise. While the initial levels of prior federal or agency experience, whether appointed or in a career position, are quite low already,

Table 2.1: Comparing First and Second Term Appointee Characteristics

	First Term	Second Term	Difference	Significant
<i>Substantive Qualifications</i>				
Previous Agency Experience	0.11	0.06	-0.05	✓
Previous Appointee Experience	0.17	0.08	-0.09	✓
Education Level	0.39	0.38	-0.01	
Federal Government Experience	0.28	0.21	-0.07	✓
Subject Expertise	0.46	0.40	-0.06	✓
Task Experience	0.73	0.73	0.00	
<i>Political Experience</i>				
Campaign Work	0.24	0.28	0.04	
Congressional Experience	0.39	0.32	-0.07	✓
Party Work	0.33	0.37	0.04	
Prior Political Job	0.65	0.62	-0.03	
Transition & Inauguration	0.09	0.09	0.00	
Previous White House Position	0.05	0.10	0.05	✓
✓ indicates difference of means is significant at 0.05 level for two-tailed tests.				

the decline in these levels from first to second terms is both substantively and statistically significant. And though the higher first term level of subject area expertise is not as high as proponents of “neutral competence” (Heclo 1975) might think is sufficient, the decrease is substantively less striking, albeit still statistically significant. Education and task experience are relatively unchanged across terms, with task experience slightly higher in the second term.

In contrast with substantive qualifications, the measures of political experience decline little or even increase in the second term. The measure for the appointee’s previous job as political or not is lower, but other measures of political experience—work for the Bush/Cheney campaign or the Republican Party—are higher. Second term appointees are also more likely to have had earlier appointments in the White House. And the measure of work on the transition team in 2000-2001 or on inaugurations in 2001 or 2005 remains low in both terms.⁷⁰

⁷⁰I also analyze these indicators separately, with transition being higher in the first term and inauguration higher in the second term. Given the unique situation of the 2000 election and transition period,

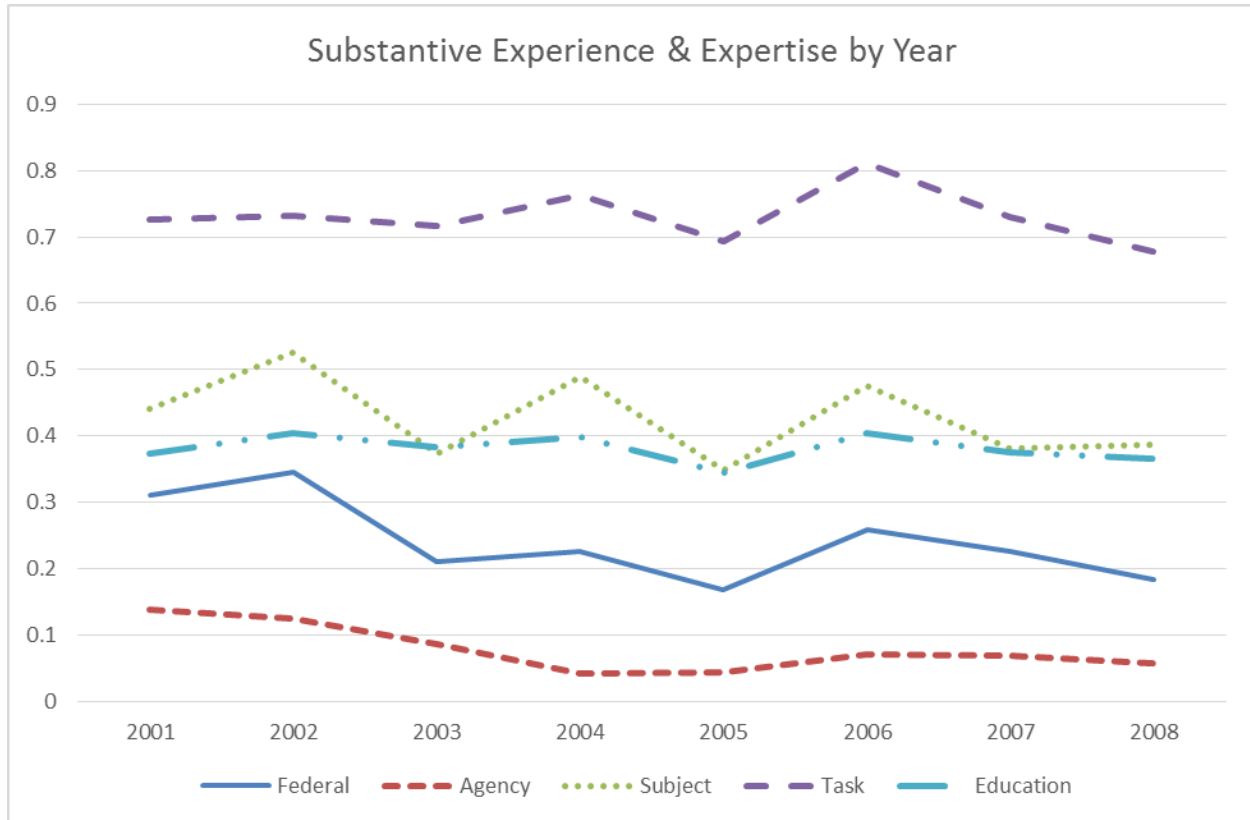
To further understand distinctive results between the measures of substantive qualifications and politically-focused experience from the first to the second term, I test the second and third hypotheses by evaluating the changes in these characteristics by years across both terms. The second hypothesis posits that substantive expertise will decline over the course of an administration because of limited labor pools. Figure 2.3 below illustrates that there are generally declines in the levels of the various characteristics associated with substantive competence, except for education levels and task experience. The strongest evidence of this fall in capacity is highlighted by the drop in prior work in federal government agencies and previous agency-specific experience. And even with some relative increases depending on the year, subject area expertise declines overall throughout the administration.

Thus when presidents are looking for appointees with either “neutral” (Hecklo 1975) or “responsive” (Moe 1985) competence, the pool of potential appointees with significant experience at the federal level appears extremely shallow—especially for lower level appointees. The proportion of PAS appointees with federal experience is the same across both terms, with around 50% having worked in the executive branch prior to appointment in the Bush administration. For SES and SC appointees, however, the proportions go from 42% and 19% in the first term to 31% and 12% in the second.

In contrast to these declining indicators of substantive capacity, hypothesis 3 highlights the expectation—initially supported by the broader aggregation of characteristics across terms—that political characteristics will remain constant or increase over the course of an administration. But the yearly measures (see Figure 2.4) suggest that there are dramatic increases immediately following the election or reelection of the president—but a general decline overall. These election-related spikes in characteristics such as campaign or party work could reflect a president’s desire to reward loyal supporters as well as the need for trusted appointees. Arguably the most valuable asset—to presidents—is a demonstrated

lower-than-expected levels of experience on either the transition or first inauguration would not be surprising.

Figure 2.3: Appointee Substantive Qualifications, 2001-2008

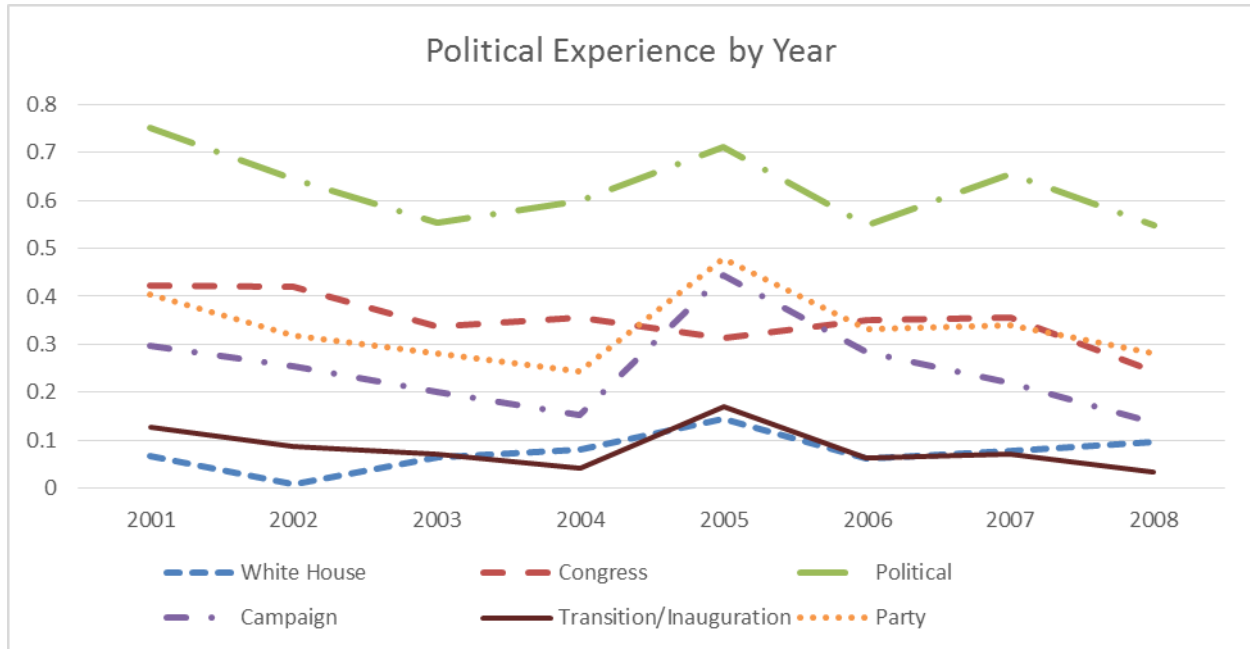


understanding of the president’s political goals and perspectives and the capability to help a president meet those goals. There are relatively few ways through which prospective appointees can acquire this capacity or signal such loyalty to presidents, and work on the campaign trail is the predominant course for doing so. The decline in campaign or party experience among appointees later in terms could indicate that the most capable campaign workers were appointed early on or there are simply fewer of them available or interested from whom presidents can choose.

In contrast to the other measures of political experience in Figure 2.4, the proportion of appointees with congressional connections exhibits a steady decline across both terms. The slight increases in 2006 and 2007 could stem from a surge of staffers either anticipating or having suffered layoffs following the Republican losses in the 2006 midterm elections.⁷¹

⁷¹In 2007, I encountered one such erstwhile congressional staffer who, having secured a Schedule C appointment at the Department of Energy after losing his position on a congressman’s staff following the

Figure 2.4: Appointee Political Qualifications, 2001-2008



Econometric Models

For more precise analysis of the effects of time on characteristics, I estimate probit regression models for each characteristic of interest. These models specifically focus on the differences between appointees' characteristics in post-election years, between first and second terms, and between appointment types.⁷² Table 2.2 below shows that substantive experience is relatively unchanged in post-election years compared to other years, but the differences between terms, like those illustrated in Figure 2.3 above, are both substantively and statistically significant. Controlling for appointment type highlights that this decline from the first to second terms is primarily among Schedule C appointees—even as they are becoming increasingly important for both political and policy reasons (Lewis and Waterman 2013).

To illustrate the substantive interpretation of these findings, I calculate the predicted

defeat of his boss in the 2006 midterms, was already concerned about losing his Schedule C position following the 2008 presidential election.

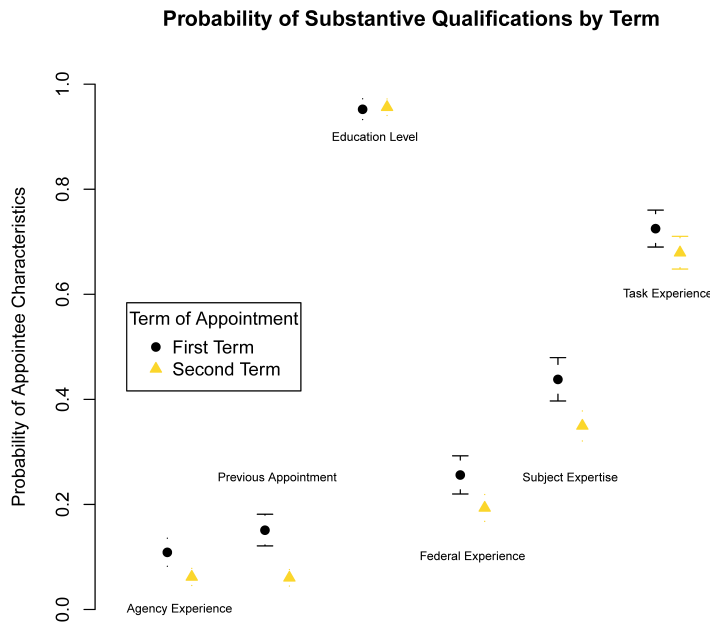
⁷²The agency fixed effects model loses many observations from agencies with few appointees and no variation in the dependent variable, but the results are substantively and statistically similar even with the additional observations available when not controlling for agency effects.

Table 2.2: Substantive Expertise over Intra-Presidential Time

	Education	Federal	Previous Agency	Subject	Task
<i>Time</i>					
Post-Election	-0.17 (0.14)	0.00 (0.10)	0.30* (0.13)	0.11 (0.09)	0.08 (0.09)
Term	0.04 (0.15)	-0.25* (0.09)	-0.39* (0.13)	-0.30* (0.09)	-0.16 (0.09)
<i>Appointment Type</i>					
PAS	0.17 (0.21)	1.22* (0.19)	0.89* (0.27)	1.40* (0.19)	0.79* (0.23)
SES	0.38* (0.19)	0.67* (0.10)	0.81* (0.14)	0.98* (0.09)	0.81* (0.11)
N	1,144	1,242	1,096	1,232	1,207
<p>Estimates are from probit regression models, with robust standard errors in parentheses. * indicates significance at 0.05 level; models include fixed effects for agencies.</p>					

probabilities for whether appointees are likely to have specific qualifications based on being appointed in either the first or second term. The change from first to second term, for example, decreases the probability that appointees have subject-area expertise to just 0.34, compared to 0.45 for first term appointees (see Figure 2.5). Except for education levels, the probabilities for appointees having other characteristics associated with competence also drop in the second term.

Figure 2.5: Predicted Probabilities for Appointee Characteristics (1)



Political experience, by contrast, tends to increase both in post-election years and in the second term—except for congressional experience. Table 2.3 indicates that these increases are, like for substantive qualifications, driven by changes in the Schedule C appointees. Political experience among these lower-level appointees is holding constant or increasing, as expected, while higher-level appointees are less politically qualified.

Calculating predicted probabilities for party work experience, for example, shows that

Table 2.3: Political Experience over Intra-Presidential Time

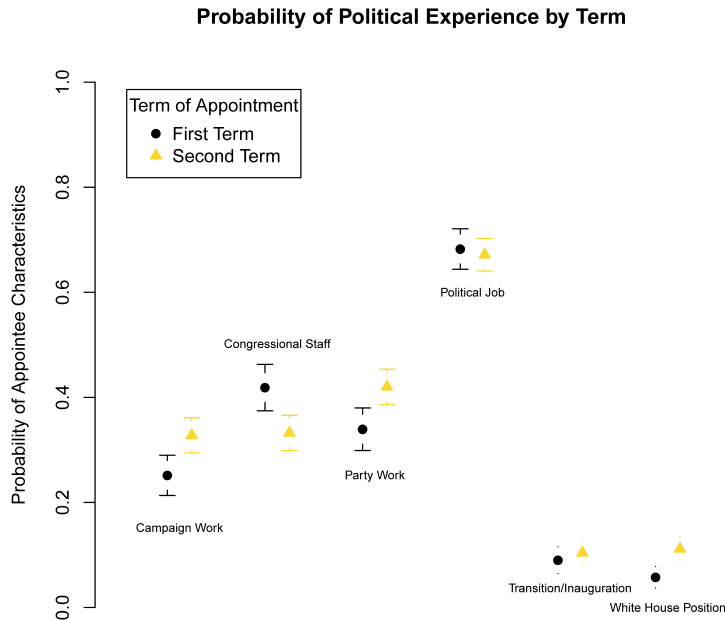
	Congress	Political	Party	Campaign	Transition & Inauguration	White House
<i>Time</i>						
Post-Election	0.02 (0.08)	0.27* (0.09)	0.22* (0.08)	0.34* (0.09)	0.41* (0.11)	0.26* (0.11)
Term	-0.24* (0.08)	-0.04 (0.09)	0.24* (0.08)	0.24* (0.09)	0.09 (0.11)	0.37* (0.12)
<i>Appointment Type</i>						
PAS	-0.51* (0.19)	-0.72* (0.17)	-1.00* (0.23)	-1.70* (0.47)	-1.04* (0.50)	-0.16 (0.25)
SES	0.29* (0.09)	-0.39* (0.09)	-0.55* (0.09)	-0.40* (0.10)	-0.37* (0.13)	-0.21 (0.13)
N	1,211	1,199	1,212	1,186	1,178	1,207

Estimates are from probit regression models, with robust standard errors in parentheses. * indicates significance at 0.05 level; models include agency fixed effects.

the probability of having such experience increases from 0.33 in the first term to 0.42 in the second (see Figure 2.6). While the likelihoods of having worked on Capitol Hill or holding a political job immediately prior to appointment decrease in the second term, other political experience is more likely after the president's reelection.

One limitation of the dataset is that early appointees in the administration who then receive subsequent appointments in different positions or agencies do not get credit for the experience gained from the initial appointment; the number of appointees who move up or around during the administration would add to the levels of substantive experience. Without more precise information on how many appointees receive multiple appointments within the same administration, estimating the effect on overall characteristic levels remains a challenge.

Figure 2.6: Predicted Probabilities for Appointee Characteristics (2)



2.5 Conclusion

Presidential influence over policy-making could decline over intra-presidential time for many reasons. In the legislative arena, it might simply be that most easily-shifted policies are already moved closer to a president’s ideal point; any remaining policies are unlikely to move because of institutional features that create multiple veto points and consequent gridlock (Krehbiel 1996). It could be that the public has lost interest, so “going public” does not help a president sway either public opinion or congressional positions (Canes-Wrone 2001). But for management of the executive branch, it could be that the capacity of leadership and supporting appointees has changed over the course of an administration.

Controlling the executive branch agencies to obtain political and policy benefits is an enormous challenge for the small organizations led by presidents who function under chal-

lenging time and institutional constraints; appointments are a critical strategy that presidents employ to influence agency decisions and outputs. Ideally, presidents would have complete information and time to recruit the best possible appointees to provide a perfect blend of political and policy benefits; but there are limits on the political capital and institutional capacity presidents have and will expend on appointments. And, as the results above suggest, these limitations become more pronounced as the most qualified and loyal appointees have begun to leave—and finding replacements as qualified or effective as the initial appointees is difficult. This could result from either limited initial labor markets from which presidents can select appointees or that some positions have become less attractive to potential appointees with the characteristics that presidents want.

The difference in declining substantive qualifications between Senate-confirmed and lower-level appointees also reiterates the perpetual concern about patronage. As even the designer of the appointment power acknowledged, without the check of Senate confirmation, presidents would be tempted to appoint “candidates who had no other merit than that of coming from the same State . . . or of being in some way or other personally allied to [the president], or of possessing the necessary insignificance and pliancy to render them the obsequious instruments of his pleasure” (Hamilton 1788c). The findings above indicate that this temptation seems most powerful immediately following an election, as campaign workers and party loyalists are ready for their rewards; and then, as the pools of substantively qualified candidates run empty toward the end of an administration, presidents again have plentiful politically experienced candidates from which to choose.

Another important implication of these results is the effect of new—and less qualified—appointees, especially lower-level Schedule C appointees, entering into existing organizational teams at different stages of an administration. If presidents make appointments in teams or groups rather than in isolation, these new entrants could disrupt established leadership teams that have finally gotten up to speed on handling the myriad challenges facing their particular agency. This reiterates how the high rates of turnover among appointees could

damage agency performance—not just by the departure of the initial appointees, but also because of the arrival of new team members without the same capacity, perspective, or attachment to the existing leadership group.

As challenging as the initial appointments process is for presidents and their personnel operations, this paper highlights how finding and appointing replacements for initial appointees can be even more demanding. Because of limited pools of potential appointees from which to choose and the often competing motivations of those most able to successfully fill appointed positions, presidents cannot expect that their power to appoint can easily overcome other influences that diminish or constrain their power over intra-presidential time.

CHAPTER 3

Striped Pants versus Fat Cats: Ambassadorial Performance of Career Diplomats and Political Appointees

Abstract

With the 20th-century expansion of the executive branch and presidents' increasingly sophisticated efforts to control it, understanding the effects of presidential personnel choices on governance and bureaucratic performance is more important than ever. A growing literature on bureaucratic performance focuses on differences in performance of programs or agencies led by either careerists or political appointees; yet this literature still struggles to measure and then compare performance across agencies or separate the individual performance of careerists and appointees from agency or program performance. By examining ambassadorial performance at U.S. embassies, this paper provides both new performance measures and analysis of individual- and organization-level differences in performance due to the influence of either careerist or appointed leadership. To test the personal and institutional characteristics that affect ambassadorial performance, I construct a new dataset using embassy inspection reports by the State Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and State Department biographies. With these data, I find that the traditional dichotomy of careerists versus appointees explains some performance differences in comparable institutional settings, but that the individual-level characteristics such as language or regional experience that are expected to affect performance are not influential. These findings have important implications for presidents in their approach to appointee selection, for agencies in how they measure and evaluate performance, and for our understanding of the influence of leaders, both careerists and appointees, on agency performance.

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 2014 annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 9-11. I am grateful to Caroline Drinnon for her work in collecting and coding data on ambassadors and embassies. And I thank my colleagues at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions for their helpful comments throughout the development of this project and participants in Vanderbilt's Graham Symposium for their feedback.

Introduction

On July 2, 1881, Charles Guiteau shot President James Garfield as retribution for Garfield's refusal to appoint Guiteau as ambassador to Vienna or consul general to Paris (Peskin 1977). Patronage excesses and scandals after the Civil War had produced calls for reform of the government bureaucracies, and Garfield's assassination by this disgruntled and delusional campaign worker was the tipping point for the passage of the Pendleton Act of 1883. The Pendleton Act and other civil service reforms that followed were based in part on the concept of a clearly discernible demarcation between politics and administration. As one prominent political scientist (and future president) put it in 1887, "most important to be observed is the truth already so much and so fortunately insisted upon by our civil-service reformers; namely, that administration lies outside the proper sphere of *politics*. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices" (Wilson 1887, emphasis in the original).

This view of administration emphasized improvement in both personnel and organization as the two critical elements of better policy implementation. Reformers argued that expert personnel, protected from the political whims of any given administration, could attain a higher objective standard of performance than appointees who were given jobs, not because of their qualifications or expertise, but as "a recognition of past services or perhaps a credit toward future considerations" for a candidate or party (Mackenzie 1981, xix). Abundant anecdotal evidence—both then and now—suggests that such "patronage" appointments distributed among campaign workers and donors results in poor agency performance, corruption, and low morale among more public-spirited government workers (e.g. Hecló 1977; Lewis 2008); and all modern candidates and presidents of both parties promise to adopt good governance best practices and pledge not to appoint special interest lobbyists or unqualified hacks to important positions. Demonstrating the performance advantages of career civil servants, a slew of internal federal government and external organization awards for achievement

and innovation highlight outstanding performance by careerists across all federal agencies.⁷⁴ One frequently cited example of this contrast between politically connected but incompetent appointees and dutiful, expert careerists is presidential appointment of ambassadors at U.S. embassies abroad.⁷⁵

Yet recent scandals, such as lavish spending on conferences by the General Services Administration⁷⁶ and a top Environmental Protection Agency policymaker defrauding the agency of almost \$1 million,⁷⁷ seem to contradict the conventional wisdom that careerists are (less) immune from corruption. Conversely, there are political appointees with exceptional abilities who reenergize agencies and lead innovative programs, such as James Lee Witt at the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the 1990s (Lewis 2008). These examples of corrupt careerists and outstanding appointees raise the questions of whether careerists systematically perform better than political appointees and what factors, either in leaders' personal backgrounds or institutional features, might contribute to any differences in performance. Understanding appointee performance matters for presidents and the public who hold them accountable. Presidents want to know if their appointment strategies and appointees are contributing to achieving their policy and electoral goals, while the general public needs information on performance to hold elected leaders accountable.

This paper examines ambassadorships, a category of appointed positions normally ig-

⁷⁴See e.g. the Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership, awarded annually by American University's Department of Public Administration and Policy:

<http://www.american.edu/spa/dpap/Roger-Jones-History.cfm>.

⁷⁵A recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing highlighted the stereotypical donor-turned-ambassador who had a difficult time answering basic questions about the country to which he was assigned; see Smith, Alexander. 2014. "Obama under fire after appointing major donor as Norway envoy." January 24, 2014. <http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/\unhbox\voidb@x\bgroup\let\unhbox\voidb@x\setbox\@tempboxa\hbox{n\global\mathchardef\accent@spacefactor\spacefactor}\accent18n\egroup\spacefactor\accent@spacefactorews/2014/01/24/22429336-obama-under-fire-after-appointing-major-donor-as-norway-envoy> (January 27, 2014).

⁷⁶Rein, Lisa and Timothy R. Smith. 2012. "GSA conference went 'over the top.'" *Washington Post*. April 4, 2012. http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-04-04/politics/35451518_1_administrator-martha-johnson-awards-ceremony-gsa-event-planner (January 27, 2014).

⁷⁷Simpson, Ian. 2013. "Ex-EPA adviser admits to fraud, CIA stint claim, 13 years of lies," *Reuters*, September 27, 2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-usa-crime-epa-idUSBRE98Q12J20130927>

(January 27, 2014).

nored in the bureaucratic politics and performance literatures, to explain how presidential personnel choices and the specific characteristics of agency leaders, whether appointees or careerists, influence performance at the individual and agency levels. Ambassadorships offer both substantive and practical advantages to studying the connection between presidential personnel choices and agency performance: 1) though highly visible in presidential politics and foreign policy, we know little systematically about ambassadors and embassy performance; 2) both appointees and careerists fill these positions in comparable bureaucratic contexts; and 3) the availability of comparable measures of performance across contexts avoids some limitations of earlier measures.

Ambassadors have historically been at the heart of the debate over appointments and performance, as they have played prominent roles in American history, both in pivotal crises such as the struggle for independence from Great Britain and in patronage scandals and inter-branch conflicts over presidential power. Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel—most recently in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen⁷⁸—also highlight the visibility of ambassadors and embassies to foreign audiences. These positions and the embassies in which they are located also share important functional characteristics with many other federal executive positions and offices, making findings generalizable to other contexts within the federal executive establishment. And ambassadorships provide methodological leverage for evaluating performance because of a large available sample, variation both across type of appointee (careerist and non-careerist) and within type (background characteristics) for similar positions with uniform appointment criteria and legal authority, and a statutorily-designed evaluation scheme with clear criteria for performance.

I outline below what we know about presidential appointments and performance, the problems that scholars confront in explaining and measuring performance, and the literature

⁷⁸See e.g. Ghobari, Mohammed and Edmund Blair. “U.S. embassies attacked in Yemen, Egypt after Libya envoy killed,” *Reuters*, September 13, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/13/us-protests-idUSBRE88C0J320120913> (February 3, 2014).

on ambassadors. Drawing on historical background on ambassadorial appointments and how modern ambassadors and embassies function, I then articulate why evaluating ambassadorial performance can contribute to this literature by providing an initial evaluation of individual and management team level performance of different types of appointees and careerists in the same position. Following a description of the data and methods for examining ambassadorial performance, I discuss the empirical analyses that highlight the influence of individual level characteristics of ambassadors. I conclude by outlining the implications of these findings for future study of performance and changes to bureaucratic practice to improve agency management.

3.1 Choice and Consequence:

Presidential Personnel Choices and Performance

A growing literature explores how presidential personnel choices are inseparable from agency performance. Scholars have long focused on one key aspect of performance as agency responsiveness to presidential political control, and extensive empirical evidence underscores the theoretical expectations that appointee placement and ideology influence agency responsiveness. Another important aspect of performance is defined as objective or general management performance. While initial studies of objective management performance suggest that appointees perform worse than careerists, scholars still struggle to overcome the limitations of available performance measures, making explanation and evaluation of performance at the individual position level and in comparable bureaucratic contexts difficult. These studies descriptively use qualitative data on a broad range of position types, from ambassadors to Schedule C staff assistants, to explain possible performance differences; but, empirically, they have focused only on the specific position types for which quantitative data are more readily available. For an entire class of highly visible presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed appointees—ambassadors—we are beginning to understand how presidents systematically

select them but have only scattered anecdotes regarding their performance. Research on ambassadors and their performance could provide insight into this specific appointee group and bureaucratic performance generally.

Performance as Responsiveness to Political Principals

Presidents seek to politicize the executive branch bureaucracy by controlling the number and penetration of appointees (Nathan 1975; Lewis 2008). They see appointments as instruments for dealing with “the inevitably changing short-term pressures of presidential politics” (Moe 1985, 152) and as opportunities for rewarding political supporters—even if agency performance suffers as a result (Lewis 2008). Thus presidents, driven by electoral and other political goals as well as by policy interests or desire for general good management, seek to identify and appoint people who demonstrate “responsive” (Moe 1985) rather than “neutral” (Hecl 1975; Kaufman 1956) competence. Such competence depends in large measure on political skills used in establishing relationships with important stakeholders, managing strategic agency actions to meet political needs, and articulating policy goals that match a president’s agenda (Maranto 2011). Presidents ideally want appointees who understand presidential priorities and have substantive expertise relevant to the agency in which they will work (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis n.d.).

Beginning with regulatory commissions (Moe 1982; Stewart and Cromartie 1982; Wood and Waterman 1991, 1994), scholars have traced changes in bureaucratic performance stemming from shifts in the partisanship and ideology of presidents and their appointees. Other work finds similar effects on the extent and timing of agency enforcement actions to illustrate agency responsiveness to presidential political or policy needs (Hudak and Stack 2013; Stewart and Cromartie 1982). Distributive agencies provide other examples of responsiveness, whether in Nixon’s efforts to reshape welfare policy through personnel changes as he approached and won reelection (Randall 1979) or the award of grants and contracts to key constituencies or regions (Berry, Burden, and Howell 2010; Gordon 2011; Hudak 2012).

The Challenge of Defining and Measuring Management Performance

While presidents might define performance as a function of agency or appointee responsiveness to presidential goals, “for members of Congress, clients of the agency, or other interested parties, the definition of good performance is likely to differ” (Lewis 2007, 1075). Civil servants have policy or ideological preferences of their own and might be frustrated by the constantly changing priorities and demands from political appointees (Clinton et al. 2012), and public sector unions would prefer that the high level jobs were reserved for careerists. Both agency employees and the recipients of goods and services provided by agencies could be frustrated by degradation in general management performance due to presidential prioritization of patronage and politicization.

Because the agencies within which appointees and civil servants work were designed not just for objective performance but also to meet either short- or long-term political goals of the designers (Lewis 2003), presidential selection of appointees and their subsequent performance often reveal these tensions between political goals and institutional management—or, in Wilson’s characterization, the inherent conflict between “politics” and “administration.” Focusing on objective management performance rather than responsiveness to the competing demands of political principals, scholars have argued that careerists are better equipped to manage agencies and programs than appointees because of agency-specific experience, longer tenures, and management skills developed in the public, rather than private, context (Chang, Lewis, and McCarty 2001; Hecl 1977; Lewis 2008). In contrast, appointees could bring a “constant infusion of new blood” into agencies that provides “fresh ideas and greater sensitivity to other groups and sectors of society” as well as “exceptional energy and zeal to their brief periods of public service that are hard for long-service bureaucrats to match” (Bok 2003, 264). Such energy and external perspective might lead to better management performance in addition to the presidential goal of greater responsiveness.

To arbitrate between such competing claims, scholars have taken several approaches to

studying objective performance of careerists and appointees, including measuring budget forecasting accuracy, comparing internal program evaluation scores, and fielding surveys of agency employees. Drawing on previous literature in economics and fiscal political economy, Krause, Douglas, and Lewis (2006) evaluate state-level budget forecasting and the effects of different personnel systems on the accuracy of those forecasts. They find that forecasting done by state agencies with distinct personnel systems for supervisory versus subordinate levels, such as systems in which gubernatorial appointees manage careerists, was more accurate.

Another approach has focused on performance measures derived from a management evaluation tool designed and implemented by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) during George W. Bush's first term. This grading scheme, called the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), relied on input from agency managers and OMB examiners about a given agency's program design, strategic planning, program management, and results (Gilmour and Lewis 2006). In one example of work using PART scores to compare performance, Gilmour and Lewis (2006) use the scores from 234 programs to compare programs led by PAS appointees with those run by Senior Executive Service careerists; they find that appointee-led programs averaged lower scores on multiple management measures. To more specifically evaluate background characteristics associated with performance, Lewis (2007) explores the effects of previous bureau experience, length of tenure, and education levels on performance. While appointees have higher levels of academic credentials and private management experience, programs administered by careerists, with more experience and longer tenures, received higher PART evaluations (Lewis 2007). Demonstrating that programs led by appointees whose primary experience was on political campaigns performed worse than those led by either careerists or other appointees, Gallo and Lewis suggest that the limited substantive or task experience of these appointees negatively affects program performance as reflected in lower PART scores (2012). And combining PART scores with survey responses from agency employees in the Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS), Lewis demonstrates

that agencies with higher proportions of appointee managers score lower on both measures than those agencies with fewer appointees (Lewis 2008).

These and other studies seem to validate the extensive qualitative literature and journalistic accounts of the detrimental effect of appointee management on objective agency or program performance. Yet each of the measures used—budget forecasts, PART scores, and survey responses—suffers from limitations that make valid inference difficult across positions, agencies, and administrations. Budget forecasting is a unique technical task that might not be generalizable to other agencies or programs (Gallo and Lewis 2012). One concern about PART scores is the disparate levels of response effort among agencies along ideological or partisan lines (Lavertu, Lewis, and Moynihan n.d.); another critique indicates that scores could reflect executive expertise at fulfilling the PART process itself rather than program performance (Gilmour 2006). And survey responses of federal workers “rely on the impressions of federal employees who may or may not be close enough to agency senior leaders to accurately evaluate performance” (Gallo and Lewis 2012, 221).

These shortcomings reflect the numerous challenges to comparing the effect of appointees on performance across agencies: “it is hard to compare executives and agencies against each other since agencies have different mandates, operating environments, and constraints It requires an acceptable definition of good performance, an identification of the universe of federal bureau chiefs, an acceptable grading scheme, willingness on the part of federal executives to participate, and an approach that is sensitive to differences among federal programs” (Lewis 2007, 1075). Comparing performance across individual agency or office leaders is similarly difficult, as many positions are either not comparable across agencies or there is no variation between careerists and appointees in a given position. Performance measures like PART or survey responses are agency or program level measures, reflecting the capacities and efforts of many people; individual performance data are either not collected at all or, in the case of yearly individual evaluations, are not available even in aggregate form due to privacy law.

What We Know about American Ambassadors

There is an entire class of appointed positions—ambassadorships—with features that might address some of the shortcomings of extant studies of performance described above. Although presidents typically make more than 200 ambassadorial nominations in a single term, we know little systematically about ambassadorial appointments and performance. There is descriptive and historical work, often focused on specific ambassadors or foreign policy crises; frequent mentions in the press and scholarly literature on appointments about the propriety and consequences of appointing campaign donors to ambassadorships; and a limited theoretical and empirical literature on the selection of ambassadors. What we do not know reflects the limitations of the bureaucratic performance literature generally: Are these positions generalizable to other contexts in the executive branch? What affects performance individually and collectively? And is there an agreed-upon definition of performance and a way to measure it?

All ambassadorships are subject to presidential appointment and Senate confirmation, and thus all ambassadors—regardless of professional background—could be described as presidential or political appointees. As ambassadorial vacancies occur, especially at the beginning of a new presidential term, State Department leadership and the White House Presidential Personnel Office jointly determine those positions that career diplomats will fill and those that non-career appointees will take. Though there are some positions that have historically been filled almost exclusively by one type or the other, many ambassadorships alternate between types. The State Department provides lists of possible careerist candidates for the designated careerist positions to the White House for final consideration, and the Presidential Personnel Office develops candidate lists for the other positions. The president then makes the formal appointments for all positions. In this paper, I refer to presidentially appointed ambassadors who are career Foreign Service officers as “career diplomats” or

“careerists” and to those who are not as “political appointees.”⁷⁹ Since 1960, the allocation of ambassadorships has fluctuated around 65% careerists and 35% political appointees.

Much of the descriptive work on ambassadors, both careerists and political appointees, comes from firsthand memoirs or historical accounts. Edited collections of interviews with former ambassadors provide an in-depth look at ambassadorships, from selection to training, from arrival at post to the departure for home (e.g. Mak and Kennedy 1992; Morgan and Kennedy 2004); the interviews themselves are part of an ongoing oral history project run by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST).⁸⁰ The American Foreign Service Association maintains data on ambassadorial appointments since 1960, as well as links to media reports on ambassadorial appointments and ambassadorial performance.⁸¹

Along with descriptive material, the commentary from journalists, foreign policy practitioners, and scholars that accompanies every announcement of a prominent ambassadorial appointee highlights the salience of ambassadors in the broader debate about patronage, qualifications and expertise, and presidential prerogatives in the appointments process. George Kennan, a diplomat famous for his contribution to—and later criticism of—the design of the Truman administration’s policy of “containment” and the Marshall Plan, articulated the case against presidential prerogatives in ambassadorial appointments. Decrying the “entrenched political control of the foreign service,” Kennan argued that the appointment of non-career ambassadors is just one of many factors that frustrate diplomats, hinder recruitment efforts, and damage the conduct of foreign policy (1997, 203). Echoing Kennan, another former career ambassador focused on the patronage aspect of some political appointments to ambassadorships, urging both candidates in the 2008 presidential election to end the practice of appointing campaign donors to ambassadorships: “it is untenable for a great power, a

⁷⁹This follows the convention of the American Foreign Service Association, which categorizes ambassadors as either “career” or “political.” See <http://www.afsa.org/ambassadors.aspx>. Other scholars have used “professional” or “foreign service” and “nonprofessional” to characterize ambassadors of differing backgrounds (e.g. Hollibaugh 2014).

⁸⁰The collection is available from ADST at <http://adst.org/oral-history/> or the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/> (January 28, 2014).

⁸¹Available at <http://www.afsa.org/ambassadors.aspx> (January 28, 2014).

global power, to entrust its frontline national security managers—ambassadors—to used car salesmen, hairdressers, art dealers and strip mall developers, as it has in the recent past It is time to end the last great vestige of the 19th-century spoils system. The American people, our foreign policy, our national security, and our current and future career Foreign Service officers deserve better” (Bodine 2008).

From a presidential perspective, however, ambassadorships should be under political control just like other senior policymaking positions. A former staffer in the Presidential Personnel Office who was responsible for selecting political appointee ambassadors recalls how careerists in the State Department were highly resistant to political appointees and did not recognize “how important proximity to the president could be.”⁸² This proximity can provide presidents with information that does not get filtered through the State Department hierarchy in “a bad game of telephone.”⁸³ Responding to the critiques of Kennan and others about political appointees, one former non-career ambassador argues that, “[by] resisting the legitimacy of political appointments essential to presidential control, [the Foreign Service] inevitably rejects as well the legitimacy of political direction” (Silberman 1979). And presidents defend what critics derisively call “patronage” appointments broadly and in ambassadorships specifically on the grounds that “what some appointees lack in demonstrated credentials, they make up for in general competence and a close connection to the president. Indeed, the connections and experience that come with work for the campaign or party may provide executives precisely what is needed for them to do their job well” (Gallo and Lewis 2012).

Recent social science work has begun to add theoretical and empirical examination of the selection of ambassadorial types for specific posts. An initial study buttresses the conventional wisdom by showing that political appointees typically receive postings in high-income, high-tourism countries, and by developing an “implicit price list” for sought-after postings

⁸²Personal interview, March 5, 2014.

⁸³Ibid.

in western European capitals such as London (Fedderke and Jett 2012). Hollibaugh (2013) develops and then empirically tests a theory to explain presidential selection of ambassadors by incorporating expectations of policy and patronage benefit along with a penalty in policy for less competent appointees; the analyses and results go beyond Fedderke and Jett's (2012) findings to suggest both domestic and foreign political factors that influence presidential choices. And although these two studies examine the selection phase for ambassadors, neither the expansive literature on Senate confirmation of appointees or the expanding performance literature address what happens after the initial nomination of ambassadors.

These initial empirical studies of ambassadorial selection, along with the broad descriptive literature and active debate on selection and performance, highlight how little we know about these appointments even though they are highly visible in policy and political debates. As Hollibaugh (2013) articulates, but much of the general commentary glosses over, there is significant variation between careerists and appointees both within individual ambassadorships and across the class as a whole. Yet we do not have systematic data on variation within these types; for example, how many political appointees—or, perhaps more interestingly, careerists—have language skills or experience in the countries to which they are sent? What, if any, are the differences in the tasks they perform or the embassies they lead? And, recognizing that not all political appointees perform poorly and not all careerists perform well, are there systematic differences, *on average*, in performance either between or within types of ambassadors?

3.2 Ambassadorial Advantages for a New Approach to Appointments and Performance

Answering some of these questions about ambassadors could also offer explanations for some of the broader issues yet unanswered in the bureaucratic performance literature. Perhaps for no other appointed position has the tension between presidents' constitutional prerogative of

appointments and then-professor Woodrow Wilson's ideal of a complete separation of politics from administration remained so palpable and unresolved as it has for ambassadorships. Though generally not a focus of study for bureaucratic politics scholars, ambassadorships offer historical, institutional, and methodological advantages for understanding the effect of presidential personnel choices on bureaucratic performance at both the individual and program or agency level. First, ambassadors are an important class of appointments in their own right, as they are prominent, and often controversial, in policy and political debates. Ambassadorships are also located in comparable bureaucratic contexts managed by appointees and careerists, providing important variation for understanding factors that influence bureaucratic performance. And there are available performance measures that are comparable across contexts and thus mitigate limitations of earlier measures. Following some historical background on ambassadorships and appointments, I describe the institutional context within which ambassadors work, the expectations for why career diplomats could perform better than political appointees in ambassadorships, and how the State Department's process for assessing ambassadorial and embassy performance could yield important new measures of appointee and agency performance.

Ambassadorial Appointments from the Founding to the Present

Throughout our nation's history, ambassadorships have exemplified the debate about presidential choice and government performance. Ambassadors, or ministers and envoys as they were primarily called until the 1890s, played a key role in American independence by negotiating France's entry into the Revolutionary War and securing lines of credit to finance the war efforts. The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution both explicitly authorized the sending and receiving of ambassadors as a core function of government's foreign affairs responsibilities; and the Department of State (originally Foreign Affairs) was the first cabinet department established. Despite such historical and institutional importance in the early Republic, ambassadorships quickly became seen in the public eye as the embodiment

of the spoils system rather than as essential positions for conducting foreign policy.⁸⁴ And it was contention over an ambassadorship that led to President Garfield's assassination in 1881 and the subsequent passage of the Pendleton Act: Garfield's assassin, Charles Guiteau, had wanted to be appointed either as ambassador to Vienna or consul general to Paris (Peskin 1977).

Like in other agencies, the civil service reforms affecting the State Department began after the Pendleton Act of 1883 and centered on concerns about recruitment, retention, patronage, and performance. While serving in the U.S. legation to Russia in the late 1890s, Herbert Peirce—a Harvard graduate, son-in-law of a senator, and career diplomat—had eloquently argued for this professionalization of diplomacy:

As we would not put a ship into the hands of a commander ignorant of navigation, an army under the control of a general without military training, a suit at law into the hands of a counsel who never opened a law book, a suffering wife and child under the care of a person wholly unskilled in medicine; so we should not put the foreign affairs of our government into the hands of men without knowledge of the various subjects which go to make up diplomatic science and consular efficiency (1897, 919).

Peirce's argument reflected the milieu of progressive civil service reform at the end of the 19th century, which focused on the problems of appointed, rather than careerist, leadership in government agencies. Speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives just over a decade later, congressman Frank Lowden of Illinois voiced his concerns about the long-term challenge of recruiting talented diplomats when the top posts seemed permanently off-limits, arguing that, "it ought to be possible for the lowest man in the foreign service to feel that it is within his power, if his service justifies it, to reach the highest posts" ("Rise to World Power, 1867-1913" n.d.).

⁸⁴In a report to President Andrew Jackson, forwarded to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State Edward Livingston wrote in 1833 that "ministers [ambassadors] are considered as favorites, selected to enjoy the pleasures of foreign travel at the expense of the people; their places as sinecures; and their residence abroad as a continued scene of luxurious enjoyment" (Message from the President of the United States, 1833).

Responding to such arguments, Presidents Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt issued executive orders that required entrance examinations and merit-based promotion for consuls and diplomats; further legislation in 1906 established a grade classification for consular officials and an inspection system of consular operations overseas (“Rise to World Power, 1867-1913” n.d.). Then in 1924 the passage of the Rogers Act created the Foreign Service. The Foreign Service Act of 1980 explicitly focused on the influence of campaign donations on ambassadorial selection, asserting that ambassadorial appointments “should normally be accorded to career members of the [Foreign] Service . . .” and that “contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor” in such appointments (§304, 1980).

But extensive legislative reforms, the occasional journalistic piece on the price of ambassadorships,⁸⁵ and constant complaints from retired careerists and the American Foreign Service Association have not deterred presidents (or potential ambassadors). Since passage of the Foreign Service Act, approximately 74% of ambassadors to countries in the G8 economic group and approximately 54% of those assigned to G20 member nations have been non-career appointees (American Foreign Service Association 2013). For the past 50 years, presidents have generally given about 30% of all ambassadorships to political appointees.

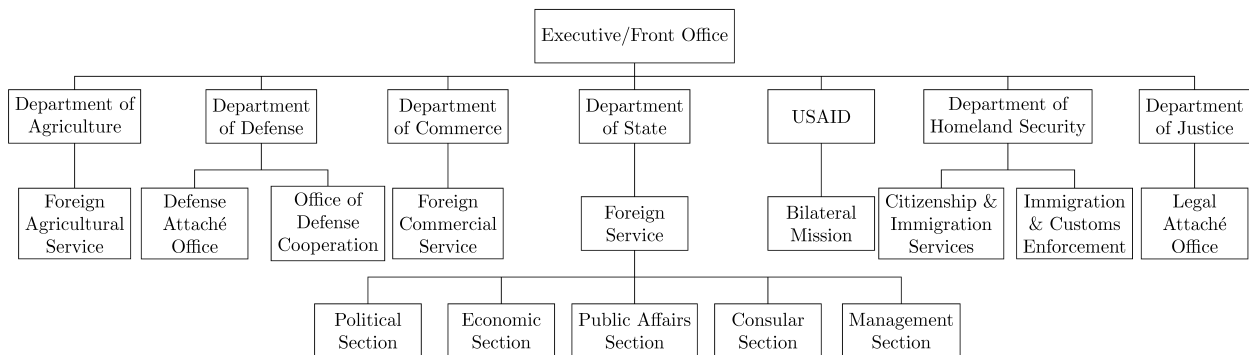
Institutional Features of Ambassadorships and Embassies

Though frequently in the news during the presidential nomination and Senate confirmation process, ambassadorships and embassies are often forgotten by the public and even political leaders until a problem or scandal occurs. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time, often groused about ambassadors: “Nothing is going to pot because an ambassador’s not there. I’ve seen them come and I’ve seen them go and the

⁸⁵One recent example on the front page of the *New York Times* (January 19, 2013), “Well-Trod Path: Political Donor to Ambassador,” by Nicholas Confessore and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, highlighted the rumors that the editor of *Vogue* magazine, a prodigious political fundraiser, wanted the ambassadorship in London.

best thing about almost all of them is when they go.”⁸⁶ In spite of the seemingly unique circumstances that keep ambassadors out of the limelight once confirmed, ambassadorships and embassies are, in important ways, similar in function and institutional form to many other executive branch roles and offices that consistently garner headlines. Both in personnel and organization, embassies look like other bureaus and agencies. They have multiple layers of authority, sometimes without clear demarcation of jurisdiction or boundaries; there are personnel hired through multiple channels, with differing career tracks, benefits, and corresponding incentives. Figure 3.1 shows the organizational layout of a typical medium-sized embassy, such as the embassy in Accra, Ghana. This embassy employs over 500 people and has an operating budget of approximately \$150 million.⁸⁷ Figure 3.2 focuses on the positions and staffing of just the Department of State component of an embassy.

Figure 3.1: Embassy Organization



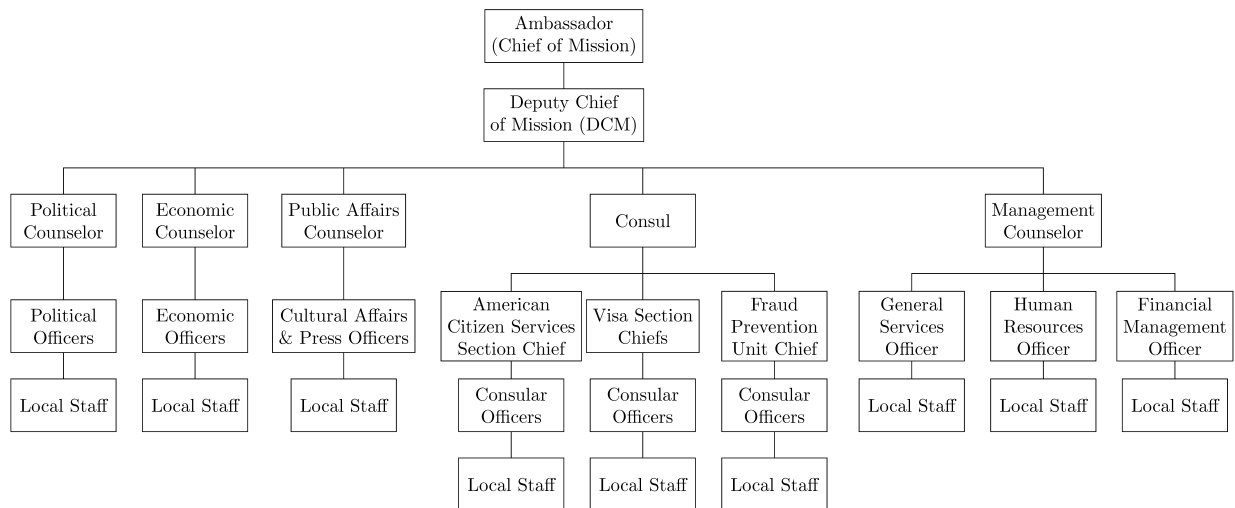
All ambassadorships require presidential nomination and Senate confirmation,⁸⁸ with the stature and legitimacy that this authority commands both within and without the bureaucracy. Once confirmed by the Senate and at post, ambassadors typically serve terms

⁸⁶Sciolino, Elaine. 1995. “Awaiting Call, Helms Puts Foreign Policy on Hold.” *New York Times*, September 24, 1995. <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/09/24/world/awaiting-call-helms-puts-foreign-policy-on-hold.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (January 27, 2014).

⁸⁷Figures as of March 2009; see *Report of Inspection: Embassy Accra, Ghana*, Report Number ISP-I-09-14A, March 2009. <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/126064.pdf> (January 27, 2014).

⁸⁸Unlike most presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed sub-cabinet positions, however, the requirement for Senate confirmation of ambassadors is constitutional (Article II, Section 2) rather than statutory.

Figure 3.2: Department of State Personnel in an Embassy



of limited duration (generally three years); and in these positions, they head organizational units with a broad range of personnel and cross-cutting missions. Ambassadors, under “chief of mission authority” conferred by various statutes and national security decision directives (NSDDs), have some discretion over the allocation of personnel and resources at embassies.⁸⁹ They do not have, however, much control over broader budgetary allocations or hiring and firing decisions; both American officers and local staff are selected and separated from service through extensive formal procedures subject to civil service and other labor laws. Although these limitations provide ambassadors with little formal control, they still exercise informal influence through tasking decisions, annual evaluations, and, especially for career ambassadors, developing protégés among the mid- and entry-level officers.

Like many other bureaus or agencies with few appointees, the structure of embassy management means that the ambassador, regardless of professional background, works closely with a careerist deputy; in this case, that position is the deputy chief of mission (DCM). There is a traditional division of labor between ambassadors, who focus on external relationships

⁸⁹For staffing, see for example the NSDD-38 process (<http://www.state.gov/m/pri/nsdd/>) that allows ambassadors limited control over interagency staffing at embassies. For funding, one prominent example is the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund program at embassies in sub-Saharan Africa (<http://www.state.gov/p/af/pdpa/ssh/index.htm>).

and public engagement, and DCMs, whose emphasis is on internal embassy management. When an ambassador is absent from post for any reason, the DCM becomes the chargé d'affaires and can act, in most important respects, with the legal authority of the ambassador. This two-person team, along with their office management specialists, is called the embassy's Front Office.

Regardless of who occupies the White House or the foreign policy directives that come from political principals, all ambassadors perform many tasks that do not change. As the official representatives of the United States in their assigned countries, ambassadors engage in public and private advocacy for U.S. policies and priorities, public outreach with media and other audiences, and providing information to higher-level policymakers in Washington. As chiefs of mission, they are ultimately responsible for leadership of all personnel at their posts and for stewardship of embassy resources. They have to coordinate with other embassies in the region, various bureaus within the State Department, and other executive branch agencies. Office and bureau chiefs throughout the executive branch have similar responsibilities even if the substantive policy areas differ. Thus because of the functional and institutional similarities of ambassadorships and embassies described above, studying these positions can lead to explanations of performance variation that are generalizable to other positions and organizations in the executive branch.

To answer the question of whether careerists perform better than appointees, an important characteristic of ambassadorships is that there is variation both across and within types of ambassadors. The predominant view of career diplomats and political appointees is exemplified by a comparison between the accomplishments of career diplomat Ryan Crocker, ambassador to multiple Middle Eastern countries and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the tragicomic attempt of Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich to parlay his authority to fill President Obama's vacated Senate seat into his own appointment as an ambassador. This dichotomy provides variation across type for an initial evaluation of performance.

There are also observable distinctions *within* these two broad categories that are important to presidents and could influence performance. Four of President Obama's earliest ambassadorial nominees and one of President Bush's appointees illustrate these distinctions in background characteristics. Obama's formal nominations of Jeffrey Bleich, Leslie Rowe, and Cynthia Stroum arrived in the Senate on September 15, 2009. Both Bleich and Stroum had provided significant financial support to President Obama's campaign as well as bundling campaign contributions from other donors; but unlike Stroum, Bleich had some government and foreign policy experience to go along with his financial clout. At the time of his nomination, he was Special Counsel to the President and had worked as an advisor in the Clinton administration. Stroum's ambassadorial posting would be Luxembourg and Bleich would go down under to Canberra, Australia. By contrast, neither Rowe—a career foreign service officer—nor any of her immediate relatives had ever given money to any political candidates or parties. Rowe had already served as ambassador in one tough location, Papua New Guinea, and was nominated for the head job in Mozambique. She spoke the language (Portuguese) and had previous high-level diplomatic experience in East Africa.

Nominated as ambassador to China two months earlier than Rowe, Bleich, and Stroum, former Utah governor and future unsuccessful presidential candidate Jon Huntsman was not a stereotypical political appointee. Whether or not President Obama's appointment of Huntsman was designed to deter a political rival ahead of the 2012 presidential election, Huntsman was highly qualified: he speaks fluent Mandarin and had worked extensively on the U.S.-China relationship as an appointee in previous presidential administrations.⁹⁰ And Kurt Volker, a career diplomat whom President Bush designated as U.S. ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, had political connections, having served as a State Department legislative fellow on Senator John McCain's staff in the late 1990s. While Stroum and Rowe represent the prototypical donor-turned-appointee versus apolitical careerist di-

⁹⁰U.S. Embassy Beijing biography, <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/ambassador09.html> (May 14, 2014).

chotomy, the appointments of Huntsman and Volker highlight how some political appointees possess characteristics typically associated with substantive competence and some careerists have political experience to accompany their substantive expertise.

Expectations for Performance by Appointees and Careerists

Given this institutional and historical context, political appointees filling ambassadorships appear to be at a severe disadvantage in comparison to career diplomats. The analogy between diplomacy and medicine, law, and military leadership articulated by Herbert Peirce above succinctly describes the perception that expertise and neutral competence are irreplaceable in such a complex environment as foreign policy and national security. Such expertise could include experience managing personnel and resources within the constraints of a public bureaucracy (Hecl 1977). Another element of ambassadorial competence is the ability to negotiate intra- and interagency relationships; at many embassies, for example, the State Department contingent represents only 30 percent of the entire embassy community nominally under chief of mission authority, with the other 70 percent coming from other agencies (Kennan 1997). Career diplomats could also benefit from the leadership and managerial training, tailored specifically for the Foreign Service context, that was instituted under Secretary of State Colin Powell and required for promotion to senior levels of the Foreign Service (Foreign Affairs Council 2003).

When Congress formally expressed a preference for career diplomats as ambassadors over political appointees in the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the act also listed key qualifications that potential ambassadorial appointees—career or otherwise—should possess in order to successfully lead an embassy. These included “a useful knowledge of the principal language or dialect of the country in which the individual is to serve, and knowledge and understanding of the history, the culture, the economic and political institutions, and the interests of that country and its people” (§304, 1980). Campaign donors and political supporters, lacking such skills and knowledge, could be ill-equipped to develop rapport with foreign leaders, handle

aggressive or adversarial media interlocutors, and analyze local political developments. And even political appointees with language skills or in-depth experience in a country might perform worse than careerists because they do not understand State Department norms, culture, or procedure as well; in essence, they lack the unique capacities or knowledge relating to public management that is not transferable from other domains (Lewis 2007).

Based on the prevalent approach to performance and specific expectations for ambassadorial performance, two primary hypotheses focus on the distinction between careerists and political appointees:

H1: Career diplomats perform better than political appointees as ambassadors.

H2: Embassies led by career diplomats perform better than embassies led by political appointees.

Auxiliary hypotheses can illustrate the differences in performance based on characteristics of the individual appointees rather than the type of appointee:

H3: Ambassadors with previous regional or language experience (per the Foreign Service Act of 1980) perform better than ambassadors without such qualifications.

Measuring Ambassadorial and Embassy Performance

In addition to the historical background and institutional features of U.S. embassies, there is a long tradition in the State Department of internal performance assessment that could provide a way to adjudicate between these competing expectations. Since 1906, Congress has statutorily mandated assessments of operations at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad; the Foreign Service Act of 1946 required biennial “inspections” of the management of every operating unit of the State Department (GAO 1983). The statutory inspectors general established under the 1978 Inspector General Act in most cabinet departments were expected to leave regular management assessments to existing management bureaus while exercising discretion in the reviews and investigations they chose to conduct as problems arose (§6(a)(2), 1978). State’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) likewise investigates allegations

of fraud and abuse and performs formal audits according to broadly accepted standards. But, uniquely among cabinet departments, State's OIG conducts general management assessments or inspections of operating units based on a statutory mandate (GAO 1983); the Foreign Service Act of 1980 sets a specific timetable (every five years)⁹¹ and substantive categories for evaluation (§209). This mandate results in State's OIG using inspections rather than more formalized audits as a much higher proportion of its oversight activities than other agencies do. In fiscal year 2005, for example, State's OIG released 99 inspection reports and just 44 audit reports. By comparison, the combined output from inspectors general subject to the 1978 Inspector General Act had just 443 inspection reports but over 4,300 audit reports (GAO 2007). These requirements remove both the selection effects inherent to other inspector general investigations of which units get reviewed and when those investigations occur as well as making inspection results comparable across operating units and over time.

This institutionalized tradition of performance evaluation and its standardized format provide a potential new source of performance data that could add to the performance research that has relied on PART scores and survey responses for measures of performance. Because any "comparative study of executive performance" should provide for the "identification of the universe of federal bureau chiefs" and "adequately distinguish appointees from careerists" (Lewis 2007), the extensive historical record makes it possible to identify the universe of ambassadors either cross-sectionally or dynamically and clearly distinguish between appointees and careerists. And by focusing on positions within the same executive department and with uniform position titles, statutory authority, confirmation requirements, and

⁹¹Congress has repeatedly waived this five-year requirement since enactment of the Foreign Service Act; in spite of the waiver, OIG has generally kept within a year or two of the five year prescription based on funding and other priorities, including other congressionally requested investigations or inspections of specific programs. State's OIG does incorporate risk-based prioritization in its inspections; for embassy inspections, however, this is not used to determine which embassies to schedule for inspection. Rather, the risk-based prioritization puts emphasis on certain operational areas at every embassy inspected, such as information technology and security capabilities. Some inspections of other operating units or programs are scheduled based on risks, such as contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan or operations of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (see e.g. inspection report ISP-IB-13-50 on U.S. broadcasting to Russia, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/217908.pdf>).

performance mandates for political appointees and career diplomats alike, there is minimal variation in the broader departmental culture or position authority across positions. But there is variation in some key institutional features—such as embassy size and location—that are of interest for comparing the personal and sub-departmental institutional characteristics that influence performance.

3.3 Data, Measures, and Methods

To evaluate ambassadorial and embassy performance, I analyze data compiled from 197 inspection reports released by the State Department’s OIG between 2002 and 2013 and posted to their online report archive.⁹² The Foreign Service Act (FSA) of 1980 specifies that these inspections should determine “whether policy goals and objectives are being achieved and whether the interests of the United States are being represented and advanced effectively” (§209, 1980). OIG inspection teams meet with department officials in the Washington geographic bureaus with responsibility for each inspected embassy and then travel to the embassy to conduct interviews, collect survey data from embassy employees, and observe embassy operations. The reports documenting these inspections, obtained from OIG’s website and through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, are thus a rich source of data for empirically determining if careerists perform better than appointees at the individual level and if embassies led by careerists outperform embassies headed by appointees.

Each OIG inspection examines the following statutorily designated areas of performance at embassies: Policy Implementation, Resource Management, and Management Controls. For Policy Implementation, the OIG inspection teams evaluate “whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately

⁹²There are 208 reports in the dataset, but there are 11 reports from embassies at which there was no full-time Chief of Mission evaluated by the OIG team. In these cases, the OIG teams evaluated the Deputy Chief of Mission in the role of *chargé d’affaires* or acting ambassador.

coordinated.”⁹³ The teams also conduct more technical and formulaic assessments more similar to official audits of Resource Management and Management Controls, as these areas involve more complex statutory and regulatory guidelines for expending funds, operating and maintaining government-owned buildings and vehicles, and managing both American and third-country national staffing.

In this paper, I focus on the Policy Implementation aspect of the inspections because it is the area in which ambassadors have the most discretion and around which the debate about careerist versus appointee leadership revolves. Inspectors look at the traditional diplomatic functions of an ambassador, such as how well the ambassador conveys U.S. priorities and positions to the host country government, the flow of information from the embassy to key audiences in Washington, and the ambassador’s public activities and media relations. They also assess the ambassador’s internal leadership and management in the embassy: the critical relationship between the ambassador and the deputy chief of mission, the level of coordination between different agencies represented in the embassy, mentoring and guidance of entry-level officers, and management of the local staff.

Following the inspection, OIG prepares a report summarizing the results of the inspection. Each inspection report is divided into six main sections: 1) Key Judgments, which summarizes the major achievements and areas of concern identified by the inspectors; 2) Context, which provides an overview of U.S. interests and relations with the host country; 3) Executive Direction, which focuses on ambassadorial leadership and front office guidance of the mission; 4) Policy and Program Implementation, which evaluates the activities and programs of the political, economic, public affairs, and consular section of the embassy; 5) Resource Management, which assesses human resources, financial management, and facilities maintenance operations; and 6) Recommendations, which includes specific tasks for embassy and State Department action. In this paper, I draw primarily on the Key Judgments and

⁹³From the report’s section on “Purpose, Scope and Methodology of the Inspection,” typically included after the cover sheet. See e.g. Inspection Report Number ISP-I-09-30A from Embassy Baghdad, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/126600.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

Executive Direction sections for evaluations of ambassadorial performance and on the Policy and Program Implementation section for assessments of broader embassy performance.

The inspections' frequency and uniform assessment criteria, prescribed by statute (FSA §209, 1980), provide for within-case comparison of appointees and careerists, and cross-case analysis of ambassadors and embassies. Because the OIG inspections are not undertaken as a response to problems, but are instead scheduled at relatively consistent intervals, there is not a selection effect of including only poor or excellent embassies or political or career ambassadors in the data. There are also embassies (Buenos Aires, Kabul, Nairobi, Phnom Penh) in the dataset with a political ambassador at the time of one inspection and a career diplomat in the top position during another inspection; these cases could help address concerns about endogeneity, or whether some factors omitted from the analysis might predict both what type of ambassador, political or career, is selected and how the ambassador performs.

Unlike surveys or other opt-in research methods, these inspections do not depend on the “willingness on the part of federal executives to participate” (Lewis 2007). Additionally, because the Foreign Service Act of 1980 designated the areas for evaluation, the assessments are, at least in principle, fairly consistent across reports and over time. This externally prescribed framework for evaluating performance provides an “acceptable definition of good performance” and an “acceptable grading scheme” (Lewis 2007), both critical components of valid comparisons of executive performance.

Measuring Ambassadorial and Embassy Performance

The current dataset includes multiple measures of ambassadorial and embassy performance drawn from the OIG inspection reports.⁹⁴ For measures of general performance, I extract

⁹⁴I have also requested via the Freedom of Information Act the surveys that the OIG teams administer to embassy employees during the inspections; that request is currently under appeal. These surveys include specific questions about ambassadorial leadership, employee morale, internal customer service between embassy sections, internal financial controls, and the allocation of resources. The responses contribute to and are cited in the published reports. The surveys could add quantitative measures of how embassy

Table 3.1: Sentences Referencing & Evaluating Embassy Leadership

<i>Sentence Subject</i>	Informational	Positive	Negative	Total Sentences
Ambassador alone	798	1490	252	2540
DCM alone	372	695	104	1171
Combined	571	1358	241	2170
Total	1741	3543	597	5881

All sentences in Key Judgments and Executive Direction sections of OIG reports that reference the ambassador, deputy chief of mission (DCM), or both.

from the Key Judgments and Executive Direction sections every sentence that mentions the ambassador, deputy chief of mission, or both.⁹⁵ There are 5,881 sentences, with an average of 29.9 sentences per report. After coding the leader referenced in the sentence (ambassador, DCM, or both) and whether these sentences are merely informational (1,741) or include an evaluative judgment of performance (4,140) from the OIG inspectors, I code each evaluative sentence for a negative or positive evaluation (0,1; 85.6%) (see Table 3.1 below). From these evaluative sentences, I create a performance score (0-1, 0.77) for each ambassador by calculating the proportion of positive to negative evaluative sentences.⁹⁶

An informational sentence could explain background characteristics of an ambassador or describe objective features of an ambassador’s work or schedule without discussing or evaluating performance. Many informational sentences include references to when an ambassador arrived at post and what previous experience the ambassador had in the country or region: “The Ambassador, who arrived in December 2011, acquired expertise about South Sudanese politics and society from her participation in the negotiation of the 2005 Com-

employees—both American diplomats and local staff—perceive ambassadorial performance relative to the external assessments of the OIG inspection teams.

⁹⁵In embassy parlance, the combined executive leadership team of the ambassador and DCM are referred to by various phrases: “front office,” “executive team,” “executive direction,” “post management,” “executive leadership,” etc. Sentences with such phrases are included in the dataset and are coded as references to both the ambassador and DCM.

⁹⁶I also calculate performance scores for each DCM, but do not include these scores in the analysis as they are not a primary focus of this paper.

prehensive Peace Agreement with Sudan.”⁹⁷ The following two sentences, from inspections of embassies in Pretoria, South Africa, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, both include a positive evaluation of performance while referencing the ambassador alone or the front office (ambassador and DCM) collectively: “The Ambassador provides strong leadership to this large mission;”⁹⁸ and “Senior officials in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) identify the embassy front office as one of the strongest teams in the region.”⁹⁹ An example of a negative evaluation is: “The main operational problem at Embassy Sarajevo is an exaggerated concentration of decision-making and paperwork in the front office.”¹⁰⁰

I also derive two other measures of performance to examine more detailed hypotheses about ambassadorial leadership of other elements of the embassy: executive team facilitation of interagency coordination and the level of political and economic reporting quality. I focus on interagency coordination because it is one of the few responsibilities of the chief of mission that are specifically articulated in the Foreign Service Act: “under the direction of the President, the chief of mission to a foreign country shall have full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all Government executive branch employees in that country” (FSA, §207(a)(1)). And consequently, it is one of the main emphases of the OIG inspections, as inspectors evaluate “whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.”¹⁰¹ A possible mechanism for a performance advantage for career diplomats over political appointees is an understanding of interagency relationships developed through public management experience. The measure of interagency coordination (1-3, low, medium, high) can provide leverage for evaluating if this mechanism is at play.

⁹⁷From the 2013 inspection report on Embassy Juba, report number I-13-29A, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/211153.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

⁹⁸From the 2011 inspection report on Embassy Pretoria, report number I-11-42A, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/169232.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

⁹⁹From the 2013 inspection report on Embassy Buenos Aires, report number I-13-15A, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/206821.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰⁰From the 2009 report on Embassy Sarajevo, report number I-09-55A, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/132896.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰¹From the report’s section on “Purpose, Scope and Methodology of the Inspection,” typically included after the cover sheet. See e.g. Inspection Report Number ISP-I-09-30A from Embassy Baghdad, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/126600.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

The report on Embassy Bucharest in 2012 provides an example of poor interagency coordination, coded as a ‘1’ in the dataset: “Many employees described the mission to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) team as ‘territorial’ or stovepiped.”¹⁰² The following sentence exemplifies what would be coded as a ‘2’ for mixed performance: “Interagency relations, while professional and productive, would benefit from greater transparency and inclusiveness on the part of post management.”¹⁰³ An outstanding evaluation of interagency cooperation comes from the report on Embassy Buenos Aires in 2006: “This front office team has fostered excellent interagency cooperation and has orchestrated impressive law enforcement and security cooperation with Argentine authorities.”¹⁰⁴

The measure of political and economic reporting quality (1-3, low, medium, high) reflects the debate about how much effect managers, either political appointees or careerists, can have on civil servants in the hierarchy below leadership. Whether the latest trend in U.S. diplomatic efforts is a focus on digital outreach or empowering civil society organizations, the core diplomatic function of embassies is the gathering of information and reporting back to policymakers in Washington. Political and economic reporting quality is thus a feasible proxy for embassy performance, and could indicate whether ambassadorial type or characteristics are factors in how other officials respond to leadership.¹⁰⁵ While the OIG reports also discuss other broad areas of embassy performance, such as resource management, reporting quality is a more suitable measure because it reflects the output primarily of American foreign service officers in the political and economic sections rather than local staffers in human resources, financial management, or facilities maintenance.

¹⁰²From the 2012 report on Embassy Bucharest,
<http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/197277.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰³From the 2008 report on Embassy Dublin,
<http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/120259.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰⁴From the 2006 report on Embassy Buenos Aires,
<http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/136032.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰⁵Inspection teams also examine consular section efficiency and customer service, the integration and execution of public diplomacy, and resource management metrics in financial accounting, internal controls, and staffing issues. Any of these evaluations could also serve as proxies for overall embassy performance.

Comments from inspectors about reporting such as, “...such messages often lack the insight and analysis that are the hallmark of Foreign Service reporting,”¹⁰⁶ are coded as a ‘1.’ Positive evaluations with caveats or qualifications are coded as ‘2’ in the data: “Reporting on Brazil’s internal politics and foreign policy is strong, but some required work is not being done.”¹⁰⁷ Much of the evaluation of reporting comes from OIG inspectors’ discussions with Washington recipients; for example, Embassy Banjul reporting officers received favorable reviews from their audience: “Washington readers interested in The Gambia give Embassy Banjul reporting and analysis generally high marks in terms of both quality and quantity.”¹⁰⁸

Though the inspections also evaluate resource management and management controls, measures of performance in these areas are likely to be less central to ambassadorial performance. There are more prescriptive regulations for procurement, personnel hiring or firing, accounting standards, and property management than for handling interagency conflicts or reporting critical political developments to Washington in written format. With less apparent discretion and limited time to influence the more logistical aspects of embassy performance—along with the traditional delegation of such responsibilities to the deputy chief of mission—ambassadors are unlikely to expend significant time or effort on these areas of performance, making them less central to a broader analysis of ambassadorial performance.

Key Factors for Performance

For measures of individual- and embassy-level factors that might influence performance, I draw on the criteria most often cited in journalistic and political commentary about ambassadorial qualifications. The primary distinction made is that between career diplomats and political appointees (0,1; 30.8%); these are coded based on the State Department’s historical

¹⁰⁶From the 2010 report on Embassy Dhaka, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/149413.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰⁷From the 2008 report on Embassy Brasilia, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/113914.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

¹⁰⁸From 2009 report on Embassy Banjul, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/126066.pdf> (February 1, 2014).

Table 3.2: Ambassadorial Performance Scores by Type

<i>Ambassador Type</i>	Reports	Average Score	Min/Max	Std. Dev
Career Diplomats	133	0.79	.2/1	0.17
Political Appointees	64	0.73	.1/1	0.20
All reports	197	0.77	.1/1	0.18

Score is proportion of positive evaluations from all evaluative sentences.

listing of ambassadors and the congressional records of nominations. For countries where no fully accredited ambassador is assigned because of a diplomatic dispute, such as Burma, or where there is a consulate inspected independently of an embassy, such as Hong Kong or Hamilton, Bermuda, I include the chiefs of these missions as ambassadors. A deputy chief of mission temporarily serving as chargé d'affaires, i.e. as the acting or interim ambassador while awaiting a Senate-confirmed ambassador, is coded only as a deputy chief of mission (5.3%).

An initial look at the performance scores derived from evaluative sentences conforms to the expectation of poorer performance by political appointees, as the mean performance score for political appointees is lower than for career diplomats (see Table 3.2 below).

When Congress formally expressed a preference for career diplomats as ambassadors over political appointees in the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the act also listed key qualifications that potential ambassadorial appointees—career or otherwise—should possess. These included “a useful knowledge of the principal language or dialect of the country in which the individual is to serve, and knowledge and understanding of the history, the culture, the economic and political institutions, and the interests of that country and its people” (§304, 1980). To measure language skills (0,1; 67.5%),¹⁰⁹ and regional experience (0,1; 71.1%), I

¹⁰⁹Because of the imprecision of these biographies relating to the level of language skill, I have also requested language skill records via the FOIA process; the Foreign Service Act of 1980 requires the State Department to provide the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with information on ambassadorial language skills once they have been at post for six months. This FOIA request is currently pending. Additionally, several recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports highlight the shortcomings of the State Department’s language training program. For example, a 2008 GAO report

use official State Department biographies, available either on the Department’s website or, in more recent cases, on the embassy’s website. If the biography expressly states that an ambassador speaks the language of the country or describes prior experience in positions that would have required language skills, I code language skills as a ‘1.’ In some cases, the OIG reports also directly comment on language proficiency or prior regional experience. I also code language skills (0,1; 80.9%) and regional experience (0,1; 86.3%) for deputy chiefs of mission; but because fewer DCMs have biographical information on the State Department’s website, I used general web searches to find other sources, including LinkedIn career histories or newspaper articles referencing their experience or language skills.¹¹⁰ Table 3.3 below indicates the distribution of these background characteristics among political appointees and career diplomats.

Table 3.3 also includes institutional factors that could affect performance. State Department statistics and the OIG reports provide measures for location, operating environment, and size. I identify location based on the State Department’s division of six regional bureaus (African Affairs (AF), covering sub-Saharan Africa; East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP); European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR); Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), covering the Middle East and North Africa; South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), covering the Indian subcontinent and central Asia; and Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)). This measure of location could highlight one institutional mechanism that influences performance. If different bureaus within the State Department are better or worse at assigning and supporting ambassadors,

noted that almost 1/3 of Foreign Service officers in overseas positions that are designated for qualified speakers of the local language did not have the required proficiency (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09955.pdf>). These reports, along with personal experience that contributes to some skepticism about the State Department’s evaluation of language proficiency, suggest that my measure of language skill likely overstates how many career diplomats speak the language of the country to which they are assigned as ambassadors.

¹¹⁰I also code an indicator variable for whether or not English is either an official or predominant language in the country; I use the CIA’s World Factbook language listing (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>) for the coding rule. In the analyses below, the results are not statistically or substantively different if I include this control variable or drop the observations for these countries in which ambassadors—either political appointees or careerists—can easily conduct official business in English.

Table 3.3: Ambassadorial and Embassy Characteristics

	Career Diplomats	Political Appointees	Total
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>			
Language Skills	102 (77.4%)	31 (48.4%)	133 (68.0%)
Regional Experience	114 (85.7%)	26 (40.6%)	140 (71.1%)
<i>Embassy Characteristics</i>			
Total Employees	501	531	511
Hardship Differential (0-5)	23	41	64
(10-15)	30	10	40
(20-25)	59	11	70
(30-35)	21	2	23
Danger Pay (0-5)	109	62	171
(10-15)	12	0	12
(20-25)	9	1	10
(30-35)	3	1	4
<i>Regional Bureau</i>			
Africa	44	5	49
East Asia Pacific	22	8	30
Europe	21	29	50
Near East	18	3	22
South Central Asia	10	3	13
Western Hemisphere	18	16	34

Total Employees excludes 2 reports which had all employee numbers redacted.

performance could vary simply based on regional bureau effectiveness.

Related to location is the environment within which ambassadors lead embassies. Some countries have well-developed political, social, and physical infrastructure that make life and work much easier; others are less-developed and sometimes incredibly dangerous for civilian workforces. The State Department and other agencies, based on the Overseas Differentials and Allowances Act passed in 1960, compensate employees beyond their base salaries when conditions are difficult. The two main allowances for difficult conditions are post hardship differential and danger pay; these are distinct from cost-of-living allowances that are paid to government employees abroad and domestically based on differences in basic expenses. Post hardship differential (0-35) is the percentage added to basic compensation for “service at places in foreign areas where conditions . . . differ substantially from conditions . . . in the United States.”¹¹¹ Such differences include availability of medical care, physical hardship, or crime levels. Danger pay (0-35) is similarly a percentage of base salary in addition to regular compensation for service in locations “where civil insurrection, terrorism, or war conditions threaten physical harm or imminent danger to all U.S. Government civilian employees.”¹¹² Table 3.3 shows that political ambassadors, though predominantly nominated to posts in western Europe, also serve in other geographic regions and in most levels of hardship and danger pay posts.

Because the complexity of managing an organization could depend on the scale of the organization, I measure embassy size as a proxy for such complexity. An ambassador in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, for example, is chief of mission for an embassy staffed by 2 other State Department officers and 16 local employees. By contrast, the ambassador in Beijing or Bangkok confronts the task of leading over 500 American employees from multiple agencies

¹¹¹See Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) section 510 for definition, http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=260&menu_id=81; and the Office of Allowances for historical rates, <http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/hardship.asp> (January 28, 2014).

¹¹²See Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) section 651 for definition, http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=271&menu_id=81; and the Office of Allowances for historical rates, http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/danger_pay_all.asp (January 28, 2014).

and local staffs of over 1000. Embassy size (14-2319)¹¹³ is measured as the total number of number of direct-hire American personnel (DHA) and locally employed staff (LES), which includes host country nationals, U.S. citizens hired locally, and third-country nationals.

Methods

Because the ambassadorial scores are censored, I use tobit (or censored normal) regression models as a more consistent estimator than ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of the effects of appointee type, ambassadorial characteristics, and institutional features on the overall ambassadorial scores for each report. I also use robust standard errors because the sentences used to compile the scores are not independent, violating the assumptions of both OLS and tobit regression.¹¹⁴ I then estimate ordered logistic regression models to analyze the influence of ambassadorial and embassy characteristics on interagency coordination and

¹¹³Embassy Baghdad's total employment does not include over 10,000 contractors (approximately 13,500 at the time of the 2009 inspection report and just below 11,500 at the time of the 2013 report) providing security, construction, and other services. For other embassies employing contractors, I also excluded these counts; the total number in Baghdad simply far outstrips the level of contracting at other embassies. And even without the contractors in the total count, Embassy Baghdad employs more direct-hire Americans than any other embassy.

¹¹⁴There are several other potential weaknesses in using data from the reports. Because inspection teams consist of career civil and foreign service officers, there could be bias in the reports based on personal connections or experience. Because Foreign Service personnel in OIG rotate out to new assignments, inspection team composition changes slightly each year—and early reports in the dataset include the names of inspection team members, allowing for appropriate coding of reports by inspection team. For later years in the dataset, however, the names of the inspectors are redacted from the reports. Regarding this potential bias, the Government Accountability Office has repeatedly found that there are both “structural independence issues” and a “lack of assurance that the department obtains independent [inspector general] investigations” because of the role of current foreign service officers on the inspection teams (GAO 2007). To control for changing inspection team composition, I also estimate the models with controls for year of inspection; the results are similar substantively and statistically, with only reports in 2011 showing a statistically significant decline in scores. This decline is likely due to two highly negative reports for political appointees in Luxembourg and Valletta, Malta; both of these ambassadors resigned after the reports were released to the public.

Related to potential biases of the inspection teams, the level of redacted material in reports is another possible source of error. As commentators have noted, four recent reports, all about embassies led by political appointees, contained few redactions compared to other reports of struggling embassies led by career diplomats. See “State Dept OIG Reports: Oh, Redactions, Is Double-Standard Thy True Name?” Diplopundit.net. <http://diplopundit.net/2012/07/19/state-dept-oig-reports-oh-redactions-is-double-standard-thy-true-name/> (February 3, 2014).

Finally, several of the deputy chiefs of mission at embassies inspected early in the period were later appointed ambassadors at embassies that were inspected later in the period; and eight ambassadors held ambassadorships in different embassies during two separate inspections.

reporting quality. The appendix includes logistic regression models examining the evaluative sentences in each report, as well as OLS estimates of the ambassadorial scores as robustness checks for the tobit models.

3.4 Results

To test the main hypothesis that career diplomats perform better as ambassadors than political appointees, I first estimate tobit regression models of the influence of different ambassadorial and embassy characteristics on the proportion of positive evaluations by report. The first model only includes the type, with model 2 including indicators for the ambassadors' language skills and regional experience. Models 3 and 4 include embassy-level characteristics, with model 4 also estimating the effects of a DCM's characteristics on evaluations.

The results in Table 3.4 above suggest that politically appointed ambassadors perform worse generally than career diplomats, with a 10% reduction in performance score on average for political appointees compared to careerists. And though the estimates indicate a statistically significant effect on performance from the living and working conditions as measured by hardship differential, the substantive effect is minimal; and the size of an embassy has no effect on ambassadorial performance. And, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, neither do ambassadorial language skills nor regional experience—contrary to what the Foreign Service Act of 1980 articulated as critical skills for any aspiring chief of mission.

An ambassador's language ability does, however, appear related to facilitating interagency coordination (see Table 3.5 below)—even as ambassadorial type and regional experience do not. The expectation was that career diplomats should be able to better manage interagency relations because of their public management and agency-specific expertise. But the estimates from these models, obtained by ordered logistic regression, show little difference between careerists and appointees—possibly because one significant influence on interagency coordination could be completely out of the ambassador's control: the capacity and coopera-

Table 3.4: Ambassadorial Performance Scores

Covariates	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Ambassador characteristics</i>				
Political Appointee	-0.07*	-0.06	-0.10*	-0.09*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Language Skills		0.01	0.02	0.01
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Regional Experience		0.01	0.02	0.03
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
<i>Deputy Chief of Mission characteristics</i>				
Language Skills				-0.01
				(0.04)
Regional Experience				-0.00
				(0.04)
<i>Embassy characteristics</i>				
Total Employees			0.00	0.00
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Hardship Differential			0.00 *	-0.01 *
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Danger Pay			0.00	0.00
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	0.80*	0.79*	0.84*	0.86*
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)
<i>N</i>	197	197	195	163

Estimates from tobit regression, standard errors in parentheses.

* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

tion of agency heads assigned by their agencies in Washington. At the embassy in Beijing, for example, competition for direction of economic policy simply reflects interagency squabbles in Washington. At the embassy, there is no clear hierarchy based on seniority because “most agencies are represented in Beijing by senior officers of equal rank.” The OIG inspectors also noted that “[s]everal mission staff members characterize economic policy coordination as ‘Washington in Beijing.’”

The effect of language capacity on interagency coordination could stem from those political appointees who combine language skill with an understanding of Washington political realities to successfully direct coordinated efforts and resources to the most critical issues. Both career diplomats and politically appointed ambassadors with language skills could also benefit from higher trust and engagement with local audiences, giving them insights and increased credibility when trying to coordinate agencies with differing interests and capacities.

These estimates, like those in Table 3.4, also demonstrate that a post’s level of hardship matters, though the substantive effects on interagency coordination are small. Hardship could be connected with the challenge of recruiting capable personnel, especially for agencies such as the Treasury Department in which the agency’s primary mission is not normally related to preparing for and performing in difficult overseas locations. If agencies cannot send their most adaptable and capable personnel, poor interagency coordination could result in large measure from the initial assignment of personnel rather than from poor embassy leadership. Another reason why hardship differential could affect interagency coordination is the challenge posed by underdeveloped infrastructure. Many embassies in less developed countries have grown in size in a patchwork fashion, with new offices and buildings added over time. In countries with poorly designed and maintained transportation and information technology infrastructure, simply meeting face-to-face or coordinating between agencies in different offices or locations can be extremely difficult.

Another hypothesis addresses the level of influence a chief of mission could have on the performance of other sections further down in the embassy’s hierarchy. Estimates of

Table 3.5: Ambassadorial Performance in Interagency Coordination

Covariates	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Ambassador characteristics</i>				
Political Appointee	0.11 (0.37)	0.14 (0.43)	-0.24 (0.48)	-0.68 (0.54)
Language Skills		0.82* (0.39)	0.83* (0.40)	0.82 (0.54)
Regional Experience		-0.54 (0.45)	-0.33 (0.46)	-0.26 (0.52)
<i>Deputy Chief of Mission characteristics</i>				
Language Skills				-0.24 (0.57)
Regional Experience				0.07 (0.58)
<i>Embassy characteristics</i>				
Total Employees			0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Hardship Differential			-0.03 (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)
Danger Pay			-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
τ_1	-2.58 (0.31)	-2.55 (0.55)	-3.03 (0.64)	-3.76 (0.91)
τ_2	-1.17 (0.21)	-1.11 (0.50)	-1.59 (0.59)	-2.08 (0.85)
N	191	191	189	161
Estimates from ordered logistic regression, standard errors in parentheses. * indicates significance at the 0.05 level.				

an embassy’s quality of political and economic reporting indicate that ambassadorial type is significantly related to reporting quality (see Table 3.6 below)—but language skills and regional experience are not. Without prior embassy experience, political appointees might not know what the expectations are from Washington audiences for political and economic reporting; and they might not provide in-depth oversight, either themselves or through the DCM, of the political and economic sections that could improve reporting performance.

Table 3.6: Embassy Reporting Quality

Covariates	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Ambassador characteristics</i>				
Political Appointee	-0.86*	-0.76*	-0.92*	-1.06*
	(0.32)	(0.37)	(0.41)	(0.47)
Language Skills		0.57	0.67	0.39
		(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.49)
Regional Experience		-0.22	-0.03	0.07
		(0.38)	(0.40)	(0.44)
<i>Deputy Chief of Mission characteristics</i>				
Language Skills				-0.34
				(0.52)
Regional Experience				0.14
				(0.51)
Includes Embassy-level Controls	N	N	Y	Y
τ_1	-3.15	-3.03	-3.43	-4.06
	(0.34)	(0.52)	(0.59)	(0.86)
τ_2	-0.97	-0.83	-1.13	-1.76
	(0.19)	(0.43)	(0.50)	(0.77)
<i>N</i>	193	193	191	162
Estimates from ordered logistic regression, standard errors in parentheses. * indicates significance at the 0.05 level.				

These findings provide an important starting point for further analysis, as they indicate that there is empirical support for the perception that politically appointed ambassadors

perform worse than career diplomats. Another implication of these findings is that the criteria laid out in the Foreign Service Act do not necessarily address characteristics critical for performance. In some cases, the State Department assigns career diplomats to ambassadorships for which they have neither regional nor language expertise; and both ambassadors and DCMs without such qualifications perform well on measures of leadership and internal management.

3.5 Conclusion

Though nominally chief executives of the executive branch and its more than 2 million federal civilian employees and almost 1.5 million active-duty military personnel, modern presidents directly control a much smaller organization of 3,000 to 4,000 presidential appointees. But because this core group has immense influence on what executive branch agencies do, presidents spend significant political capital and institutional effort to recruit, select, and direct appointees. While presidents hope to reap electoral and other political benefits from patronage appointments, they also want political control of agencies and responsive performance from appointees.

Along with the extensive historical and qualitative literature on appointments and appointee performance, scholars are developing deeper theoretical and empirical treatments of presidential appointment decisions and consequent effects on aggregate bureaucratic performance. Yet even as the literature has begun to explain what appointees do and how well they do it at the program or agency level, there is no systematic assessment of the individual appointment choices of presidents and performance at the individual appointee level.

This paper seeks to contribute to this part of the presidential literature by examining appointments and performance at the individual level using new data on the effects of presidential personnel choices on ambassadorial performance. The conventional wisdom—that politically appointed ambassadors are detrimental to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and

this transmission of information—has few, if any, critics. Yet there has not been any systematic examination to either endorse or refute the anecdotal claims of harm to our diplomatic efforts. The results above suggest that the stark dichotomy of career diplomats and political appointees explains some, but not all, of the differences in ambassadorial performance. Appointee performance tended towards extremes: many political appointees received the highest praise from inspectors, but a few were by far the worst performers. And while careerists systematically performed better than appointees, there was significant variation within careerists as well. Embassy size had little effect on performance, but higher hardship differentials levels, reflecting challenging living and working conditions, were detrimental to performance.

Related to these questions about the effects of ambassadorial and embassy characteristics on performance is the need to identify the mechanisms through which leaders might affect performance. Though challenging, finding ways to clearly demarcate the distinct individual components of embassy performance could provide a better understanding of appointee/civil service interactions and consequent effects on program or agency performance. Evaluating the joint performance of the ambassador and DCM could begin to explain how much influence a manager can have on the performance of subordinates and whether a mix of appointees and careerists with specific characteristics is beneficial for performance (Lewis 2011). And could there be a “coattails” effect for careerist ambassadors or other careerist agency leaders? Such an effect would come from the possibility that career foreign service officers or civil servants might exert more effort when led by career ambassadors who can have significant influence over their career trajectories. This might be particularly relevant for foreign service officers, who rotate assignments every 2-3 years. Impressing a high-ranking career ambassador could lead to plum assignments, while failing to excel might consign that officer to less enticing positions.

Further work focusing on ambassadors could refine our understanding of responsiveness in both political and policy realms. For example, two prominent campaign donors in the 2008

election cycle who received ambassadorial appointments from President Obama resigned after State Department inspectors found significant problems at their embassies;¹¹⁵ both subsequently raised significant funds for President Obamas reelection campaign and for other congressional candidates. Their demonstrated foreign policy and managerial competence was low, but, from a presidential perspective, was that performance less important than the political benefit derived from their financial support in two elections?

And because many other agencies conduct similar inspections or audits, this data collection method and the findings (for reasons explained above) are generalizable beyond the embassy context and even beyond the American bureaucratic context. Canada similarly evaluates its career diplomats and politically appointed ambassadors, and these performance reviews are publicly available.¹¹⁶ With more such systematic evidence of how appointed and career agency leaders can influence bureaucratic performance, presidents and other political leaders could make better decisions—and be held more accountable when their decisions damage agency performance.

¹¹⁵See State Department inspection reports from the Office of Inspector General, Report Number ISP-I-11-17A, January 2011 and Report Number ISP-I-12-08A, January 2012.

¹¹⁶The Office of Inspector General for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development posts their inspection and evaluation reports online at http://www.international.gc.ca/about-a_propos/oig-big/index.aspx?lang=eng (February 3, 2014).

References

- Aberbach, Joel D., and Bert A. Rockman. 2009. "The Appointments Process and the Administrative Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39(1): 38–59.
- American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). 2013. "History of Appointments - G8 & G20." *American Foreign Service Association*. <http://www.afsa.org/g8g20.aspx> (June 7, 2013).
- Beckmann, M. N., and J. Godfrey. 2007. "The Policy Opportunities in Presidential Honorarymoons." *Political Research Quarterly* 60(2): 250–62.
- Berry, Christopher, Barry Burden, and William G. Howell. 2010. "The President and the Distribution of Federal Spending." *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 783–799.
- Binder, Sarah A., and Forrest Maltzman. 2009. "The Politics of Advice and Consent: Putting Judges on the Federal Bench." In *Congress Reconsidered*, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. Washington DC: CQ Press, 241–61.
- Bok, Derek. 2003. "Government Personnel Policy in Comparative Perspective." In *For the People: Can We Fix Public Service?*, eds. John D. Donahue and Joseph S. Nye. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, p. 255–272.
- Bond, Jon R., Richard Fleisher, and Glen S. Krutz. 2009. "Malign Neglect: Evidence That Delay Has Become the Primary Method of Defeating Presidential Appointments." *Congress & the Presidency* 36(3).
- Boyne, George A. 2003. "Sources of Public Service Improvement: A Critical Review and Research Agenda." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13(3): 367–394.
- Burke, John P. 2000. *Presidential Transitions: From Politics to Practice*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- . 2001. "Lessons from Past Presidential Transitions: Organization, Management, and Decision Making." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31(1): 5–24.
- Burstein, Paul. 1977. "Political Elites and Labor Markets: Selection of American Cabinet Members, 1932–1972." *Social Forces* 56(1): 189–201.
- Calabresi, Steven G., and Christopher S. Yoo. 2009. "Remove Morrison v. Olson." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 62: 103–19.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2001. "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 313–29.

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2005. *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, and Kenneth W. Shotts. 2004. "The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 690–706.
- Chang, Kelly, David E. Lewis, and Nolan M. McCarty. 2001. "The Tenure of Political Appointees." Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. <http://www.princeton.edu/~nmccarty/turnover041201.pdf>.
- Clinton, Joshua D., Anthony Bertelli, Christian Grose, David E. Lewis, and David C. Nixon. 2012. "Separated Powers in the United States: The Ideology of Agencies, Presidents and Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 341–354.
- Clinton, Joshua D., and David E. Lewis. 2008. "Expert Opinion, Agency Characteristics, and Agency Preferences." *Political Analysis* 16(1): 3–20.
- Collier, Kenneth E. 1997. *Between the Branches: The White House Office of Legislative Affairs*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Cooper, Joseph. 2009. "From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence: Power and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century America and Today." In *Congress Reconsidered*, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. Washington DC: CQ Press, 361–92.
- Cunningham, Noble E. 2000. *Jefferson vs. Hamilton: Confrontations That Shaped a Nation*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Dickinson, Matthew J. 1997. *Bitter Harvest: FDR, Presidential Power and the Growth of the Presidential Branch*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Dull, Matthew, and Patrick Roberts. 2009. "Continuity, Competence, and the Succession of Senate-Confirmed Agency Appointees, 1989-2009." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39(3): 432–53.
- Faughnan, Brian M., and John J. Hudak. 2012. "Presidential Pandering: How Elections Determine the Exercise of Executive Power in the U.S. and Colombia." *Issues in Governance Studies* 53(Nov).
- Fedderke, J.W., and D. Jett. 2012. "What Price the Court of St. James? Political Influences on Ambassadorial Postings of the United States of America." Economic Research Southern Africa working paper, http://www.econrsa.org/system/files/publications/working_papers/working_paper_234.pdf.
- Fenno, Richard F. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. New York: Little, Brown.

- Foreign Affairs Council. 2003. *Task Force Report: Secretary Powell's State Department*. http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2003_04-06/fac/fac.html.
- Foreign Service Act of 1980*. 1980.
- Fossedal, Gregory A. 1993. *Our Finest Hour: Will Clayton, the Marshall Plan, and the Triumph of Democracy*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- Gallo, Nick, and David E. Lewis. 2012. "The Consequences of Presidential Patronage for Federal Agency Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 22(2): 219-43.
- Gilmour, John B. 2006. "Implementing OMBs Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART): Meeting the Challenges of Integrating Budget and Performance." IBM Center for the Business of Government.
- Gilmour, John B., and David E. Lewis. 2006. "Does Performance Budgeting Work? An Examination of the Office of Management and Budget's PART Scores." *Public Administration Review* 66(5): 742-752.
- Goemans, H.E. 2000. *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gordon, Sanford C. 2011. "Politicizing Agency Spending Authority: Lessons from a Bush-Era Scandal." *American Political Science Review* 105(04): 717-34.
- Grossman, Michael Baruch, and Martha Joynt Kumar. 1979. "The White House and the News Media: The Phases of Their Relationship." *Political Science Quarterly* 94(1): 37-53.
- Haglund, Evan T., and David E. Lewis. 2013. "Politicization and Compliance with the Law: The Case of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998." Working Paper, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Vanderbilt University.
- Halberstam, David. 1993. *The Best and the Brightest*. 20th Anniv. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Hamilton, Alexander. 1788a. "Federalist 71: The Duration in Office of the Executive." *New York Packet*. <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa71.htm>.
- . 1788b. "Federalist 72: The Same Subject Continued, and Re-Eligibility of the Executive Considered." *Independent Journal*. <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa72.htm>.
- . 1788c. "Federalist 76: The Appointing Power of the Executive." *New York Packet*. <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa76.htm>.
- Hecl, Hugh. 1975. "OMB and the Presidency—the Problem of 'Neutral Competence.'" *The Public Interest* (38): 80-98.

- . 1977. *A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hollibaugh, Gary E. Jr. 2013. “Vacancies, Vetting, and Votes: A Unified Dynamic Model of the Appointments Process.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, forthcoming.
- . 2014. “Amateurs or Ambassadors? The Political Determinants of Professional Diplomats.” Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2405141>.
- Hollibaugh, Gary E. Jr., Gabriel Horton, and David E. Lewis. Forthcoming. “Presidents and Patronage.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Howell, William G., and Kenneth R. Mayer. 2005. “The Last One Hundred Days.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(3): 533–53.
- Hudak, John J. 2012. “The Politics of Federal Grants: Presidential Influence over the Distribution of Federal Funds.” PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University.
- Hudak, John J., and Kevin Stack. 2013. “Enforcement Discretion and Presidential Electoral Politics.” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2107311>.
- Inspector General Act of 1978*. 1978. Public Law 95542 (October 12, 1978).
- Johnson, Ronald N., and Gary D. Libecap. 2007. *The Federal Civil Service and the Problem of Bureaucracy: The Economics and Politics of Institutional Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kaufman, Herbert A. 1956. “Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrines of Public Administration.” *Public Administration Review* 50(December): 1057–1073.
- Kennan, George F. 1997. “Diplomacy without Diplomats?” *Foreign Affairs* 76(5): 198–212.
- Kernell, Samuel. 2007. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 4th ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Krause, George A., and David B. Cohen. 1997. “Presidential Use of Executive Orders, 1953-1994.” *American Politics Research* 25(4): 458–81.
- Krause, George A., and Anne Joseph O’Connell. 2011. “Compliance, Competence, and Bureaucratic Leadership in U.S. Federal Government Agencies: A Bayesian Generalized Latent Trait Analysis.” http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/events/Krause_OConnell_2011_Compliance_Competence.pdf.
- . 2013. “Experiential Learning and the Dynamics of Compliance-Competence Trade-offs: Presidential Appointments of Bureaucratic Leaders in U.S. Federal Agencies.” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

- Krehbiel, Keith. 1996. "Institutional and Partisan Sources of Gridlock." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8(1): 7–40.
- . 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kumar, Martha Joynt. 2008. "Getting Ready for Day One: Taking Advantage of the Opportunities and Minimizing the Hazards of a Presidential Transition." *Public Administration Review* 68(4): 603–17.
- . 2010. *Managing the President's Message: The White House Communications Operation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kumar, Martha Joynt, and Terry Sullivan, eds. 2003. *The White House World: Transitions, Organization, and Office Operations*. Texas A&M University Press.
- Laver, Michael, Kenneth Benoit, and John Garry. 2003. "Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data." *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 311–331.
- Lavertu, Stephane, David E. Lewis, and Donald P. Moynihan. "Government Reform, Political Ideology, and Administrative Burden: The Case of Performance Management in the Bush Administration." *Public Administration Review*, forthcoming.
- Lewis, David E. 2003. *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design: Political Insulation in the United States Government Bureaucracy 1946–1997*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 2007. "Testing Pendleton's Premise: Do Political Appointees Make Worse Bureaucrats?" *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1073–1088.
- . 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2009. "Revisiting the Administrative Presidency: Policy, Patronage, and Agency Competence." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39(1): 60–73.
- . 2011a. "Presidential Appointments and Personnel." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14(1): 47–66.
- . 2011b. "Presidential Appointments in the Obama Administration: An Early Evaluation." In *The Obama Presidency: Change and Continuity*, New York: Routledge.
- . 2012. "The Contemporary Presidency: The Personnel Process in the Modern Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 42(3): 577–96.
- Lewis, David E., and Terry M. Moe. 2009. "The Presidency and the Bureaucracy: The Levers of Presidential Control." In *The Presidency and the Political System*, ed. Michael Nelson. Washington DC: CQ Press, p. 367–400.

- Lewis, David E., and James Michael Strine. 1996. "What Time Is It? The Use of Power in Four Different Types of Presidential Time." *Journal of Politics* 58(3): 682–706.
- Lewis, David E., and Richard W. Waterman. 2013. "The Invisible Presidential Appointments: An Examination of Appointments to the Department of Labor, 2001-11." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 35–57.
- Lewis, David E., and Abby K. Wood. 2012. "The Paradox of Agency Responsiveness: A Federal FOIA Experiment." http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/research/CSDI_WP_06-2012.pdf.
- Light, Paul C. 1995. *Thickening Government: Federal Hierarchy and the Diffusion of Accountability*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- . 1999. *The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton*. 3rd ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Loughran, Tim, and Bill McDonald. 2011. "When is a Liability not a Liability? Textual Analysis, Dictionaries, and 10-Ks." *Journal of Finance* 66(1): 35-65.
- Lowi, Theodore J. 1985. *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mackenzie, G. Calvin. 1981. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*. New York: Free Press.
- Mak, Dayton, and Charles Stuart Kennedy. 1992. *American Ambassadors in a Troubled World: Interviews With Senior Diplomats*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Mayer, Kenneth R. 1999. "Executive Orders and Presidential Power." *Journal of Politics* 61(02): 445–66.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McCarty, Nolan M., and Rose Razaghian. 1999. "Advice and Consent: Senate Responses to Executive Branch Nominations 1885-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 1122–43.
- McLaughlin, Patrick A. 2010. "The Consequences of Midnight Regulations and Other Surges in Regulatory Activity." *Public Choice* 147(3-4): 395–412.
- Maranto, Robert. 2011. "Career-political Relationships: Going Beyond a Government of Strangers." In *The Trusted Leader*, eds. Newell Terry, Grant Reeher, and Peter Ronayne. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Milkis, Sidney M. 1993. *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Milkis, Sidney M., and Michael Nelson. 2003. *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2002*. 5th ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Moe, Terry M. 1982. "Regulatory Performance and Presidential Administration." *American Journal of Political Science* 26(May): 197–224.
- . 1985. "The Politicized Presidency." In *The New Direction in American Politics*, eds. John E. Chubb and Paul E. Petersen. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, p. 235-272.
- . 1990. "Political Institutions: The Neglected Side of the Story." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 6: 213–253.
- Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29(4): 850–873.
- Morgan, William D., and Charles Stuart Kennedy, eds. 2004. *American Diplomats: The Foreign Service at Work*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc.
- Nash, Bob J. 2000. "Interview with Martha Kumar and Terry Sullivan." White House Interview Program. <http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/research/transition-interviews/pdf/nash.pdf> (June 25, 2013).
- Nathan, Richard P. 1975. *The Plot that Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: Free Press.
- Nixon, David C., and Roisin M. Bentley. 2006. "Appointment Delay and the Policy Environment of the National Transportation Safety Board." *Administration & Society* 37(6): 679–94.
- O'Connell, Anne Joseph. 2008. "Political Cycles of Rulemaking: An Empirical Portrait of the Modern Administrative State." *Virginia Law Review* 94(4): 889–986.
- . 2009. "Vacant Offices: Delays in Staffing Top Agency Positions." *Southern California Law Review* 82: 913.
- Parsneau, Kevin. 2013. "Politicizing Priority Departments: Presidential Priorities and Subcabinet Experience and Loyalty." *American Politics Research* 41(3): 443–70.
- Patterson, Bradley H., and James P. Pfiffner. 2001. "The White House Office of Presidential Personnel." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31(3): 415–38.
- Peirce, Herbert H.D. 1897. "Our Diplomatic and Consular Service." In *The Arena*, Boston: Arena Company, p. 909.
- Peskin, Allan. 1977. "Charles Guiteau of Illinois: President Garfield's Assassin." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 70(2): 134-135.

- Pfiffner, James P. 1996. *The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running*. 2nd ed. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Pipe, G. Russell. 1966. "Congressional Liaison: The Executive Branch Consolidates Its Relations with Congress." *Public Administration Review* 26(1): 14–24.
- Randall, Ronald. 1979. "Presidential Power versus Bureaucratic Intransigence: The Influence of the Nixon Administration on Welfare Policy." *American Political Science Review* 73(3): 795–810.
- "Rise to World Power, 1867-1913." *A Short History of the Department of State*. <http://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/worldpower> (June 7, 2013).
- Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2008. "Rethinking Presidential Responsiveness: The Public Presidency and Rhetorical Congruency, 1953-2001." *Journal of Politics* 68(3): 720–732.
- Rudalevige, Andrew. 2002. *Managing the President's Program: Presidential Leadership and Legislative Policy Formation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rudalevige, Andrew, and David E. Lewis. 2005. "Parsing the Politicized Presidency: Centralization and Politicization as Presidential Strategies for Bureaucratic Control." American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.
- De Rugy, Veronique, and Antony Davies. 2009. "Midnight Regulations and the Cinderella Effect." *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 38(6): 886–90.
- Silberman, Laurence H. 1979. "Toward Presidential Control of the State Department." *Foreign Affairs* 57(4): 872–893.
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1993. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Stewart, Joseph Jr., and Jane S. Cromartie. 1982. "Partisan Presidential Change and Regulatory Policy: The Case of the FTC and Deceptive Practices Enforcement, 1938-1974." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12(4): 568–573.
- Theriault, Sean M. 2003. "Patronage, the Pendleton Act, and the Power of the People." *Journal of Politics* 65(1): 50–68.
- Thompson, Carolyn R., and Roger G. Brown. 1997. "The Transfer of Political Functions from the National Party Committees to the White House: From Eisenhower to Nixon." *Southeastern Political Review* 25(1): 27–48.
- Tolchin, Martin, and Susan J. Tolchin. 1971. *To the Victor ...: Political Patronage from the Clubhouse to the White House*. New York: Random House.
- . 2011. *Pinstripe Patronage: Political Favoritism from the Clubhouse to the White House and Beyond*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

- U.S. General Accounting Office. 1983. *State Departments Office of Inspector General Should Be More Independent And Effective.*
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. 2007. *Inspectors General: Activities of the Department of State Office of Inspector General.*
- Weko, Thomas J. 1995. *The Politicizing Presidency: The White House Personnel Office, 1948-1994.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Wilson, Woodrow. 1887. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly.*
- Wood, B. Dan. 2009. "Presidential Saber Rattling and the Economy." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(3): 695-709.
- Wood, B. Dan, and Miner P. Marchbanks. 2007. "What Determines How Long Political Appointees Serve?" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18(3): 375-96.
- Wood, B. Dan, and Richard W. Waterman. 1991. "The Dynamics of Political Control of the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review* 85(3): 801-28.
- . 1994. *Bureaucratic Dynamics: The role of Bureaucracy in a Democracy.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

APPENDIX A

Survival Estimates by Appointing President

Figure A.1: Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments by President (Bush)

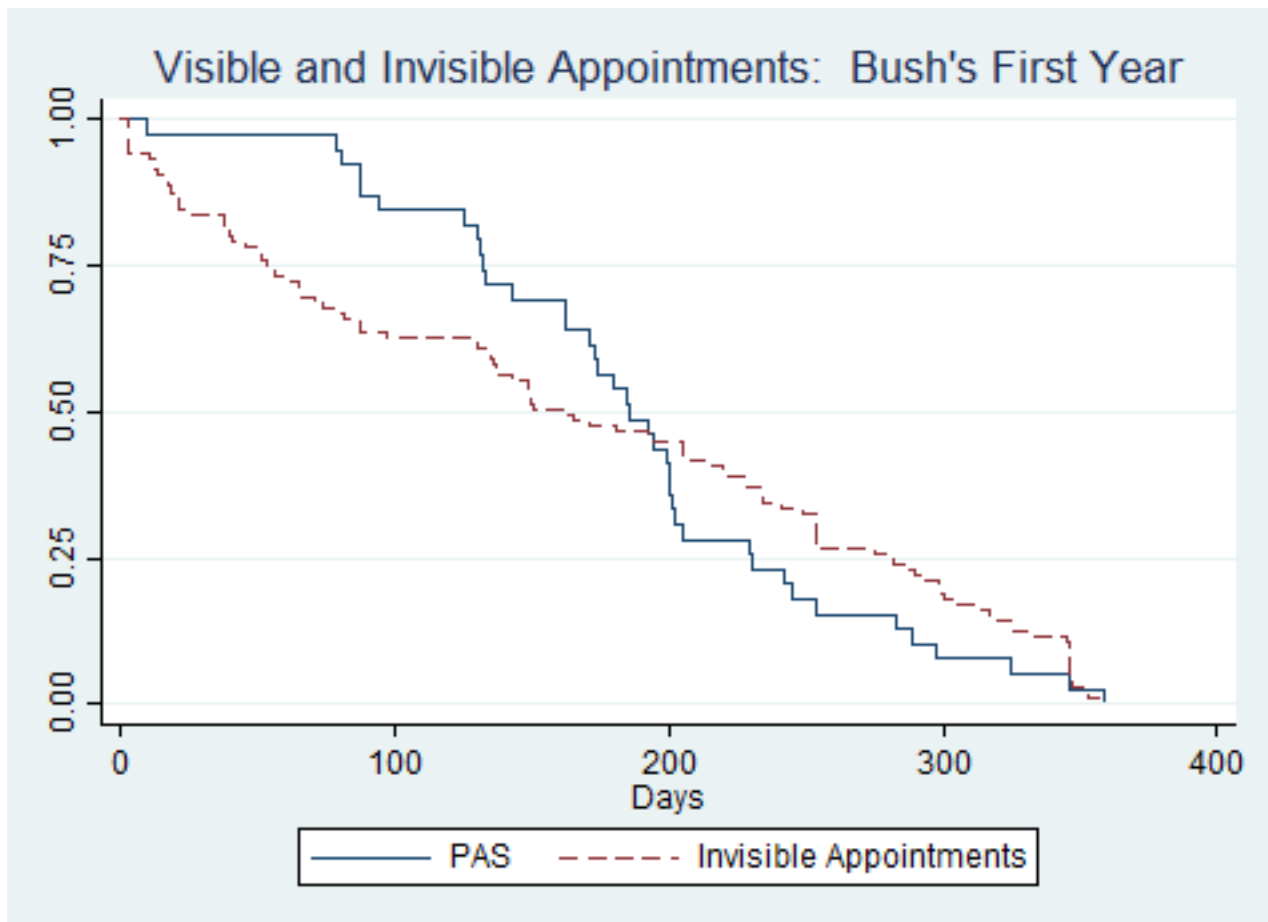
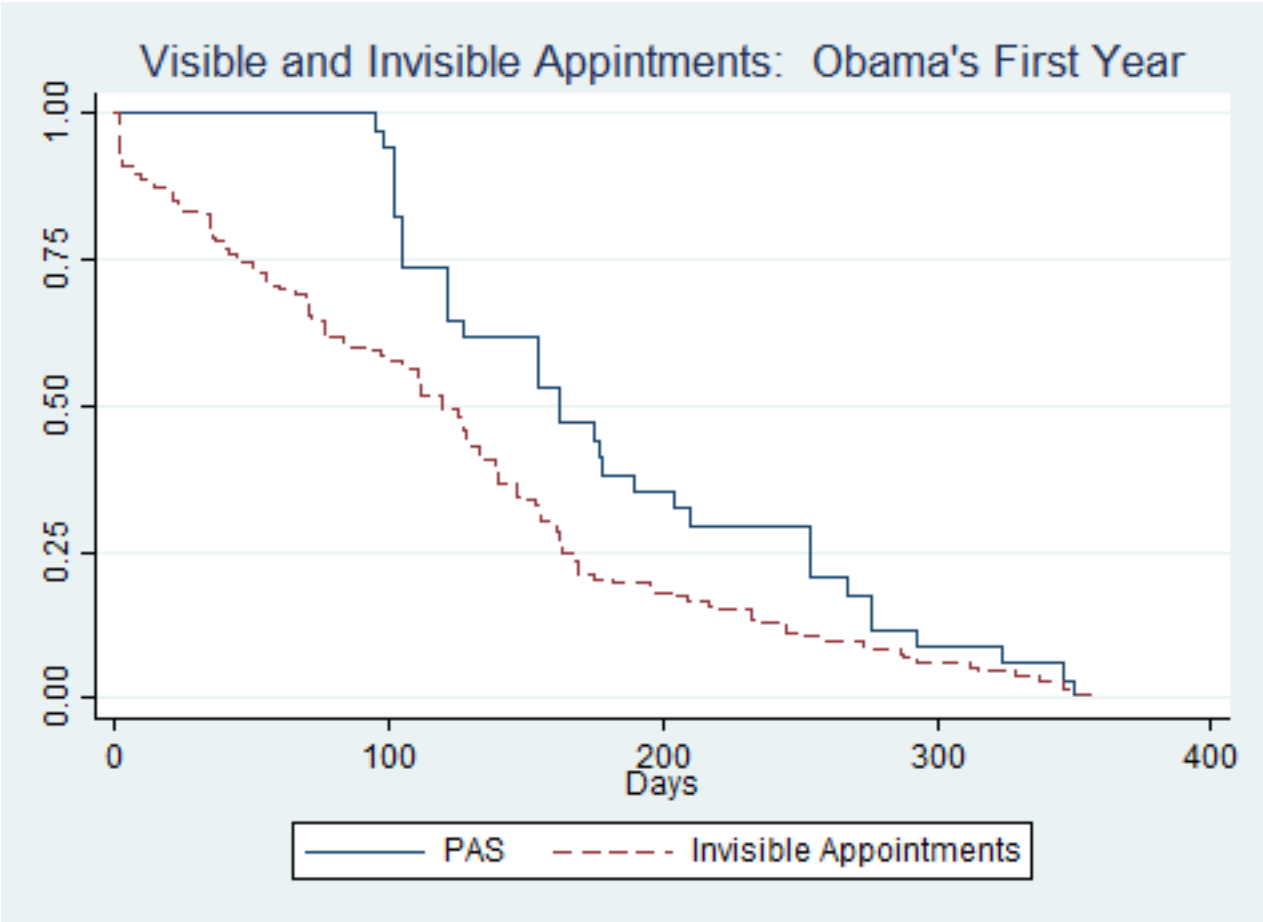


Figure A.2: Survival Estimates for Visible/Invisible Appointments by President (Obama)



APPENDIX B

Codebook for Appointee Resume Project

The data collection process began with the Lewis Lab team sending Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to almost 100 government agencies in late May, 2011. These requests sought to get the names and resumes of all political appointees from January 2001 to May 2011. 53 agencies responded to the requests, providing resumes for at least some of the political appointees during the period of study.

To build the dataset, seven graduate students used the coding rules below to code information on the appointees' positions (from the federal Plum Book, the Federal Yellow Book leadership directories, web searches and agency-provided lists) and backgrounds (only from the resumes). As of August 10, 2012, the coding group had coded resumes for just over 3000 appointments.

The purpose of this dataset is to collect information on political appointees in different presidential administrations. With a few exceptions the goal is to collect data on the backgrounds of appointees prior to their work in the administration.

Variables:

Appointing President: The president that selected the appointee. This can usually be determined by noting the years of service (i.e., 2001-2008 vs. 2009-present).

Last Name: The appointee's last name.

First Name: The appointee's first name.

Agency: The name of the primary department or agency that houses any sublevel bureaus or offices. The primary department is either the Executive Office of the President (EOP), the name of the cabinet department that houses the appointee, or the name of the agency outside the cabinet that houses the appointee. A list of all federal agencies can be found at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/browse-gm-09.html> or an organization chart can be found at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2009_government_manual&docid=217558tx_xxx-2.pdf, p. 21. For most resumes the department category will be easy to code since the resumes are grouped by department. All printed resumes from the same department are grouped together. All electronic resumes usually have a file name that indicates the department. The only exceptions are resumes for appointees working in agencies in the EOP. EOP agencies include the Council of Economic Advisers, Council on Environmental Quality, National Security Council, Office of Administration, Office of Management and Budget, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Office of the United States Trade Representative.

Bureau: The name of the next-lowest level of organization if they work in one. For Cabinet departments, this is often a bureau or office. Sometimes it is a grouping of bureaus or programs under an under- or assistant secretary. For example, the Department of Justice includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Alternatively, the Department of Agriculture has a major sub-unit titled Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. An undersecretary of Agriculture runs this sub-unit which includes both the Farm Service Agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Sublevel: A third level of organization, listing the name of a specific division, office, or board within a bureau. This would include the Farm Service Agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service listed above. It would also, in some cases, list smaller organization units depending upon the size of the agency involved. For example, within the Broadcasting Board of Governors is the International Broadcasting Bureau includes both an Office of Cuba Broadcasting

and an Office of External Relations.

Title: The official title of the appointee. This information is gleaned from the Federal Yellow Book or the Plum Book except for a few agencies where this information was provided by the agency (e.g., Department of Energy).

Appointment Type: The type of appointment: “PAS” = Presidential Appointment with Senate Confirmation; “NA” = Non-Career Senior Executive Service Appointment; “SC” = Schedule C Excepted Appointment; “PA” = Presidential Appointment (without Senate Confirmation). This information is gleaned from the Federal Yellow Book or the Plum Book except for a few agencies where this information was provided by the agency (e.g., Department of Energy).

Education Level (0,1,2,3,4): Highest education level completed. Coded with a 0 if no education listed, a 1 if achieved Bachelor’s level degree, a 2 if achieved Master’s level degree (e.g., MBA, JD, MA, MS), a 3 if M.D./M.Phil level or ABD, and a 4 if PhD level.

Graduate Degrees: List the graduate degrees earned. For example, MA, JD, MBA, MPA, PHD, MPhil.

Undergraduate university: Name of the person’s undergraduate university.

Federal (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has worked in the Executive Branch (or an agency) of the Federal Government prior to their first appointment in the administration in which they serve (i.e., Bush or Obama). Part-time work, internships or volunteer activities do not count.

PrevAgency (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has previously worked in the agency to which they have been appointed and a 0 otherwise. This should only be coded with a 1 if the appointee worked in the agency as an employee prior to the start of the administration

that appointed them. Part-time work, internships or volunteer activities do not count.

So, for example, if an appointee previously worked as an appointed chief of staff in the Department of Energy prior to being appointed as a deputy assistant secretary, their work as chief of staff should NOT be coded as prior work in the agency. Only work in the agency prior to their first appointment in the current administration should lead them to be coded with a 1.

Subject1 (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has previous work or educational experience (i.e., graduate degree) in the same subject area as the core policy mission of the agency to which they are appointed. An undergraduate major in same subject area should NOT be coded as subject area expertise. This is for work done prior to appointment in the agency. This may include experience in other government agencies, but excludes work in relevant congressional committees.

For example, appointees in the Department of Labor would receive a 1 here if their biography included experience in any of the following: a labor union, a state-level labor department, the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (or similar agency), or teaching position in a relevant area such as labor law, industrial relations, or labor economics.

Determining whether the appointee has subject area expertise is perhaps the most difficult coding decision to be made. All questions should be referred to the principal investigator.

Task (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has previous work or educational experience (graduate degree) in the same work area as the job to which they are appointed (e.g., management, speechwriting, public relations). This is for work done prior to appointment in the agency.

For example, if a person has experience working on the campaign as a press officer and then assumes a similar position in the federal agency, this should be coded with a 1. Similarly,

if person worked as a lobbyist prior to their appointment to a position as a congressional liaison, this should be coded with a 1.

This should only be coded with a 1 if there is clear evidence that that person has the appropriate task expertise. In the case of special assistant or confidential assistants, persons should have worked in a similar role prior to appointment.

White House (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the person previously worked in the White House for the same administration in which the person received an appointment and 0 otherwise. This must be work as a full time employee. Work as an intern or part-time employee should be coded with a 0. So, if a person worked in the Obama White House prior to their appointed job in the Obama administration, this would be coded with a 1. Someone who worked in the Clinton White House would receive a 0.

For this variable, positions in the White House Office should be coded with a 1, while positions in other EOP offices should be coded with a 0. For the breakdown of which offices are part of the White House Office, see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/>. For example, someone working in the White House Personnel office would receive a 1, but a special assistant to the US Trade Representative would receive a 0.

Congress (0, LA, SA, Committee): Coded with LC (Legislative Correspondent), LA (Legislative Assistant), SA (Staff Assistant), LD (Legislative Director), Counsel (Legislative or General Counsel), Committee (Committee Staff), CS (Chief of Staff), PS (Press secretary/communications director) or MC (Member of Congress) if the appointee has worked in Congress and a 0 otherwise.

This includes experience as a member of Congress, as committee staff, and personal staff. Persons who only worked in institutional staff agencies such as the Congressional Budget Office, the old Office of Technology Assessment, or the Botanical Garden are coded with a

0. Persons who only served as a legislative fellow (e.g. APSA Congressional Fellowship), intern, page are coded with a 0. Persons only serving on congressional campaigns or campaign committees (e.g., DCCC, RSCC) are coded with a 0.

Member or Committee Name (0,1): The name of the member or committee that employed the person. List all in the order of service if there is more than one.

Public (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has public management experience prior to their appointment in the agency and a 0 otherwise. This only includes high-ranking positions in federal, state, or local government agencies (secretaries, under secretaries, deputy secretaries), as well as directors of smaller bureaus and offices. For politicians, executive positions like mayors and governors receive a 1, but legislators do not. For military officers, a position at the rank of colonel or above (captain for Navy) would receive a 1. Lieutenant colonel and below (commander in the Navy) would receive a 0.

State Work Experience: Lists work at the state level—(EL) elected official; (LB) worked in legislature; (EB) worked in executive branch. Those with no work experience at the state level are coded with a 0.

Private (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has private management experience and a 0 otherwise. This is limited to presidents, vice presidents, CEOs, CFOs, managing partners, or similarly-titled positions of any privately owned business. Remember, the focus here is on for-profit businesses.

This does NOT include management of universities, political organizations, non-managing partners of law firms, board members of companies, center directors, PACs, or other business organizations that are not for-profit firms (e.g., President of the Chamber of Commerce).

Not-for-profit (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has management experience in the not-for profit sector and a 0 otherwise. This should be a full-time job where the person gives

policy direction to the organization.

This does NOT include management of political organizations such as PACs or campaigns. It does NOT include non-managing partners of law firms, board members of non-profits, department chairs, center directors, or campus organizations. Work as a board member in any not-for-profit does NOT qualify.

For simplicity, provosts, deans, or presidents of universities are included in this category, even if they managed a publically-funded school.

If a person served as vice-president of the Red Cross, Director of the Alabama chapter of the Sierra Club, or president of the Kiwanis, they would be coded with a 1.

Appointee (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the person has held an appointed position in a previous administration and 0 otherwise.

So, for example, an appointee in the Obama administration with only a previous appointed job in the Obama Administration would be coded with a 0. A person with an appointed job in the Clinton Administration would be coded with a 1.

CurrentAppointee: Includes the location (e.g., Department of Defense, Federal Communications Commission) of previous executive branch appointments in the current administration (Obama administration if appointed by Obama, or Bush administration if appointed by Bush) listed on their resume and 0 otherwise. This coding should be completely different from the previous column since that previous column deals with appointed positions in previous administrations.

AppthisAdmin: Coded with position of previous executive branch appointment in the current administration (if CurrentAppointee includes the location of a position, this should be the matching position) and 0 otherwise.

Political (0,1): Coded 1 if the person's last job/activity prior to their initial appointment in the administration was in politics and 0 otherwise. This includes work for: Political campaigns, Members of Congress, a political party, political official (e.g., governor, political appointee, etc.), government affairs office for a firm or organization, a PAC or lobbying firm, or other political group.

So, for example, if an appointee previously worked as an appointed chief of staff in the Department of Energy prior to being appointed as a deputy assistant secretary, their work as chief of staff should NOT be coded as political. For the purposes of this variable political is only coded if their last job previous to appointment in the Bush or Obama administration was in politics. That is, was their last job before joining the administration a job in politics?

Persons recruited into the administration from jobs in Congress, a PAC, government affairs for a private corporation, the party, or an elected position would be coded. Internships or volunteer work in a political position would be coded a 1 as well (e.g. a recent college graduate who interned in Congress).

Campaign (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the resume indicates that person worked or volunteered for the Obama for America campaign or Bush-Cheney Campaign and 0 otherwise.

State/Role: Lists the position of the person on the campaign. Some examples include volunteer, state director for Florida, National Finance Chair, etc.

PrevCamp: Count of the number of previous political campaigns (including any coded in the Campaign variable) the person lists on their resume. This includes work as a volunteer or paid staff. This includes not only presidential campaigns but other campaigns as well (House, Senate, mayoral, etc.).

Transition (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee worked on President-elect's Transition Team and 0 otherwise. This does not include work for the inaugural committee or inaugu-

ration.

Inauguration (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee worked for the inaugural committee or inauguration.

Party (0,1): Coded with a 1 if the appointee has ever worked for the Republican or Democratic political party and 0 otherwise. This includes work at the state or national level. For example, work for the party at the National Party Convention would qualify. This can also include work for the College Republicans or Democrats, or for the parties' House or Senate campaign committees (DSCC/DCCC; NRSC/NRCC).

Details: Lists party position(s) of candidate.

Elected Official(0,1): Coded with a 1 if the person has ever held elected office prior to their appointment.