

The Politics of Patronage and Consequences of Civil Service Reform: Evidence from the US*

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Abstract

Civil service protections occupy a central role in accounts of administrative capacity, state development, and party politics. Though the replacement of the patronage system with the civil service in the US is commonly credited with increasing administrative power, there is relatively little systematic evidence about the mechanisms through which patronage was allocated or the impact of civil service on the composition of bureaucratic personnel. We study the effect of the Pendleton Act of 1883 on patterns of bureaucratic employment using new data on nearly two million officeholders who served between 1851 and 1917. We present two main findings. First, we show that nineteenth-century bureaucratic appointments were allocated to states on the basis of their electoral support for the sitting presidential administration. Second, we show that the connection between electoral politics and allocation of patronage was significantly attenuated, if not eliminated, following the adoption of civil service reform. These findings provide new evidence about how civil service reform weakened presidential patronage and may have laid the foundations for the modern administrative state.

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The spoils system was *the* distinctive characteristic of nineteenth-century American politics. The system linked presidents to their parties, connected national parties to state and local party organizations, and democratized access to federal employment (James 2000; Johnson and Libecap 1994*b*; Skowronek 1982). The president stood at the center of this system. Wielding the appointment power, presidents selected copartisan supporters to serve in executive branch positions (James 2000; Johnson and Libecap 1994*b*; Skocpol 1992; Skowronek 1982; White 1954). Through this process, as Carpenter (2001, 40) has argued, “agencies were partisan reflections of the presidential administration in power.” Controversy over patronage was associated with the first impeachment of an American president, the assassination of another president, and persistent calls for civil service reform.¹ The replacement of the spoils system with the merit system was among the most “wrenching and controversial changes” (Carpenter 2001, 5) that had “transformed” the civil service by the turn of the twentieth century (Hoogenboom 1959, 313).

We study the allocation of bureaucratic positions during the patronage era and evaluate how the transition to civil service weakened the association between politics and federal officeholding. We characterize patronage as a distributive good that presidents awarded in exchange for political support. During the spoils era, we argue that bureaucratic posts were awarded to constituencies who were politically aligned with the current presidential administration. We further argue that the introduction of civil service reform with the Pendleton Act of 1883 reduced the opportunities for presidents to exchange offices for electoral support. While previous research infers the existence of patronage based on snapshots of personnel turnover (e.g., Carpenter 2001; Hoogenboom 1959) and patterns of removal from Senate-confirmed positions (e.g., James 2006), this work does not identify a political mechanism through which executive branch positions were awarded during the patronage era. Identifying the mechanisms through which patronage positions were

¹President Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 due to in large part because his removal of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was in violation of the Tenure of Office Act passed a year earlier, which restricted the president’s power to unilaterally remove officials who had been confirmed by the Senate. President James Garfield was assassinated in 1881 by Charles Guiteau due to Guiteau’s anger over not receiving a federal appointment to which he believed he was entitled.

allocated provides insight into the operational nature of the spoils system (Skocpol 1992, 83) and adjudicates between theoretical accounts that posit different processes through which patronage was allocated and reaching competing conclusions about the consequences of civil service reform (e.g., Gailmard and Patty 2013; Huber and Ting 2021).

We contribute new evidence about the politics of patronage and its decline in the United States. Drawing from original data we compiled on employment in the executive branch from 1851 to 1917, comprising approximately 1,800,000 position-years, we present two primary findings. First, we document a robust link between electoral politics and executive branch appointments. Using a panel design with presidential election results and the allocation of executive branch positions across states, we find that a state's electoral support for the presidential administration significantly increased the hiring rates of state residents. Voting for the winning presidential candidate in the Electoral College was associated with a 32 to 44 percent increase in bureaucratic positions in that president's administration. We further show that these patterns were stronger for partisan strongholds, in which presidents performed especially well, than for electorally marginal states. In additional models, we establish that these findings are more strongly driven by the president's support in the state rather than the composition of a state's congressional delegation or the state-level political connections of department heads. Second, we show that the introduction of civil service reform attenuated and perhaps severed the relationship between presidential election returns and the allocation of bureaucratic positions. Studying the period after the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883, we find that state voting patterns in presidential elections had essentially no association with the allocation of positions.

Collectively, our findings make several new contributions to scholarship on bureaucratic politics and interbranch relations. First, they are consistent with the claim that the presidency's formal appointment power, rather than informal deference to congressional copartisans, was the mechanism through which the spoils of office were distributed. Second, our results support the argument advanced by Whittington and Carpenter (2003) that emphasizes the president's role in

accounts of American political development. While nineteenth-century presidents did not dominate national politics to the same degree as their twentieth-century predecessors, they wielded power strategically to advance the political interests of their party—and affecting the character of the administrative state along the way. Finally, our results contribute new evidence about the consequences of civil service reform. Most suggestively, our findings indicate that not only were the effects of civil service reform more immediate than posited by other scholarship (Carpenter 2001; Gailmard and Patty 2013), but they also may have had more ambiguous effects on presidential control over bureaucracy than claimed in classic accounts (e.g., Gailmard and Patty 2013; Howell and Moe 2025).

The Patronage Era

The first century of American government was administered largely by the major political parties. Patronage was central to these arrangements (e.g., Carpenter 2001; Skowronek 1982; Skocpol 1992). According to Skocpol (1992, 75), for instance, “from the Jackson era through the end of the century, parties . . . controlled much of the staffing and functioning of public administration in the United States.” The defects of the spoils system generated calls for reform toward the end of the nineteenth century and precipitated fundamental change in the nature of the administration state (Carpenter 2001; Skowronek 1982).

As head of the executive branch and the agent of their parties, presidents had central roles in the patronage system. According to Johnson and Libecap (1994*b*, 104), for instance, “the President was the key figure in the allocation of patronage,” and this position enabled presidents to wield “broad control over administrative affairs” (Mashaw 2012, 293). This responsibility consumed their official duties. As Bryce (1995 [1888], vol I, 61) remarked, Abraham Lincoln confronted “a rising tide of office-seekers” while James Garfield “was engaged almost incessantly in questions of patronage.” Changes in presidential administrations were thus accompanied by the rotation of

party members through executive departments (Carpenter 2001). Based on this state of affairs, Skowronek (1992, 52) characterized the presidency of 1832 to 1900 as a “partisan presidency” in which presidents mostly distributed patronage to party factions to preserve the national coalition.

Comparatively little is known, however, about the organization of the federal bureaucracy during the patronage era. Perhaps even more importantly, less is known about the personnel who worked in the bureaucracy and how patronage considerations were associated with their employment. As a result, we lack systematic evidence about the role of presidents and Congress in dispensing patronage, the mechanisms through which patronage was awarded, and how the transition to civil service was associated with changes in the selection of personnel. While the institutionalization of adjoining branches of government—namely, Congress (e.g., Polsby 1968) and the presidency (e.g., Ellis 2022; Tulis 1988)—is reasonably well-studied, systematic quantitative evidence for the institutional development of the American bureaucracy is less readily available.

But the patronage system was not only vital for party organization and maintenance. It also had consequences for the execution of public policy by the federal government. Theoretical and empirical scholarship on contemporary politics recognizes that hiring allies for executive branch positions increases bureaucratic responsiveness to the principal’s (president’s) preferences (e.g., Berry and Gersen 2017; Gordon 2011; Moe 1985). Politicization thus provides advantages to presidents by ensuring that bureaucratic outputs are more consistent with their policy goals. The patronage system in the nineteenth century likely held similar benefits for presidents and parties. According to Carpenter (2001, 42), for example, “[w]hether in the postal service, in customs collection, in land allocation, in patent administration, or in agricultural research, politicians aligned with the president could rest assured that federal programs were being implemented according to their party’s view. . . . Republican bureaucrats rewarded Republican loyalists, and Democrat-filled agencies did likewise for reliably Democratic states and localities.” To the extent the allocation of bureaucratic appointments was responsive to the occupant of the White House, agency decision making also was likely to favor the president and his copartisans. Thus, understanding the nature

of the patronage system and the mechanisms through which it operated can provide insight into the character and quality of policy implementation in the nineteenth-century United States.

Presidents and the Distribution of Patronage

We study how presidential politics was reflected in the composition of the federal bureaucracy. We argue that by virtue of appointment (and removal) powers, patterns of bureaucratic appointments corresponded to presidents' political goals. These goals centered primarily around electoral and partisan considerations. As agents of their parties, presidents had incentives to satisfy the demands of party leaders. Party bosses were vocal about their unhappiness with presidents whose allocation of patronage they deemed unsatisfactory; for example, several months into Rutherford B. Hayes' term, party leaders accused him of "a lack of devotion to the interests of his party" Stoddard (1889, 77). Presidents also desired to enhance their electoral standing (and, by extension, their party's). By delivering patronage positions to localities most critical for the president's re-election, presidents can increase their chances of renomination and re-election, and further their party's electoral efforts (James 2000, 2006).

While it is difficult to cleanly separate the relative influences of presidents' partisan and electoral incentives, our account provides a president-centric explanation for patterns of patronage distribution. Though this characterization contrasts with research that emphasizes Congress's role in dispensing patronage (e.g., Kernell and McDonald 1999), it is consistent with a variety of accounts that emphasize how appointment power established presidential control of patronage. Bryce (1995 [1888], vol I, 61), for instance, noted that "the president's patronage is, in the hands of a skilful intriguer, an engine of far-spreading potency. By it he can oblige a vast number of persons, can bind their interests to his own, can fill important places with the men of his choice." Similarly, Whittington and Carpenter (2003, 500) argued that presidents' ultimate authority over patronage helped to compensate for some of their institutional weaknesses. Moreover, our account is consistent with the claim that, during the postbellum period, "patronage discipline [was]

systematically applied to service the electoral welfare of the president's party" (James 2006, 59). James (2000, 27) further notes, though, that presidential control over patronage extended well into the 1930s and was used strategically by presidents to advance their policy agendas (see also Gailmard and Patty 2013). However, presidential influence over patronage could have varied across time and executive branch position, as White (1954) notes that presidents regularly cleared and/or named appointments to key positions as early as the antebellum period.

Accounts about the character of the patronage system, however, have generally not been received systematic empirical scrutiny. Most evidence about employment in the nineteenth-century executive branch relies on cross-sectional comparisons and/or highly aggregated data. For example, Carpenter (2001, 41) describes the replacement of 40,000 postmasters appointed by Republican presidents during Cleveland's administrations with Democratic appointees, and likewise during the Harrison administration. Carpenter (2001, chapter 6) also examines the distribution of employees across counties in the Department of Agriculture in 1905. Neither comparison allows us to infer whether these patterns reflect patronage as opposed to some other mechanism, or would have been observed in other contexts with different political configurations. Other work describes turnover rates or personnel characteristics in individual units of the executive branch, usually at highly aggregated levels and at single snapshots in time (Fowler 1943; Hoogenboom 1959, 1961; White 1958). Several studies examine the distribution of post offices (Rogowski 2015, 2016) and postal routes (Kernell and McDonald 1999) across states and counties, but while they note the implications the data for patronage they do not directly evaluate how patronage positions were dispensed or to whom.² In perhaps the most extensive investigation of patterns of patronage, James (2006) reports evidence from Senate-confirmed presidential appointments between 1829 and 1917. Yet the data exclude the more 95% of bureaucratic appointments that did not require Senate confirmation and do not provide information about the mechanism through

²Gordon and Simpson (2018) study local appropriations in the country's first century, most of which are for the construction of federal buildings and related projects, but also do not examine how appointments to positions in those sites were allocated.

which patronage may have been extended. More recently, scholars have used data similar to those we have assembled to study racial segregation in federal employment (Aneja and Xu 2022), changes in the institutional organization of the federal bureaucracy over the nineteenth century (Mastrorocco and Teso 2024), and the effect of civil service reform on bureaucratic performance (Aneja and Xu 2024; Moreira and Pérez 2024), but do not directly investigate the allocation of bureaucratic positions. Thus the available evidence provides an incomplete portrait of the nature and operation of the patronage system in nineteenth-century executive branch politics.³

We contribute to this literature by performing the most comprehensive empirical investigation to date of executive branch personnel in the nineteenth century. Though our focus is on the nineteenth-century United States, we contribute to scholarship on patronage and bureaucracies across a range of other contexts. For example, Colonnelli, Prem, and Teso (2020) study the effect of political connections on public sector employment in contemporary Brazil and report evidence of patronage allocated through local parties. In this work, campaign donors and candidates for office were significantly more likely to receive government employment when their party wins control of local government, particularly for positions without competitive examination requirements. Studying Ghana, Brierly (2021) shows that bureaucrats are more likely to hire copartisans to serve in low-skilled positions but rely on meritocratic criteria for high-skilled positions. And in Indonesia, Pierskalla and Sacks (2020) show that increased party competition leads to higher rates of election-year patronage hiring. Each of these studies documents the role of political connections and electoral competition on governmental employment. Our research contributes to this research by studying the relationship between presidential politics on executive branch personnel in the historical United States.

³A robust literature studies patronage appointments in contemporary bureaucratic appointments (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis 2014; Hollibaugh 2015, 2018; Lewis 2007, 2009). This scholarship often studies patronage through the lens of the loyalty-competence tradeoff, a framework of analysis that would not have existed for nineteenth-century presidents.

Civil Service and the Decline of Presidential Patronage

Textbook accounts of bureaucratic development emphasize the importance of the Pendleton Act. Passed in 1883, the Act insulated a share of executive branch positions from patronage considerations.⁴ The Act created the Civil Service Commission, which made determinations about which positions were subject to civil service protections. The Commission was also responsible for designing and implementing competitive examinations for appointments to those positions. According to Theriault (2003, 52), “[t]hese exams replaced loyalty with merit as the medium of exchange in securing political appointments.” The Act classified positions based in Washington, D.C. and in certain post offices and customs houses. It also permitted the president to extend protections to positions not originally designated by the Act. Finally, the Act required that appointments to classified positions were apportioned to states on the basis of population.

Beyond its implications for the hiring practices associated with individual positions, civil service reform is credited with changing the nature of the administrative state. According to Van Riper (1958, 111-112), for instance, the Act “laid the foundation for the development of that technical expertise so crucial to the operation of the modern state.” Skowronek (1982, 67) went further, arguing that the Pendleton Act “amounted to nothing less than [a] recasting of the foundations of national institutional power.” The reasons for these claims lay largely in the severing of politics from executive branch appointments. Before 1883, Hoogenboom (1959, 301) wrote, “the spoils system largely prevailed, with politicians dictating appointments.” But with the adoption of Pendleton, civil service reform led to “political neutrality in the distribution of public office” (Van Riper 1958, 111).

Despite the importance of civil service reform in theoretical and historical accounts, relatively little evidence provides systematic support for claims about its impact. Yet some cross-sectional comparisons are suggestive. For example, Hoogenboom (1959) noted the varied occupational

⁴For extended discussion of the Pendleton Act, its origins, and provisions, see, e.g., Hoogenboom (1961, chapter 13) and Van Riper (1958, chapter 5).

backgrounds of individuals who worked in the Treasurer's Office in 1867. Because their diverse backgrounds were mostly unassociated with the substantive work performed in the Treasurer's Office, he concluded that they "could anticipate early dismissal" (Hoogenboom 1959, 301). The clear implication was that these short-term positions were granted for partisan purposes rather than skill or expertise. Two decades after passage of the Pendleton Act, by comparison, Carpenter (2001, chapter 6) analyzed the geographic distribution of positions in the Department of Agriculture across counties, and found relatively little evidence that political connections were associated with the number of positions. Based on these findings, Carpenter (2001, 198) concluded that the Department had "solidified the scientific outlook" in its hiring practices. Reflecting on successive presidents' use of the Pendleton Act to extend the positions covered by civil service protections, Gailmard and Patty (2013, 104) argue that the Act "simultaneously lightened the burdens of the president in terms of congressional demands for patronage and enlarged the direct scope of presidential control of the federal services." While recent work evaluates whether the nature of bureaucratic selection affects personnel performance in the contemporary era (Lewis 2007), however, we lack larger scale evidence about whether and how the Pendleton Act affected executive branch patronage.

We test the hypothesis that presidential control over patronage weakened following the Pendleton Act. The accounts above lead us to expect that the association between presidential politics and bureaucratic positions attenuated after the Pendleton Act. However, it is not clear that the Pendleton Act had the kind of immediate transformation some accounts suggest. For example, only eleven percent of federal workforce was under civil service protections in 1883; while that figure increased to 46 percent by 1900 (Hoogenboom 1959, 303), its provisions applied gradually rather than suddenly. Because of this, "agencies hired applicants based on 'presidential recommendations,' congressional advice, and geographic apportionment for decades after the Pendleton Act" Carpenter (2001, 47). Gailmard and Patty (2013, 98) present a relatively circumspect conclusion about the effects of the Pendleton Act, arguing that "the act did little to abrogate di-

rect responsiveness of federal employment to presidential election outcomes.” And investigating a context quite different from the Gilded Age U.S., Dahlström and Holmgren (2019) shows that partisan politics can continue to shape the composition of agency personnel even in systems that are intended to insulate bureaucratic expertise from political control. These accounts suggest that the Pendleton Act may have had little if any effect on materially altering the relationship between state electoral politics and executive branch positions. Arbitrating between the competing hypotheses discussed in previous research is an important task for characterizing the effect of civil service reform on executive branch personnel.

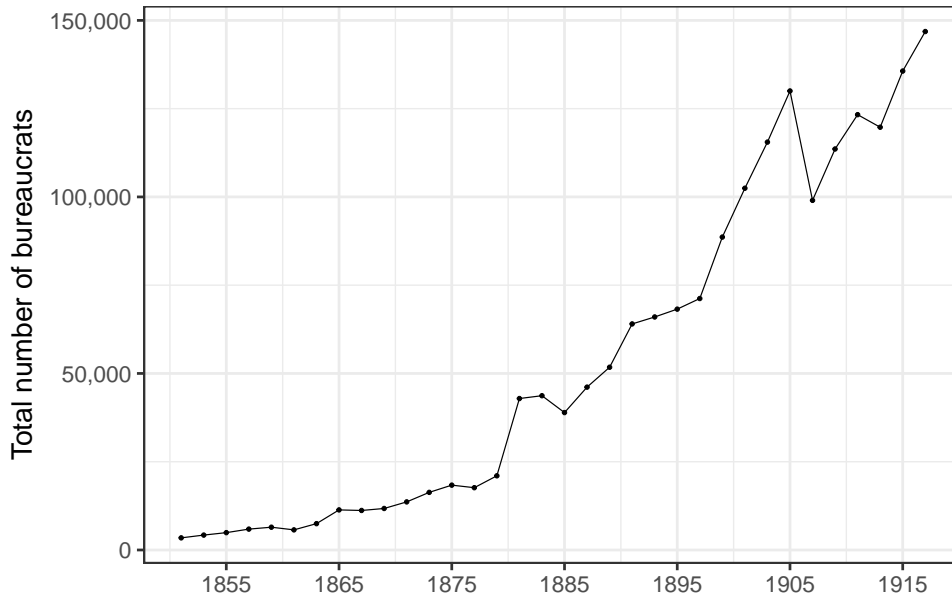
Data

We evaluate the politics of personnel using data we collected from the *Official Register of the United States*. The *Official Register* was published biennially beginning in 1817 and contained the names of all civilian and military personnel working in the federal government at the time of publication. Entries included each individual’s place of birth and residence at the time of appointment, the location of their government employment, title, and salary. We collected these data for all civilian executive branch employees from 1851 to 1917. Figure 1 displays the raw number of bureaucrats in our data. The number of employees grew by a factor of 40 over the period under study, from around 3,400 in 1851 to 145,000 in 1917.

We use the data described above to study the relationship between presidential politics and executive branch employment. We model the allocation of bureaucratic positions as a distributive good in which presidential administrations spread federal employment as a function of their political incentives. To do so, we use the information we collected from the *Official Register* on the state of residence at the time of appointment for the personnel in our data. These details were recorded beginning in 1851, thus our choice to begin our analysis in that year.

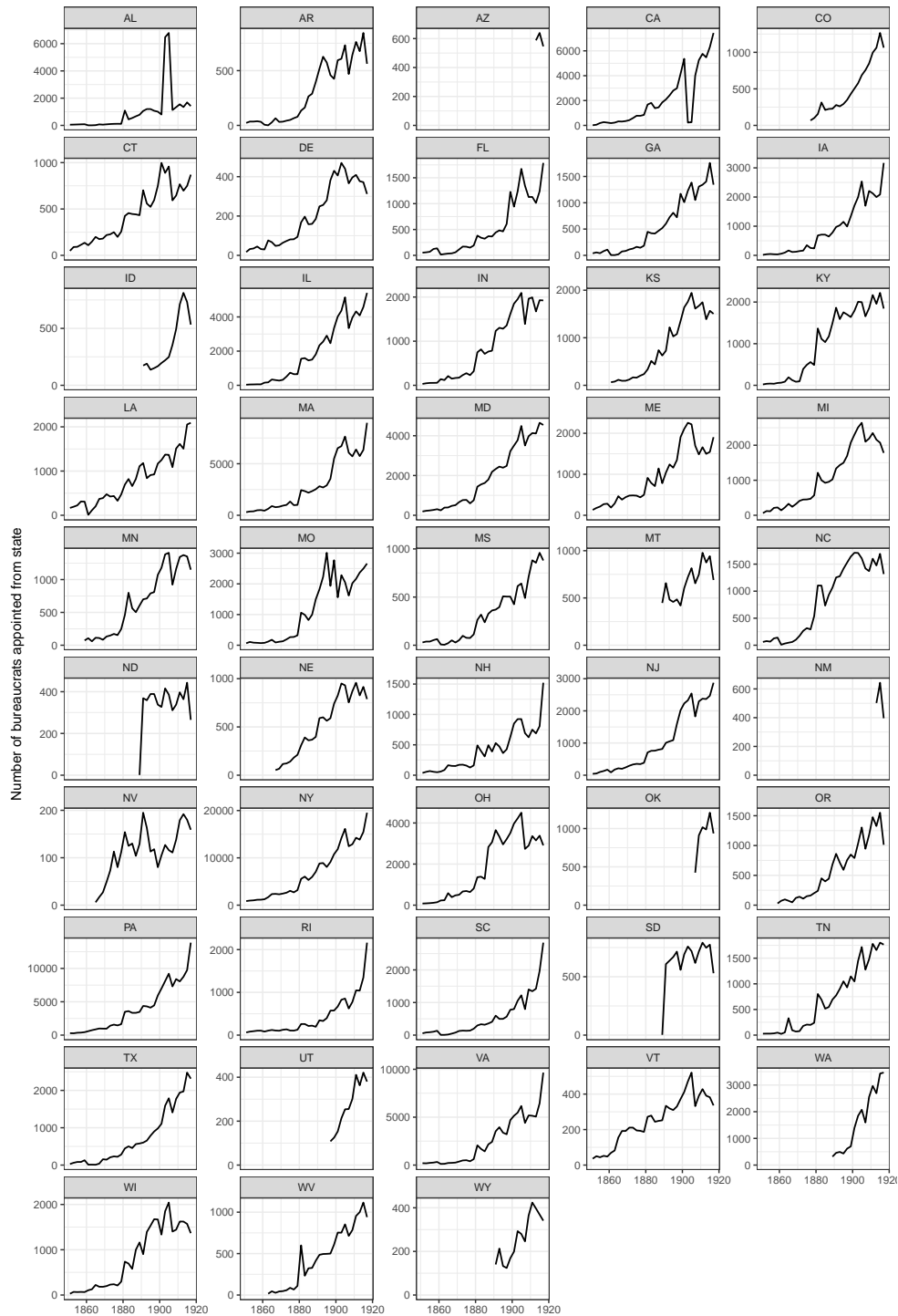
Figure 2 below shows the number of positions awarded to residents of each state between

Figure 1: Executive Branch Employees, 1851–1917



1851 and 1917. The data reveal considerable variation in state appointments both between states and across time. Even as the overall number of positions across time for most states, there was variation in the rate and nature of the increase. While some states experienced relatively monotonic increases in positions—for example, New York—the allocation was more variable for most others. Alabama, for instance, experienced a large increase in positions in 1903 and 1905 relative to previous years before declining in 1907. The number of positions allocated to Missouri varied quite dramatically between roughly 1895 and 1910. And Nevada also experienced large surges and declines in the number of positions between about 1875 and 1915. We use this state-level variation in employment patterns to examine how presidential politics is reflected in administrative governance.

Figure 2: Bureaucratic Appointments by State, 1851–1917



Figures show the biennial number of bureaucratic appointments to residents of each state.

Empirical Strategy

We leverage the panel nature of the data described in Figure 2 to estimate the degree to which bureaucratic appointments were responsive to a state’s political alignment with the presidential administration. Specifically, we estimate the following model:

$$\ln(\text{appointments})_{it} = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \beta \text{Electoral College support}_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where the dependent variable is the number of appointments filled by residents of state i in year t . Because the distribution of this variable is right-skewed, we use the natural log of the number of positions.⁵ The main explanatory variable characterizes a state’s electoral support for the current presidential administration in the most recent election. Our primary measure of this variable is an indicator for whether the current president received (a majority of) the state’s votes in the Electoral College. For example, for the year 1855, states whose electors supported the losing candidate in the 1852 election, Winfield Scott, are coded as zeroes (Kentucky, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Vermont) while the states that supported Franklin Pierce (all others) are coded as ones. As we describe below, the results from models that use the share of a state’s popular votes cast for the incumbent president are consistent with those that use the binary indicator. We prefer the latter measure for two primary reasons. First, popular vote totals were not reported for all states and years in the time frame under study. Using the binary indicator thus allows us to include those states in our analysis. Second, it is unclear whether the allocation of logged bureaucratic positions would be expected to be linear in the state’s electoral support for the president, and thus the binary indicator helps to relax assumptions about functional form.

Given the specification above, the coefficient for β is the key parameter of interest. If the distribution of bureaucratic personnel to states is responsive to states’ support for the presidential administration, we expect to observe a positive coefficient estimate for β . We include state fixed effects (α_i) to control for observed and unobserved time-invariant attributes that may affect the

⁵No state was allocated zero positions in a given year.

allocation of positions across states. For instance, states may vary on average in the number of positions they receive based on their political histories, geographic locations, and physical features. We also include time fixed effects (δ_t) to account for secular trends in bureaucratic personnel across time. As we describe below, we also estimate additional models that control for state population and include state-specific time trends. Finally, ϵ_{it} is a random error term, which we cluster on state-presidential election year.

Using equation (1), the coefficient of interest is identified with within-state variation in a state's political alignment with the current presidential administration. Within-state changes in the values of this measure are driven by two sources of variation. In the first, state preferences change, in which a state that did not formerly vote for a presidential candidate then did so when the winning candidate sought re-election. For instance, in the 1868 election, New York supported Horatio Seymour over Ulysses Grant, but then supported Grant's re-election bid in 1872. Analogous logic applies to a state's changing partisanship, such that the state begins supporting Republican or Democratic candidates when it used to support candidates from the other party. For example, Pennsylvania supported primarily Democratic presidential candidates in the antebellum period before voting consistently Republican after the war. In the second, the partisan identity of the presidential administration changes, inducing changes in a state's alignment with the party of the presidential administration currently in office. The presidency changed partisan hands nine times during the period under study.

As we describe below, we also estimate additional models that include state-specific linear and quadratic trends. The key identifying assumption (i.e., parallel trends) in our analysis is that absent changes in support for the current president, the allocation of bureaucratic appointments in states that supported the current presidential administration would have followed the same trends as those in states that did not support the current presidential administration. These additional specifications relax our reliance on the parallel trends assumption and help address the possibility that changes in a state's political alignment with the president is correlated with other

trends in a state’s representation in the federal bureaucracy.

Results

Table 1 reports the results of the regression models described above. Column (1) displays the results of a bivariate regression of appointments on the indicator for whether the president won the state in the Electoral College, along with year and state fixed effects. The coefficient estimate for β is positive and statistically significant, indicating that supported the current presidential administration received larger numbers of bureaucratic appointments. This relationship is maintained in our benchmark specification, column (2), when adding a control for (logged) state population.⁶ This model also produces a positive and statistically significance estimate for β , indicating that a state’s political alignment with the current presidential administration is associated with an increase in the number of bureaucratic positions it is awarded. Column (3) and (4) include linear and quadratic state-specific trends, respectively, and we continue to obtain positive and statistically significant estimates for our coefficient of interest in both. These results provide evidence of a link between the president’s geographic bases of electoral support and the representation of those regions in the executive branch. Exponentiating the coefficients, supporting the president in the Electoral College is estimated to increase a state’s number of bureaucratic positions by 32 (based on column 3) to 44 (based on column 2) percentage points.

The results reported above are robust to several additional analyses. First, as we indicated above, we re-estimated our models while using the continuous indicator of presidential vote share. These results are shown in Appendix A. These analyses continue to provide positive and statistically significant evidence of a relationship between a state’s alignment with the current presidential administration and its allocation of bureaucratic posts.

Second, rather than study how the number of positions were distributed across states, we

⁶We linearly interpolated state population totals from the decennial Census to measure population in intercensal years.

Table 1: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Electoral College support	0.29*	0.28*	0.37*	0.36*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)
log(Population)		0.33	1.06	−1.26
		(0.18)	(0.55)	(0.90)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election year in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

estimated models that characterized the value of positions in terms of the salaries each received. The vast majority of positions were salaried, and for each year we summed the total amount of salaries paid to individuals appointed to federal positions from each state.⁷ More prestigious positions with greater policymaking influence were generally paid higher salaries; thus, this metric not only characterizes how much of the federal payroll was distributed to states but also provides a rough approximation of the prominence of a state’s officeholding portfolio. These results are shown in Appendix B. The coefficients for *Electoral College support* are positive and statistically significant in each of the four models. The estimates suggest that the distribution of federal salaries was even more responsive to state political alignment than the number of positions allocated. Exponentiating the coefficients from these models implies that supporting the president in the Electoral College increases the salaries awarded to bureaucrats appointed from that state by between 57 and 62 percent.

We find similar results when studying the (logged) average salary paid to bureaucratic appointees from each state. As Table B.2 shows, the average salary paid to residents of states that

⁷From this analysis, we omit the minority of positions in which officeholders were paid on more short-term bases.

supported the president in the Electoral College was 11 to 19 percent higher than the average salary paid to residents of other states. This finding suggests that appointees from states aligned with the presidential administration are receiving more plum positions with greater responsibility and policy influence.

The Mechanisms of Patronage Distribution

Theories of distributive politics suggest competing motivations for parties and politicians to privilege certain constituencies when distributing resources. If patronage was used primarily to repay party organizations or (perhaps especially) party bosses for their support in the most recent election, then we might expect that states in which the president performed especially well would be disproportionate recipients of federal positions. This pattern would suggest a retrospective quality to presidential patronage, in which a president is expected to provide rewards to the party organizations who supported their successful bid for office. Alternatively, if patronage is a mechanism through which presidents attempt to maintain and build successful political coalitions, they may prioritize swing or marginal constituencies. In this case, we would expect that patronage would be disproportionately targeted to states where presidential election results were especially competitive.

We evaluated these possibilities, following Kriner and Reeves (2015), by creating indicators to distinguish *Core* and *Swing* states. *Core* states supported the president with at least 55 percent of the popular vote while *Swing* states awarded the president between 45 and 55 percent of the vote. Hostile states who opposed the president at greater levels are the omitted category. Thus, the coefficients for *Core* and *Swing* states characterize the increased number of positions allocated relative to states in which the president fared poorly.

The results are shown in Table 2. We find that both *Core* and *Swing* states benefited, relative to hostile states, from their alignment with the president. However, the magnitude is consistently larger for *Core* states, with the coefficients being approximately twice as large. The coefficients

from the various models imply that being a competitive state increased the distribution of appointments to residents by 22 to 32 percent relative to hostile states, while being a “core” state increased appointments by 52 to 84 percent over hostile states. These results are generally consistent with the Dixit and Londregan (1996) model of “machine politics,” in which parties privilege loyalists over swing voters when they have strong information about the partisan identities of voters and are able to precisely target resources to individuals. Historical accounts strongly suggest these conditions were in place for most of the nineteenth century. Political parties dominated civic and political life (Silbey 1994) and the nature of nineteenth-century balloting provided parties with the ability to monitor in detail how individuals cast their votes (Bensel 2004). In conjunction with the results from Table 1, these findings suggest the strategic use of patronage by presidents primarily to distribute the spoils of office to their parties and only secondarily to maintain and build electoral coalitions.

Table 2: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881: Distinguishing Forms of Particularism

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Swing state	0.21* (0.10)	0.20* (0.10)	0.27* (0.10)	0.28* (0.09)
Core state	0.44* (0.11)	0.42* (0.11)	0.61* (0.12)	0.51* (0.12)
log(Population)		0.23 (0.18)	0.39 (0.57)	−1.50 (1.06)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends	None	None	Linear	Quadratic
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

In Table 3, we explore how the findings from Table 1 apply to the eleven states of the Confed-

eracy relative to the rest of the country. The first column estimates our benchmark specification from Table 1 but interacts an indicator for the confederate South with *Electoral College support*. For the entire period under study, this indicator distinguishes those states that seceded from the Union. The second column estimates our benchmark specification while omitting the Confederate states during the period they were at war. Together, the models show that the allocation of patronage in the South was especially responsive to political alignment with the president but that the correlation was much smaller—perhaps even zero—among confederate states.⁸

Table 3: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881: Accounting for the Confederacy

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)	
	(1)	(2)
Electoral College support	0.06 (0.08)	0.00 (0.05)
Confederacy × Electoral College support	0.55* (0.15)	
log(Population)	0.35 (0.18)	0.45* (0.16)
States	All states	States not at war
Year fixed effects	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X
Observations	554	504

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

The results in Table 3 are consistent with the findings from Table 2. For most of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1860, the South “lacked most of the basic two-party competitiveness that characterized most of the rest of the country” (Silbey 1994, 157). In most years, the South

⁸Our analysis of the distribution of salaries across states (Table B.4 provides similar patterns in that the connection between *Electoral College support* and the salaried value of positions is stronger in the Confederate states than it is for the rest of the country. However, in these models, *Electoral College support* remains positive and statistically significant for the states outside the confederacy (0.24 and 0.19, respectively).

voted as a bloc and its partisan loyalties were generally with the Democrats.⁹ As a result, there were few incentives for Republican presidential administrations to attempt to curry favor with Southern states. The main opportunity for these states to receive patronage positions came from the election of Democratic presidents. Figure 2 shows relatively clear peaks and valleys in the number of positions allocated to states like Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas in the decades preceding civil service reform—with the timing of these peaks corresponding to periods of Democratic presidential administrations. The absence of two-party competition in the South denied its states much of an opportunity to place its residents in patronage positions in Washington—at least outside of the few Democratic presidential administrations in this period. Not only does this suggest the theoretical link between party competition and the provision of patronage in an era of machine politics, but it also suggests a political explanation for why the composition of the executive branch in this era was dominated by Northerners.

Our theoretical account emphasized the role of the presidency in dispensing patronage, and our empirical results are consistent with this perspective. However, we also considered several complementary if not alternative mechanisms that could also generate the findings reported above. First, we considered the possibility that the composition of a state’s congressional delegation, rather than the state’s political alignment with the president, is associated with the allocation of patronage. Given perspectives that emphasize the dominance of Congress in nineteenth century politics (Bryce 1995 [1888]; Lowi 1986; Wilson 1885), studying the composition of US House delegations rather than the state’s electoral support for the president provides an opportunity to evaluate whether Congress and not the presidency was the more dominant institution in distributing patronage. Second, we also considered the possibility that patronage was dispensed through a state’s connection with department heads (see Johnson and Libecap 1994a, 29). This account would suggest that the selection of department heads, rather than the president’s par-

⁹This is less the case during the period of Reconstruction, though the fact that federal troops were dispatched to several states to ensure compliance with federal law—during which time those states tended to vote for Republicans—supports the more general case that these states’ loyalties were *not* with Republicans.

tisan or electoral incentives, shapes the composition of the federal workforce. We discuss these analyses in turn.

Column (1) in Table 4 estimates our benchmark model when accounting for the share of a state's House seats held by members of the president's party rather than the measure of *Electoral College support*. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant and similar in magnitude to the coefficients reported in Table 1. This result could suggest that the president consulted with or even deferred to members of Congress from his own party when allocating patronage positions. Given the close association between presidential and congressional election results in this period (Engstrom and Kernell 2005), however, it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish the relative contributions of presidents and their congressional copartisans in dispensing patronage.

In columns (2) and (3), we account for the share of each state's House seats that was affiliated with the chamber majority party. Larger values of this variable indicate that a state's House delegation was more strongly aligned with the party that controlled the chamber. As column (2) shows, we find a positive and statistically coefficient on this variable. This suggests the possibility that the congressional majority party rather than the president could have been dominant political figure in the allocation of patronage. Column (3) examines this possibility more directly by interacting the share of seats from a state's House delegation held by the majority party with an indicator for periods of divided government. During these conditions, the relative contributions of the president and the Congress can be distinguished most clearly. Here, the coefficient for the constituent term is positive (0.44), indicating that during periods of unified government states receive more patronage positions when larger shares of their House delegation are aligned with the majority party. However, the interaction term is negative (-0.33), indicating that the advantages of being aligned with the majority party are substantially attenuated during periods of divided government. While there are benefits to being represented by members of the majority party, these benefits are considerably greater when the majority party in Congress also holds the White House.

In column (4), we estimate a model that includes an indicator for whether at least one department head in a given year was appointed from state j . If presidents delegate authority to dispense patronage appointments to the people they nominate to lead departments, those department heads could rely on their home-state political networks when distributing appointments. The results, however, weigh against this possibility. The coefficient estimate is positive (0.02) but small in magnitude and not distinguishable from zero. Department heads could certainly have relied on their political networks to influence the distribution of patronage but, in the main, there is no evidence that states from which department heads were appointed were disproportionate recipients of rank-and-file bureaucratic positions.

Table 4: Evaluating Other Possible Mechanisms of Patronage Allocation, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Congressional delegation aligned with president	0.32* (0.10)			
Congressional delegation aligned with majority		0.26* (0.08)	0.44* (0.13)	
Congressional delegation aligned with majority × Divided government			-0.33* (0.16)	
Home-state department head				0.02 (0.13)
log(Population)	0.33 (0.19)	0.41* (0.18)	0.39* (0.18)	0.37 (0.19)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

Party Structures and the Distribution of Patronage

We further explore how the system of presidential patronage varied across states with different party structures. State and local party organizations dominated party politics in the nineteenth century, but they took different forms across the country. We study two potential sources of variation: the presence of machine cities and the strength of state party organizations. Theoretically, parties who exercised strong or monopoly control over local and state governing institutions may have less demand for federal patronage, as patronage needs could be more easily and efficiently addressed through state and local-level positions. Similarly, states with more robust party organizations could have been successful on their own in attending to members' political needs without the use of positions allocated from Washington.

Using data from Trounstine (2009), we create an indicator for *Machine state* on the basis of whether at least one city in a given state was characterized as having a party machine at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁰ We use Mayhew's (1986) study to distinguish whether a state had a *Strong party organization*.¹¹ At the outset, we acknowledge the limitations of both measures. Trounstine's measure comes from conditions in the early twentieth century while Mayhew's comes from the mid-twentieth century. Unfortunately, we are unaware of any other similar measures that characterize state and local party organizations in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. While the presence of party machines and the strength of party organizations are likely to be long-lived conditions—a point Mayhew explicitly acknowledges—we interpret the results with caution given the potential for measurement error.

Table 5 shows the results. Column (1) includes the indicator for *Machine state* using the designations from Trounstine (2009), which we interact with *Electoral College support*. The coefficient on the interaction term is positive, but small in magnitude (0.05) and not statistically

¹⁰Based on Trounstine (2009), we characterize the following states as having machine cities: CO, CT, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MI, NJ, OH, PA, RI, SC, and VA.

¹¹Based on Mayhew (1986), we characterize the following states as having strong party organizations: CT, DE, IL, IN, KY, MD, MO, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, and WV.

distinguishable from zero. These results provide little evidence that the relationship between a state's political alignment with the presidential administration and the dispensation of federal patronage varied on the basis of whether a state had a major city controlled by a party machine.

Column (2) includes the indicator for states with strong party organizations using the Mayhew (1986) classification and its interaction with *Electoral College support*. The constituent term for the latter is positive and statistically significant (0.48), and larger in magnitude than the coefficients reported in Table 1. The coefficient on the interaction term is negative and approximately equivalent in magnitude to the constituent term for *Electoral College support*. This finding suggests that while alignment with the president had a strong association with the volume of patronage appointments states with weak party organizations received, there was no such association in states with strong party organizations. One possibility is that strong party organizations controlled the disbursement of patronage in state and municipal governments, reducing their reliance on federal appointments for party maintenance. Another possibility is that strong party organizations could *always* count on receiving some relatively fixed quantity of federal patronage appointments, such that the volume of patronage was less responsive to the state's alignment with the president. Unfortunately, our data do not permit us to distinguish these accounts, but they are intriguing subjects for future research on how parties pursue patronage goals in a federal system.

Civil Service Reform and the Decline of Presidential Patronage

In a final set of analyses, we study how civil service reform affected the relationship between state electoral support for the presidential administration and the allocation of bureaucratic positions. To do so, we estimate models similar to those reported above while including additional data from 1883 to 1917. We included a indicator for observations in 1883 or later (*Reform*) and

Table 5: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881: Variation across State Party Contexts

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)	
	(1)	(2)
Electoral College support	0.26* (0.10)	0.45* (0.09)
log(Population)	0.33 (0.18)	0.35 (0.18)
Electoral College support × Machine state	0.05 (0.18)	
Electoral College support × Strong party organization		−0.48* (0.14)
Year fixed effects	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X
Observations	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

interacted it with the measure of state presidential voting patterns. If civil service reform reduced the allocation of presidentially-based patronage, we would expect the coefficient for *Electoral College support* to be positive and the interaction term to be negative, indicating that the relationship between presidential politics and bureaucratic appointments attenuated following the passage of the Pendleton Act. Because Pendleton also required civil service positions to be apportioned on the basis of state population, we also estimated models when interacting the *Reform* indicator with our measure of population (logged). If the apportionment requirement changed the allocation of positions so that they better reflected state population sizes, we expect the coefficient on this interaction term to be positive.

Before presenting the results, we emphasize the challenges in precisely identifying the effect of civil service reform. As we noted above, there is considerable ambiguity around when we would expect the civil service “treatment” to apply. The law was passed in 1883, but only a

small number of positions was originally subject to classification. Several decades passed before a majority of positions were covered, and not until 1912 were statutory provisions implemented to protect employees from improper removal. Moreover, civil service reform was implemented in a period during which a series of other reforms to the political system were also implemented, including (among others) the replacement of party ballots with the Australian ballot (Moskowitz and Rogowski 2024), the emergence of formal leadership structures in Congress (Galloway 1976; Gamm and Smith 2025), the direct primary (Hirano and Snyder 2019), and the direct election of senators (Foy-Sutherland, Moskowitz, and Rogowski 2023; Schiller and Stewart 2015). Thus, we do not interpret our research design as isolating the effect of the Pendleton Act but rather as a way to gauge whether the relationship between presidential politics and the distribution of bureaucratic positions was different in the years following its passage compared with the preceding period.

Table 6 shows the results. In each model, the coefficient for the constituent term for *Electoral College support* is positive and statistically significant, and nearly identical in magnitude to Table 1. The interaction term in each model is negatively and statistically distinguishable from zero. Most strikingly, the magnitudes of the interaction terms are nearly identical in absolute terms to the constituent term, suggesting that the relationship between *Electoral College support* and the number of bureaucratic positions was approximately zero in the period following the passage of civil service reform. As we indicated above, our results are substantively identical when substituting the president's share of the popular vote for the binary indicator of Electoral College support (Table A.3) and when studying the allocation of bureaucratic salaries rather than positions (Table B.7). The models in these additional analyses continue to show that while the president's electoral performance was strongly associated with the allocation of federal patronage, this association is approximately zero in the period following civil service reform.

We also find some evidence that, consistent with the goals of the Pendleton Act, state population was a stronger predictor of the number of bureaucrat posts after its implementation. The

coefficient for the interaction between $\log(\text{Population})$ and *Reform* is positive and statistically significant in our benchmark specification, column (2). The magnitudes of the coefficients indicate that the association between population and bureaucratic appointments strengthened by approximately 50 percent in the post-reform period. However, we do not wish to overstate our confidence in this finding or its magnitude given the considerably smaller estimates on the interaction terms in columns (3) and (4). At the very least, it seems reasonable to conclude, as Hoogenboom (1959, 314) did, that while “appointments under the merit system were more equally distributed [across states] than they had been in the past,” apportionment “was never fully achieved.”

Table 6: Presidential Support and State Bureaucratic Appointments before and after Civil Service Reform, 1851–1917

	Dependent variable: $\log(\text{Positions})$			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Electoral College support	0.36*	0.35*	0.30*	0.31*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Electoral College support \times Reform	-0.38*	-0.37*	-0.28*	-0.29*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
$\log(\text{Population})$	0.48*	0.41*	0.51*	1.17*
	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.18)	(0.39)
$\log(\text{Population}) \times \text{Reform}$		0.19*	0.06	0.05
		(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	1,338	1,338	1,338	1,338

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *Reform* indicates observations from 1883 to 1917. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

The results in Table 6 provide new evidence about the potential consequences of the Pendleton Act. We find that the relationship between presidential politics and the allocation of bureaucratic positions significantly attenuated upon the passage of civil service reform in 1883. As we emphasized above, we do not wish to overinterpret these findings. Nevertheless, they suggest the

politics of patronage meaningfully changed following the introduction of civil service reform, with implications for bureaucratic selection and the allocation of executive branch positions.

Conclusion

Civil service reform was a landmark moment in the history of American government and the federal bureaucracy in particular. We have sought to characterize the politics associated with the composition of the executive branch before and after the introduction of civil service. Our evidence confirms some accounts that emphasize the president's role in dispensing patronage and establishes a robust correlation at the state level between the president's electoral performance and the allocation of patronage positions. Our analysis also suggests that this relationship decayed, and was perhaps eliminated, following civil service reform. While our findings do not indicate that patronage no longer existed following the implementation of merit requirements, they do suggest that the exchange of votes for positions was no longer an important means through which the bureaucracy was staffed. These results indicate that the role of both the presidency and political parties in awarding bureaucratic positions substantially changed following the Pendleton Act.

Our data and findings raise a number of questions for future research to address. First, future work could more finely distinguish bureaucratic personnel by position and classification status under the Pendleton Act. This could provide better clearer evidence about how patronage varied across the bureaucratic hierarchy and with the introduction of civil service reform. Second, our work does not evaluate the backgrounds of individual bureaucrats. Given opportunities to link personnel to Census data and other political-biographical data, this could shed new light on the characteristics of the individuals working in the federal government. Third, additional work would be useful for examining the consequences of patronage for other outcomes of interest. For instance, how does patronage generate tradeoffs with the quality of bureaucratic administration?

Likewise, how does the allocation of patronage affect outcomes within the separation of powers? Many of the accounts described above suggest its utility for presidents in affecting legislative support for the president's policy agenda; this question, among many others, is ripe for future research. We seek to address these possibilities in our future work.

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SUPPLEMENTARY APPENDIX

Robustness Checks and Empirical Extensions for “The Politics of Patronage and Consequences of Civil Service Reform: Evidence from the US”

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A	Measuring Electoral Support using President’s Share of Popular Vote	1
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A Measuring Electoral Support using President's Share of Popular Vote

Table A.1: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Presidential popular vote share	1.40*	1.42*	1.61*	1.29*
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.28)	(0.31)
log(Population)		0.37*	0.18	-1.70
		(0.16)	(0.54)	(0.95)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	545	545	545	545

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election year in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table A.2: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Appointments, 1851–1881: Accounting for the Confederacy

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)	
	(1)	(2)
Presidential popular vote share	−0.18 (0.28)	0.14 (0.24)
Confederacy × popular vote share	2.31* (0.36)	0.64 (0.43)
log(Population)	0.37* (0.15)	0.43* (0.15)
States	All states	States not at war
Year fixed effects	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X
Observations	545	495

Note: The dependent variable is the logged number of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table A.3: Presidential Support and State Bureaucratic Appointments before and after Civil Service Reform, 1851–1917

	Dependent variable: log(Positions)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Presidential popular vote share	1.58*	1.65*	1.58*	0.48*
	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.20)
Presidential popular vote share × Reform	−1.57*	−1.61*	−1.56*	−0.41
	(0.27)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.23)
log(Population)		0.49*	0.42*	0.39*
		(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.10)
log(Population) × Reform			0.17*	0.18*
			(0.05)	(0.05)
States	All	All	All	Not At War
Year Fixed Effects	X	X	X	X
State Fixed Effects	X	X	X	X
Observations	1,317	1,317	1,317	1,267

Note: Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

B Characterizing Dependent Variable as Sum of Bureaucratic Salaries

Table B.1: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Salaries, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Electoral College support	0.46* (0.09)	0.45* (0.09)	0.48* (0.10)	0.46* (0.10)
log(Population)		0.55* (0.17)	1.69* (0.57)	−0.45 (0.95)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election year in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table B.2: Presidential Support and Average Bureaucratic Salaries, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Salary)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Electoral College support	0.18*	0.17*	0.11*	0.10*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
log(Population)		0.22	0.62*	0.81*
		(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.25)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged average salary of bureaucratic positions awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election year in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table B.3: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Salaries, 1851–1881: Distinguishing Forms of Particularism

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Swing state	0.36*	0.35*	0.33*	0.30*
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Core state	0.59*	0.57*	0.65*	0.55*
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)
log(Population)		0.41*	0.82	−0.56
		(0.16)	(0.62)	(1.12)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table B.4: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Salaries, 1851–1881: Accounting for the Confederacy

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)	
	(1)	(2)
Electoral College support	0.24* (0.10)	0.19* (0.07)
Confederacy × Electoral College support	0.54* (0.16)	
log(Population)	0.57* (0.18)	0.66* (0.18)
States	All states	States not at war
Year fixed effects	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X
Observations	554	504

Note: The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table B.5: Presidential Support and the Distribution of Bureaucratic Salaries, 1851–1881: Variation across State Party Contexts

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)	
	(1)	(2)
Electoral College support	0.43* (0.11)	0.66* (0.11)
log(Population)	0.55* (0.17)	0.57* (0.16)
Electoral College support × Machine state	0.05 (0.19)	
Electoral College support × Strong party organization		−0.59* (0.14)
Year fixed effects	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X
Observations	554	554

*Note:*The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Table B.6: Evaluating Other Possible Mechanisms of Patronage Allocation, 1851–1881

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Congressional delegation aligned with president	0.51* (0.11)			
Congressional delegation aligned with majority		0.28* (0.08)	0.63* (0.16)	
Congressional delegation aligned with majority × Divided government			-0.67* (0.18)	
Home-state department head				0.00 (0.09)
log(Population)	0.55* (0.18)	0.65* (0.21)	0.61* (0.19)	0.61* (0.22)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Observations	554	554	554	554

Note: The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

Table B.7: Presidential Support and State Bureaucratic Salaries before and after Civil Service Reform, 1851–1917

	Dependent variable: log(Total salaries)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Electoral College support	0.48*	0.46*	0.45*	0.42*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Electoral College support × Reform	−0.48*	−0.47*	−0.44*	−0.42*
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
log(Population)	0.69*	0.63*	0.60*	1.57*
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.17)	(0.33)
log(Population) × Reform		0.14*	0.08*	0.06
		(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Year fixed effects	X	X	X	X
State fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Trends			Linear	Quadratic
Observations	1,338	1,338	1,338	1,338

Note: The dependent variable is the logged total salaries awarded to residents of each state. Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on state-election years in parentheses. *Reform* indicates observations from 1883 to 1917. *p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).