

**CAPACITY ISSUES IN PAKISTAN’S CIVIL SERVICE: A CASE STUDY OF
THE PAKISTAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE**

By

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[17M01006]

Thesis submitted to the Lahore School of Economics
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
M.Phil. Development Studies

2021

[27, 296]

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ABSTRACT

The governance capacity of the Pakistan Administrative Service is an important determinant of the bureaucracy's capacity to deliver public services at both the field and the secretariat levels. The capacity of the PAS is determined by a number of factors at the induction level as well as during the service career of the officers.

We judge this capacity at the initial level from the academic grounding of candidates to their performance at the university level and the quality of education they received, to their performance in the entry exam, and their subsequent performance in the initial training programmes. The quota system and the emphasis on the English language as a medium of testing candidates are specifically explored at this initial phase. Thereafter, we assess capacity development, retention and erosion on the basis of development of expertise and meritocratic promotions and positioning on key posts.

We use this information to categorize the 240 PAS officers who were inducted from 1982 to 1990 into three tiers i.e. high performers, mid-level performers and underperformers. While we find that the high performers, irrespective of their gender, were rewarded the most in terms of the highest grade and coveted positions which helped retain capacity, many officers were promoted despite violating policies which militated against the build-up of capacity. We also find that there was no prevalence of a glass ceiling that prevented women officers from attaining the highest management positions.

The research reveals fluctuating instances of both development and erosion of capacity during the period under study and highlights governance factors responsible for these variations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my friends, family and teachers as without their support this dissertation would not have been possible.

First and foremost, I thank Mr. Javed Sadiq Malik for his unmatched guidance, his keen eye and his quest for perfection. He always pushed me to do more, read and edited my drafts countless times, and was only a call away throughout the course of this dissertation. He helped me gather valuable data which was the equivalent of drawing blood from a stone. Thank you sir, this would not have been possible without you.

Thank you Mama and Daddy! I was only able to finish this arduous task because I was constantly showered with your unfailing love and care. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my *Nana Jan* who always encourages me and reads my work with unrivalled passion and fervor. I would not have been able to make it this far without the prayers of you people.

I am deeply indebted to my siblings, *Apa*, Haider *Bhai*, Hasnain, Khadija, and Mujahid for their love and support, to Nayyer for his constant encouragement and physical labor of typing and editing my draft whenever I looked worn out to him.

I would like to thank Abubakar and Shahbano, my friends who are family to me. They helped inspire and motivate me, and provided me with constant emotional support during this long and frustrating journey and throughout life in general, and to Shahbano for saving the day with her tech savvy skills. You guys toiled as much as I did. Thank you!