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Networks of effectiveness? The impact of politicization on bureaucratic performance in Pakistan

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Abstract

Bureaucratic performance varies immensely even within low-capacity states. Politicians and bureaucrats create pockets or networks of effectiveness that allow some departments to perform more efficiently than others. How do these networks develop and how are politicized bureaucratic appointments used to influence performance? Drawing on qualitative fieldwork conducted in Punjab, Pakistan, this paper argues that politicians and bureaucrats ensure enhanced performance by making legal and extra-legal appointments of hand-picked bureaucrats to key posts. The choice of bureaucrat is made on the basis of carefully curated relationships of patronage, established through work, training, and old school networks. As a result, temporary networks of effectiveness are created but rendered unsustainable by the very patronage relationships that create them, preventing them from evolving into more permanent pockets of effectiveness. More broadly, my argument contributes to debates on intra-state capacity and politicization, establishing a link between patterns of staffing and patterns of governance.

Introduction

There is immense variation in the bureaucratic capacity and performance of regions and government departments—some departments, districts, and provinces are better at achieving set targets or distributing goods efficiently (to the citizens' or politician's benefit, as the case may be) than others (Ang, 2017; Crook, 2010; Geddes, 1994; Grindle, 1997). Explanations for the emergence and stability of such 'pockets of effectiveness' (Roll, 2014: 24) have been unsatisfying in the past (Hickey, 2019; Crook,: 2010:11-12).[1] The political settlements approach (Khan, 2010) that has grounded some of these inquiries has been limited in its analysis of sociological and public policy factors impacting state capacity (Hickey, 2019:33; Mohan 2019).[2] Framing the state as an 'ensemble of power' (Jessop 2008: 37), Hickey (2019: 33-35) argues for incorporating social and state-society relationships, the ideas that underpin the political settlement, and an analysis of policy domains to enrich studies of pockets of effectiveness. As such, this adapted research agenda encourages an investigation into the roles of 'leadership, networks of connectors and convenors, entrepreneurs and activists' (Porter and Watts, 2017:2) in the development of these pockets. In this paper, I adapt the framework used to study pockets of effectiveness in African states to study bureaucratic performance in Pakistan.

My adaptation of the framework is unique for three reasons. Work on African countries assumes the institutional structure of a presidential system. Pakistan follows a parliamentary system and therefore, the presidential patronage that enables technical appointments and the emergence of pockets of effectiveness in presidential countries (e.g., Ghana, Uganda, Brazil) cannot be cleanly replicated in parliamentary systems.[3] Second, the literature on pockets of effectiveness engages with federal ministries and departments, but not subnational units. While cross-national comparisons of bureaucratic performance have been carried out (Evans and Rauch, 1999; Rauch and Evans, 2000: 50), it is difficult to draw

conclusions regarding bureaucratic performance within a state due to the difficulties in

identifying and measuring variables that proxy for state capacity or performance at the intra-

state level (Bersch, et al., 2017a; 2017b; McDonnell, 2017; Kyle and Resnick, 2019). In

particular, work on subnational bureaucratic performance and capacity in Pakistan has been

limited due to the assumption that it is a low-capacity state (with some exceptions—see, for

instance, Hasnain, 2008). However, an investigation of the postings of career civil servants

can be a useful indicator of priorities and performance (e.g. Iyer and Mani, 2009; Brierly,

2020; Wade 1982; 1985) and can reveal a 'pattern of leadership' (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019:

35). This allows for contextualizing variation in bureaucratic capacity and critically

investigating the link between bureaucratic autonomy and performance in patronage-reliant

post-colonial countries, particularly at the subnational level where, as Bersch, et al. (2017a)

note, pockets of effectiveness can be difficult to identify since the usual performance

variables do not typically vary across departments.

I also argue for extending analysis of political settlements and pockets of

effectiveness beyond a political approach to development to encompass bureaucratic politics.

For this reason, I move away from pockets of effectiveness—where performance is measured

against that of other state agencies—to networks of effectiveness, where the comparison is

amongst a group of state actors. I focus on the career trajectories of bureaucrats at the head of

selected departments and their patronage relationships with politicians and other senior

bureaucrats.[4] As such, my argument is distinct from a political settlements approach (e.g.

Kelsall and Heng, 2014) and draws instead on the leadership approach of work on

'technopols' (Joignant, 2011; Hickey, 2019; Abdulai and Mohan, 2019), investigating how

politicians and bureaucrats work together to establish networks of effectiveness and enhance

performance. However, I contend that their reliance on such networks precludes the

formation of pockets of effectiveness. Impermanent ties of patronage place a bureaucrat at

the head of a department, but once the bureaucrat is transferred away, the department reverts back to its previous levels of poor performance.

Focusing on Pakistani Punjab between 2008 and 2018, I explain the emergence and use of networks of effectiveness by studying politicized bureaucratic appointments. By tracing bureaucratic career trajectories, I explain variations in bureaucratic efficiency and performance at the subnational level. In doing so, I address two questions. First, how do we reconcile bureaucratic performance (or lack thereof) with politicized appointments within parliamentary post-colonial countries? Second, how do different methods of politicized bureaucratic appointment enhance department or agency performance in such countries? I argue that the political settlement and policy institutions on one hand, and social relationships, ideas of public service, and negotiations amongst the political and bureaucratic elite on the other, interact to drive bureaucratic performance, leading to the formation of 'networks or channels of effectiveness' (Hickey, 2019: 42). I contend that politicians and bureaucrats make legal and extra-legal appointments of hand-picked bureaucrats to key posts in important departments at critical times, assign them specific performance targets, and ensure that they have the autonomy to design and implement policies to achieve those targets. These actors are engaged in networks that work closely, share the same ethos, and are important sites for the development and maintenance of patronage ties, carefully curated and catalysed by the process by which bureaucratic appointments are made. Legal appointees, appointed in accordance with regulations, are well-respected and maintain a 'clean' reputation, free of the taint of scandal or corruption. Extra-legal appointees, appointed by bending (but not breaking) the rules, are engaged in a quid pro quo with a patron which makes such appointments more effective in ensuring that targets are achieved, particularly with difficult, intractable problems like high wage bills and corruption in works contracts. Consequently, the process by which an appointment is made and the network relationship

that underpins it are instrumental in determining bureaucratic turnover and bureaucratic performance at times of governance crises. In effect, preferential appointments within the bureaucracy can be used to enhance performance. However, such improvements are not sustainable precisely because of the patronage ties that make them possible. The literature provides evidence of pockets of effectiveness declining due to a loss in political support (Geddes 1990; Willis 2014; Hickey, 2019), but I argue that declines equally result from appointed bureaucrats being transferred elsewhere, either because they make too many enemies or are needed to firefight elsewhere. Consequently, the network of effectiveness lapses before it can develop into a pocket and sustain itself, leaving the department to revert to previous levels of inefficiency.

This paper proceeds in three parts. I begin by discussing the concept of politicization in terms of bureaucratic separation and autonomy and consider its impact on state capacity. I then provide an overview of Pakistan's formal and informal institutional structure with a particular focus on the predominance of patronage, the political settlement between 2008 and 2018, and the relationship between the ruling party and the bureaucracy in Punjab. In the final section, I present two examples of networks of effectiveness, describing the use of legal and extra-legal appointments, premised on relationships of patronage between politicians and bureaucrats, to enhance performance.

Materials and Methods

Francis Fukuyama (2013: 8) and Bersch, et al. (2017a) acknowledge that data on performance indicators for bureaucrats is often not publicly available for many countries. Pakistan is one of them and therefore, my approach to studying intrastate bureaucratic performance and networks of effectiveness in Pakistan is a qualitative one. This paper draws on semi-structured interviews with thirty retired and serving officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service and 47 bureaucrats of the School Education Department between

September 2014 and September 2015 in Punjab, Pakistan. The interviews included questions on motivation, training, career trajectory, and experience in service. I used the snowball technique to contact more interviewees—this was particularly useful in identifying networks amongst bureaucrats based on their recommendations. However, respondents were guaranteed anonymity and I refer to them here only by their cadre or post.

Considerable material for this paper was also drawn from data mining in English language newspaper archives, including the dailies Dawn, The News, The Express Tribune, Pakistan Today, and The Daily Times, from 2008 to 2018. In the absence of publicly accessible data on bureaucratic careers, newspaper reports offer a means to map career trajectories and identify relationships amongst the political and bureaucratic elite. I triangulated the data collected using these methods through semi-participant ethnographic observations in the offices of bureaucrats and politicians in the provincial capital, Lahore, and in nearby districts, and through court judgements and government documents.

State Capacity and Bureaucratic Politicization

The Weberian view of the bureaucracy emphasises bureaucratic insulation, neutrality, and autonomy. Drawing on this work, Dasandi and Esteve (2017) model politician-bureaucrat relationships on the basis of separation and autonomy. In their collusive model, bureaucrats have low autonomy and are beholden to politicians, while in the collaborative model, they have high autonomy and are able to innovate (Dasandi and Esteve, 2017:5-6; see also Ang [2017] on 'bureau-franchising'). It is important to make two points here that permit the envisioning of a model of politician-bureaucrat relations that lies somewhere between the collusive and collaborative models, similar to Svara's (2006) 'Responsive Administrator Model'. First, bureaucratic autonomy need not be independent of political interest (Cingolani, et al., 2015). Political appointees may be given considerable autonomy precisely because supervisors trust them to make choices that would benefit them all. Such identification with

their work or firm drives bureaucrats to put in greater effort to achieve organisational goals (Grindle, 1997; Roll, 2014; Kyle and Resnick, 2019), and is critical in contexts where bureaucrats are overburdened and under resourced. Second, the grant of autonomy to bureaucrats might be temporary, intended not to place the bureaucracy 'in charge of the day-to-day running of the country' (Dasandi and Esteve, 2017: 8) but just to achieve a specific short-term target.

Where bureaucrats identify with their bosses (whether politicians or bureaucrats), 'the substitution of political criteria for merit-based criteria' (Peters and Pierre, 2004: 2) or politicization can weigh them down. Political appointees are regarded as being prone to clientelism and patronage (Panizza, et al. 2018), with volatile career trajectories and poor performance (Ban and Ingraham, 1990). This sets them up in sharp contrast to Weber's ideal type of the politically insulated, neutral bureaucrat loyal to only the state (Bersch, et al., 2017b; Geddes, 1994; Keefer, 2007). Notes of dissent were introduced by Moe (1985) and Bok (2003), amongst others, who argued that political appointees bring new blood into often inert and risk-averse government organizations. In Latin American presidential systems, politicized appointments have been used to explain the management of coalitions through enhancing performance and reducing corruption in key agencies (Bersch, et al., 2017b; Geddes, 1994; Grindle, 2012). Hassan (2020) argues that, in Kenya, bureaucratic appointments are used to manage electoral threats and maintain political stability. Effectively then, deepening our understanding of bureaucratic performance means acknowledging that politicization can (and does) 'target' the work of bureaucracies (Peters and Pierre, 2004: 4; Kopecky, et a. 2016; Panizza, et al. 2018).

I argue that particular types of politicized bureaucratic appointment—namely, legal and extra-legal—can be successful in improving bureaucratic performance by creating temporary networks of efficiency within key departments. Here I depart from Panizza, et al.

's (2018) typology of patronage which considers irrelevant 'the legality of the decision' to make a discretionary appointment. I contend that the process by which the appointment is made is an essential component of enhancing bureaucratic performance (or achieving any other outcome) as it determines the nature of the ties between actors within a network of efficiency, thereby determining levels of bureaucratic autonomy. Studying politicization through the interaction of formal institutions (such as laws, regulations, and institutional structures) and informal institutions (networks based on work and school ties, trust, and loyalty, political settlements, leadership, and patronage) (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004), reveals how temporary spikes in efficiency are achieved at the subnational level in otherwise low-capacity states.

Pakistan's Formal and Informal Institutional Structure

Though formally a parliamentary democracy, Pakistan has spent a number of years since independence as a hybrid regime as a result of military interventions in politics. Pakistan is an example of 'asymmetric federalism' (Adeney, 2007) with Punjab as the 'core' province such that the political party winning the election in the province will win at the centre (Adeney, 2012; Table 1). As a consequence of these factors and the persistent weakness of political parties, Pakistan's major political parties have established footholds in specific provinces. Particularly in the period with which this paper is concerned, 2008-2018, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been affiliated with Sindh, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) with Punjab.

It is an understatement to say that Pakistan's political settlement is an unstable one. Narrow but competitive elite settlements and a history of judicial and military interventions in politics has meant that ruling elites remain vulnerable and maintain short-term horizons (Keefer 2007). Like other post-colonial states such as Nigeria (Porter and Watts, 2016: 4-5),

the state's capacity is also asymmetric, prioritising security needs and aiding specific constituencies over the provision of public goods.

Political Settlements at the subnational level

Abdulai and Mohan (2019: 10) argue that pockets of effectiveness are likely to emerge in a dominant political settlement since leaders are insulated from external pressure. Pakistan's federal structure makes a dominant settlement unlikely at the federal level, but a considerable degree of insulation and autonomy are possible for provincial leaders under specific conditions, making the emergence of networks of effectiveness possible. The asymmetric federal structure of the state means that a dominant settlement can only emerge in the province that has the greatest share in the National Assembly: Punjab (see Table 1). Two factors allow for sufficient insulation from external pressure: when the same party forms the federal and the Punjab provincial governments, insulating the latter from federal interference and giving the party a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, and when the same person serves in a political leadership role for multiple terms, ideally contiguous but not necessarily. This allows the political leader to centralize power (Abdulai and Mohan, 2019: 13), understand the levers and constraints of the bureaucracy, and establish relationships that allow them to deliver on promises and priorities.

In the 2008 general election, the PPP formed the federal government at the head of a coalition, but the PML-N won Punjab and Shahbaz Sharif returned to the post of Chief Minister (CM) following a period of exile. He had held the post from 1997-1999, while his brother, Nawaz Sharif, was the Prime Minister, allowing him substantial experience of the job and a network of relationships that he could build on. In 2013, the PPP suffered a resounding defeat in the general election and the PML-N won majorities at both the centre and in Punjab, with Shahbaz Sharif retaining the post of CM and Nawaz Sharif once again becoming the Prime Minister. The party's dominance during this time cemented the power of

the two brothers in their respective offices, but particularly Shahbaz Sharif, creating a dominant leader political settlement in Punjab.

Patronage and the Pakistan Bureaucracy

As a result of the complex nature of political competition, military intervention in politics, and the resultant co-optation of the bureaucracy by those in power, patronage remains the predominant means of structuring political life in Pakistan (Jalal, 1995; Kennedy, 1987; Mohmand, 2019; Mufti, 2016). In Punjab, people vote for politicians who offer the best 'delivery' of services and resources (Mohmand, 2019). A politician's ability to influence bureaucratic appointments and bureaucratic competence is, therefore, crucial to the 'delivery' underpinning electoral success, and so, all else being equal, the most successful politician (electorally speaking) is not the great legislator, but the one who 'gets things done' with a cooperative bureaucrat at his back.

I posit that in determining or enhancing bureaucratic competence, agency leadership (meaning ministerial appointments) is of 'modest importance' (Krause, et al.,2006: 785); "[i]n the federal ministries, the minister still has clout. But in the provinces, the minister gets side-lined and the Secretary is the powerful one," explained a retired PAS bureaucrat.[5] In contrast to existing work on pockets of effectiveness which focuses on political appointees in ministries or departments reshuffling bureaucrats to construct a trusted team (Abdulai and Mohan, 2019, 19), I emphasise the significance of networks between senior bureaucrats and the provincial political and bureaucratic leadership. Therefore, my interest is in the elite cadre of civil servants who occupy these posts – the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS, formerly known as the District Management Group or DMG). The PAS is a generalist cadre selected through a competitive examination with progression measured along Basic Pay Scales (BPS), starting from BPS 17 and invariably rising to BPS 22 and the post of federal

secretary. There is no lateral entry from the private sector (though entrants are permitted from the military).

Recruitment to the PAS, based on a competitive examination, varies from year to year, usually between twenty and forty. This leads to a 'shared belief in each other's merit' within this coveted cadre, not unlike a 'union or guild'.[6] The sense of *esprit de corps* is reinforced during training. Socialised as batches, officers and their families remain in contact throughout their careers. Ties of mentorship further strengthen bonds within the cadre; 'seniors who have served with you early on will take care of you…this cultural web is drawn around you to make you behave in a certain way, even when you are serving alone in a district.'[7] However, just as McDonnell (2017: 481) notes for Ghana, this web does not amount to the sense of vocation or bureaucratic ethos that Weber (1978) envisioned. The reasons for this are complex, but the overtly political role the Pakistan bureaucracy has played during both democratic and military regimes has entrenched patronage ties between bureaucrats and the ruling elite (Kennedy, 1987; Jalal, 1995). Though bureaucrats acknowledge the politicization of the PAS, this is not a practice they consider to be corrupt. Such networking is the means by which politicians get work done through a team of bureaucrats that they trust.[8] This differentiation is premised on these ties of trust being different to kinship or *biraderi* ties more commonly identified in informal networks across multiple settings in South Asia (Martin, 2016; Nelson, 2011). Bureaucrats distinguish themselves as professionals by grounding their relationships in work, school, or training networks with politicians and other bureaucrats, producing reliance, loyalty, and mentorship—particularly when initiated in the formative years of a bureaucrat's career. They require effort to build, establish trust, and decide which ties will be most useful and so, these relationships are strategic—actors curate them in ways that benefit themselves.

The PML-N and the PAS

        The PML-N's strategy of co-opting key players within the bureaucracy came to the fore when a number of bureaucrats who had worked closely with the Sharifs during their previous stints in government (during the 1990s) became key players in senior bureaucratic posts between 2008 and 2018, particularly in Punjab. The trust between these actors allows the politicians to grant bureaucrats significant discretionary powers (McDonnell, 2017: 498; Abdulai and Mohan, 2019:20) and for both parties to channel their energies towards achieving specific targets. As a technopol (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019: 36; Joignant, 2011) or a "'big man'" (McDonnell, 2017: 488), CM Shahbaz Sharif was particularly successful in using these relationships to ensure service delivery. Centralizing power in his office, the CM closely monitored bureaucratic appointments and performance across the province through a network of bureaucratic (not political) allies (Ali, 2020a). The commitment to performance and service delivery became part of the CM's constructed political identity; when asked whether he inspires people's loyalties, the CM reportedly replied, "I don't believe in loyalty, I believe in performance. Loyalty is nothing but vested interest."[9]

        Exploring the motivations of the bureaucrats involved is important as well (Banuri and Keefer, 2013). At any given moment, a bureaucrat is being influenced by multiple actors—family and friends, departmental superiors, batch mates, business owners, politicians, political fixers, and the courts. Their goals can range from being mission oriented and wanting to enhance performance to seeking personal enrichment or protection or pushing a particular political agenda. To achieve these goals, each bureaucrat forms relationships with the actors (political and bureaucratic) who can help achieve them.

        The combination of formal and informal structural factors outlined in this section provide the context for the curation of networks of effectiveness. In line with Grindle (2012), I contend that their emergence in an atmosphere of "'systemic vulnerability'" is motivated by a 'strategy of patronage' (Hickey, 2019: 38; Ali, 2020a) just as much as, if not more, by state-

building. In other words, patronage relationships enable the negotiation of terms and the curation of networks of effectiveness amongst actors within the state, rather than being 'a form of rational-legal, merit-based form of state functioning…existing in a sea of patronage' (Hickey, 2019: 13). However, it is precisely these characteristics that prevent these networks from evolving into more permanent pockets of effectiveness as strategies shift and patronage ties are re-structured.

Bureaucratic Appointments and Bureaucratic Performance

Variation in performance is, I argue, deliberate. It is based on prioritising some targets over others and using politicized bureaucratic appointments to create networks of effectiveness to achieve them. However, these networks cannot lead to sustained improvements in effectiveness in departments. Fundamentally, the objective of the network of effectiveness is not to structurally overhaul the department so as to ensure sustained performance. Instead, it is to provide a temporary spike in efficiency that suits both the political and bureaucratic leadership in a dominant leader political settlement where parties operate with short-term horizons. Therefore, these networks do not necessarily produce a unique sense of mission (Grindle, 1997) or even an "organizational identity" (Abdulai and Mohan, 2019: 26) in the department that subsumes other associations. Rather, performance is ensured through stringent monitoring by senior bureaucrats and politicians and any 'organizational mystique' (Grindle, 1997) amongst the department's bureaucrats is closely tied to the person of the Secretary. The result is that non-PAS bureaucrats in the department seek the Secretary's favour, and through them, the favour of the political leadership (Ali, 2020a).

I argue that politicians and bureaucrats are most successful in creating networks of effectiveness when they exploit regulatory loopholes to make extra-legal appointments. In making this argument, I focus on bureaucratic turnover in the post of departmental Secretary

in the absence of any change in political leadership. The Secretary has the power to determine the direction of a department; a politically well-connected Secretary can exercise considerable discretion over staffing within their department, particularly transfers, even within the constraints of the civil service structure and legal provisions (Roll, 2014; Ali, 2020a). Each case in this section explores the career trajectory of the bureaucrat with respect to the relationship they had with senior politicians and bureaucrats, and the bureaucrat's performance.

Legal Appointments

In 2010, CM Shahbaz Sharif launched a School Reforms Roadmap (under the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program or PESRP which began in 2003) aimed at enrolling all children of school-going age and providing them with a quality education. The project won high praise in some circles, but there has been considerable debate over its impact with evaluations citing concerns over data falsification and data sources (Naviwala, 2016: 17-18; Das 2013). A 2016 World Bank project appraisal report concludes:[10]

> Despite over a decade of focused support to large scale education programs and what some have termed "cutting edge" reforms, education outcomes, including enrolment rates and learning outcomes, in the province of the Punjab are only marginally better than those in the rest of the country. Gains made over the last decade have stagnated.

Nonetheless, from the standpoint of the political leadership in Punjab at the time, the Roadmap was a success because it brought in significant donor funding and was lauded internationally as one of the successes of Sir Michael Barber's 'deliverology' approach.[11] Such reputational gains are critical for countries like Pakistan which have struggled with their international image, and in particular by ruling parties in these countries that are perpetually on the backfoot in the face of an interventionist military establishment. As a result, "Chief

Minister Shahbaz Sharif took personal ownership of the program," the PESRP Program Director told me.[12]

I argue that the perceived success of this program was ensured by the political and bureaucratic leadership through the curation of a network of efficiency in the Punjab School Education Department (SED) department. From the initiation of the Roadmap till May 2017, the department had just two secretaries, a deliberate choice considering previous and subsequent secretarial tenures (Figure 1). In the absence of other forms of performance data, length of tenure in a post is a proxy for political and donor support for a bureaucrat, and for distinction within the bureaucracy. For example, a DFID February 2020 evaluation report (p.3)[13] notes that the SED has had eight different secretaries in the past ten months, leading to an evaluation of 'moderately not met expectations' on the measure of strong leadership and accountability. A former PAS bureaucrat explained:[14]

> Postings do not really impact salaries (aside from corruption). So how do you distinguish someone likely to become Chief Secretary? Who are the top twenty or thirty percent of officers? They are distinguished by a few features – they have served in districts and served for long tenures. Tenure maximization is critical—can you stick it out? Can you handle the pressure? It is literally like the rodeo.

I divide the Roadmap into two phases based on the tenures of the two secretaries who led the department between 2010 and 2017. The first phase was completing the design of the project and developing policy documents for merit-based teacher recruitment, monitoring and evaluation, and student and teacher assessments. The legal appointment of a bureaucrat with experience in the education sector was required to indicate to the donor that the government was committed to the Roadmap. Mohammad Aslam Kamboh, the man picked as the Secretary, started his career as a government schoolteacher before joining the PAS. After serving as the director of donor-funded projects in education in Punjab, he served as Programme Director of the Directorate of Staff Development in the Punjab SED in 2008.

Unlike other prominent bureaucrats working in Punjab at the time, Kamboh had not worked with Shahbaz Sharif all that closely since he was posted in a different province during the 1990s. Therefore, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary approved his appointment on the basis of his expertise and experience of working with donors—the ideal technocratic bureaucratic appointment.[15]

By the time Kamboh's term as Secretary came to an end in 2013, new policies were in place for the meritocratic recruitment of teachers, a ban on teacher transfers during the school year, and monitoring by the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU).[16] Phase two involved ensuring the implementation of these policies in the face of inevitable political pressure. As a result, the new Secretary needed to work closely with the CM Secretariat and sideline local political actors seeking to dispense patronage through the appointment of teachers. It was at this point that the relationship between the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary (the senior most bureaucrat in the province, also a PAS officer) on the one hand, and the bureaucrat appointed by them as the department Secretary became critical, forming a network of effectiveness to produce (the impression of) results.

Unlike Kamboh, Abdul Jabbar Shaheen had no significant prior experience with the education sector. However, he was very familiar to the CM and the Chief Secretary as a result of his various appointments in Punjab (see Figure 2) and had a reputation for reporting demanding politicians to the CM Secretariat.[17] In 2008, the Chief Secretary of Punjab recommended Shaheen for the post of District Coordination Officer of Kasur, the latter's home district.[18] The Chief Secretary was interested in launching a post-retirement political career,[19] and Shaheen's appointment was a means of directing development funds towards his ancestral village, Roshan Bheela. This small village not far from Kasur city had, by 2010, acquired a dual carriageway, a fully equipped hospital, parks, and schools (Gilani, 2010). Understandably, such targeted patronage irked politicians from the ruling PML-N in Kasur

district and led to demonstrations being carried out both in support of and against Shaheen (DAWN, 2009). Bureaucrats at the centre of such conflicts are often placed on leave or transferred to a low-profile post. But the CM Secretariat appointed Shaheen—legally—to prominent posts in Lahore, revealing the strength of his relationship with the CM office and the protection extended to him. As Abdulai and Mohan (2019: 17) found in Ghana and Bukenya and Hickey (2019: 36) in Uganda, the political leadership in Punjab favoured bureaucrats over their own party members (Ali, 2020a). As one PAS bureaucrat explained, "[The CM] runs his government through [chosen] bureaucrats. He tells [them] to learn to deal with [politicians]."[20]

Shaheen was the Secretary when I interviewed SED bureaucrats in 2014 and 2015. Although detailed policies had been developed for merit-based recruitment and scheduled transfers of teachers, orders from the CM Secretariat or the Secretary were often used to bypass them.[21] This is a pattern seen elsewhere—in Uganda, for example, the executive intervened to weaken the provisions of the 2015 Public Financial Management Act (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019: 25-26). Porter and Watts (2016:2) refer to it as 'isomorphic mimicry'—superficial changes rather than sustainable institutional ones. The result is that the sense of pride that McDonnell (2017: 490) finds in bureaucratic interstices was absent, replaced by a much more cynical ethos and view of reform amongst mid-tier SED bureaucrats based on the certainty that if you had the right political and bureaucratic connections, you could easily bypass any new regulations. A Deputy Secretary who joined the department when Shaheen became Secretary at the latter's request, having worked with him previously, commented: "If you ask me in an official capacity, I will say everything is fine. Unofficially, it is all political interference."

Consequently, the department cannot develop into a pocket of effectiveness, not only because any sustainable improvements are undermined by the political and bureaucratic

leadership itself (Ali 2020a), but because any impression of improvement in performance is centred in the person of the Secretary, who will eventually be transferred, and their ability to balance patronage demands with reform initiatives. In the case of the SED, for example, a First Interim Evaluation Report (2018: v) found that despite "strong political commitment", there is no "comprehensive education policy framework, in particular to guide prioritization and public expenditure decisions". The reform program stagnated for, as a retired PAS bureaucrat put it, "When a Secretary goes, institutional memory doesn't exist beyond him."[22]

Extra-legal Appointments

An extra-legal appointment is one that exploits a loophole or gap in the formal rules, taking a legal practice and extending it to circumstances outside its usual domain. Typically, this is either the result of discretionary powers or ambiguity (deliberate or otherwise) in the regulations. The key factor is the degree of flexibility extra-legal appointments allow—appointments can be made without raising red flags for corruption or malfeasance but, at the same time, existing laws continue to stand so that they *can* be followed when this suits the actors in question.[23]

Where patrons expend some effort to have bureaucrats appointed to particular posts, the expectation is that (reciprocally) the appointee will expend some effort to achieve the patron's expected performance outcome, making the ties between patrons and appointees not only stronger, but also more sustainable. Consequently, I contend that the most efficient method of establishing a network of effectiveness and improving bureaucratic performance is to bend (but not break) the rules on bureaucratic appointment to get the right bureaucrat to the right post.

Examples of extra-legal appointments being made for performance gains abound in the career trajectories of prominent bureaucrats in Punjab between 2008 and 2018 as they

became public figures known for being allies of the government. Many benefitted from extra-legal appointments at some point in their careers—they were too junior for the positions they held, bypassed their seniors for a post, or retained charge of more than one post at a time. The CM was "whimsical with those about whom he has doubts in his heart…If he doubts [someone], nothing can be done [to change his mind]".[24] So, the same people, part of a network favoured by the political and bureaucratic leadership in Punjab, would be rotated in key posts. In exchange, the CM office expected them to produce results. In this section, I discuss one such case, that of Fawad Hasan Fawad, a member of the PAS, whose meteoric rise as a technopol in Punjab led to him becoming Secretary to the Prime Minister and the most powerful bureaucrat in the country—till he was arrested on charges of corruption.

Fawad was referred to by his colleagues as a "fire fighter – a tough bureaucrat, abrasive but efficient".[25] He served as staff officer to senior bureaucrats who were close confidants of the Sharif brothers during the 1990s. When General Musharraf staged a coup in 1999, Fawad was posted abroad and was thus not 'tainted' by association with the military regime. Once the PML-N returned to power in 2008, Fawad became a prominent figure in governance circles in Punjab, becoming part of a carefully curated network of effectiveness. Between April 2008 and June 2013, Fawad held six different department Secretary posts, each of them for less than 18 months (see Figure 3). In each one, the CM Secretariat appointed Fawad extra-legally as a result of discretionary violation of tenure and seniority rules, leapfrogging his seniors to posts above his pay scale.[26] Extra-legal postings of this nature are typically justified as being in the 'public interest' on the grounds that the bureaucrat in question is the best person for the job. But, as a senior PAS bureaucrat explained, bureaucrats working with politicians develop:[27]

> a certain level of comfort, a mutual understanding…i]t is good to have the devil you
> know rather than the devil you don't know. But bureaucrats get politicized if they
> work with a certain party for a long time, become identified with it. They exercise

their discretion in a certain party's favour, and in return they will always have good postings. And so, political parties have started to expect personal loyalty from bureaucrats. This is very much the system and [we] can't do anything about it.

For each appointment, Fawad was assigned a particular performance target—reduce the wage bill, tackle corrupt practices, etc. In exchange for these choice postings and political cover, Fawad was expected to perform tasks that other bureaucrats would find at best daunting and at worst impossible, and at a rapid-fire pace. In turn, the CM Secretariat provided him with the support he needed (autonomy, protection from political pressure, his pick of appointees to his department, etc.). Like the Sharif brothers, Fawad believed in assembling around him a team of junior bureaucrats he trusted.[28] This was essential to ensuring performance because, as one of his PAS colleagues explained, Fawad was disliked by 'those who don't work' because he 'keeps bureaucrats under pressure'.[29]

In April 2008, the Cm Secretariat posted Fawad as Secretary Services and General Administration with the task of reducing the Punjab government's wage bill and freeing up posts for selected officials to be promoted and transferred, while ensuring that all the right people remained in the right places to push the CM's policy agenda forward. Though he was successful in lowering the province's wage bill (DAWN, 2011a), Fawad's work was contentious because he was too junior for the post of Secretary Services, he was deciding the fate of officers senior to him.[30] Unsurprisingly, this led to 'a dispute with senior officers' (Sumra, 2011) and eventually to Fawad's transfer after six months in the posting.

Next, the CM Secretariat appointed Fawad, again extra-legally, to the post of Secretary Communication and Works (C&W). He was too junior for the post, but the CM Secretariat tasked him to 'accelerate the pace of work and purge the department of corrupt officials and contractors' (DAWN, 2011b) by dismantling the parallel economy of kickbacks in construction contracts that involved all levels of department staff, politicians, and

independent contractors. Fawad's actions against allegedly corrupt officials soon had

employees and contractors protesting against him and going on strike (DAWN, 2008). Fawad

also allegedly came under pressure from disgruntled MPAs whose favoured contractors were

facing difficulties in getting government works contracts (DAWN, 2011b). In 2009, matters

came to a head when Fawad ruffled the feathers of a senior minister of the ruling PML-N

(The Daily Times, 2009) when he suspended employees on allegations of corruption

(DAWN, 2011b). The senior minister told the CM that Fawad had allegedly claimed without

proof that the corrupt officials were the minister's appointees and that, 'Either we or the

secretary will have to go' (The Daily Times, 2009). Such conflict and ultimatums are

common in pockets of effectiveness as political considerations conflict with improving

organizational performance, as Abdulai and Mohan (2019, 16-17) and Roll (2014) note.

However, testifying to the strength of the network of effectiveness to which he belonged,

even this ultimatum resulted only in Fawad being sent on leave for six weeks after which he

returned to the same post, remaining Secretary C&W for a total of a year and a half despite

the complaints of contractors, politicians, and department bureaucrats.

In July 2011, the CM Secretariat posted Fawad (extra-legally) as Secretary Excise and

Taxation and tasked him with increasing tax revenues. He was only in BPS 19 at the time of

his appointment while the post was for bureaucrats in BPS 20 and above. This time, Fawad's

extra-legal appointment came in the wake of the removal of the incumbent Secretary under a

cloud of corruption allegations (Sumra, 2011). At the same time, there was a country-wide

push to increase tax revenues as a result of donor pressure and Fawad was tasked with

ensuring that tax revenues showed a substantive increase. He succeeded; Piracha and Moore

(2016, 1784) found that property tax collection, for instance, increased as a consequence of

the Secretary's desire 'to make his mark'. According to a newspaper report, the Secretary

'managed to increase tax revenue by 20% in the province without [the] introduction of any new tax or increase in base rates' (The News, 2015).

A senior PAS bureaucrat noted that there "needs to be a huge amount of trust between bureaucrats and politicians in many offices, and so, sometimes, very clear preferences emerge [on both sides]."[31] In appointing him to key posts extra-legally, the patron ensured that Fawad would 'deliver' difficult to achieve outcomes. In exchange, Fawad trusted that the patron would protect his interests even in the face of controversy. The patronage extended to Fawad was such that when he was posted as the Secretary of the Public Prosecution Department in 2011, he 'refused to take up the job' (Sumra, 2011). When the CM was asked about the refusal by the media, he (remarkably) commented: 'What can I do if Fawad does not join [the department]?' (Sumra, 2011). Therefore, Fawad's career is a classic instance of a technopol, a bureaucrat regarded as a political equal by the CM and senior party leadership in Punjab. However, none of his achievements translated into long term efficiency in any of these departments—in effect, temporary networks of effectiveness never evolved into more permanent pockets of effectiveness.

Conclusion

There is considerable academic and general interest in bureaucratic capacity and performance in developing states. However, sub-national variation has received considerably less attention, particularly in low-capacity states. I contribute to recent debates on pockets (or networks) of effectiveness by connecting dominant leader political settlements and processes of bureaucratic appointment to bureaucratic performance. I argue that dominant politicians and bureaucrats rely on patronage ties to curate networks of effectiveness so they can achieve specific performance objectives. Legal appointments are most useful where donor projects are involved but bending the regulations to make an extra-legal appointment catalyses the

relationship between politicians and bureaucrats. This creates a give-and-take that makes the appointed bureaucrat more responsive to the demands of their patron. However, these networks of effectiveness are unable to evolve into pockets—the leadership that sustains them is temporary and therefore, enhancements in capacity and performance are unsustainable. Once the leadership moves on, the department returns to its prior levels of inefficiency.

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[1] Roll (2014: 24) defines pockets of effectiveness as 'public organisations that are relatively effective in providing public goods and services that the organisation is officially mandated to provide, despite operating in an environment in which effective public service delivery is not the norm'. I do not adopt Roll's criteria for identification of pockets of effectiveness, instead connecting my work to what Hickey (2019, 42) refers to as 'networks or channels of effectiveness' and McDonnell (2017) as bureaucratic 'interstices'.

[2] Drawing on the work of Mushtaq Khan (2010), political settlements are 'the balance or distribution of power between contending social groups and social classes, on which any state is based' (John and Putzel, 2009: 4).

[3] In the past, Pakistan has had a hybrid system with strong elements of presidentialism. However, between 2008 and 2018, there was a firm shift toward parliamentarism.

[4] In identifying networks between politicians and bureaucrats, I focus on bureaucrats from the Pakistan Administrative Service, an elite cadre of federal bureaucrats who occupy the senior most posts in the administrative structure and work closely with politicians throughout their careers.

[5] Interview, 14 April 2015

[6] Former PAS officer, interview, 16 April 2015

[7] Former PAS officer, interview, 16 April 2015

[8] PAS officers, interviews, 19 and 29 September 2014.

[9] PAS officer, interview, 13 April 2015

[10] World Bank (2016). Combined Project Information Documents/Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (Pid/Isds) Appraisal Stage, Pakistan: Third Punjab Education Sector Project (P154524)

[11] 'The Good News from Pakistan', authored by Sir Michael Barber in 2013 and with forewords by the then President of the World Bank Group and the UK Foreign Secretary, can be found here: https://rtepakistan.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The_good_news_from_Pakistan_final.pdf

[12] Interview, 2 September 2014

[13] PESP II Annual Review – February 2020, DFID

[14] Interview, 16 April 2015

[15] As federal bureaucrats serving in the provinces, their appointments within that province are approved by the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister and notified by the provincial Services and General Administration Department.

[16] Deputy Secretary SED, interview, 27 November 2014

[17] PAS officer, interview, 18 September 2014. See also Ali (2020b, 190).

[18] PAS officer, interview, 18 September 2014.

[19] Former Chief Secretary (retired), interview, 3 March 2015.

[20] Interview, 13 April 2015

[21] See Ali (2020a) for an account of the variable application of regulations within the SED.

[22] Interview, 14 April 2015

[23] Extra-legality is commonplace amongst elites in Pakistan and elsewhere—see Armytage, 2020: 137).

[24] PAS officer, interview, 13 April 2015

[25] PAS officer, interview, 13 April 2015

[26] Under the Sixth Schedule of the Government of Punjab Rules of Business 2011.

[27] Interview, 19 September 2014

[28] Bureaucrat who served under Fawad Hasan Fawad, interview, 17 February 2015

[29] PAS office, interview, 13 April 2015.

[30] Until December 2011, he continued to hold posts that are typically for BPS 20 and above (Pakistan Today, 2011).

[31] Interview, 29 September 2014

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Distribution of general seats in Pakistan's National Assembly

	Punjab	Balochistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Sindh	FATA	Federal Capital	Total
General seats	148	14	35	61	12	2	272

Source: National Assembly of Pakistan - http://www.na.gov.pk/en/content.php?id=2

Figure 1: Tenures of the Secretaries of the Punjab School Education Department
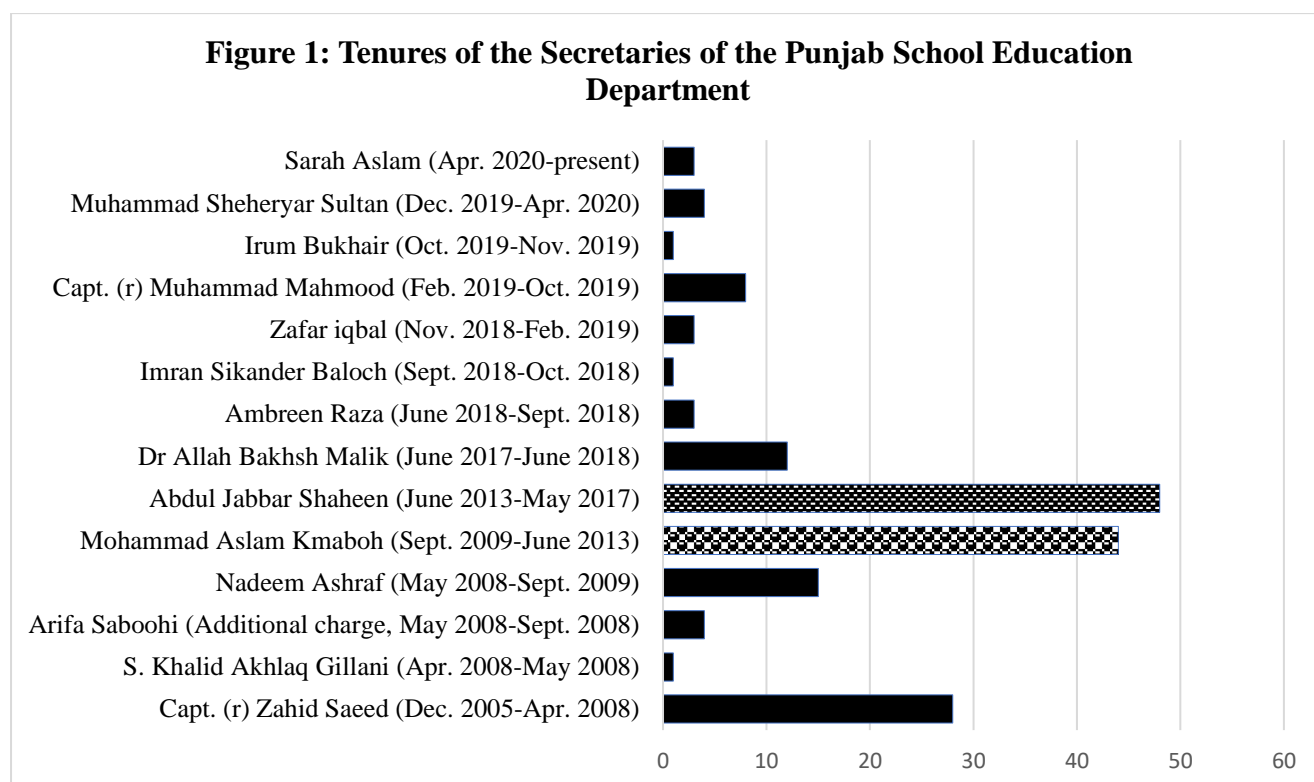
Source: Punjab School Education Department website -
https://schools.punjab.gov.pk/oursecretaries

Figure 2: Career trajectory: Abdul Jabbar Shaheen 2006-2017

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                2006                  │
│  Additional Director Anti-Corruption │
│       Establishment Faisalabad       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│              2007-2008               │
│  Additional Secretary Administration,│
│     Punjab Services and General      │
│       Administration Department      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│              2008-2009               │
│   District Coordination Officer Kasur│
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                2010                  │
│      Director General, Parks &       │
│       Horticultural Authority        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                2011                  │
│ Additional Charge-Director General   │
│    Lahore Development Authority       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                2012                  │
│        Commissioner Gujranwala       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│              2013-2017               │
│  Secretary, Punjab School Education  │
│             Department               │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Source: Compiled by the author using newspaper articles, government websites, and interviews

Figure 3: Career Trajectory: Fawad Hasan Fawad 1997-2018

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│              1997               │
│  Principal Staff Officer to the │
│     Prime Minister's Principal  │
│            Secretary            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            1999-2000            │
│  Principal Staff Officer to the │
│     Chief Secretary of Punjab   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2001-2002            │
│  Additional Secretary, Punjab   │
│  Services and General           │
│  Administration                 │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│              2008               │
│  Secretary, Punjab Services and │
│  General Administration         │
│  Department                     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2008-2010            │
│  Secretary Communications and   │
│  Works, Punjab                  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2010-2011            │
│  Secretary, Punjab Health       │
│  Department                     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2011-2012            │
│  Secretary, Excise and Taxation │
│  Punjab                         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2012-2013            │
│  Secretary Implementation to the│
│  CM Punjab                      │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│              2013               │
│  Joint Secretary Economic       │
│  Affairs Division               │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2013-2015            │
│  Additional Secretary to the    │
│  Prime Minister                 │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            2015-2018            │
│  Seretary to the Prime Minister │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Source: Compiled by the author using newspaper articles, government websites, and interviews

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