

Contested Identities; Competing Accountabilities: The Making of a 'Good' Public Schoolteacher in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Soufia A. Siddiqi

Abstract

This paper investigates norms, practices and contests that shape public school teaching in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) province, Pakistan. Using 16 months of ethnographic data, it traces how teacher-bureaucrats are detracted from, and motivated towards, learning-oriented performance. The comparison of official and lived experiences in teacher policy demonstrates that despite seemingly large political, bureaucratic and legal reform efforts aimed at 'depoliticising' teacher quality in KP, decades-long politics of patronage and compliance are still critical mediators of teacher performance. Within these official structures, however, everyday school practice reveals an agency through which teacher-bureaucrats navigate meanings of 'good' teaching. By exploring teacher accounts of themselves against the state's official narratives and expectations of teacher performance, the work draws attention to the importance of teacher voice in understanding the everyday enactment or adaptation of state policy.

Contested Identities; Competing Accountabilities: The Making of a ‘Good’ Public Schoolteacher in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Soufia A. Siddiqi
LUMS School of Education

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Executive summary

This report presents key learnings from an ethnographic investigation of how public school teachers perform as bureaucrats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. Using in-depth qualitative fieldwork to map the political economy of KP's most significant teacher reform effort in recent history, we trace the norms and strategies through which teacher-bureaucrats come to be both detracted from, and motivated towards, learning-oriented performance. By exploring teacher accounts of themselves against the state's official narratives and expectations of teacher performance, we draw attention to the importance of teacher voice in understanding the everyday enactment or adaptation of state policy.

The comparison of official and lived experiences in teacher policy demonstrate that despite seemingly large political, bureaucratic and legal reform efforts aimed at 'depoliticising' teacher quality in KP, decades-long politics of patronage and compliance are still critical mediators of teacher performance (Levy et al., 2018). In addition, performance measurement does not seek to capture teacher effort as it is embodied by teachers in their everyday routines. Based on outdated definitions of experience and seniority, the rules for performance continue to reproduce narratives of generalised bureaucratic practice. In an environment of personalised logic (e.g. based on cultural, religious, ethnic, gendered or other such drivers), such rules may be officially reported, but are educationally irrelevant and collectively mocked by teacher collectives.

Although KP has only recently started to witness nascent forms of democratic transition (echoing a wider pattern in Pakistan), these longstanding informal values continue to entrench decision-making in frameworks of adhocism as well as deprofessionalisation. Understandably, then, reforms such as the 2014 teacher recruitment deprofessionalisation one find currency in the system, but do not work effectively towards improving learning levels in public education. Simultaneously, state-level decisions signal a range of strategic options to teachers in order to navigate the complexities of a bureaucratic pedagogic field – with mixed implications of whether they align with bureaucratic or educational compliance.

The vast array of rules, processes, notifications and monitoring/compliance mechanisms governing public education service delivery suggests that the state operates within the parameters of a traditional Weberian bureaucratic model. In reality, however, field data contests these parameters routinely through the social and cultural capital teachers build up, and use to transact their ways through public educational hierarchies (Mangla, 2014).

In contrast to broad-brush narratives of passivity or powerlessness through which teachers are often represented in the South Asian context, including that of Pakistan, we show through this work that teacher-bureaucrats are both agents of compliance *and* agency. The realisation that despite frictions to the delivery of meaningful education, teachers – especially at the primary level, which is the largest segment of the provincial education sector – can continue to account for their identities and practice in child-centred ways suggests significant potential for course correction in KP. The lessons from this work may find applicability across Pakistan because of

similarities shared by other federating units in teacher policies and non-academic constraints to education service delivery. The findings shared through this work also have meaningful implications for a recently emerging literature on teacher education in South Asia, which finds that agentic expressions of service and care are demanded by teachers to be recognised both in processes of training as well as evaluations (Setty et al, 2019). Above all, this work contributes to a large gap that currently exists regarding what happens to two of education's most important actors public systems as large as those in the Pakistani context: the teacher and his/her student.

Pakistan's educational context

At 220 million people (and counting), Pakistan is one of the youngest countries in the world with at least 1/3 of the population under 15 years of age. Yet the country has a literacy rate of only 56% and in 2019, only 57% of students in Grade 5 demonstrated Grade 2 numeracy skills and 60% of Grade 5 students could demonstrate Grade 2 mother tongue literacy skills¹. What explains Pakistan's persisting poor performance in basic competencies despite the issuance of more than ten national-level education policy documents, and multiple international educational commitments, in the 70 odd years since its birth? In particular, what has been the trajectory of teacher identity, motivation and performance within this larger space of incoherent education planning for learning outcomes? These are some of the most pressing concerns driving this research study into the politics of education in the Pakistani context.

Closer inspection of national education policies demonstrate fluctuating, often competing, ambitions of the Pakistani state (Siddiqui, 2016). For instance, the 1970 New Education Policy underscored an emphasis on science and technology in the education system, whereas 2 years later, the 1972 policy undertook Pakistan's largest education nationalisation agenda. Before the end of the decade, by 1978, a 3rd education policy issued by a government constituted through a military coup was issued, making the case for privatisation of education and a heightened emphasis on Islamisation of educational processes across the country. The introduction of religion into the Pakistani education system at a national level through both policy and its accompanying legislation largely aligned with Pakistan's wider position in the geopolitical region, indicating a confluence of politics, geography, and a moral position on the outcomes of a Pakistani child's learning. Similar tensions continue into the current decade.

The educational aims laid out in Pakistani policy documents are not, however, a product of state determination alone. Parallel tensions in educational aims and financial allocations are observable in the varying emphases of donor agencies, development partners and even civil society members throughout Pakistan's educational history. Although an education discourse built primarily around metrics of access and infrastructure has persisted in the country since the 1950s, attention to questions of learning and its valid measurement have arisen since then, even if infrequently or ineffectively.

These questions have come through technical support programmes financed by development partners, as in the case of the yet-to-be-implemented KPK and Punjab Assessment Policy Frameworks. But they are also found in systemic pressures mounted by influential civil society actors, such as the upper-class families of Lahore and Karachi in the late 1970s who led the expansion of high-cost private schooling in the country to counter the perceived negative effects of nationalised education services by the state in the early 1970s.

¹ ASER (2020) *Annual Status of Education Report (Pakistan) 2019*. Lahore: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi

A primary mediator of student learning, whether in private or public education, throughout these processes is the Pakistani teacher. Evidence from the Punjab reveals, for instance, that over the past decade infrastructural and classroom inputs have reached 98-100% provision in government schools, and attendance of enrolled students *and* teachers averages ~96%². But over the same period of time, just about half the student population at Class 3 has been able to meet even Class 2 learning standards³. Similar evidence is highlighted in the RISE Pakistan Country Research Team (PCRT) Systems Diagnosis, which argues that an increase in inputs to schooling still yielding disappointing learning results is a function of multiple frictions. These include information asymmetry, conflicting expectations about policies amongst school actors, hence ensuing systemic incoherence between education and non-education administrative planning/implementation (PCRT, 2017).

When the data above are juxtaposed with results from a recent pedagogic instrument administered amongst teachers in the Punjab - in which the mean score of 2.68 out of a total of 5 does not meet the instrument's threshold for effective teaching – the argument that more schooling does not equate to more learning becomes all the more compelling for Pakistan. To the contrary, the data raise the question of how effectively the process of learning happens, from start (curriculum) to finish (testing) through an important medium: the teacher. What do Pakistani teachers actually teach and, more importantly, how well are they *enabled* to teach⁴?

Very little is still known about the motivations, aspirations, identity and behaviour of teachers, particularly in state-led (government/public) education in Pakistan, where the teaching force is estimated to be the second largest public sector populace after the country's military personnel. How do they understand their own role, and that of their system's, in the successful accomplishment of children's learning? Vice versa, how does the Pakistani public system understand and explain the role, thus production and empowerment, of teachers in government-run schools? On a slightly more expanded horizon, what does the system need to do to produce a 'good'

² Calculated using open, real-time access and enrolment data from the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) of the School Education Department, Government of the Punjab, available at < <https://open.punjab.gov.pk/schools/>>

³ Calculated using decade-long data from the Annual Status of Education Reports for Pakistan and the Punjab (2009-2019). See also ASER (2020) *Annual Status of Education Report (Pakistan) 2019*. Lahore: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi.

⁴ Limited evidence that is available on Pakistani public teaching indicates very little return thus far on nationalising the country's teaching service. For instance, the World Bank's SABER research programme provides disappointing results. Scored out of 5, the instrument used by this work to measure teacher ability in a public classroom in Pakistan yields a modest 2.68. A score less than 3 signals a red flag, in which teachers are unable to meet a minimum performance threshold for teaching. This was calculated out of a mean of 5, based on a 27-variable instrument used to measure teacher ability through behaviours in socio-emotional relatability to children, formal pedagogic ability in instructional content, and overall management of a conducive classroom culture. Of the three big heads, it was only classroom culture in which Punjab's teachers scored above 3, ie above worrisome levels of low performance. The study, piloted in the Punjab, therefore shows that although teachers are recruited on considerable merit through third-party entrance assessment following teaching recruitment reforms, they remain weak pedagogic leaders (World Bank, 2019).

Pakistani schoolteacher and why have those in the public system still been unable to facilitate quality learning for their students?

In the early 1970s, the response to this question was that Pakistani teachers were rendered ineffective because they were not adequately compensated in rank or remuneration as similarly qualified counterparts in public service. A second dimension to this response by the government of the day was that the lack of state control over the quality of education service delivery (especially the teacher) prevented educational equity from taking root in the country (Qadeer, 2001). By 1972, the teaching service and Pakistani educational institutions (barring a handful of private organisations) were transferred over to the control of the state.

Yet the rapid conversion of teachers from professional educators to state employees was driven more by an aspiration to secure electoral interests for the government of the day, not a learning-centred reform effort (Jones and Jones, 1977/78, p599). The history of this phenomenon lies in the controversial election of a new government in West Pakistan in 1970, which advanced a narrative of nationalisation of key industries and sectors as a means to social equity and productivity. This narrative overlapped well with pre-existing demands since the mid-1960s by protesting teacher unions and associations (especially from then privately-run institutions) to award teachers compensation packages similar to those afforded to employees of the state of similar qualification or merit.

In particular, the nationalisation narrative presented an effective strategy through which to appeal to the Pakistani masses for grassroots-level support of a new, but non-majority, government of the day⁵. Nationalisation, when marketed as an effort by the state to take direct and close interest in the affairs of its citizens (in contrast to the seemingly distancing step of privately-run sectors and organisations), presented a picture of a Pakistani state orienting its public policy towards social good. Chief amongst such social good was an interest in enabling more equitable outcomes for Pakistani students through the harmonisation of teaching practice and compensation (Burki, 1991; Qadeer, 2006).

But how effectively have teachers been able to perform their learning duties within the large organisation constituted by the Weberian bureaucratic structure of government service since this decision nearly 50 years ago? Not enough is known in response to this important question, but as Pritchett (2018) observes, the scale of an organisation inevitably impacts schooling or educational performance and is often a *political decision* driven by the differentiated power interests of multiple stakeholders to an elite decision-making process.

A good case of the persisting effects of such politics on Pakistan's learning processes lies in efforts to reform the nature of the contract between teachers and the state: between 2002 and 2008, teachers were allowed to be recruited on non-

⁵ Non-majority because in the General Elections of 1970, the larger share of the vote belonged to the Awami League that operated out of East Pakistan (the part of the country with a larger population) but authority to constitute a national government was eventually obtained by the Pakistan People's Party in West Pakistan after the fall of Dhaka and the formation of Bangladesh out of East Pakistan in 1971.

permanent contracts under the assumption that this would increase performance competition. But without sufficient compensation packages being offered to contractual teachers, and complex rules of business for contractual appointments, teacher demands for equal and permanent compensation arose once again. Resultantly, another attempt to reform teacher performance through 'correct' incentives fell victim to incoherent planning⁶.

⁶ See also the Punjab Contract Appointment Policy 2004, which, if read with the provincial Deputation Policy, leads either to a conflict of duty between contractual and permanent appointees or, as is known through anecdotal evidence, court cases by teachers or unions challenging appointments, extensions, terminations and even completions of contracts. The RISE PCRT Systems Diagnosis observes the fluctuating teacher recruitment policy as a significant manner through which principal-agent relationships between the state and its teachers seem to have compromised an effective orientation of Punjab's education system towards effective learning.

From conflict to performance: education for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

To date, most education research and what little is known about Pakistani *public* schoolteachers has come from larger provinces like the Punjab and Sindh. Through the Aga Khan network, there is a level of knowledge about teacher identity and motivation in more remote parts of the country, such as the autonomous region of Gilgit-Baltistan (Memon and Bana, 2005). However, not enough is known about the same questions when it comes to the northwest of Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), where educational access – especially for girls and even certain ethnicities – has been significantly compromised in recent decades as a result of war and conflict.

Against Pakistan's larger backdrop of a country context marked by years of political turbulence and participation in decades of regional war, KP offers a missing puzzle piece to understanding the impact of the country's administrative, financial and political structures on education policy when planning is routinely interrupted by domestic and global political turmoil.

With a population of 35.5 million, KP may be smaller than the Punjab and Sindh. But its literacy rate hovers around 55-57% and at least 28% of children are reported as still out of school⁷. These provincial numbers suggest incoherence between administrative planning and success for even basic educational outcomes. They raise important questions about how the political, civic and bureaucratic forces responsible for education decision-making/advocacy prioritise education and its sub-components, considering it has now been about a decade since educational responsibility was devolved to the provinces in Pakistan⁸.

If viewed in historical relief, how has devolution shaped education policy in comparison to federal decision-making? This is an area of interest to the wider RISE PCRT political economy research, which has thus far focused on the case of the Punjab. KP undertook local government reforms much earlier than the Punjab - between 2013 and 2014 – but the effects of these are still overlooked when it comes to community/client voice in education service delivery.

In addition, KP's educational realities are not simply a linear function of *educational* planning. The province's history is a web of ethnic variety (at least 75% Pashtun, but complemented by Chitralis, Hindko-speakers and a very small proportion of migrants from other parts of Pakistan) and a traditionally tribal culture.

KP has witnessed decades of centralised political influence originating in Islamabad, the national capital, but often extending into capitals far beyond the country. In the 1980s, this phenomenon materialised in the form of a frontline involvement in the US-led Afghan jihad; a similar role was performed by KP and especially (then) FATA⁹ in the US-led War on Terror between 2001 and 2017. Especially important to

⁷ Government of Pakistan (2020) *Pakistan Social Living and Standards Measurement Survey (PSLSM) 2018/19*. Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

⁸ This devolution happened through the 18th amendment to the Pakistani constitution in 2010.

⁹ Federal Administered Tribal Areas, now incorporated into KPK and referred to (for comparative purposes) as Newly Merged Districts (NMDs)

consider is the recent merger of Pakistan's Western tribal border (former FATA) into KP, shifting responsibility for its education decisions from the centre (Islamabad) to the province.

For significant amounts of their documented history, Pakhtun tribes appear to have been labelled 'noble savages' (Akbar, 1983). From being portrayed as simpletons against the opulent Mughals to being romanticised by colonial officers as a fierce race who do not compromise on their independent lifestyle (Wylly, 1912; Caroe, 1958), the Pakhtun image remains vague and distant. Amidst the grandeur of nature in complete solitude, the Pakhtun lands were often dubbed as the last frontier for empires, further romanticising the image of a Pakhtun being an embodiment of *ghairat*, or pride.

This image was effectively used by the young state of Pakistan after 1947 to keep the Pakhtun tribes at bay, and avoid confrontation through demands for adherence to mainstream politics. Significant tracts of Pakhtun lands that became a part of post-Partition Pakistan were left loosely administered in the form of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), and they continued to act as a buffer between the country and regional actors (such as Afghanistan, and the former USSR). This policy was later used to its full effect during the Afghan Jihad of the eighties when the Pakhtunwali notion of *panah* (unquestioning sanctuary) was used to shield and protect Afghan warlords in the tribal areas of Pakistan to serve the interests of a regional Cold War theatre.

Nonetheless, this narrative about the Pathan was challenged all along by nationalist leaders of the former NWFP (now KP) and was termed a ploy to use Pakhtuns as cannon fodder in a war against their own kind in Afghanistan. The Afghan war coincided with rapid transformations to local Pashtun culture in Pakistan: the predominantly secular Hujra (meeting place for the community/tribesmen) being replaced by the mosque and religious actors to secure legitimacy for participation in the Afghan Jihad. Similar to the tactics used by the colonialists of introducing a new class of Khans and Nawabs from within their own ranks to challenge the old way of living, the religious actors were viewed as a modern version of creating fiefdoms influenced by the power of religiosity.

This led to a huge influx of Pakhtun families into urban centres across Pakistan, which provided them an opportunity for private education and jobs. In the absence of a Hujra/Pakhtunwali in these non-Pashtun cities, which previously instrumented a coherent sense of being Pashtun, these families were stretched between two extremes: religion (embedded with patriotism); and a non-Pakhtunwali centred sense of modernity, the latter a friction that is increasingly experienced and embodied by young Pashtuns in today's Pakistan.

Pashtun cultural orientation that dominates the province is marked by a strong legal sentiment (even if through informal/alternative dispute mechanisms¹⁰) that is

¹⁰ More commonly known as the *jirga* (a tribal dispute resolution mechanism and system with complex structures, hierarchies, and unusually egalitarian rules of procedure)

frequently misunderstood as a source of violence and conflict. A 2015 in-depth study of parental engagement and community advocacy for more effective education policies and teachers across KPK finds tribal elders especially favour using such alternative legal platforms to give voice to communities' educational dilemmas (Siddiqi, 2015). The same study, when exploring the policy spaces constituted by bureaucratic and political agents, finds elements of such tribal culture yield distinct structures of decision-making in the province: government meetings demonstrate relatively more egalitarian patterns of participation than in other provinces despite the presence of younger and relatively less experienced bureaucratic agents¹¹.

The Jirga or the coming together of the Pakhtun tribes is still considered the cornerstone of Pakhtun culture, an intersection of civic and legal domains of social organisation. Though usually misinterpreted as a site for violence and revengeful decision-making, there is far more to the concept than is commonly understood. A Jirga operates in Pakhtun culture in both horizontal and vertical manners, serving as a dispute resolution body at all levels of society, embodying legislative characteristics, playing a diplomatic role, and enjoying many more roles that have been rarely been articulated (Yousafzai & Gohar, 2014). Similarly, a Loya Jirga or grand council, is only convened at times of crises or national issues to bring together representatives from various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities for their respective opinions. Historically, a Loya Jirga in the Pakhtun lands has been used to approve a new constitution, declare war, choose a new king, or to make sweeping social or political reforms.

A fundamental pillar of Pakhtun culture, the Jirga is a representation of democracy where everyone (women, through the men of their family) is given an opportunity to have their say in shaping the course of things around themselves. Similarly, like any other institution, the Jirga has been used to refine Pakhtunwali with changing times. The discourse among the people in a Jirga is an effective way to teach young ones the real meaning of Pakhtunwali, the all-encompassing Pakhtun code of conduct, including Nang (honour) and Siali (social equality) (Ahmed, 2017).

The modern form of Jirga has been replicated by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police in the shape of the Dispute Resolution Council (DRC). Started in January 2014, the DRC is based on the spirit of the Pakhtunkhwali code for resolution of local issues and petty disputes through reconciliation offered under supervision of the local police. The introduction of DRC as a component of resolving issues within the Pakhtun community suggest that when utilised properly the Jirga system can address many issues in a swift manner *within* the cultural framework to which most of KP is already accustomed.

¹¹ Punjab typically attracts Pakistan's most technically advanced bureaucrats with Sindh a close second. Punjab's political history is also very distinct and more entrenched in Pakistan's political development. Balochistan is the least developed part of Pakistan and also the most challenging to operate within because of political strife. For a mixture of these reasons - which are by no means exhaustive at this point in our knowledge - KP seems younger and less experienced in comparison.

The Pakistani teaching conundrum

Against the backdrop of national education policy fluctuations outlined previously, and KP's particular contextual features, the province gives rise to even more intriguing questions of how norms and values shape the practice of law, communities (as representatives of the private part of society, in contrast to those in public office) as well as public officials who are all stakeholders to the education process. This question is made particularly complex by the fact that the province is an inherent part of a region affected by decades of instability. Such intricacies become all the more important to analyse in light of anecdotal evidence from the public education system that suggests Pakistani public teachers can spend nearly 50% of the academic year performing non-pedagogic activities. Much of this seems to emanate from how the teacher's role is positioned within, and by, structures of state and society.

Preliminary field data from a 2019 effort at the School Education Department in the Punjab to understand teacher activity underscores the need to examine *where* teachers can be found when they are not teaching: doing the numbers for a local office of government at seasonal *bazaars* (markets); participating in wheat procurement processes; providing much-needed literacy skills at different events in their village/town; vaccine, census, election and most other 'duties' for which an educated, able-bodied citizen of Pakistan is required – not just by other Pakistanis, but especially by the Pakistani state.

Why do Pakistani public schoolteachers spend such significant amounts of academic time performing additional duties of the state? Does it add to the academic development of their careers or is a response to bureaucratic instructions fundamentally intertwined with teachers' dual accountabilities: as officers of state, who must also teach? On the one hand, is a demand for creative instruction (a commitment to one's students); on the other, a requirement to comply with the rules of government service (a commitment to state instruction and benefits). When teacher identity becomes more than a function of a professional community of educators, how do teachers prioritise their daily, monthly, and even career outcomes and what factors and which agents mediate such decision-making?

These are some of the tensions that this study would like to explore. The contest between being a teacher and being a bureaucrat all within the same person is not new to Pakistan, although it is underexplored as a driver of success for repeat education reform programmes, which tend to frame teaching within a purely teacher training/education problem. By embracing diverse stakeholder interests, norms and values as they become embodied in the policy documentation, such research expands the opportunity to think about education in the Pakistani context in a more holistic manner. It works under the assumption that the gaps in learning outcomes may, in fact, be engendered by a part of the system that does not concern itself directly with the business of teaching and learning, but inevitably impacts the rules of service delivery.

Conceptual framework

To hypothesise that low-level performance equilibrium traps may persist in teaching because of the competing orientations of the two big roles teachers are expected to perform is to fall into the tempting trap of assumption that complex problems are best explained through simplified compartmentalisation of everyday agents and their practice of education. In their 2018 work documenting South Africa's intricate educational story, Brian Levy et al. warn against the temptations of such dichotomies¹². The book argues for attention to macro and micro nuances that shape education systems' varying levels and distributions of power that mediate decision-making. If, for instance, a system's incoherence emerges through constraints on political or institutional scope for change, the creation of pockets of participatory leadership and governance can expand the space of said change. Similarly, allowances for innovation within the bureaucracy and the wider system can also serve as entry points for change.

But what is the context within which such spaces of change can be found and capitalised upon? As Gershberg (2020) sets out in a conceptual framework for deeper political economy analyses of the emergence and success (or not) of education policy, the attempt to study context informs:

a view of education policy – and the broader aims of education systems – as (a) product of conflict and contestation between competing political and social coalitions of stakeholders...(within) a range of domains and specifically those labelled 'political', 'civic', 'bureaucratic', and 'legal'...(p11)

Thus, not only does the challenge to teaching and the creation of effective teachers in the Pakistani context require an understanding of the process that governs teachers themselves, but also the wider 'worlds' within which teaching, and consequently learning, must happen. The above quote represents an effort to build a more generalisable model for the political economy of learning, and the policies that can eventually facilitate it – not apart from the zones of implementation, but *in spite* of them. So although development partners may constantly stress the importance of a well-trained teacher in the classroom, what theory of change for learning drives the decision-makers who ultimately sanction the notifications, laws, orders, and processes through which a 'well-trained' teacher assumes responsibility in Pakistan?

Although the specific space of education policy being investigated through this study is concerned with teachers and the drivers and actions behind their choice of career, this study attempts to join a series of comparative pieces that dive deeper into two components of systems established with a focus around effective learning:

¹² Levy, B., R. Cameron, U. Hoadley & V. Naidoo (2018) *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: a Tale of Two South African Provinces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. the development (or lack thereof) of national exams or outcome measures of learning¹³
2. teacher career paths.¹⁴

In the Pakistan context, of the two components indicated above, the politics of teaching remains an underexplored part of the education system. As mentioned previously in this document, one of the most important pieces on teaching in recent times emerged from the World Bank's SABER approach to systems research into education. However, much of the SABER results regarding Pakistani teachers are still rooted in what is observable in the classroom (the TEACH tool used for the study is classified explicitly as a classroom observation instrument through which to study teacher behaviour, and infer performance). What is missed in this particular framing of teaching in the classroom is an understanding of the wider school, community, political, and systemic variables that mediate teacher drive to join the service, and the calculations teachers must make to progress through Pakistan's public education hierarchy(ies)¹⁵.

This study is shaped by earlier thinking by the RISE PCRT for not just teacher reform, but also other areas of reform to education in Pakistan. These areas include accountability measures, financial redistribution, devolution of authority, and also more technical points such as curriculum and assessments. It is the PCRT's policy discussions on assessments that remain of particular relevance to this study because of the important – and often controversial – link made in the Pakistani educational context between student learning outcomes and teacher performance. In contrast to efforts to gauge teachers' pedagogic competence by developing teachers' *own* profiles (Voss, Kunter & Baumert, 2011), Pakistani public accountabilities are structured round the performance of *students*, and even *schools*.

The PCRT discussions observe how teacher incentives are inevitably misaligned when teachers 'game' the system to show better student results than are valid reflections of student learning. A review of legal proceedings against the School Education Department in the Punjab, as well as number of government notifications issued to call for teacher explanation between 2012 and 2018 raise a similar concern. In the process of avoiding punitive measures that may be imposed by the state to discipline 'poorly' performing teachers, teachers seem to orient themselves towards

¹³ Most of this component shall borrow from the existing work on assessment development by the Pakistan CRT based at CERP, distinct to this analysis of teacher identity, motivation and career pathways

¹⁴ The Guiding Principles document asks the following questions around teacher career trajectories: '...understood narrowly, on purpose...(i)n our context, it refers to the progression path in salaries and other benefits. What factors drive that progression? Is it purely age and years of service? Paper qualifications/certification? Or does it include performance-based pay, some notion of progression based on community esteem, or pay for being willing to be deployed to difficult situations, or teaching in subjects for which there is scarcity? Does it involve trial or probation periods? And, importantly, how did any of this change if the country pivoted, or tried to pivot, from an access agenda to an access plus learning agenda?' (Gershberg, 2020, p12)

¹⁵ This is not at all to assert that SABER continues to make such omissions from its research; it is just in this particular project, the focus was within the classroom.

learning metrics that may turn out to be red herrings for those looking to improve education and teacher policy for Pakistan: even if the student learning outcomes reported in Pakistan through system/national exams are valid, are they accurate measurements of performance through which teachers should be evaluated or asked to self-correct?

The discussions from the PCRT policy dialogues draw on recent policy recognition in the Punjab that seeks to counter such misalignment by lowering assessment stakes for students *and* teachers through the recently issued 2019 Assessment Policy Framework. But the report on the discussions cautions that unless a whole-system shift towards learning does not accompany such well-intended policies, reform efforts will continue to administer the symptomatic education treatments of the past. Student learning outcomes, irrespective of how many times, and of what type, are measured will yield insufficient knowledge about system health if the interests of key education actors do not align with whatever motivations and/or incentives feature in the design of policy implementation programmes. Such actors, whether senior bureaucrats and politicians (who hold their hierarchies to account) or school-level and community agents (who deliver or support delivery of education), will continue to present everyday embodiments of the rules and norms through which they make sense of ‘success’ and being ‘good’ in the Pakistani education sector.

The emphasis on *contestation* is thus critical to the framework for the study being proposed in Pakistan. It demands attention to the arrangements and distributions of power, as well as how the rules and norms emanating from such political configurations govern (including challenge) the interaction of different kinds of institutions and agents – what Hickey and Hossain (2019) expand upon as the ‘political settlements’ (arrangement of power) and ‘public governance’ (how such power governs) models originally proposed by Levy and Walton (2013) (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

| Table 1: Classification of four ideal types of political settlement (Levy & Walton, 2013) | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Dominant | Competitive |
| Personalised | Elite cohesion is high; power exercised by leadership is top-down; limited constraints on political actors. | Elite cohesion is low; settlement demands power change hands on electoral competitive basis, but “rules of the game” are personalised (this is also called “competitive clientelism”). |
| Rule-of-law | Elite cohesion is high; power is top-down, but actions are anchored in rules which institutionalise how power is to be exercised. | Politics is competitive; impersonal rules govern the exercise of power. |

Source: Pritchett (2019). In Gershberg, A. (2020) Guiding Principles to RISE PET-A Programme.

| Table 2: Classification of four ideal types of public governance (Levy & Walton, 2013) | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Hierarchical | Negotiated (Horizontal) |
| Personalised | Implementation is hierarchical, principal-agent structure defined by personalized authority of principals and not systematized rules | Neither formal rules nor well-designed hierarchy of authority exist. Cooperation conditional on the personal relationship of individual actors involved. |
| Impersonal | Classical “Weberian” bureaucracy of top-down enforcement of impersonal rules and standard operating procedures. | Multiple stakeholders, each with significant independent authority. Rules are formal, codified, and enforced in an impersonal manner. |

Source: Pritchett (2019). In Gershberg, A. (2020) Guiding Principles to RISE PET-A Programme.

Although the original of these two settlements and governance models attempt to neatly quantify the world into 2x2 matrices, the Gershberg (2020) framework acknowledges that the realities of countries such as Pakistan may not adhere perfectly to any one part of the models. To determine where exactly a context like that of Pakistan and its teaching policies lies, this study uses a stakeholder analysis (Schieffelbein and McGinn, 2017) to map multi-agent interactions shaping the education process. This process helps explain the multiple interactions across civil, bureaucratic and political domains that give rise to the opportunities and frictions that systems present to actors within them. Known as domains of contestation, these are sites within which rules and norms are made, then remade, as agents with different self-interests play a series of moves to remain relevant and survive in a wider systemic space.

As discussed previously in the context section of this document, the education space in Pakistan – especially KP– is regularly constituted and contested by the aspirations and ambitions of elite actors, such as senior politicians, landowners, and senior-grade government officers. It is also impacted by pockets of resistance to policies and decisions mounted by civil society activists, who typically have more influence than the (still) less empowered parent citizen in society. With about 50% of school education delivered privately across Pakistan, the private sector is increasingly become a significant player seated at the table of policy negotiations for education design and outcomes¹⁶. This has become especially apt since the confrontation between private schools and government agents over the hotly contested question of who should set school fees for private education and in which categories¹⁷.

¹⁶ ASER (2020) *Annual Status of Education Report (Pakistan) 2019*. Lahore: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi

¹⁷ Much of this debate arose following a 2017/2018 Supreme Court case in which the then Chief Justice, Saquib Nisar, took suo moto action against private schools for charging their clients extraordinarily high fees. In response, private schools associations sprung up with renewed confidence across Pakistan to counter the legal injunction that mandated all private schools to reduce their charges according to a certain court-determined formula. To date, no provincial government has implemented the order effectively due to recurrent breakdowns in negotiations.

The embroilment of the entire Pakistani education sector in a legal dilemma is not new, however. Lawsuits are often brought against government departments by various actors, but in KP, this is especially true of teachers. One assistant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Department suggests as much as 50% of annual administrative time at the Department is spent attending to matters of the law, when teachers as well as other actors in the system seek protection either on the offense or defense.

Elite agents, such as provincial politicians and/or the bureaucrats with whom they maintain mutually beneficial alliances, may use the policy space to ensure teacher recruitment, allocation, transfers and postings happen in manners that preserve their influence over their constituencies. For instance, schools may be located on lands that belong to a local politician, which affords said political actor a direct stake and say in the affairs of a state-administered school, including having its teachers transferred through the provincial education department to a less developed region for non-compliance of socio-cultural mores. In exchange, a teacher may file suit for protection or dismissal of transfer orders through a court of law to preserve his/her position in the system. In subsequent sections, we shall see how the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) of KP attempts to institutionalise this process, but also how rule-based decision-making is not always successfully enacted in and of itself to begin with.

To weave these different power interests into a coherent and cohesive framework for analysis of domains of contestation, and the contests therein, this study grounds itself in the following important principles highlighted in the Guiding Principles for the RISE Programme's PET-A Research (Gershberg, 2020, p11)¹⁸:

- a view of education policy—and the broader aims of education systems—as the product of conflict and contestation between competing political and social coalitions of stakeholders that have an interest in the nature of a country's education system and the changing balance of power between them—in other words, the nature of the political settlement underpinning the country's political economy and its education system in particular;
- an understanding of education policy-making as occurring in a range of domains and specifically those labelled 'political', 'civic', 'bureaucratic', and 'legal' by Schiefelbein and McGinn (2017);
- an understanding of competing political and social coalitions in terms of their interests, agendas with regards to education policy, and forms of leverage over the policy-making process;...
- ...an understanding of patterns of market-oriented education policy reform as reflecting the way in which structural pressures for reform (emanating from economic conditions that confer additional leverage on political and social coalitions seeking to promote such reform) are mediated by the capacity of competing political and social coalitions to resist reform;

¹⁸ A complete list of these principles, along with the rationale behind their framing, can be found in Appendix B

- an understanding of the latter in terms of these groups' ability to organize collectively, access the policy-making process, mobilize public opinion or otherwise exercise leverage over the policy-making process. (sic)

As explained above, when domains of contestation and the larger political arrangements within which they are governed and affected are examined together, they can be understood as a 'field' of (admittedly considerably expanded) bounded space within which certain kinds of capital are produced, consumed and exchanged (Bourdieu, 1993)¹⁹. Within this educational field, departmental Secretaries – as members of the federal civil services – seek to maximise their influence and bureaucratic performance; politicians and landowners seek to preserve their fluctuating influence over the constituencies in their control; parents and communities place educational demands on different parts of the system, including by substituting a government school with a privately-managed one; and teachers aim to progress successfully through the promotion hierarchy ('ranks') that governs their career growth.

This type of social mapping of how power is distributed and negotiated in the process of development also finds relevance in the World Bank's 2004 model for analysis of public service delivery. Locating effective service outcomes for citizens at the intersection of key agents and their accountabilities, the model is premised on the reasoning that end users (citizens) frequently develop a good sense for whether their needs are being met effectively or not, and that this sense is inferred from encounters with the multiple relationships through which everyday service delivery is enacted. When combined with the French sociologist Bourdieu's concept of a bounded environment within which agents transact to carve out some expressive path of agency, one might better understand how, and why, Pakistani public teachers move as they do within the 'field' constituted by the Pakistani state's bureaucratic pedagogic service.

What does this all help produce as a systemic outcome? Here is a nice opportunity to intersect the above conceptual outlay with a principal-agent framework for education accountability developed by Lant Pritchett and colleagues within the RISE (Research on Improving Systems of Education) network that maps different forms of relationships in education decision-making²⁰. Known subsequently as the RISE 5x4, this unconventional accountability framework suggests varying forms of education system outcomes can emerge contingent on the coherence of interactions between agents of education and 5 aspects of system design: what rules and tasks get assigned; what financial stipulation occurs in the process; how informed and supported actors are regarding the terms of their assessment; and, relatedly, how

¹⁹ These include political, economic, legal, and bureaucratic forms of capital. Building on my findings from my DPhil research in the Punjab on youth, education and civic engagement, I argue civic capital is also an additional form of 'currency' engendered by power asymmetries through which educational actors in Pakistan find themselves empowered and enabled to trade importance and relevance – important factors that weigh in on the teaching and learning process.

²⁰ Pritchett, L. (2015) *Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes: Making the Transition from Schooling to Learning*. RISE Working Paper 5. [Online] Available at <https://www.riseprogramme.org/sites/www.riseprogramme.org/files/publications/RISE_WP-005_Pritchett_0.pdf>

agents are rewarded or punished for their performance as well as how performance connects to future motivation.

Unlike notions of education accountability developed within purely ‘managerial’ frameworks for public service delivery (such as the one set up by the management consultant-led Education Roadmap in the Punjab), the Pritchett-led accountability framework suggests coherence between system aspirations and performance is better achieved by looking at the ‘accounts’ (richer stories) emerging from within education systems, as opposed to ‘accounting’ (simplified metrics). For instance, if teacher performance is accounted for (over a stipulated period) in terms of pre-determined targets against Key Performance Indicators for access and infrastructure, this is likely to drive teacher identity more towards a managerial role, which raises important questions for whether teachers even see *themselves fit* to enable quality learning effectively (see bold section of Table 3 below).

| Table 3: Mapping teacher identity against account(ability) | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Teacher Identity | Teacher Account(ability) |
| Management | Supervision; administration of resources and students, whether in school and classroom or outside of it in community; an agent who has to respond to a principal in the form of a school/district manager | Number of students enroled Number of students retained Number of presences/absences School infrastructure checklist complied with (e.g. toilets; boundary walls) |
| Client Power/Voice | | |
| Compact (Professional Contract) | | |
| Politics | | |

Source: Author’s adapted table of Pritchett (2015) system diagnostic tool for principal-agent relationships in education²¹.

²¹ By mapping competing and cooperating factors, agent interests and socio-cultural norms/rules within which agents play ‘games’ to progress through a series of systemic moves, the tool helps elicit arrangements and distributions of power affecting the political economy of education and its reform through policy.

Research questions

This research is therefore guided by two interconnected interests:

1. how teacher accounts of identity from KP help explain strategies, navigation and the performance of teachers in the field of pedagogic bureaucratic service;
2. how shifting power centres/actors shape such accounts (such as elected representatives or the administrative bureaucrats with whom they must work in delivering education) or how such agents of power are themselves shaped by the politics of public school teaching (such as through legal or unionised action by teachers)

The two questions are broken into a set of sub-questions that will help pace the research by identifying the key actors, processes, phenomena, values/norms and other kinds of 'rules' that govern the education (especially teaching) policy space in KP:

- a. What domains of contestation (DoC) can be identified as relevant to teacher policy (whether formal or informal) in KP? How do the actors, push and pull forces, norms, rules, and arrangement of power within such domains help explain the factors that motivate individuals to become public schoolteachers, and how they navigate their time in service?
- b. Building on the DoC profile emerging from the research, what does a political settlement contextualised for education in KP look like? What does this reveal about the nature of teacher policies that have affected the province and how do such political configurations explain the relationship between these policies and the varying results of teacher recruitment and practice?
- c. What kinds of teacher accounts are narrated within these political arrangements and against these domains of contestation, and how do they explain systemic (in)coherence between policy decisions and everyday practice?
- d. How do teacher accounts of identity and performance help construct, and explain, the idea of being and/or becoming a 'good' teacher in a public education system?

Methodology

Sample Frame²²

KP has 7 Divisions²³, 35 districts, and a well-embedded local governance system that has conflicting reports of performance, but one that continues to operate (in contrast to rest of Pakistan's provinces). Districts for this study are selected on basis of population, geography, and teacher information. They will be selected out of the following divisions that have been chosen for this study based on their geographical locations and the history of their socio-cultural contexts:

Malakand Division – large population and geographical spread; poor learning outcomes; topography presents a peculiar challenge to teacher access and (potentially, which has to be explored) motivation and retention

Chitral – diverse ethnicity and geography affected by climate change presents significant challenges to educational access for students and teachers alike. For instance, the Kalash Valley typically has a single-classroom school in each of its villages, for which teachers have to travel up from Ayun, a village 12 km away but which is made considerably difficult to access because of a significant breakdown in road infrastructure. (It takes a minimum of 1.5 hours using a local driver familiar with the road to travel one-way.)

Swat - post conflict zone + opportunity to revisit some schools and tehsils that were visited during work with Alif Ailaan to understand how educational environments have changed; back then, a newly recovered Swat Valley was met with great enthusiasm from teachers, who were willing to host students in their own homes as well to sustain their educational opportunity

Lower Dir – poor overall performance on literacy and numeracy (see ASER (2020))

Peshawar Division – large population; includes provincial capital; poor learning outcomes

Peshawar – home to the provincial capital; poor learning outcomes despite very large population; significant private sector service provision

Hazara Division – third largest population; relatively better learning outcomes in key districts; previously recognised nationally as well during Alif Ailaan rankings

Haripur (Hazara Division)

Newly Merged Areas – are being treated separately to the Divisions within which they are now classified because of their particular history so they merit various reasons for selection.

²² These districts are suggested thus far. Revisions may be needed to the sample frame; if such becomes the case, updates shall be duly provided.

²³ Largest administrative units within a Pakistani province

South Waziristan (Newly Merged Area now in D I Khan Division) – an important new district in KPK, recently merged from the former Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), key site of the War on Terror; very high OOSC population, but also a high private-sector involvement in schooling; learning outcomes are surprisingly better than most of NMA; population size similar to Kurram, but large geographical spread

Kurram (Newly Merged Area now in Kohat Division) – also ex-FATA; also affected by War on Terror; high OOSC, but also poor private sector involvement and very poor learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy; population size very similar to South Waziristan, but geographical spread is far less

Methods

Building off this emphasis on educational accounts, teacher identity and its structural fragmentation through competing rewards in a bureaucratic environment can benefit from being explored qualitatively, particularly, ethnographically. The ethnographic approach, by paying attention to how socio-cultural factors shape the motivations and constructions of teacher identities, can offer insight to the construction of the public education 'field', its pedagogic opportunities and performance challenges as *understood by Pakistani public schoolteachers*. This is a dimension from which education is rarely investigated in this country context although its contributions to a deeper understanding of education decision-making is well acknowledged throughout the world (Gordon, Holland and Lahelma, 2001; Haman & Vandeyar, 2018).

In his 2020 analysis of bureaucratic performance, Martin Williams emphasises the need for a more nuanced approach to conceptualising how state and policy actors deliver reform. Instead of relying on broad-spectrum, often hypothetical ideas about capacity or performance, he suggests the documentation of multidimensional aspects to real life policy spaces. For instance, he considers the presence of multiple principals, whose competing demands can lead to a multitude of responses. Williams also indicates the need to identify distinctions between expectations embedded within policy instructions and the actions that embody their delivery.

The recognition that a more accurate understanding of policy implementation or reform is incomplete without unearthing multiplicity of actors and voices that mediate such processes is a valuable one. Aiyar et al. (2015) and Hossain et al. (2017) incorporate this thinking into their qualitative investigations of teachers as bureaucrats in the Indian and Bangladeshi contexts respectively. Paying attention to in-depth interview and focus group data that explain everyday enactments of official policy documentation, they both tap into similar frictions around teacher performance. Although the role of state employed teachers protects them against any serious performance accountability policy reform, teachers are simultaneously left feeling disempowered by the structures that govern their roles *and* expectations for performance. Although Aiyar et al. (2015) attempt to unpack teacher norms and values about teaching, neither study comprehensively brings in the socio-cultural dynamics of teacher or policymaker surroundings that may help explain why certain norms persist or how these interact with the political settlements within which they emerge.

Ethnographic research becomes instrumental here, lending itself to the capturing of rich field data from not just actors themselves, but the circumstances in which their thoughts take root, shape or flight. Using a diverse set of methods, an ethnographic approach in education affords an opportunity to understand the discursive spaces within which teachers narrate themselves. An exploration of everyday enactments goes beyond traditional school observations or just teacher interviews to locate lived experience in response to official stance-making regarding teaching values and performance metrics (Packer, 2000).

The use of multiple methods to try finding a meaningful answer to a given set of research questions is described more neatly as triangulation. Through this process, multiple sources of independently-collected data are compared and contrasted to determine their convergence towards similar kinds of results to questions posed. The process also represents a continuous effort in qualitative research to minimise research(er) bias. This shall be done both by keeping an eye out for evidence that goes against widely-held assumptions governing the research, or revisiting research questions in the face of deviant cases that help refine the direction in which results take the overall conclusions of the study (Silverman, 2005).

Miles and Huberman (1994) provide an extensive set of criteria to reflect on two additional considerations for research quality that are also linked to triangulation efforts: reliability, which they helpfully describe as 'dependability' and 'auditability'; and validity, which they also explain as 'credibility' and 'authenticity'. Reliability is a measure of the consistency and stability of the research process, which investigates conceptual coherence, consistent coding on the basis of these concepts, and evidence towards the study's concepts that has been checked for (and minimised of) bias driven by the research team's assumptions.

Validity, on the other hand, is about establishing as accurate a representation of the participants' social worlds as is possible by seeking 'thick' descriptions of the context (Geertz, 1973), exploring negative evidence and conducting a constant comparison between multiple possible explanations for social phenomena. One of the ways in which this study seeks to improve the validity of its data and conclusions is by allowing the reader to 'hear' from the field: quoting participants in anglicized versions of the original language in which they speak (Urdu/Pashto) to present participants – especially teachers - as they present themselves (Siddiqi, 2017). Through this technique, the research seeks to avoid objectifying Pakistani teachers in terms from public discourse that traditionally portray teachers as demotivated, disinterested upholders of educational practice without a voice.

Although most of this research work shall be qualitative in nature, there are some quantitative aspects to data analysis that are explained in further detail later in this section. They involve analytically examining secondary data sources to gain understanding of KPK's systemic situation with regards to education, particularly its teachers. These data also set a background within which to converse with members and leaders of teacher unions to understand issues of contestation -and how they might correspond with the Domains of Contestation literature identified for this research; strategies and mechanisms for voice and agency; what these reveal about

teacher career navigation; and bargaining rights and power. This is fleshed out in greater detail through the discussion on specific methods and data analysis that now follows.

Historical analysis

This technique shall draw upon archival material to analyse and explain the development of education policy within the context of social/political relationships and structures, with an emphasis on teaching and teacher. During this part of the research, the study shall undertake both qualitative (narrative analysis) and quantitative (descriptive, group and relational statistical analysis) approaches to make sense of the data being collected.

It will explore transformations in the Pakistani bureaucracy (especially during the 1970s when teaching was largely nationalised), as well as Pakistan's education policies that have repeatedly emphasised teacher and assessment improvement. It shall also include in-depth perusal of media narratives from each significant period of reform to teaching structure and recruitment, such that it aligns well with the overarching ambition of the study to explain attempts at teacher reform and the impact of such reform efforts on teacher motivation and identity.

Additional secondary sources of data informing historical analysis can include:

National and KPK teacher data: demographics; qualification/certification; recruitment cycles; transfers/promotions/retention; education hierarchies and salary structures

National and KPK student data: demographics (age; gender; ethnicity; geography); enrolment rates (net; gross; participation; dropout; retention, if available; out-of-school estimates or counts); learning outcomes (through a range of tests and indicators employed in the Pakistani context²⁴)

National and KPK education data: finance and budget; legal orders and rulings; bureaucratic instructions and notifications, including civil services restructuring; WoT²⁵ measures and orders; post-WoT measures and orders; NMA²⁶ measures and orders

Observations and Conversations

These two less structured methods will be the initial tools employed around teachers during this project's fieldwork. They shall remain a consistent part of the project until the production of its final report, primarily because attention to details of educational practice, and its surrounding environment, opens up continuous analytical opportunity that complements more structured tools such as interviews or archival documentation.

²⁴ This part of the project will overlap, and benefit from, with the assessments analysis being conducted through the Pakistan CRT based at CERP.

²⁵ War on Terror

²⁶ Newly Merged Areas

Although these two methods require extensive fieldnotes that document life as it is happening, participant observations are an important aspect for several reasons. Firstly, they allow an immersive learning of the context within which one's participants have to exist and strategise their everyday practice; secondly, as a set of descriptions, they attempt – to the extent possible – to represent participants' worlds to those who have not been there in person; and finally, they facilitate the establishment of trust between researcher and participants through a process of continuous engagement and understanding.

Accounts

Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2011) explain 'accounts' as a data collection mechanism through which conversations are prompted to allow a participant to explain their worldview, experience(s), and position(s) on specific questions of interest. Traditionally, this is classified as an interview, but the subtle difference to observe here is that accounts generated through synchronous conversation yield 'interview' data, whilst accounts generated through asynchronous (whether written or orally recorded) responses entail a broader, prompt-led, 'messier' collection of participant thoughts that are not immediately guided by the interviewer's questioning.

Interviews

This data gathering technique uses formal conversation based on a deliberate, pre-determined agenda to help the researcher gain specialised forms of knowledge that are in possession of the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This study proposes the use of several different types of interviews, which are described below.

Elite interviews

A qualitative technique that involves one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in a research context, typically those who hold power or authority to affect multiple others with their decisions or outreach. In this particular context, key elite interviewees would include senior members of the bureaucracy who are/have remained connected with the education sector in KP, as well as political figures (whether directly in education or closely linked with it, such as in finance).

Additional elite interviews shall also be conducted amongst senior education delivery officers (DEOs) of the districts sampled for this study, retired members of the bureaucracy, and relevant actors from within political circles and the Pakistani development sector who have affected teaching and assessment process (through technical assistance to the government).

The purpose of these interviews shall be to supplement an understanding of the pedagogic field beyond information gained through observations and system metrics. In particular, interviews offer the chance to engage education actors in conversational formats through which a sense of co-creation of knowledge and learning can be established – particularly by the researcher's reflexivity about power asymmetries (Kvale, 2006).

The breakdown of these 22 interviews is as proposed below:

Senior Delivery Officers: 7 (or as many districts)

Senior members of bureaucracy: 5 (with at least one from the Punjab for a cross-context comparison)

Retired members of bureaucracy: 4 (subject to revision if more are willing to speak on issues of nationalisation and education planning)

Development sector actors: 3

Political figures: 3 (even this may require revision depending on availability of such figures, who tend to be harder to access)

Ethnographic interviews

An important source of data shall be a set of repeat interviews with select teachers, junior education delivery officers whose work involves direct engagement with teachers and schools, from whom an everyday and detailed understanding of practice can emerge. The ethnographic interview is particularly useful for its efforts to document participants' life stories as they inform their present by engaging with these participants several times over the course of the research (Heyl, 2001; Forsey, 2008).

In a bid to understand teacher motivation, identity and career path, this method collects data that enriches and stores helpful clues to actors' decisions that may not be immediately evident from group discussions or even single-conduct interviews. In particular, such interviews will pay attention to different experiences and moments narrated by participants that help explain their motivation to join the teaching service, their strategies, struggles and opportunities therein, and aspirations for the future. Unlike one-off semi-structured interviews, these can vary in length and format to remain flexible and sensitive to conditions within which interactions take place with participants. Therefore, although a total of 17 interviews is noted below, in reality, these will be at least 4-5 conversations with each of the chosen participants that can be as brief as 15 minutes or as long as 1 hour, conducted in a formal seated manner or during walks and travel.

The breakdown of these 17 interviews is as proposed below:

Teachers: 10

Junior education delivery officers: 7 (based on districts)

Semi-structured interviews

Of all the interviews planned for this research, the semi-structured versions are the most traditional. They shall follow a schedule based on a set of 10 loosely-structured questions/prompts, from which the interview cannot stray significantly although there shall always remain room for enough flexibility that a conversation progresses as naturally as possible. The biggest advantage of this technique is that it allows data collection in important areas of interest to the researcher without consuming extra amounts of time in the field – especially in circumstances where participants observe tight schedules, such as is likely the case for the interviewees listed below.

Teachers: 10

Union Staff: 4

Departmental Staff (Provincial Institute for Teacher Education KPK; Director of Elementary Education KPK; Elementary and Secondary Education Department KPK; KP Public Service Commission): 7

Analysis

Two branches of analysis are proposed for this study, one that supports the development of a system profile, and the other that focuses on diving deeper into specific components of the education system that intersects with teachers and their career pathways. The former outcome shall be targeted through quantitative data analysis, whilst the latter shall rely on the analysis of narratives and texts in a qualitative framework. It should be noted, however, that the two are not independent of each other; indeed, part of this study's approach shall be to use parts of the quantitative analysis in multiple stages to inform the direction, nature and participants of the deeper probes into teacher motivation and the domains of contestation within which teachers can be more effectively understood in KPK.

Quantitative analysis

Phase I: the initial Annual School Census dataset for 2018/19²⁷ released by the KPK Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED), when combined with population census data from the province as well as indicator-based monitoring data from the Independent Monitoring Unit of the Department, have been used to generate a descriptive profile of the education system in KPK. In addition to the general overview of geographical distribution and functional status of schools, these data show student enrolment (by gender and age groups) at the district level for KPK.

For teachers specifically, the individual data files have been aggregated up to the district level to show number of teachers, age, gender, qualifications and number of school leaders registered. All of these variables provide contextual knowledge about the districts being sampled for the main parts of this study. These shall contribute to a descriptive presentation of teacher profiles across the province, which is a small, but important contribution to the thus far limited documentation of teacher status in KPK.

Phase II: this stage shall explore existing government survey-based data on teachers in KP in greater detail to add trends, and relationships towards a better understanding of the KP education (especially teaching) context (Gray, 2014).

By identifying the most recent points of teacher policy reform (such as recruitment strategy; baseline qualifications required; any changes to teacher transfer/posting), corresponding datasets, primarily in the form of the Annual School Census, shall be

²⁷ Most recent exercise.

used to explore trends in teacher profiles. This shall generate descriptive statistics through which to comment on a range of presentations. The simplest of these shall include graphical representations of frequencies, percentages and crosstabulations such as, for instance, of how gender, geography/ethnicity, age and qualifications sit together. The descriptives shall also present seemingly simple, but informative, relationships (correlations) between teacher demographics or qualifications and indicators of teacher placement in the system (e.g. rank in government service; form of specialisation; salary range).

These latter descriptives shall permit a level of commentary on potential career pathways, strategies and personal progression decisions that teachers explore to advance their positions in a state-mediated pedagogic bureaucratic field. Admittedly, this will not be sufficient to demonstrate *causation*. However, the qualitative aspect to this research shall take up the matter of causation more critically and creatively, whilst the large number of observations available through the government's data suggests significance of correlations can be tested to produce meaningful insights to whether the relationships being explored (once demonstrated) are strong enough to merit deeper investigation.

Qualitative analysis

The bulk of this study shall constitute results of a qualitative orientation, such that text – obtained from a variety of data collection sources – shall serve as the key analytical tool for making sense of teacher 'accounts' regarding career contests and opportunities.

This study shall not adhere to one format for data analysis because ethnographic fieldwork is best made sense of through a creative assortment of tools and categories that serve actual encounter(s), not pre-fieldwork suppositions or clearly demarcated categories (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

Transcription is the obvious first stage with which to start qualitative analysis, primarily because it starts to convert the spoken word into a written format on which multiple steps of analysis can then be applied. Transcription of research interviews shall pay special attention to anonymisation of participants, with no real names being used (unless explicitly directed otherwise by participants). Opinions, stories, and backgrounds of participants shall be extracted from the transcripts and stored separately within categories of analysis in order to prevent field data from being used to trace back to the original participant source of said data.

In order to determine which parts of transcripts/fieldnotes to extract, and how to use them, the following multi-step process shall be followed, which incorporates the strength of multiple analytical approaches in qualitative analysis without the restrictions of remaining within one technique. These include:

- an initial coding strategy from grounded theory;
- a pattern-identification process from thematic analysis;
- the discursive strengths of narrative and socio-cultural discourse analysis;

- and the development of portraits to present rich accounts of participants' stories.

Together, this process attempts to reach the point of 'thick description' that is at the heart of an ethnographic research approach (Geertz, 1973), and through which the typologies explained below can be developed.

Coding is the process through which a name/label is assigned to a significant piece of information that appears in respondent data and provides a useful response to the research questions of interest. The analytical process of this study shall initially apply what Strauss & Corbin (1990) describe as 'open' coding, where useful material from the qualitative texts are categorised by their immediate description (e.g. motivation effects; financial incentives; bureaucratic hurdles).

Subsequently, these shall be returned to for a more analytical exploration of relationships based on what the hypotheses and literature review underpinning this study suggest are to be expected. What shall be kept in mind during this process is the underlying principle of a technique known as analytic induction – not all coded/categorised pieces of data reinforce or confirm the literature, and every time such deviant data/cases arise, the research requires a revisit to both the nature of the research questions guiding the hypothesis of the study as well as the final analytical output that is being developed.

Once smaller, and more specific pieces of text/narrative have been coded in this manner, a more holistic process of thematic analysis can be applied to blocks of previously marked text. This process shall aggregate analytical codes identified previously to understand how relationships and patterns emerge from the data collected, paying attention to how these patterns then relate to the study's research questions/driving concepts in order to be classified as a meaningful 'theme' to the research that can be given a formal label. In contrast to a purely theoretical thematic analysis, which uses a theoretical framework to guide the kinds of themes identified in data (fits the data into an existing premise), this study shall concentrate on an inductive thematic analytical approach such that the data is allowed to 'speak' to the concepts and questions motivating the research.

The steps outlined above represent a formal categorisation-driven approach to qualitative analysis. Typically, coding is treated as distinct to more discursive styles of analysis in qualitative research because of the former's identification of specific words and the latter's engagement with blocks of text and their semantic connotations. But as indicated previously, codes can be juxtaposed to understand relationships amongst different constructs – whether contrasting, confirming, contradicting, expanding or other such implications for research questions.

This study shall acknowledge the presence of codes in a text on the one hand, and how they can inform the reading of narrative text within a socio-cultural context. Indeed, the two shape each other such that a critically discursive reading of text can help refine the identification and interpretation of codes to more effectively explain social phenomena in the lives of (mostly teacher) participants (van Dijk, 2018). A textual reading of teachers' (and all related actors in this study) sociological and

cultural surroundings shall help draw more coherent relationships between factors stemming from the Domains of Contestation literature guiding this study and real life teacher accounts their professional aspirations, expectations and journeys (Adger & Wright, 2018).

By placing teacher accounts, interviews and texts within the context of a wider educational discourse embodied in policy and other research-related documents, this final part of the analytical process shall yield a combined outcome of portraits and typologies. Portraits use ethnographic depth from fieldwork to poetically (re)construct²⁸ individuals' stories in third-person format, paying attention to the metaphorical and symbolic details that help analytical (re)present experience as it has happened to participants and its implications on their decisions – a cornerstone of this project (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2008).

Typology development is a classification process on basis of clear criterion emphasised for qualitative analysis (Lazarsfeld & Barton, 1951; LeCompete & Preissle, 1993). Through it, narrative accounts, discursively unpacked, shall contribute to an organisation of the relationship between different types of teacher identities amongst public school teachers and types of accounts and accountabilities (shown as the adapted Pritchett framework below). This assemblage of typologies shall weave the analysis discussed thus far into Levy and Walton's 2013 classifications of types of political settlements (arrangements of power) and public governance (how such power informs rules and practice) mentioned earlier in this proposal to help this project comment on how power, rules and actors play out in Pakistan's educational/teaching policy space.

²⁸ The use of the term (re)construct is deliberate (in contrast to just reconstruction): it acknowledges researcher bias present in the field and in the writing of analysis as the researcher is one of the tools of a qualitative project, but attempts to minimise this bias through reflexive practice as participants' experiences are built back up for research presentation.

Ethics

Of primary importance to this study is the protection of data – as it is collected, during the analytical process, as well as once the study’s final outputs have been produced. The protection of data is, at heart, a protection of the study’s participants. Recognising the importance of trust to the process of credible research, care shall be taken to secure informed consent from participants through a transparent provision of context and aims of this project. Recognising the importance of verbal commitments in the Pakistani context, this project shall accept both written and verbal expressions of consent, recording them accordingly. During recorded interviews, participants shall be informed of their right to cease participation, and shall also be shown transcripts of their interviews for a collaborative approach to construction of knowledge through this research.

Once data starts to be collected, and analysed, a strict process of confidentiality shall be observed, including:

1. Anonymisation of all participant names (exceptions may be made on participants’ request)
2. Storing of all recordings, fieldnotes and transcriptions under password
3. Engagement with participants using only official institutional ID that provides higher levels of security than public domain addresses

Risks

There are two main categories of risk developed for this study: a public health risk that relates to the present Coronavirus pandemic spread across the world, Pakistan included; and researcher-participant risk that must be considered when undertaking research with human participants. These are summarised in tabular fashion below:

| | Public Health | | Human Participant | |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Risk Rapid and frequent exposure to multiple locations and persons heightens risk of becoming a Super Spreader or contracting the Novel Coronavirus;</p> <p>Not everyone observes Covid-19 SOPs properly in field encounters;</p> <p>Use of rental car service and</p> | <p>Mitigation Continuous observance of Covid-SOPs stipulated by the Government of Pakistan (masks; sanitisers; regular handwashing; physical distance; personal writing equipment and storage bag);</p> <p>Polite reminders to research participants to</p> | <p>Risk Need to reveal personal and professional details to encourage participant trust and continuously navigate consent (hence access)</p> <p>Risk of exposure to unconventional or unwarranted demands by teacher participants, who</p> | <p>Mitigation Establish pre-determined set of details for revelation in field engagements</p> <p>Be emotionally prepared to hear traumatic and difficult stories, especially through keeping of a journal and</p> |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Researcher | accommodation also increases risk of exposure. | <p>observe SOPs, especially through their line managers;</p> <p>Protocol for exposure (e.g. if handshakes are unavoidable, sanitise in between each handshake; demonstrate through sanitisation that shaking of hands is not desirable at this point in history);</p> <p>Use of disinfectant spray on all foreign surfaces to which researcher is exposed, including car seats, school and office furniture, government files, or sanitiser after accessing archival records (which cannot be interfered with through the use of any chemical)</p> | <p>seek access to higher levels of authority through researcher</p> <p>Increased risk of physical security when accessing districts in the Newly Merged (formerly Tribal) Areas, where law and order isn't fully settled</p> | <p>selection of a research confidante</p> <p>To mitigate risks to personal security, the Researcher considers the option to shift fieldwork to other similarly placed districts, but which do not present such heightened risks to one's life (e.g. Swabi was explored instead of South Waziristan in the first round of fieldwork because of a sudden eruption of violence along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border)</p> |
| Participant | <p>Risk</p> <p>Interaction with researcher increases risk of exposure to an outsider to their otherwise daily restricted circle of human engagement;</p> | <p>Mitigation</p> <p>Researcher observes protocol measures outlined above to remind participants about Covid-19 risks wherever culturally appropriate, otherwise demonstrate observance of SOPs by example</p> | <p>Risk</p> <p>Vulnerabilities associated with revelation of professional and personal experiences, especially to a researcher connected with the provincial government that oversees teacher hiring and promotion (misinterpretation of researcher authority)</p> | <p>Mitigation</p> <p>In subtle and simple ways, share of Researcher Self with participant to build a relationship of trust;</p> <p>Participate in office/school/class activities to lower potential barriers to exchange of knowledge by sharing of Researcher knowledge/thought on educational material</p> |

Limitations

One of the most significant caveats to this study stems from its predominantly qualitative nature, which implies that field insights shall be in depth, but restricted to a relatively smaller sample size than would be possible through a survey-based large N study. This trade off is endorsed for this study because relatively little is known about the everyday stories that define teacher experiences in the Pakistani, especially KPK, context. This information gap can be addressed more effectively through the recommended instruments of interviews and observations, which allow more natural discourse and conversation to emerge from the field than is otherwise possible through a structured questionnaire format alone (Hammersley, 2006).

Although a component of the study explores quantitative relationships within existing datasets, one has to remain mindful of inferences made from such data, given the quality of the design of such variables as well as the tools used to collect data against said variables/metrics and circumstances under which collection may have been executed (Gray, 2014). To support such inferences, qualitative methods used in this particular study seek to identify deviations from, or reinforcement of, trends that emerge from the quantitative analytical parts as well as add depth to whatever is gleaned from the quantitative component.

The study is also limited, increasingly, by the uncertainty surrounding field research in a pandemic environment. Despite having recovered well from the first wave, Pakistan remains unclear about prolonged school closures during its second wave of the Coronavirus, which has implications on both teacher presence (on site) as well as their schedule availability (many of them may be on site, but increasingly preoccupied with an effort to keep delivering lessons online).

Relatedly, there is uncertainty in KP about physical security. This has implications for teacher voices that can be sought and/or represented from some of the province's most troubled educational environments, especially the Newly Merged Areas.

Finally, as this entire study is led by a single researcher who is female in a predominantly male environment, it may sometimes become a challenge to access certain teaching and policy spaces. Although every effort will be made to navigate such tensions in the field, the prospect remains that a different researcher might secure different kinds of data and insights. The present researcher acknowledges that the perspectives brought to the forefront on teacher experiences and system accountabilities through this study represent only a part of a much larger set of possible explanations for the making of a 'good teacher, all waiting to be unearthed through further investigations into the same area of education research.

Inference 1

Who becomes a teacher in KP public education?

Soufia: So what made you join if you've got a degree in Engineering from Islamabad?

Male Teacher: Well, there wasn't much else to do. I had to come back home to my village....have you visited around? There are no jobs. At least I can do this job for now until I can go for a Masters or move to Lahore.

Soufia: So will you leave teaching?

Male Teacher: Maybe. I do enjoy it. You can come into my class now. It's Maths. But this pay isn't enough if I want to get married...which I do.

Soufia: But if you come back, will the Masters help?

Male Teacher: Yes. I can become a Subject Specialist in Secondary (he means Secondary School) and then I will have a better scale²⁹ and pay. Then I can be married and take care of my family as well...if I don't move to Lahore – then I could do an engineering job (sic).

The excerpt above is from one of over 15 interviews I conducted with male teachers across 4 districts of KP, many of which repeat similar sentiments about why they are currently a Primary School Teacher (PST) in KP. Young men describe their presence in the primary education system overwhelmingly in terms of gainful employment in absence of effective alternatives. These men *are* young, between the ages of 22 and 35, above which government rules do not permit entrance into even the lowest ranks of non-clerical government service such as the Scale 12 PST (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2018). But there is more than just employment at stake.

To most of the male teachers with whom I interact (whether through formal interviews or, more commonly, conversations during training days or school visits outside of lockdown periods), employment in *government service* is a predominant motivation for becoming a PST. Described as an 'easy', 'safe' or 'quick' entry point into public sector in KP, primary school teaching offers the lowest barriers to entry out of any government department and allows an educated ('qualified') young citizen clientele to 'secure age' – a term used (a) to denote the foothold within the government that is gained in timely fashion before one exceeds age limits typically imposed at entry points (such as 35 years for teaching through KP's Education Department), and (b) time gained by a person to consider which post or Department to apply to *next* within state structure.

This is not to argue that there can be *no* late-stage entries into government service. But as Mateen, a BSc in Maths and PST from Hazarah Division explains,

²⁹ The term 'scale' is used in government service in Pakistan to indicate an officer's rank according to established rules of recruitment and promotion. Teaching starts from BPS 12 at primary level and continues until BPS 17 at higher secondary level.

Yes, of course, you could be older and you could have relevant qualifications for like a post in secondary school teaching or even in the new School Management Cadre, but you might not have the kind of experience they (the state) are asking for...like recently there is an ASDEO (Assistant District Education Officer) position that opened up, and they want 5 years teaching experience, but we all know – I was discussing with some of my friends – we know that anyone with 5 years of teaching in the government will be preferred...you know, they already understand the system better so the government will not be burdened to train them... (Fieldnotes; June 2021)

Going public: an enactment of patronage

Exactly why is a job in public sector so important in KP? And what do encounters within the sector explain about the kinds of decisions that eventually govern the education delivery process? As discussed previously in this paper, one of the hints we have towards why teaching is such a lucrative government service in the Pakistani context stems back to Regulation 118 under the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government in the early 1970s through which significant portions of the education sector were nationalised across the country (Government of Pakistan, 1972). When Jones and Jones (1977/78) argue that the rapid conversion of teachers from professional educators to state employees was a means to generate broad-based electoral support at society's grassroots, they are not alone.

The allocation of public sector jobs by those with political power over the state to loyal clients as part of a strategy to concentrate power distribution is by now a frequently-analysed phenomenon (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Kingdon et al., 2014; World Bank, 2018). It is also one that can be investigated within a framework of extractive institutional presence and rent-seeking expressions of agency. This is especially likely amongst actors who, by becoming privy to information about markets and changing wage structures, can make strategic choices to secure themselves above-normal benefits (financial, and non-financial).

In KP, one of the oldest ways in which this relationship of patronage unfolds and continues to persist is found in seemingly the most ordinary part of the bureaucracy: its clerical staff. Staff may be one of the lowest ranked scales in Pakistani bureaucracy, but it plays an invaluable role in the preservation of public service status quo (Nelson, 2008; Hull, 2012). As we will also see later in the narrations of primary teachers – especially females – staff is so crucial to everyday performance that it can disable the work of a teacher who is posted several ranks above staff in government service. The fieldnote excerpt below explains this peculiar political economy from two separate visits to modest primary schools in District Chitral:

Visit 1

School is over, and I am informed by my focal person from the District Education Office of an invitation extended by the Class 4 to his home. Class 4 is a term used by everyone I meet in government service to denote clerical staff in their departments. In the school, this is the guard. The term is a reference to these employees' actual categorisation, by government scale. I

have heard this term used consistently at provincial, district, and sub-district levels. Teachers have used it within their homes in conversation with me. It seems very much an established part of the discourse here.

I accompany the two men up a steep, cobbled path flanked by narrow irrigation channels of freshwater. Mountains surround us at the far edge of this village³⁰ of Chitral town. From the condition of the school, I am unsure why we are imposing upon this school guard's home or day. It was a small 2-room, multi-graded affair with 1 PST and 1 HT and about 75 students between the two of them – girls and boys mixed because of a shortage of primary schooling in this village. He must not earn very much, given the school cannot even afford to repair or add to its schoolrooms – and from what I know of primary teacher starting salaries, I cannot imagine how much less this man earns. I am, I realise, anxious about the cost he and his family may have to incur to entertain the district officer and myself – with the baggage of me being a city girl from the Punjab looming over us all³¹.

We walk towards a gate of significant proportion. The walls extending from it run about 20 feet in both directions and then wrap around towards the back, which I cannot see because of thick foliage everywhere. Even before we enter through the gate, I can see the perplexing tops of verdant walnut and apple trees. We enter into what can only be a mini-paradise, an expanse of brilliant green lawn set back from the dense forest-like arrangement of trees through which we enter into his family property. A localised portico invites us to navigate through the forest towards the entrance veranda to a large, robustly constructed house painted in gleaming whites and brick reds. The air is incredibly fresh and hardly polluted here – there just isn't enough modern development in the area to ensure such consequences on the environment.

Inside, we are sat on a thick traditional rug in a sizeable room that serves as the guest chamber. An assortment of local delicacies are arranged before us, and I am encouraged by the host to begin eating. Confused, I wait for our host to return to his family chambers through a door to the far right before asking the district officer where we are. He replies nonchalantly, 'Madam, this is his home. That's why he's invited us.' On probing further, he explains, 'He owns this. His family owns this land. They even own the land on which the school is built. The gave the land to the government in the 90s to make the school. That's why he's a Class 4 there. That's why they gave the land. His father was also a Class 4 there. Now he is.'

³⁰ Name deliberately withheld to protect residents' and state officers' identities.

³¹ I write this in my fieldnotes as part of my acknowledgement as an ethnographic researcher of the power dynamics I embody. Lahore is generally considered Pakistan's cultural, literary, entrepreneurial, technological, spiritual and – according to many historians – political hub. Throughout my fieldwork, being an academic at one of the city's (also country's) top private universities, combined with being a Lahori (a person originally from Lahore) was met by government officers with a visible range of emotions: from discomfort, to intrigue, to being overwhelmed. Additionally, ethnic hesitancy persists between traditional Pashtun and Punjabi sentiments. Although I am personally neither Pashtun nor Punjabi, my association with Lahore inevitably brought me into the subtle cultural crossfire both ethnic groups lob at each other, whether through jokes, criticism or even government-office slurs like '*hagha Urdu-speaker da*' (literally: she is a speaker of the Urdu language; contextually: she is not Pashtun).

With a mixture of relief and perplexity, I realise I am not financially taxing the guard's family or home this afternoon. They are already considerably wealthier through their orchards and lands than the modest 12-marla home my father owns in Lahore.

Visit 2

Now the children have to be carefully escorted out of the 30x16-foot school with its 2 tiny classrooms because the door of the school is literally a step-out on to the main road entering this sub-valley of the Kalash region. When I ask the Head Teacher why it hasn't been possible all this time to build a buffer between the school and the road, he glances sideways at a young, quiet, bearded man sat in the corner of the entrance and says, 'They don't give us more land.' When I clarify who 'they' is, he points to the man.

Seeing my obvious confusion at the school guard being held responsible for securing more land for the school, the HT clarifies that this school is built on land donated by the guard's father back in the 1970s. At the time, it served the needs of the society, but it clearly doesn't anymore. The guard's family does not wish to clear any more of their fields to sell to the state for an expansion of this school building. 'They are quite content with his Class 4 employment so why would they feel pressured to give up their land now? They did it once and they got the benefit, and anyway, they aren't Kalasha so...,' is how he puts it.

In the vignettes above, multiple factors are at play in the determination of children's educational experiences and the environment within which teachers are expected to perform. But both these cases – and scores others like them – showcase a historically common method featured in the state's procurement of land upon which to build public schools across then NWFP, now KP. In exchange for parting with landed asset, relatively wealthy families of a village were able to secure a permanent job in government service for *generations* because of civil service rules in KP that permit the inheritance of a government position or pension by next of kin (provided they have the relevant qualifications) (Government of [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa]³², 1989).

Over a number of generations who are able to squeeze such rents/benefits out of the state, ideas about particular kinds of wealth and capital to be accessed despite political irregularities and economic uncertainty are culturally reproduced (Haque & Khawaja, 2007; Niaz, 2010; Siddiqi, 2017). In a weak socio-economic environment, a job in Pakistan's public sector is still symbolic of prestige and permanence because of the opportunity such a career presents (Bourdieu, 1993). Even though extractive behaviour is often equated with a concentration of political power, and may seem to sit oddly with the notion of expanded public sector membership, state apparatus that rewards political loyalty or deference with jobs may in fact be reproducing such extractive sentiments.

³² Then, NWFP.

Without correctly aligned performance-driven incentives as grounds for recruitment or reward in a public office, the system is likely to concentrate its extant operational inefficiencies and reward status quo preservation over innovation. As Habib (2015) explains in a rare analysis of public education in KP, such inefficiencies inevitably seep into acts of compliance amongst the teaching human resource of the KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED). But her work does not unpack the many expressions of agency or innovation that also help explain why or how teachers continue to manage their students.

Aiyar et al. (2015) use the idea of cognitive maps amongst frontline providers (teachers) to explore how teacher-bureaucrats make sense of their time in public service. Although these maps are a useful tool for understanding the bureaucratic mind and why government servants are in the careers they are (Mehta & Walton, 2014), their use often overlooks socio-cultural dynamics within which teachers perform. In doing so, this approach also risks positioning teacher behaviour as linearly responsive to organisational structure of the bureaucracy. This limits an exploration of the compensatory effects of social and cultural values on teacher norms that shape performance.

By exploring the dispositions that are cultivated amongst teacher-bureaucrats as a result of both organisation structure of bureaucracy *and* society, we may be better placed to understand teachers as agents who continuously evolve the strategies through which they seek to navigate their career journeys. More importantly, attention to dispositions helps provide a missing puzzle piece to the process through which teacher norms or sense of self are enacted in the everyday field of bureaucratic pedagogic service delivery. What is the conduit through which values underpinning teacher identity in KP's context engender strategies and transactions through which to navigate a career in public sector?

Here, the Bourdieuan interpretation of capital becomes especially useful: social capital allows teachers to build networks of relevance and cultural capital permits acquisition of whatever intellectual asset is likely to open more doors. In the patronage vignettes shared above, both types of capital feature in the transaction for scale: land for a Class 4 position. As we see in the rest of this report, these two categories of capital feature in teacher narrations. Their presence helps explain many aspects of how teacher policy is adapted in KP by its public servants, whether in their decisions to enter or to remain in the system.

The persisting attraction of public sector

KP's experience with what I call 'the attraction of Scale' as a key driver for why individuals join government service is nested within the province's war-torn economy and unclear administrative boundaries³³. Significant periods of state and military intervention throughout the 1980s through to 2000s, when Pashtun lands within Pakistan's border were either leased out for religious militancy or then targeted for

³³ Until their merger into settled KP, the former tribal areas bordering Afghanistan juxtaposed KP, but were administered through a distinct set of Frontier regulations by the Pakistani date, but the regulations themselves dated back to the British empire and were considered both anachronistic for the 21st century and sensitive for their relationship with local Pashtunwali (code of life).

terrorism clean up, have led to mixed messages. Local communities have since perceived a threat to their cultural code (Pashtunwali), whilst bearing the economic brunt of war to date (Mazari, 2004).

A large influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan's tribal and surrounding provinces of then NWFP and Balochistan has weighed heavily on KP's decision-making, particularly in social sector development. And as Pasha (2011) points out, foreign aid inflows to Pakistan from allies during its years of war inevitably financed consumption-led growth amongst Pakistan's urban elite, not the ravaged rural populations of the sites of war – KP.

Against this complex backdrop of missed economic and political opportunity, it becomes easier to understand the ironic importance of the state – despite its perceived fragility and poor governance record, it is not just more reliable, but actually *has* jobs on offer. These jobs do not offer just an income. Through the socio-cultural capital government service can help accumulate (in the form of non-financial benefits), ordinary citizens of modest socio-economic status imagine such employment as a credible avenue for social mobility (Siddiqi, 2017).

Because of KP's peculiar conflict-affected context, the field of employment is defined by demands for income *and* access to social services (health; education; safety). This is largely driven by the underdevelopment of institutions that can provide such services to the ordinary citizen. When such provision lacks, and private sector provision is also absent or inaccessible, citizens may strategise regular access to key services through the avenue of public sector jobs (Hasnain, 2008; Niaz, 2010). The state's own lack of performance inevitably compels young job seekers to join it *to benefit from it*. In the education sector, this extractive incentive structure acts as a first step in orienting teacher aspirants away from the main aim of student learning, and towards 'a security that nobody can take away' as teachers and education management explain:

- *guaranteed income* (pay, even if delayed, *will* come as was the case with the salaries of new teachers originally appointed in March 2020, and who were paid a year's salary in June 2021 after Covid-induced delays);
- *permanence* (civil servants may be transferred out of existing posts or relieved of duty during an enquiry, but will not be completely discharged from service duty nor have their promotional reviews likely obstructed by questions of performance)
- *access to a variety of career paths* (such as teaching or management within the Education Department or through transfer into posts at other Departments);
- *mobility* (postings into urban centres with improvement in rank, such as Secondary School Teachers or Subject Specialists in Peshawar or Abbotabad);
- *medical and life insurance* (health benefits can be availed at government hospitals by not just bureaucrats, but also their immediate family members; and the KP Civil Service Rules of 1989 permit the child or widow(er) of a

deceased government officer to inherit their post provided they meet its minimum qualifications).

Out of the list above, it is permanence and insurance that is most frequently cited by teachers and secretarial staff members when explaining key drivers for entry into the teaching service of KP. Repeatedly, officers across the Department explain a government position as one from which nobody can suddenly be removed; uncertainty about work in the private sector looms as a very real shadow upon even the most well-qualified candidates, as a group of male teachers from the Swat Valley explain:

Nobody can just remove you from this position...like I am a teacher, right? OK, I can be fined if I am late or I don't come to school, but it will not be like I have seen with people in my community – if they have been late for any reason, your employer can just terminate you. Don't come tomorrow, he will say. He might not even give you your salary for the month...

It's like this. If I get into an accident today, and I am injured, government will take care of me. I will get a bed in a hospital, and if I don't recover, it will also take care of my family because I cannot work properly now. There is a system. It works³⁴. It's not like this in private schools or companies. So I don't know where I will get a job in engineering (his undergraduate degree), but right now it's OK here. I am comfortable.

(Fieldnotes, Volume 2: Spring 2021)

Notions of stability and economic opportunity that come with a job in government, even as a teacher, are significant. Placed in relief against the main components of but they do not come cheaply, especially for young men in the system. At 20,000 Pakistani Rupees (USD 126) a month to start, primary school teachers with a range of qualifications anywhere from the minimum of a 2-year Bachelors (equivalent to an Associate's degree in the global context) to professional degrees in medicine and engineering and even MPhils and PhDs are some of the poorest paid non-clerical members of KP government (above BPS 10), lower in income level than even health workers or police officers in the same scale.

A struggle for prestige in a system that signals merit through wage is therefore structured into the everyday life of a public schoolteacher because of policy decisions designed elsewhere. As Primary School Head Teacher Ali Sher reflects,

I started my service in 1988 on a salary of 850 rupees...so think about this yourself, I've been in service some 32 years and now I have finally become a primary school head teacher in Scale 15. When I joined, I was in 7 and I would probably have retired on Scale 10, but the last government revised the scales for primary so that now I will probably retire on 15. But the salary for these younger teachers isn't enough...they are very competent, but they don't get paid for their skills. You should see how many children across KP are

³⁴ In accordance with Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department (2009) Notification No FD (SOR-II)4-199/2010 issued specifically in response to waves of terrorism across the province, but related to additional compensations on medical grounds to government employees.

coming back into government schools from private schools because of these qualified teachers, but they are paid nothing so...I guess they will leave. You know (he mentions a teacher in his school) whom you just met, his paperwork is almost complete for (mentions a country), so he will leave then. Because the pay is not good, and even the respect (*izzat*) is not good.'

(When I ask about lack of respect)

'Respect is that I go to the bank across the road and I have to go during my school hours because we finish our work close to when the bank is also closing so I have to spend my school hours standing in a queue and then the teller says, get in line you old man, who do you think you are? You're just a teacher, aren't you, you're thinking you're such a senior officer (*barai afsar ban rahai hain*). So then who will respect us?

The legal space of teacher policy

The continuous push and pull factors mediating teacher motivations and experiences in KP considered so far demonstrate how friction between policy intentions and uptake alter relationships of power. The Pakistani state, which set into motion a policy of offering the perks of a bureaucrat's life to educators, is itself now at the receiving end of its employees' contradictory lamentations. The state is reliable because of all that it does, but it still does not do enough. The latter reality has consequences for the intentions with which people join teaching in the public system, and how they choose to perform in the everyday of education service delivery (Goffman, 1959).

In 2014, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government – in an attempt explained by the architects of the reform as one to help the state do *most* – undertook a significant and serious policy risk. It issued a notification declaring permanent ('regular') government posts in KP's education sector could be routinely staffed with contractual hires: primary school teachers would henceforth be appointed 'through initial recruitment on adhoc (sic)...through Merit (sic) on School base (sic)' (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2014). The policy also led to the lifting of professional teaching certification requirements, which the authors of the policy explain in hindsight as 'barriers to entry' to the teaching cadre of KP ESED.

In the next chapter of this work, we discuss the question of 'Merit' at length, and its implications for both teacher *and* system performance within KP's competitive clientelist context. But for now, we restrict our attention to the meaning of 'school base' and the implications of this recruitment policy on the relationship between KP's precariously balanced civic and bureaucratic influences on the education system.

Prior to the 2014 policy, the KP ESED was in habit of recruiting teachers (especially into primary school) on basis of district-level counts of vacancies ie: against a certain number of officially sanctioned posts in each district, but without specifying schools by name down to the village level. As a result, although teachers were appointed to

schools in their own district, they could frequently be posted far enough from their home Union Councils (an administrative unit) to be left feeling unsettled, even stranded. This was especially likely for female teachers, who could often end up with postings in what are commonly referred to as 'hard areas' of districts – where access infrastructure is limited, commutes are lengthy and expensive (3500-5000 rupees a month, which can be 16-25% of a teacher's pay), and schools are often run by single or two teachers resulting in considerable amounts of multigrade teaching.

By allowing teachers to choose 4-5 schools against which to consider their applications within their Union Council, argues the author of this policy, a former Director of Schools (KP), the intention from the system is to facilitate teacher placement in a school from as local a radius as possible. In theory, this is a well-meaning position, but in reality, it entails a contradiction to the other requirements of the same policy: a minimum qualification of a 2-year Bachelor's degree for eligibility to a Primary School Teacher post, and a contractual obligation to serve in the same school for at least one year from date of appointment. In some of KP's worst-off *districts*, such qualifications are not easily found – especially for female teachers to place in girls' schools – let alone at sub-district levels.

Additionally, a 2011 legislative act prevents ESED from deliberately retaining a primary school teacher at a school outside of their home UC if a vacancy simultaneously arises *within* their home UC (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2011, Section 3). In October 2020, amidst the Covid pandemic, a PST Scale 12 officer of KP ESED filed a petition for relief in the Peshawar High Court, arguing that the terms of her teacher contract were in violation of the 2011 legislation mentioned above. In an attempt to mitigate the scale of public outrage that could erupt from an admission on ESED's part of a policy inconsistent with an Act of Assembly, the case was requested to be withdrawn. An out-of-court settlement found a loophole through which to transfer the petitioner – a female teacher – back to her home UC eventually, but this was only one of many such cases emphasising the constraint of the legal domain within which policy decisions at ESED are not just deliberated, but then bypassed by the government's own agents to overcome structural inconsistencies.

A 2013 notification from the KP Chief Minister's Office to the Secretary of ESED demonstrates a similar incident when such grassroots realities require deviance from established rules. To account for a shortage of teachers with the right professional qualifications required at the time, District Kohistan was permitted a 'one time relaxation of rules...' by the highest political authority in the province – the Chief Minister – who met with Members of both the National and Provincial Assemblies from his party (the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf) shortly after the party assumed power in the province.

Inference 2

The unintended consequences of ad hocism

Behaviour like that discussed in the previous section, ad hoc in nature, is echoed in the 2014 policy that legitimised contractual appointments to teaching posts. Much of this was done in the interest of covering persistent teacher shortages in the system. Interviews with members of ESED's own bureaucracy as well as external actors from development sector partners to ESED suggest that such ad hoc decision-making was *preferred* as a deliberate effort to bypass a lethargic, and inefficient recruitment process deeply entrenched in an inefficient state. Three main concerns were identified for remedy through this policy:

1. A politicised understanding of 'merit' in which political party representatives (as patrons) frequently wielded authority over the bureaucratic domain by placing clients in educational positions of choice.
2. A lengthy recruitment process elongated by the requirement of a professional teaching qualification meant only certain types of candidates could apply to become teachers out of the available stock of applicants in the job market. Such frictions problematised targets to meet gaps in teacher allocation to schools across KP.
3. Misalignments between supply of, and demand for, quality teaching, largely a consequence of a poor articulation of afforded by higher educational institutions for a career in teaching (such as through a Bachelor's in Education B.Ed. or a Master's in Education M.Ed.)

The insistence that professional teaching certification amongst pre-2014 candidates did not add productive value to the education delivery chain became a cornerstone of the new teacher recruitment reforms. The 'professional' degrees or certifications with which candidates applied for a teaching position ranged from a Primary Certification in Teaching (PCT) to an Associate Degree in Education (ADE) and even a full 4-year Bachelors in Education (B.Ed.).

Almost all of these degrees were administered by sub-campus across Pakistan (including KP) through a parent university, the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) or 4 provincial universities. None of these institutions are considered well-regulated for quality by the provincial higher education department or the national Higher Education Commission (HEC). The alternative delivery mechanism was the Regional Institute for Teacher Education (RITE), present in each district capital and also a site for in-service teacher training (now Continuous Professional Development).

Graduates from these institutions were largely unable to demonstrate rigour in teacher training, as a result of which the very names of these degrees (B.Ed., for instance) became synonymous with inferior academic, hence, career potential. In an extreme case, one university's name became metonymic for fraudulent transactions, even an epithet for deceptive academic behaviour because of its proven notoriety for awarding bogus qualifications in exchange for handsome sums of 'tuition fees'. Unable to trust the pledges of merit made by the higher education

domain, policymakers in school education sought to change the norms around teacher merit in KP.

By lifting the ‘barriers to entry’ that previously prevented educated, but not ‘professionally’ qualified, individuals from seeking a teaching post in the government, the Department attempted to communicate a new paradigm for improved learning outcomes across KP public education. From now on, not only could teaching ‘professionalism’ be gained through the Department’s own induction programme (initially 3, then 6 months; then extended to 9 months from 2018), *anyone* could teach so long as they were able to also clear a third-party standardised test to required benchmarks (designed, administered and evaluated by the National Testing Service).

At the same time that we observe the generalisation of teaching, it is important to keep an eye on the expanding public investments into education. Expenditure on the training of teachers (especially for induction of PST) is certainly on the rise in KP, with an approximately 1300% increase in operational and training budgetary allocation between Fiscal Year 2014/15 (when the policy was notified) and 2019/20 (most recent expenditure figures at time of writing this report)³⁵. This is matched by an approximately 1715% increase in operational and training expenditure over the same time period.

Although there are minor ups and downs in the percentage change year-on-year of both training allocation as well as its expenditure, the overall trend signals an expanded investment by the state in teacher training at point of entry into the system. Correspondingly, however, the performance of teachers still does not emerge clearly as a concept within the language of KP ESED’s accountability frameworks. This tension applies not just to teacher performance, but also to how systemic misalignments contribute varyingly to the notion of *teaching*, whether in the classroom or as a profession (field insights to this issue are discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

Kingdon et al. (2014) reason that political patronage, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, may lead to a systemic preference for salary increments over investments that are oriented towards learning – such as teacher training. But evidence from KP suggests otherwise. The expansionary budget above, as well as my field observations and the plethora of training manuals that now populate the province, all suggest systemic inclination towards schools as ‘real seats and abodes of learning by transforming teachers and educational managers into forward looking change agents through consistent, innovative and strategic training interventions.’ (PITE, 2018,). KP has also witnessed a revision to teacher ranks in government that correspond with revised pay scales, a phenomenon that is not lost on teachers either.

³⁵ Based on induction training data shared by DPD with the researcher



Figure 1: Vision for teachers across KP

Source: Department for Professional Development (formerly PITE), Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Yet if the intention behind the 2014 recruitment reform was to transform KP's primary school teaching into a competitive market driven by 'talent that was previously being prevented from coming into our system' (Director Schools), it may have been a slightly premature expectation. As discussed previously, despite recent revisions to pay scales and salary structures, primary education is still one of the lowest financially valued components of KP's overall governance model. And if a large number of younger recruits (especially men) continue to explain their entry into teaching in the same language as most senior teachers in the system (no alternative jobs or chance employment), they only serve as an echo chamber for a narrative oriented *away from learning* that the Department is already advocating:

'Make teaching a viable career option for anyone...people need jobs; they will come...look around yourself, and you will notice anyone can teach. Doctors are teaching their children at home; lawyers are teaching their children at home...(in response to my question about whether they can sustain such activity on a regular basis at home) well, that's up to the parents, they may or may not....I've come to the conclusion teaching is not a profession' (Additional Director Schools).

The excerpts shared here are part of longer conversations that eventually draw one's attention to the same realisation repeatedly. In KP arose an opportunity around 2012/13 to introduce a reform that would solve some of the teaching profession's biggest crises: shortage of teachers across the province's primary schools, which was particularly acute in rural areas out of which teachers could rapidly transfer themselves; and a low-level equilibrium trap for teacher performance fuelled by ineffective in-service training and poor quality hires who were then put through this training.

In reality, however, a well-intended policy revision that has led to an expanded teacher base still does not demonstrate significant shifts in student learning outcomes or teacher performance according to ESED's own sample-based assessments conducted through its Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education³⁶. To the contrary, the policy creates room to embed teaching further into the very language of ad hoc non-professionalism that it aspires to contest, as is made evident from a former Secretary's observation that, '...if a teacher can give students something meaningful for even one year before he leaves the system, I am happy.'

Responsibility and service amongst school teachers in KP

As officers of state, teachers in KP's public education system straddle a fine line of divergent responsibilities. On the one hand, they must follow departmental orders, regardless of their nature. On the other hand, they must be the teacher in a classroom who enables and facilitates student learning, a role that will often require drawing upon reserves of creativity and innovation to keep students engaged, learning and happily returning to school throughout the year. The last point is especially pertinent to mention in this context because the large number of out-of-school children already present in KP (3.8 million+³⁷) may expand through dropouts that are caused by household perceptions of meaningless learning environments in public schools.

Compliance by teachers to system instruction is tracked through joint monitoring efforts by officers from the provincial Implementation Monitoring Unit (IMU) as well as district education management hierarchy. In its most literal form, teacher performance is measured through a set of indicators incorporated into a reporting tool called a District Scorecard. Although classified as a combination of metrics that help gauge 'teacher quality', these metrics do not correspond well with what actual measurements of teaching quality should look like:

1. CPD Participation Rate: this is an attendance metric for professional development days

³⁶ In a personal meeting with the Additional Director for Assessment and Evaluation at the DCTE, sets of decks shared with me demonstrated marginal improvements amongst teachers in the Settled Districts (non – NMD) of KP in basic concepts of maths, English and science at primary levels. Because these slides have still not been shared, I remain unable to indicate the specific proportion or quantity of change the system has seen in how teachers perform on the sample-based assessment administered by DCTE to collect performance metrics on teacher competence and pedagogic ability.

³⁷ This figure is estimated in the following manner:

Using the 5-16-year-old population projection for 2020/21 obtained through confidential documents internal to Government of KPK reporting, we compare the number of enrolments officially reported across all types of educational institutions in KP (public; private; madaris) at all levels (primary to higher secondary) and count the difference as the number of student that are currently unaccounted for through official reporting lines, hence the assumption that they are out-of-school.

We further estimate that the difference calculated (3.8 million) is still an underreported number of actual OOSC aged 5-16 because not all students currently enrolled in KP and counted in the official survey will fall into this age group. Students may be overage for the grades in which they are enrolled because of missed years of schooling at an earlier point in life, for instance, so that the total enrolment reported actually includes 16years+ children as well.

We compare our estimation against the percentage of OOSC reported through media outlets using internal government documentation and find a reasonable overlap in the suggested amount of OOSC for KP (Dawn, 2021).

2. Induction Programme Participation Rate (face-to-face): this is also an attendance metric pertinent to the Induction Programme through which all new teachers must pass
3. Induction Programme Monthly Assessment Result: the only learning metric of teachers based on modules on their tablet, but applies only to newly recruited teachers
4. Induction Programme Completion Rate: assumed to be a learning metric, but indirect because does not accurately demonstrate learning or performance quality: it is contingent on tablet modular completion without oversight of mechanism through which such completion may be accomplished by newly inducted teachers

In the official language through which district performance is reported, the scorecard captures this quality index as 'effective teachers', not effective *teaching*. Instead of indicating a process through which learning outcomes can be affected by relevant actors (teachers), the official narrative remains structured around descriptions of the actors themselves. Additionally, these descriptions are not well aligned with teacher performance.

Two of the four indicators rely on an outdated approach, in which teacher presence (even if in a professional development cycle) is considered a valid proxy for teacher performance. The problematic assumption here is that being in a classroom or in attendance of training will lead to effective teaching or learning (Ehrenberg et al., 1989). This approach to the construction of the state's most regular index on teacher performance overlooks a key aspect to real-life circumstances of KP's public schools: teacher effort may just not be enough to overcome the systemic constraints within which schools have to operate or children have to learn. As Das et al. (2007) note, '...in a poor learning environment, teacher inputs add little at the margin' (p 821).

But is teacher compliance embodied by just these indicators? No, and therein lies the rub. In order to meet several other reported indicators of school performance, district-level actors inevitably rely on teachers to deliver *even if such actions are not directly related to the teacher's role in educational service provision*. So although other indicators reported as part of a district's performance are not rooted in teaching, the actions that can help improve or sustain such metrics invariably involve teacher compliance for activities that take away time from the classroom.

Case 1: Teacher performance during Covid-19

A good example of how this kind of tension manifests can be drawn from a new indicator that was incorporated into traditional scorecards with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. On both the access and quality versions of the District Scorecard, indicators were introduced to determine how well a district was following provincially-issued policies on Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (Figures 2 and 3).



Quality Scorecard indicators

Outcome, output and Process level indicators that lead to improvement in student learning



| | Quality Indicators | Frequency | Source | Weight |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Student Learning Outcome | LitNum Assessment Result | Monthly | EMA | 10 |
| | Grade 5 Assessment Result | Annual | BISE | 8 |
| | Grade 8 Assessment Result | Annual | BISE | 8 |
| Effective Teachers | CPD Participation Rate (PDDs) | Monthly | PITE | 12 |
| | IP Participation Rate (F2F) | Monthly | PITE | 10 |
| | IP Monthly Assessment Result | Monthly | PITE | 8 |
| | IP Tablet Based Completion Rate | Monthly | PITE | 5 |
| Environment and Practices | SQMI/SL Visits Conducted | Monthly | SQMI/SL MIS | 7 |
| | Satisfaction Level of Citizen Portal | Monthly | EMIS Cell | 5 |
| Covid-19 Response | Percentage of Schools with all Worksheets Available | Monthly | EMA | 8 |
| | Percentage of Schools with Revised/Accelerated Academic Calendar Available | Monthly | EMA | 8 |
| | Percentage of Schools that Conducted school based Diagnostic Assessment | Monthly | EMA | 8 |

Figure 2: District Performance Scorecard (Quality Indicators)
Source: KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department



Access Scorecard indicators

School and District level factors/activities that motivate children to come to schools



| | Access Indicators | Frequency | Source | DPS |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----|
| School Leadership | Student Attendance | Monthly | EMA | 25 |
| | Teachers' Attendance | Monthly | EMA | 15 |
| | Non-Functional Schools | Monthly | EMA | 7 |
| | Percentage of Functional Facilities | Monthly | EMA | 7 |
| | Non-Teaching Staff Attendance Rate | Monthly | EMA | 4 |
| | PTC Meetings Conducted | Monthly | EMA | 4 |
| District Governance and Management | Percentage of cases completed on OAMS | Monthly | OAMS | 4 |
| | Admin Visits Conducted against Target | Monthly | EMA | 3 |
| | Percentage of schools updating monthly attendance in GSP MIS | Monthly | GSP MIS | 3 |
| | Provincial ADP utilized against released | Monthly | PIFRA | 2 |
| | Non-Salary Budget utilized against released | Monthly | PIFRA | 3 |
| Covid-19 Response | Percentage of schools with handwashing points having water and soap available | Monthly | EMA | 4 |
| | Percentage of schools with COVID awareness posters displayed | Monthly | EMA | 7 |
| | Percentage of Teachers & Non-teaching staff wearing facemask | Monthly | EMA | 5 |
| | Percentage of students wearing facemask | Monthly | EMA | 4 |

Figure 3: District Performance Scorecard (Access Indicators)
Source: KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department

From the figures above, it can be observed that even though the state (with the help of its Technical Assistance team) classifies these indicators as indications of either access or quality and further divides the latter into measures of outputs, outcomes or process, indicators do not fall neatly into these categories.

Consider those being used to measure the effectiveness (on both access and quality fronts) of KP's Covid-19 response in the education sector. Measuring the number of

schools with all Covid-19 adjusted curriculum worksheets during Pakistan's first wave of the pandemic was no guarantee that these sheets were put into use, that all students were able to use them properly or complete their work at home effectively or that teachers were able to coordinate well between learning gaps identified through diagnostic assessment and material emphasised through the worksheets.

But quality indicators cannot be read alone. Under the same category in access, one of the ways the system checked SOP compliance was to report the proportion of students and teachers wearing masks or schools with established handwashing points inclusive of water *and* soap. In reality, with a majority of government primary schools staffed with 1-2 teachers, SOP compliance amongst young children started to consume much of teachers' time at school:

These days, we spend most of our time ensuring the children are using sanitisers etc and complying with the SOPs. When are we supposed to teach them? (Primary School Teachers, District Haripur)

It is just too much work, these worksheets have to be followed, then we are constantly asking the children to keep their masks on – they are little children, they don't understand, they don't even listen, we just spend most of the time doing this...they don't even understand why they have to clean their hands so much...now how do I stop this little girl from putting her hands in her mouth after she is touching everything in this classroom...and we have to finish the adjusted course as well – well, the students have forgotten so much, we are just revising basic things with them these days...(Primary School Teachers training cluster, District Swabi)

Curating an effective Covid-19 educational response also featured significantly in trainings throughout 2020/21, whether amongst Master Trainers in Peshawar at the (then) Provincial Institute for Teacher Education or at district or subdistrict trainings. As the fieldnotes below reflect, a disruption like Covid-19 introduced significant stress points into all education systems around the world, but within KP's particular socio-cultural and economically constrained environment, the effects seem to have compounded. An interplay of compliance to infrastructural *and* teaching expectations simultaneously complicated the work of teaching, and through this, the ways in which teachers navigated the meaning of their teaching duties, and location of the teacher Self in this process:

...a middle-aged teacher in this training session attempts to discuss the Covid-19 SOPs that are the current topic of discussion as the system prepares to reopen schools across KP. He consistently mixes Pashto with Urdu, and is repeatedly reminded by the Master Trainer to speak in only Urdu. This seems to interrupt the teacher's train of thought several times, until he finally exclaims, 'Even young adults, we think they are sensible, they can understand why they have to observe SOPs, even they won't do it – they are not even doing it during this CPD (he is referring to the younger teachers with whom he has been engaging at PITE), how will we make children do this?'

In response, the Master Trainer calmly and firmly emphasises to the room the importance of caring for children even if they are disregarding SOPs. Persistence is a key theme of the next 4 minutes of this training session throughout which the lead instructor uses terms like 'work together' and 'be patient...you know this is a hard time for everyone' and it ends with the reinforcement of the need for all to observe SOPs.

The Master Trainer does not wear a mask himself. When I discuss his session with him later, his mask does come up in conversation, and he smiles sheepishly whilst saying to me, 'I guess everyone can't be perfect, not even a teacher.'

Case 2: Teacher management of the learning environment

Admittedly, the Covid-19 pandemic was a significant aberration for education systems around the world yielding many types of unconventional policy instructions. But its enactment in the KP case sheds light on an important wider pattern to how systemic compliance adds non-educational duties to the school day. A good way to understand the effects of such compliance mechanisms is by exploring a more structurally inbuilt misalignment between service design and learning - student presence in the classroom. We ask a seemingly simple question: what does the volume of student attendance mean for learning environments and is the current systemic response to it oriented towards good teacher performance in a real classroom?

Primary schools in KP are dominated by the presence of high enrolments per class/grade, and insufficient teacher placements. This is evident from the official student-teacher-ratio (STR) policy of 40:1 notified at the primary level, which is nearly double the recommended STR by international standards if teachers are to help students learn meaningfully and effectively³⁸. But what does a large class size actually mean? Interpreted differently, does a smaller class size actually mean good teaching is taking place or can?

Field observations reveal that teachers are often responsible for far greater numbers of students in a single classroom than the ideal 40. The difficulty of maintaining classroom discipline and delivering content successfully to such a large number of students, many of whom will exhibit different learning needs, is already a challenge. But what teachers all over KP emphasise as even more challenging is the fact that not all students in their classroom are even in the same *grade*. So when, for instance, a school reports an STR close to 100:1³⁹ as is one case from Tehsil

³⁸ In a regional comparison of STRs for South Asia using World Bank data, Pakistan still has one of the highest STRs (44), second only to Afghanistan (49). In contrast, between the late 1990s and 2019, neighbours like India, Bangladesh and Iran have all significantly reduced the number of students reported in charge of a single teacher (33, 30 and 29, respectively). Importantly, neighbour India has a 5x larger population of school-aged children than that of Pakistan's (386.4 mn compared to Pakistan's 74.25 mn).

³⁹ We abstain from referring to the STR in firm and fixed terms because children invariably enrol and drop out depending on their household circumstances and parents' fluctuation perceptions about the

Bahrain, District Swat where a school is built into the ledge of a landslide zone, it means:

- There are actually only 2 PSTs (Grade 12, each) in the school for 200 children, although there are at least 4 officially sanctioned posts for regular teachers and 1 post for a Head Teacher
- There is no Head Teacher in the school, which is why one of the PSTs has assumed an additional charge of school leadership alongside her instructional duties
- Consequently, both teachers have distributed all the female students between themselves so that they take three grades each. One teaches KG-2 and the other teaches 3-5. The roughly 100 students each one is responsible for does not constitute one grade; it is in fact an environment in which at least 2 grades are sat in a single physical classroom, and 1 teacher is responsible for instruction, assessment, classroom culture and socio-emotional management of all the students (3 different grade levels) in her charge.

The phenomenon described above is known as multi-grade teaching (MGT), a reality so prevalent in KP public education at primary that the provincial teacher education directorate (DPD) officially includes MGT instructional strategy in continuous professional development coursework for primary school teachers. This decision represents both a recognition of, and interest in, the complicated classroom environment within which KP teachers must deliver, especially at the primary level, as is evident from the graph below (Multigrade 1 = multi-grade schools with 1 teacher).

utility of their child's primary school education. See section on how teachers manage parents and community members for a better understanding of the tensions between policy positioning of teachers and socio-cultural perceptions or narrations of the teaching self.

Multigrade School Category

Distribution and Comparison by Region in Percentage

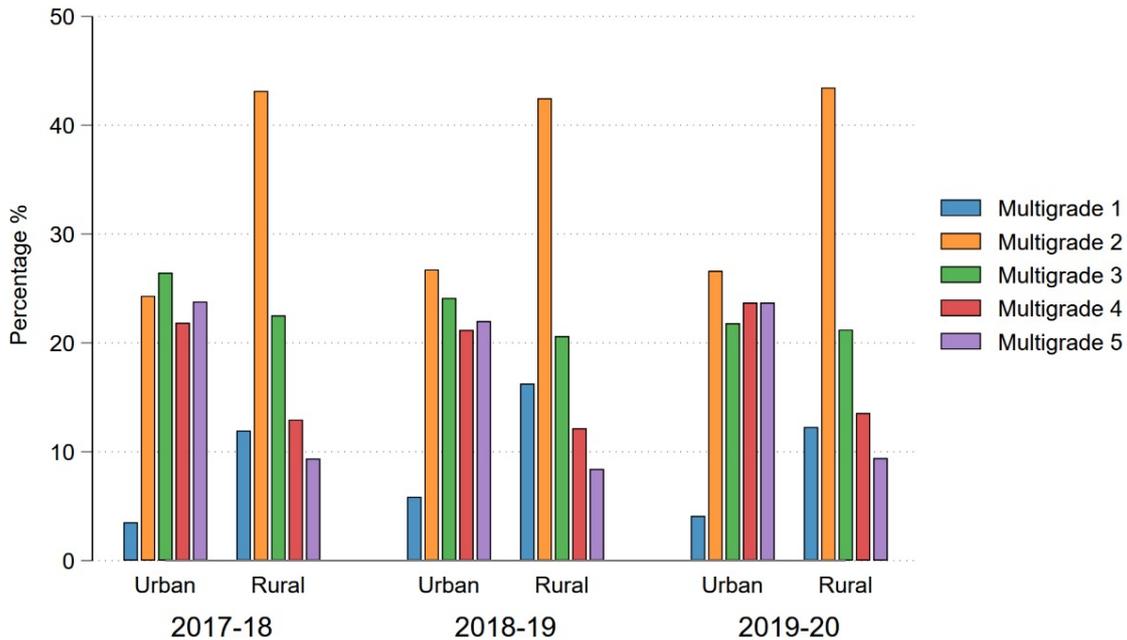


Figure 4: Distribution of multi-grade schools, by number of teachers and geography
Source: KP Annual School Census data 2017/20

However, the quality of master trainer instruction around MGT does not sufficiently enable in-service teachers to successfully manage teaching in such a diverse and distractive environment. Additionally, KP's flagship induction programme does not prepare its newly inducted teachers for the realities of teaching in such strenuous environments. The excerpt from fieldnotes below is an attempt to let the field speak for itself on some of these matters:

At a sub-district training in Haripur, the lead trainer introduces the multi-grade teaching section of the training manual by asking trainee participants their opinions and experiences about MGT. The answers range from difficulty in managing such a variety of student needs to even a shortage of physical space within which to seat multiple grades of students. Most of the responses focus on a teacher's inability to complete the prescribed curriculum on time or in a meaningful manner because there is typically noise and distraction in the classroom. A few mention parents leaving younger children with their siblings at school.

The lead trainer then asks participants to revise the components mentioned in the manual, but no discussion on actual pedagogic strategies follows. The session moves on to the next topic after about 27 minutes. This repeats many times throughout the session, sometimes with the lead trainer also instructing, '*aapnai na idhar hatna hai na udhar, bas isi pai chalna hai* (you must not stray left nor right; you must follow this (designated manual)'. When I ask her later about this comment, she explains this as an effort by ESED to 'standardise'

training processes across the province to ‘remove differences in teacher quality’. She simultaneously admits that the reality of teachers’ classrooms *will* in fact require them to adapt whatever training they receive in many different ways otherwise ‘they will not get through their syllabus at all.’

When I speak with newly recruited teachers (1-2 years into service) at their schools in Haripur outside of trainings, they show me the courtyard within which one of them teaches 2 classes (there aren’t enough classrooms to fit all students and not all sanctioned posts are filled). I ask him to explain how he manages across different teaching levels and after thinking about it for a moment, replies, ‘I guess I just do whatever I can for that day....I don’t think I’ll finish the complete syllabus and also schools were closed for Corona so we are just trying to teach them the basics and (pause) *dekhtai hain kya kar saktai hain* (let’s see what we can do).’

Many months later, I compare this response with that of a different male primary school teacher in Chitral, who explains his strategy for multi-grade teaching as, ‘I know we have lesson plans. They teach us this idea in the induction and even afterwards during PD days, but how I make lesson plans is that I make them in my mind....(when I ask how many, and why he does this) well, um, I mean I don’t really have time to make them all on paper because I have to teach 4 classes every subject so that’s like at least 30 lesson plans every day.

(Fieldnotes, Volume 1: Winter 2020 and Volume 3: Summer 2021)

The effort to conduct MGT in the classroom has recently been incorporated into a classroom observation tool that is ideally meant to be used by the lowest tier of district education management (Assistant District Education Officers -ADEOs). The use of an observation tool is an official part of a mentorship narrative slowly taking root in KP’s education sector, and the inclusion of an MGT component from 2021 is an important recognition by the system of some of the realities within which KP’s teachers must perform.

But the effective practice of MGT – much like other components of the same instrument - is contingent on an important prior. Teachers must have enough space, resource material, and *time* to delivery effectively in the space of a 40-minute period. From the field data shared above, this is clearly not the case in most of KP’s public schools, especially in rural areas.

Equally importantly, ADEOs must themselves be able to participate in such types of nuanced and learning-oriented behaviours. On average, though, an ADEO is responsible for field visits to 35-45 schools a month. The visits include attending to both infrastructural and quality indicators, which amount to a checklist of over 20 indicators. Additionally, ADEOs are constrained by transportation issues, accessibility concerns due to KP’s topographical considerations, as well as the peculiar circumstances of the schools that are visited.

An expanded scope of 'duty'

As agents of service in the delivery chain of public education, teachers are officially expected to perform an established set of duties towards the running of their schools and learning of their students. At the same time, acts of 'care' by teachers represent agentic expressions of going above and beyond the call of official duty (O'Connor, 2008). As the excerpt below helps explain, rural schools and their communities do not maintain environments conducive to learning, teaching or monitoring quality of learning. Yet teachers perform a variety of unofficial and informal tasks to comply with their state-mandated duty, most of which do not happen in accordance with the neatly developed rubrics of official evaluation instruments like the Classroom Observation Tool.

Many of the observational categories in the instrument are operationalised from the Teacher Competency Framework developed by the Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education on the basis of Pakistan's National Professional Teaching Standards. A significant exercise in itself – particularly as KP is the only federating unit in Pakistan to have made this extensive an effort towards teacher development – the execution of this process nevertheless remains at odds with the ideals of this policy instrument.

Head Teacher: Things are such that we had to argue with our district office for permission to use the PTC funds to provide some pencils, notebooks – things like that – to the students. And we had to use those funds for sanitiser or masks as well. Now, look at these children – you have been inside the classrooms this morning – these are impoverished families (*ghareeb hain gharwalay inkai*) – they can't afford things like a uniform so what we do is we meet some expense from the school fund, and some we put in from our own pocket. We even tell students – do you see some of these girls in that room (she points towards the far end of the schoolyard) - that's why they aren't wearing a uniform, we said just come, it doesn't matter, just come in whatever clothes you have.

Soufia: So (long pause) this is against the rules? Shall I not write this down?

Head Teacher: No, you can write it. *Balkai zaroor likhain. Hum toh kar hee rahai hain apnai traf sai. Unko bhi toh samajh aye kin haalat mai hum sai kitna kaam liya jaata hai aur bachon ko ghar sai bhi laatai hain waldain ko samjha samjha kai aur wasail na honai kai bawajood dekhain meri teachers kitni mehnti hain aur phir tankhwa bhi kaisee ke mujhe toh ab jaa ke scale aur tankhwa achi mili hai itnai saalon ke baad.* (In fact, do write this down. We are doing this (ie. our work) at our end. They (government or decision-makers) should also understand the circumstances under which we are made to work – and we have to reason quite a bit with parents to convince them to send their children with us to school – and despite not having enough resources, look at how hardworking my teachers are - and then look at the kind of salary – I have only just gotten a good scale and salary after so long (because she has finally reached the post of Head Teacher).)

Soufia: Why did you have to argue about the funds? What are they for?

Head Teacher: These are mostly for the building or furniture, like you could repair things with them. But they were not sanctioned for these other things that we actually needed so we needed to get permission. But you know in our area, we are more familiar with the district officers so maybe we got permission a little more quickly even though it was hard. I have met some teachers from (she names a different Tehsil with which she interacts through training sessions and social reasons) and they were having a very hard time. We just spend our time in these kinds of issues.

Soufia: How are you more familiar with the officers?

Head Teacher: I take good care of her when she comes (laughs). Of course we offer tea and biscuits – *yeh toh hamara culture hai* (this is part of our culture) – but we chat and she also knows the difficulties we are managing. Well, she used to be a teacher herself so she is sympathetic to our circumstances.

Issues ranging from as basic as the provision of stationery to more complex questions of parental interest in a child's education or relationship management with district education managers to flex rules governing service delivery are all part of the everyday for a public schoolteacher. In other cases, too, teachers report behaviours that actively bend system rules to cater to the particular circumstances or norms within which they make sense of their teaching responsibilities.

In districts like Swat, which has a recent history of combatting socially conservative narratives, male primary teachers and their head teachers make an additional effort: household heads (men) are often in other cities where they are employed, and the mothers left in their stead are not comfortable engaging with male teachers so conversations have to be curated that much more carefully. As the teachers explain to me, 'Madam, *aap ko pata hi hai ab Pashtun culture ka* (you already know about (the particulars) of Pashtun culture)⁴⁰.'

In Larama, at the outskirts of Peshawar, home to a significant Afghani refugee population belonging to some of Pakistan's most economically vulnerable segments, parents often agree to enrol their girl children in school *only* if younger siblings are also allowed to be deposited with them:

There are 2 PSTs and 1 HT running the main girls' primary school for this catchment area. The school has only 2 functional classrooms. In the small courtyard of the school, from where I enter, sits 1 PST surrounded by an assortment of girls of different sizes. I am introduced, and told these are students of KG and Classes 1 and 2. When I ask about the 4 toddlers sat next to the teacher, to whom she turns lovingly to settle down from time to time,

⁴⁰ In fact, what they are referring to is not a purely Pashtun element to social/civic behaviour. Although concepts like *nang* (honour) and *jirga* (public discourse through spaces constituted by men) do mediate the interaction of genders in Pashtun social structure, professional engagement of teacher with parent is more likely complicated by the district's recent transition out of a wave of grave conservatism in the early 2000s.

away from the older girls, and the infant in her arms who is a constant presence as she walks around checking on the girls' (shared) notebooks, I am told these are siblings who are not old enough to be enrolled here.

The school operates as an unofficial day care for parents in order to convince them to send their daughters here regularly. Despite this, the Head Teacher informs me that whoever comes from an Internally Displaced Family⁴¹ is likely to be in and out of school as families return to their original villages in Pakistan's former tribal areas to tend to lands or for the men to join *jirga* (cultural village councils) proceedings. This starts to explain why there are 14-year-old girls sitting at the back of multi-graded Classes 3 and 4, who are unable to read even a page from a Class 3 book.

When I ask the teachers and Head Teacher what motivates them to make these allowances for so many extra children in the school, they mention the Afghans as 'our guests' and 'our brothers and sisters' whom they 'cannot turn away or leave them in their time of need' according to the values of 'Pashtun culture' and 'what is the job of a teacher if she cannot help the community?'

(Fieldnotes, Volume 2: Spring 2021)

⁴¹ In addition to Afghan refugees, a large number of Pakistani families hailing from the former FATA (now Newly Merged Districts of KP) live in different parts of the country, especially Peshawar and Karachi. They retain ties to their original homelands, and routinely visit them, taking their families along for months at a time during which periods their children will often miss school.

Inference 3

Orienting away from a learning system

Measuring teacher performance

What these field data make evident are two important parameters to being a ‘good’ teacher in KP’s public system:

- the clever balancing act required between non-educational and educational/teaching activities that are regularly performed by school teachers even if not officially mandated;
- motives steeped in values that cut across economic, social and – above all – a cultural (predominantly Pashtun) logic to performance.

In addition to the unconventional efforts teachers may have to make to fulfil their *teaching* responsibilities, non-teaching activities consume a proportion of teacher time. There, too, a personalisation of rules manifests in the strategies through which teachers navigate the everyday field of education service delivery. Although non-teaching activities are officially described as ‘lesson preparation, making teaching and learning resources, marking student work and co-curricular activities’, field data reveal that such activities actually extend far beyond official definitions. Often, they stretch into non-educational realms, taxing teachers into a sentiment of powerlessness echoed by their counterparts in other poorly-managed state education systems (Aiyar, 2015; Hossain et al., 2017).

Senior teachers (10+ years of service), in particular, express such forms of disillusionment with the system. Despite the pedagogic experience they seem to have built up over their years in the system, many of the teachers I meet have not been able to secure a promotion out of primary school. Others have had to wait very long periods of time to receive scale increments in primary teaching. During these long waiting periods, the system seems to have eroded their resolve:

‘...we are not as important as the *thaanadaar* (jailor) even though we are going to give the next generation a better life opportunity...’ (male head teacher)

‘...I feel tired. I have been managing my school with great difficulty. I already had diabetes and now I have been diagnosed with cancer and even when I have to go to Peshawar to Shaukat Khanum, I have to ask a teacher from a nearby school to manage my duties and she doesn’t really know my students or where we are in the syllabus. I have been requesting an additional teacher at my school for 2-2.5 years, but because the enrolment isn’t enough, they don’t create another post. So I feel tired and as though I am not heard.’

The sense of being uninfluential or unimportant in a very large mechanical system provides an important point for reflection. Is a lack of effective performance what prevents such teachers – with their long history of service to the public sector – from attaining promotion? As we discuss further below, promotion through public service

is not fundamentally linked to quality of teaching. To the contrary, the resource constraint that prevents new post-primary school investments from being made in the province also features in the long-term career prospects of teachers recruited 10+ years ago. Without a significant expansion in sanctioned posts beyond primary school, there will just not be a sufficient supply of jobs beyond primary for which PSTs can even plan to compete⁴².

In contrast to the disappointment showcased above, there are alternative framings of teacher identity in the same system:

...our work is of nation-building... (teacher union leadership)

...we are following in the footsteps of *Nabi sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam* (Messenger of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who was the greatest teacher, but society does not understand this importance properly... (primary and middle school teachers)

...professionals who are going to teach your children in a proper way regularly which you would not be able to do all year because you can't even keep up with your children's homework in one month... (principals of high schools, who were once primary school teachers before their promotions)

...equal to men in changing our society by teaching our girls... (female primary school teachers)

I became a teacher because I believe the educational foundation for any child is formed at the primary school level. How can you have a roof without walls? (female primary teacher)

How long such motivation levels will last are indeed shaped by the amount of leverage teachers feel they have – or will eventually have – over the system. Unlike the experiences of much older teachers, newer recruits (3 years or less in service at the time of this study) have witnessed circumstances in which teacher collective behaviour has effectively pressurised the state – such as regularisation protests to convert contractual hires into permanent (long-term) employees of the provincial government. The ability to negotiate permanence in public sector through collective action is an important mechanism that signals to newer teachers the power that rests in their shared voice, once they have identified the relevant means for such expression *and despite the other forms of disempowerment that might simultaneously mark their socio-cultural capital* as public school teachers (Kingdon et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2017).

⁴² Some of the largest investments to middle and high or higher secondary schools have happened only recently. Between 2014 and 2020, although the total percentage increase in number of functioning schools is only 3.3%, the change in number of higher secondary schools is 81%. This is explained by the government's policy of 'upgrading' existing primary or middle schools so that the same registered school is expanded to accommodate students progressing to higher levels. With this evolution of the school, a new wing might be added, and certainly, new teaching posts will be sanctioned for higher classwork. However, the number of teaching positions at primary continue to occupy a large segment of teacher level profiles in KP (51% of all sanctioned positions) with the remaining distributed across middle, high or higher secondary levels. And with 69% of enrolments still in primary schools, teacher demand remains concentrated around this level of school.

Such realisations reinforce the personalisation of existing rules for service delivery. Teachers will make choices every day to get their jobs done *without clear direction from the state*, and based on their own inferences of the field within which they have a set of moves from which to draw. By tapping into a repertoire of religious, cultural, national or moral values, teachers demonstrate subjective interpretations of their job as expressions of agency within the relatively inflexible structures of the educating state. As a group of young male teachers (aged 24-29) reflect:

We are innovators in our school. Our Head Teacher listened to us, and we decided we should not have one teacher for each grade and taking all the classes. We should allow every one of us (sic) to teach all classes in our specialised subject. This is our strength, and we can teach the students better this way. But in PD day, what do they tell us? Stories. Nothing is from real life. We know what we need to do ultimately because we are with these boys (they mean students) all the time. We also have university degrees. It is not like we don't know anything. In PD day, everything is just repeating like all the schools have the same problems. We need practical and real solutions.

The repeated reference to 'real' in the excerpt above is telling as is the juxtaposition of teachers' narrations of their experience during professional development training days with their own demonstrations of agency ('innovators'). By referring to an actual problem and a practical solution with which they all manage to address their students' needs, the teachers at this peri-urban school, which caters to a large low-income community stress an adaptive problem-solving approach. The friction in the system remains that these demonstrations of creative and novel abilities as teachers are neither instructed nor recorded by the state as part of teacher performance.

To the contrary, as excerpts from official documents below show, a good teacher is one who accumulates *quantity* over quality of time in service. Irrespective of the efforts a teacher has made once into the system, he/she will inevitably be evaluated against an acontextual bureaucratic clock: one that only starts when a regular appointment is made (as opposed to the ad hoc contracts on which new recruits are currently hired); and one that is premised on calendar years, not quality of achievement therein.

Many of these behavioural elements are not effectively, or even adequately, captured by official accountability measures of the state. A good example comes from the indicators used to construct the District Performance Scorecard (discussed through the Covid-19 indicator case above). Another evaluation rubric emerges in the form of the Performance Evaluation Review for teachers or the Civil Service Rules under which career progression is defined:

Table 5: Career progression indicators mapped from laws/rules related to civil service officers

| Legal document | Ruling |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The KP ⁴³ Civil Service Act, 1973 | Section 8, Clause 4: ‘Seniority in a post, service or cadre to which a civil servant is promoted shall take effect from the date of regular appointment to that post’ (the beginning of a narrative built around an equation of experience with length of time in service) |
| | Section 9, Clause 2 (b): ‘...promotion shall be made as may be prescribed...on the basis of seniority-cum-fitness’ |
| The KP Civil Servants (Appointment, Promotion and Transfer) Rules, 1989 | Section 17, Clause 1 (a): ‘...persons selected for appointment to post in an earlier selection shall rank senior to the persons selected in a later selection... ’ |
| | Section 17, Clause 2: ‘...if two dates are the same, the person appointed otherwise shall rank senior to the person appointed by initial recruitment.’ (the implication here being that the person appointed otherwise has been in the system longer than the one who entered on the same date of appointment through initial recruitment) |
| NWFP Civil Servants Promotion Policy 2009 | Section 1, sub-section (a): ‘No proposal for promotion shall be entertained unless the condition of the prescribed length of service is fulfilled.’ (with the length in service also defined within the same policy for various pay scales) |
| Performance Evaluation Review (a confidential report of technical civil service staff) | Particular Remarks on: 1. Judgement and sense of proportion 2. Initiative and drive 3. Technical Knowledge and application 4. Supervision and control over students 5. Integrity |

⁴³ Originally, NWFP.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>6. Co-operation with Staff 7. Relation with public 8. Suitability for promotion 9. Knowledge of languages</p> <p>(some of these categories represent subjective metrics that are devoid of any guidance notes to the reviewer; in the original form, only a single line is provided on which the evaluator writes an answer; both these aspects make it difficult to relate these evaluation metrics to the real-life work of teachers or challenges and opportunities with which they engage)</p> |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The exclusion of public teachers' non-teaching/non-educational/innovative activities from official accounts of teacher performance offers an important explanation for why KP's public education system does not cohere around effective learning. As bureaucrats, teachers *can* be asked by the provincial government to perform specific tasks that are beyond the immediate terms of their contracts or teaching duties. These may be couched in the language of 'other responsibilities', as is the case in KP primary teacher job descriptions such as, '...take part in activities that promote enrolment, attendance and community participation in education....(or) (a)ny other duty assigned by the Head Teacher.' But what happens in real life?

Teacher 3: We've been through the system ourselves so we know what the challenges are. I try to prepare my children as best as I can even though we cannot give them as much attention as we should because we are always being asked to do other things like send data or fill out some form or the other...

Teacher 2: We're asked to send personal details or a bank account again and again. Why can't the office keep a record of them?

Teacher 1: Sometimes the district office even wants us to get some kind of work done from the *chowkidar* (guard) and he doesn't listen to us. How can I, a woman, get work done from a man?

Teacher 2: A man and woman are not equal.

Soufia: But...do you think that's an opinion based on your experience? You're all government officers, right? And there are both men and women in the government.

Teacher 1: No, they (the guards) don't respond to us like we respond to our seniors. You can't tell the men to do so and so – our culture is not like this.

The effects of such asks on teacher time is one, however, that the state's own metrics still do not recognise or effectively capture. Time *is* the most important resource available to teachers in an already input-constrained environment⁴⁴. Every additional task that does not directly improve the condition of a student or the teacher's own professional development inevitably requires a trade off against what might ideally be the most important performance outcome of the teacher bureaucrat: student learning (Rasul, Rogger and Williams, 2018).

But if the state's own accountability and rewarding mechanisms do *not* hold learning – whether demonstrated through teacher's performance in a classroom setting or student outcomes – as key mediators of career progression, the amount of time allocated to ensuring student learning loses value. In such a situation, none of KP's conventional accountability metrics actually represent an opportunity to distinguish one's own teacher self from or above others. By relying on *time in service* as opposed to *time on teaching*, and that too, the latter in a meaningful manner, the state's evaluation narrative does not align or incentivise teacher performance with improved student learning. The presence of meaningless competition (just spending enough years in schools) is as poor a policy choice as the absence of competition (everyone gets a promotion) altogether (Khan, Khwaja & Olken, 2019): neither orients teaching in an education system towards improved learning.

Teacher policies remain incoherent around learning

It is unsurprising, then, that primary school is the educational site from where most teachers seek to exit, and the one in which the greatest amounts of dissatisfaction starts to accrue. As laid out in this chapter, the friction between the state's definition of meritorious performance and its everyday embodiment by public school teachers decelerates attempts to institutionalise learning reforms. Teachers will manage as they must, and as soon as an opportunity presents itself, will seek to escape the low-value trap of primary schooling. What is officially presented by the state as a learning-oriented strategy becomes, through its various adaptations by teachers, a contested site for learning improvements across KP's public schools.

Although far more academically qualified teachers now enter primary schools in KP (about 40% hold an MSc or higher degree), the original intention through the 2014 policy of the provincial government to steep the education system in merit does not follow through. If the ambition of ESED was to minimise, and possibly eliminate, political intervention into public sector teaching at point of entry into the system, this was met largely through reliance on a standardised test (Habib, 2015). Until the 2020 challenge to the credibility of this standardised test, its mandatory submission as part of the application process was seen as an effective mechanism through which to slowly eliminate political influence from district-level recruitment of teachers. Now that the NTS, too, has lost ground as an effective recruitment tool⁴⁵, ESED's teacher policy is once again caught in a bind.

⁴⁴ One that does not have sufficient financial outlay to ensure equitable and sufficient provision of material inputs to the learning process, whether as books, stationery, uniforms, rooms, well-trained teachers, support staff and etc.

⁴⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1606357>

Much of what the Department struggles with in its attempt to get the teacher quality approach right is its framing of the idea of merit. Narrowly interpreted as a set of marks based on a third-party general test of aptitude, ESED's explanation is not rooted in the language of pedagogic practice or excellence. By equating the idea of political influence on merit with the adverse effects of *electoral* interference at point of recruitment, the Education Department overlooks politics of power that mediate teacher performance even after their entry into the sector. It assumes a singular entrance filter can ward off all contests of power or authority further down the teacher career path.

The intersecting political and bureaucratic domains of contestation within which these struggles for importance and value play out are not eliminated; their influence on teacher practice just manifests at a different point in time. In this sense, the deprofessionalisation of the public school teacher is a rudimentary solution to the demanding ask of attracting the right amounts of relevant candidates towards public sector teaching *careers*, not *posts*. Although lower barriers to entry have made it easy to come into teaching, they have not effectively signalled to candidates or new entrants the realities of technical requirements needed to be a teacher in a real school in KP.

The population of eligible applicants and the available *pool* of individuals available for teaching may have increased, but so have competing incentives that can drive these teachers' exits (especially PSTs) from this low-value proposition within government service as soon as the opportunity arises. Teachers will evaluate and seek to bend existing rules using whatever socio-cultural capital they have collected at a point in time in order to navigate movement into better parts of the public system (e.g. higher rank or better sector). Since the concept of merit is not intellectually or educationally expanded through this field of bureaucratic service, the notion of 'school-based' merit from the 2014 reform effort is unlikely to translate into improved and meaningful learning outcomes.

To the contrary, the reform effort we have unpacked throughout this work only *delays* the contests that continue to orient the education system away from learning, and towards conservation of existing levels of influence over the system (ie. preservation of the status quo). This may happen through an erosion of both motivation and trust as has been narrated through teacher voices above. Or it may encourage teacher exits from the low-value trap of primary schooling altogether. The figures below attempt to map these strategy options.

Teacher Career Journey

To build the Schiefelbein & McGinn (2017) stakeholder analysis model as applicable to our study, we first map teacher journey options through KP's Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED).

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-Entry | <p>Supply space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University degree – professional (non-teaching) e.g. MBBS (medicine); BEngg • University degree – general or specialised (non-teaching) e.g. BS (2-year or 4-year); BA; MSc; MPhil; PhD • University degree + teaching qualification ('professional' in ESED language) e.g. BEd; MEd; ADE <p>Other job options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional (medicine; engineering; law etc.) • Other government positions • Private sector employment (most limited in KP context due to lack of economic depth) |
| Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to 2014 policy, strict contractual terms of 1-year appointment without allowance for transfer (movement) out of designated school (Union Council) in home domicile • Mandatory externally-administered test has to be cleared • Must have a Bachelors degree + undergo 9-month induction training (before 2018, this was 6 months long and served as a pilot) |

Figure 5: Mapping the eligible population of teaching candidates in KP

Teacher Career Journey

To build the Schiefelbein & McGinn (2017) stakeholder analysis model as applicable to our study, we first map teacher journey options through KP's Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED).

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Year 1 | <p>Appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'School-based': all districts are checked by ESED for existing PST vacancies against sanctioned teaching posts, and qualified candidates posted to these vacancies using home district domicile in BPS 12 (government scale) • Most fresh hires are sent to rural schools, either as the first teacher there or to join a 1-teacher school in improving student-to-teacher ratios • PSTs may inevitably therefore end up acting as Head Teachers in rural areas, where an HT does not already hold post <p>Trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction programme of 9 months (since 2018) with both content knowledge and pedagogic training • Tablet technology is provided with in-built self-learning videos on both components (knowledge + teaching) • Those without a professional teaching certification/degree are likely to enrol in an education-related course part-time to qualify for promotion e.g. ADE; MEd • Teachers may also enrol in a part-time degree in a subject that will help them apply to a Subject Specialist or Secondary School Teacher (specialised subject) post |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 6: Examining options and obstacles to newly inducted teachers in KP

Teacher Career Journey

To build the Schiefelbein & McGinn (2017) stakeholder analysis model as applicable to our study, we first map teacher journey options through KP's Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED).

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Years 2-3 | <p>Teaching Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain a PST at BPS 12 • Be promoted to Senior PST at BPS 14 (provided vacancy exists) • Be promoted to Primary School Head Teacher (PSHT) at BPS 15 (provided vacancy exists at school otherwise will have to await transfer to another vacancy) <p>Trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD programme with monthly Professional Development days that are based on manuals developed using technical feedback on teacher weaknesses from DCTE's sample-based assessments <p>Exit Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave primary for middle/secondary school • Leave teaching for mid-tier managerial options or administrative posts in attached departments (DPD; DCTE; Directorate for Schools) • Leave ESED for a similar post in a different Department with better pay/incentives • Leave government service, which would require significantly competitive incentive structure in the private sector and is least likely |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 7: Credible exit options start to emerge for teachers

Teacher Career Journey

To build the Schiefelbein & McGinn (2017) stakeholder analysis model as applicable to our study, we first map teacher journey options through KP's Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED).

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Years n = 3+ | <p>Teaching Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very similar to Years 2-3 • Added option to reappear through Public Service Commission exam for BPS 17 teaching posts in post-primary schools (giving up years of service in Primary then) <p>Trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD programme with monthly Professional Development (PD) days • Become Master Trainers to PSTs on the latter's PD days <p>Management Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join School Management Cadre as ASDEO (BPS 16) or DDEO (BPS 17) and progress upwards towards District Education head <p>Exit Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave primary for post-primary school teaching or as Instructor/Subject Specialist in attached department such as DPD or RITE • Leave teaching for mid-tier managerial options or administrative posts in School Management Cadre • Leave ESED for a similar post in a different Department with better pay/incentives • Leave government service, which would require significantly competitive incentive structure in the private sector and is least likely |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 8: Further examination of strong and likely incentives to exit primary teaching

Accumulating the ‘right’ socio-cultural capital

The pathway options above are a generalised depiction of the many ways in which teachers attempt to capitalise on the socio-cultural capital they have accumulated during their time in service. As is apparent from a comparison between Figures 2, 3 and then 4, the passage of time is a means to greater opportunity *for those who are cognisant of such possibilities*. From the teacher voices above, we gain insight to the experiences of various types of teachers – those who have spent their entire careers in primary schools, and those who are young and qualified enough to immediately weigh up their transitional possibilities. To successfully navigate this bureaucratic field of pedagogic service, public school teachers will therefore draw on whatever social and cultural capital is available or accessible to generate optimal solutions for themselves.

Although the teachers who use these capital for their individually transacted journeys will perceive these experiences as novel (to themselves), there are important consequences of their choices on the wider public education system. Over the scale of 144,000+ teachers and a generation (with old and post-2014 reform hires) they can help reproduce and sustain a considerably weakened narrative about what it means to be a ‘good’ teacher.

So although teaching is recognised by KP civil service legislations and rulings as a ‘technical’ (professional or with a specific skillset) cadre, the enactment of teacher policies derived from such laws suggests otherwise: teaching is easy and anyone can teach so once into the system, one can learn on the job, and if the circumstances aren’t conducive to personalised assessments of growth, one can always make the right move to find a different place in government service from where to carry on with this career path. Professional capital built up in the education sector (initially as teachers, but also as school managers) is therefore eroded by the same system responsible for its development and institutionalisation.

This process of devaluation implies that *technical* socio-cultural capital teachers build up from induction into KP ESED and early years of service loses value with time if the system does not align in other ways towards the same end game: sustained improvements to student learning through meaningful teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Bawane, 2019; Moyer & Sperandio, 2019). In contrast, an understanding of the correct networks to tap into and avenues for movement across government takes precedence because of its relevance in determining the most strategic moves for progression:

I joined the government in (mid-2000s)⁴⁶ in Grade 11 in (non-education department)⁴⁷ and after about 5 years, I was at Grade 16 and we were hearing no more slots were available in the next position for a long time. So when I saw openings here in ESED, I applied here as a Secondary School Teacher (Grade 16), but there were chances for promotion because I came through the Public Service Commission so you know the pool of jobs is bigger

⁴⁶ Deliberately generalised to protect participant identity

⁴⁷ Deliberately generalised to protect participant identity

from that route. In 2018, I eventually joined (attached department of ESED)⁴⁸ because there was a chance in this role to (long pause) well, I could meet donors and get trainings and grow, but now this role is just a lot of clerical work because we don't have enough staff here to help us with logistics etc.

So I have to do all this work and it doesn't seem there will be a Grade 17 position here for a long time so now I am thinking about either going back to teaching as a Subject Specialist at High School level or become a college lecturer (long pause) but it's just that *meri qismat bohat kharab hai* (I'm just so unlucky) because when I was at my old department, we only had about 65 positions and after I left, more and more positions were eventually created and my batchmates all got promoted and now they have access to cars, foreign trips, protocol and (pause) me? I just go from room to room, from classroom to staffroom to home (long pause) yeah, so I don't know where to go right now, but I guess I am not very happy in ESED anymore.

(Interview Excerpt, Summer 2021)

Whether by removing pedagogic capacity as an entrant filter; trivialising the everyday classroom reality within which teachers must navigate many competing demands on their time and energies; or by compelling teachers to seek within individualised or socialised narratives a meaning for 'good' teaching to fill the gaps present in the state's own conceptualisation of the same, the rules of the game to survive in public teaching are being learned, grasped and even made up by teachers along their career paths. With informality very much prevalent in the current bureaucratic structure of KP's education system, performance here unfolds very differently to that of traditional Weberian models for which identifying the correct 'rules' is considered an effective solution (Hickey & Hossain, 2019).

A misaligned accountability regime that evaluates teachers at recruitment and in service for very different reasons to what pedagogic practice actually looks like in KP's public education system ultimately weakens the system's learning foundations (Pritchett, 2013). This lamentation is evident in the position of the only apolitical teacher union in the province. It is captured below through an interview with the president of the All KP Primary Teachers' Association (APTA) – also a serving primary school teacher:

If the foundation is set right, the building above it can be shaped well. In other societies, people who join primary schools are well qualified and enjoy great incentives. Unfortunately, here the primary level is the elementary (basic) level and accordingly primary teachers are (considered) basic teachers. The people who join as teachers are well-qualified but unfortunately, they always look for opportunities outside, like middle school and high school, and are always looking for ways to figure out how to reach a higher scale. Their sole focus becomes figuring out ways to leave primary school, and get a better position.

⁴⁸ Deliberately generalised to protect participant identity

The children we get can neither read, write nor speak properly. Here, we teach them to write, read and speak. We teach them etiquettes (*uthna, bethna*) such that after graduating primary school they are able to manage themselves at middle and high school. We come at 8.30 and remain in school till 1.30, and teach 5-6 hours daily taking responsibility for a whole section and class⁴⁹. Now, the teachers who teach at the higher secondary level take 4-5 periods per week. They are inducted in BPS 17 and promoted up to BPS 20. Look at the amount of work they have to do, maybe even just 3-4 periods per week. In contrast, look at us. Who deserves more privileges, us or the ones taking 4-5 periods per week?

The (other) thing is ad hoc recruitment. When you keep a teacher on contract or an ad hoc basis, the uncertainty would always trouble him and his mind would be engaged with such thoughts. Even though he would be here (classroom) physically, but he would not be able to teach as he should. From day one, I have been against the removal of professional qualification as a prerequisite for teacher induction. See, let it be B. Ed or CT or any other training that a teacher goes through for the sake of becoming a teacher. If a non (teaching)-professional university graduate with a medical, engineering, computer science or any other degree, but without professional qualification in teaching, joins teaching only because it gives him cushion over the age issue, while taking benefits from the system, he is actually planning for higher aims. So in the name of induction...they abolished professional training requirements with the idea that teachers could be trained for three months after induction before going into school. Well, when they came to know that there is a shortage of teachers in the schools, they skipped this and asked the teachers to go straight into schools, and just participate in induction training on their tablets and with one day each month in person, as a solution.

This is how the system is eroding (*kharab ho raha hai*). The new teacher is qualified but is not professional. *He should be a professional; only qualification is not sufficient to be called a teacher.* And then after working 20 years at the primary level, a teacher is promoted to high school based on seniority and qualification. After working for such a long time, he has become a specialist here and now he is gone there.

(italics mine; use of pronoun 'he' original)

The politics of patronage in education

The presence of teacher unions in the public education system would, ideally, serve to protect teacher voice – and even exert pressure on the system to conform to teacher demands (World Bank, 2018). Ironically, this does *not* happen in KP the way it does in many other systems, especially for the APTA quoted above. One reason for this is the union's deliberate and widely publicized position of being apolitical. By attempting to argue on impersonalised grounds of evidence, research, and other educationally-relevant principles, the APTA inevitably cedes space to other agents

⁴⁹ PSTs take 7-8 periods continuously every day, at 40 minutes each. In total, they teach 4-5 hours continuously every day, and in a week will accumulate 35-40 periods (20-25 teaching hours).

and stakeholders whose discourse is more closely aligned with a personalisable logic to educational decision-making.

In contrast, teachers who assemble *just on their own in groups* can generate more impact, whether outside the Peshawar Civil Secretariat or Islamabad. Instead of the assumption that an increase in recruitment of government officials can slowly carve out an inclusive politics from which to develop inclusive educational institutions, the expanded base of workers that now occupy the bureaucratic domain of educational decision-making assert pressure back on the system without necessarily operating as technical collectives. This phenomenon manifests routinely in ESED's annual operations. Contractual hires from 2014, for instance, led a protest in Bani Gala (the residential neighbourhood of the present Prime Minister, and Chairman of the PTI, which led a coalition government in KP at the time) to be 'regularised' or appointed full-time permanent status as government officers. The demands were met by 2017, shortly before the next election cycle.

Contractual hires since 2017 were also in a similar process of regularization through an Act of Assembly in the summer of 2021, which has now been approved. Acts are revered within the structure of the state, from which procedural rules are derived on the basis of which compliant and consistent policies are meant to be designed. The process exists to demonstrate, in theory, that the 'people's' will is vested in the decisions of state machinery, including the expansion of the bureaucracy, through continued regularisation of contractual hires.

This seeming institutionalisation of the people's voice does not actually mean the civic domain *is* gaining leverage. A civic domain of educated citizens would ideally act as a site of contestation from within which debates about learning could nudge the education system towards *learning-oriented* decisions. This would be the civic equivalent of the technically-grounded APTA from within the bureaucratic domain. Instead, the conversion of contractual hires to permanent status is legal and political enactment of administrative or bureaucratic aspiration amongst young job-holders/seekers who can aggregate to push *this* singular agenda enough.

Public education in the Pakistani context therefore presents a fragmentation of bureaucratic practice compliant with the instructions of multiple principals (Williams, 2020). With most of these principals oriented away from educational outcomes for Pakistani children, friction in Pakistani public service arises from the question of whose interests to (pre)serve, with the citizen client least influential in expression of voice.

One of the most intriguing cases that demonstrates the argument built above is that of the Sacked (now Restored) Employees of the Education Department, KP. Federally-appointed political clients of the then Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government joined the teaching cadre of the education department of then NWFP in the early 1990s without demonstration of satisfactory qualifications for their posts. On the abrupt and disruptive arrival of a new Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government by the mid-1990s, a flare in confrontational politics meant a sudden sacking of every client loyal to, and appointed by, the PPP (Amin, 1995). But by then, not only had they built enough legislative alliances in the NWFP Assembly,

they were also in a sizable enough number (7-9000) at all levels of government service to file a collective writ in the Peshawar High Court for violation of fundamental rights.

The sacked employees case is an important demonstration of patron-client relationships that pull so many into public 'service' only to yield no productive outcome in the interest of that same public (Kingdon et al., 2014). Instead, clients add value to their existing repertoire of social and cultural capital, the former in the shape of networks and the latter in the shape of rank in bureaucratic structures. In exchange, they sustain patron narratives, and through this, status quo political arrangements (Javid, 2010). With the disappearance of the political patron (the PPP), client teachers shifted partial expectation for relief from the political to legal domain (through the filing of a petition in a court of law); backup relief was negotiated through social capital in the provincial legislature.

The two-pronged strategy paid off, as a result of which all originally political appointees were asked by the Court *15 years later* to be restored to paid employment within their respective departments (including education). They were also protected through an Act passed in their favour. The older-aged teachers amongst them now receive targeted training through the Regional Institutes for Teacher Education on a *separate teacher training path* because they were never recruited into the system on the basis of any legitimate teaching or content knowledge qualifications. Most of them will retire within the next 5-7 years without having made any significant contribution to the learning outcomes of KP's primary or secondary school students.

The idea that technical performance amongst public sector Weberian-style bureaucracies varies by nature and arrangement of powerful actors is not a new one. Mushtaq Khan frames this argument as an arrangement of the correct incentives that help a system reach stable, competitive decision-making logic within an impersonal set of rules and norms (2010). Mangla (2014) demonstrates through the Indian education case, however, that the everyday (re)making of bureaucratic norms inevitably mediates the extent to which formal rules can actually govern teacher practice. The sacked employees case exemplifies this kind of rule-bending logic to personalised public systems.

If rules are codified expressions of commonly held norms and values through which to manage human interaction (North, 1991), it is important to identify their source to understand their institutionalisation. Rules for hiring and firing of civil servants may de jure have been notified through the bureaucratic domain, but the de facto rules that applied to service delivery recruitment were ultimately those serving the interests of a political elite. In the court, the bureaucracy had to defend an inconsistent approach to rule-making, which aided its defeat in said case. Ultimately, the arbitrariness of process through which political clients had turned into bureaucrats was appealed against *by the very beneficiaries of said arbitrariness* because *this* was the precise rule of the game that would hold merit in a court of law. Allegiance was not to the notion of a shared rule; it was to whatever version of logic would appeal most to the relevant site of a given contest.

The role of teachers throughout their career paths from pre-service preparation to their hiring and effective performance is critical to student learning, but did not feature in an instrumental court decision that affected KP's education system. Justice was inevitably interpreted and awarded through an apparent need to 'institutionalise' *bureaucratic norms*, not through nuanced attention to technical performance (how well the teachers amongst these sacked employees had been able to improve student learning). The missing emphasis on the significance of the education process in an apparent dispensation of justice to teacher-bureaucrats who were, in fact, teacher clients to an elite political patron, is demonstrative of public sector inefficiencies. As Levy and Walton (2013) note, these types of inefficiencies can arise from multistakeholder governance arrangements in elite clientelistic systems – in other words, where power can be transacted by multiple actors using their respective socio-cultural capital, but in the interest of competing social outcomes.

Pakistan has an established history of such relationships, wherein personalised forms of authority and dominance are in fact marketed as institutionalised norms by patrons. Primarily, this happens by populating service delivery chains with clients who manage patron interest(s) in the *language of the people* (Mohmand, 2014). Provision of jobs in the education sector is a classic expression of such clientelism (World Bank, 2003). But it is especially lucrative in a country like Pakistan, where the scale of public responsibility for schooling is dramatically significant. As discussed earlier in this chapter, in a war-torn KP of 2013, access to public sector employment benefits were all the more important because the alternative - private sector employment – was either non-existent or too underdeveloped to absorb large segments of a young population.

The 1990s in the same province presented a very similar dilemma, Pakistan freshly emerging from a previous decade of frontline participation through Peshawar in the Afghan jihad under military rule. With weak democratic culture and poorly developed accountability mechanisms in the country, political competition for entrenched loyalty amongst citizens quickly found opportunity in the education sector (Hasnain, 2008). After all, this was proven to be an effective site for success in political contests: much of Pakistan's jihad narrative was structured into an entire generation of citizens through school curriculum and teachers 'trained' to deliver it (Nayyar & Salim, 2003).

Field observations from my research even today demonstrate such patronage, such as the political appointment of current education department bureaucrats as entry-level teachers during the Awami National Party (ANP) government in then NWFP. In one bureaucrat's case, his displacement from a position in Hazara Division to Peshawar happened during the first PTI tenure when a PTI loyalist and Hazara local was preferred over the ANP appointee.

Frictions between Hazara and Pashtun ethnicities also feature in a longstanding organisational dispute within ESED: whether to turn PITE into an autonomous Directorate, responsible for not just teacher *training*, but also the conceptualisation and design of all teacher-related training content. At the beginning of this project, the issue involves taking certain powers away from the Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education based in Abbottabad, a hilly town about 200 km away from the

provincial capital of Peshawar. At one point in time, the dispute is additionally about the relocation of DCTE to Peshawar to join ESED's other attached departments in the capital, a proposition greatly resisted by bureaucrats from the region on grounds of discrimination against the Hazara ethnic minority.

Eventually, neither DCTE is dismantled or moved to Peshawar, nor is PITE denied its directorate status. The latter is upgraded to the Directorate for Professional Development (DPD) with an autonomous mandate for teacher training content. In order to retain the uneasy peace that has been delicately negotiated by the provincial government, the two bodies are not asked to work together on plugging systemic gaps for teacher policy. Therefore, they still do not cooperate on how to use sample-based teacher evaluations by DCTE in the preparation of more meaningful induction programming content for newly recruited teachers. As an extension of this political friction, neither body's insights or learnings are currently formally invited to inform the Department's Grades 12-15, or the KP Public Service Commission's Grades 16+, teacher recruitment rubrics or tests. Reliance by senior leadership for 'good' teacher decisions on the advice of an attached (subordinate) department could unsettle the established political hierarchy of provincial education decision-making.

The intersection of ethnic and political loyalties in the space of educational patronage is symptomatic of the considerable informality through which decision-making continues to happen in KP to this day. It reinforces the argument made throughout this project analysis, and especially of the 2014 teacher recruitment reform policy, that there remains much personalisation to education in KP despite official narrations of merit, institutionalisation of robust process, and systemic movements towards an education sector driven by student learning outcomes.

The PTI found itself a foothold in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 2013 in spite of the province's existing parochial or nationalist political narratives⁵⁰. This apparent democratic transition of power amongst political parties competing for the attention of the electorate has still not made common the adherence to institutionalised rules and practice. The political settlement literature helps us understand the Pakistani context in which these transitions are underway as one rooted in clientilistic competition that continues to be dominated by elite factions of society. This is evident through the emergence of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as a formidable challenge to the traditional two main political parties of Pakistan (the Pakistan People's Party, PPP; and the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz, PML-N). But the rise of the PTI is not a clean-slate, pristine story either, the party having ultimately benefitted from electoral patronage capital of members it has added along its path to power.

In a departure from the ideal typologies Levy and Walton (2013) use to explore the political settlement of many country cases they investigate, the evidence from KP suggests educational decisions are formulated and executed in the space of

⁵⁰ These included the Awami National Party (ANP); the Qaumi Watan Party (QWP), which became a coalition partner to the PTI in 2013; or even religious parties such as the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) - which also became a coalition partner to the PTI in 2013 after winning electoral seats in north KP.

Conclusion

This report uses ethnographic fieldwork amongst public school teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to map the political economy of how policies are adapted and enacted in the everyday space of school teaching. By exploring the acquisition and accumulation of social and cultural capital through which teachers determine career moves, we explain public teachers as agents with abilities to make choices despite the constraints of their surrounding structures. This finding provides an important departure for the Pakistani case from existing studies on teacher performance or sense of self in resource-constrained, misaligned systems like these (World Bank, 2018; Aiyar et al., 2015). It does not mean, however, that teachers are facilitated by the system to engage in meaningful pedagogy. This is largely a result of both misalignments and incoherence in the public system around decisions related to student learning.

But how exactly do misalignments arise in this context? We show, firstly, that the missing notion of teacher voice and experience from the formal instruments of state governance (such as rules, notifications, or even training manuals) creates frictions between official and lived meanings of ‘good’ teaching. This tension is instrumented primarily through a recruitment policy that has championed a gradual deprofessionalisation of teaching for almost a decade. But if anyone can teach, and teacher deployment has increased steadily over the time period since this policy was notified, why has it not been met with a commensurate improvement to both teaching *and* student learning outcomes? Clearly, the provision of schools with more teachers does not automatically mean more or better learning.

One way to bring teacher recruitment into better alignment with an overall uplift to student learning is for ESED to reconsider the rubrics or testing process it uses currently for the induction of new teachers. Instead of depending on the currently problematic notion of general standardised testing as an effective filter for pedagogic ability, the system may need to reintroduce technical elements into the process. One of the biggest motivations for removing professional teacher qualifications (such as a Certificate of Teaching or B.Ed.) at point of entry was to facilitate better qualified individuals’ consideration of teaching as a career option. This was accompanied by the assumption that the state of technical qualifications (at the time) was insufficient to guarantee meritorious teaching on appointment.

But by having stepped away entirely from educationally-anchored metrics or rubrics for applicant evaluation, the Department’s intentions inevitably miss the requirements of a majority of its public schools – teachers who are motivated in the classroom, driven by a sense of professionalism and will stick out the challenges real classrooms will send their way (Vegas, 2005). This is a significant misalignment for ESED, and one that can be corrected by exploring the incorporation of DCTE teacher competencies into the recruitment process through a model that shares responsibility across multiple partners. For instance, ESED could rely on its own testing administration arm (ETEA) in collaboration with locally-rooted intellectual or technical partners (research organisations or universities, for instance, based in Pakistan or, ideally, KP) who source support from bodies like the DCTE or DPD. This

could create a distributed governance model that spreads recruitment authority across multiple stakeholders, but with clearly delegated requirements and financial arrangements from a competitively-spirited Secretarial team in an effort to match performance accountabilities with specific asks (Levy & Walton, 2013; Pritchett, 2015). Through this kind of approach, the Department could start progressing towards a quality recruitment process aligned with the aspiration of staffing KP's primary schools with 'good' fresh recruits (Bruns & Luque, 2015).

Much of what we have reflected on thus far comes down to this question: in a resource-constrained, fragile economic environment with so many informal variables governing the politics of performance, how does ESED strike a balance between the need for large-scale recruitment and sufficient training for teachers to perform well from as early as possible? One solution might lie in paying attention to a consistently overlooked gap the system never plugged after deprofessionalising teaching entry: higher education.

Here is where coherence becomes an important principle to evaluate in the effort to improve existing policy. If one of the motivations to lifting professional qualification 'barriers to entry' was to counter the dwindling quality of entrants with education-specific certifications or degrees, the move towards generalist recruiting should, ideally, have been balanced with a means to improving teacher education programmes *outside* of departmental bureaucracy (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2020). These could have included universities or other teacher-training centres regulated by the Higher Education Department or the Higher Education Commission with continuous feedback from ESED alongside a public sector job quota policy to incentivise performance and employment pathways amongst competitive students.

Similar decisions aimed at coherence could include a necessary reevaluation of teacher promotion, performance, and other related rules. Teachers may currently be demanded to practice and deliver outcomes of a very specific nature, but their evaluation and career progression continues to be governed by generalist bureaucratic discourse and its ensuing rules. Even these rules do not meet established ideas of Weberian bureaucratic functioning. Continuously yielding to patronage or socio-cultural logic, their analysis suggests teacher performance is inevitably stretched across the competing accountabilities of compliance and innovation. Some of these behaviours may contribute to student learning; others may not. In either case, inconsistent pedagogic belief and practice compromises learning quality across the system (Levy et al., 2018).

Through a 2011 Act of KP Assembly, public sector in the province already recognises public teachers as specialist bureaucrats. Without inducing any further disruptions to scale and pay structure, the teaching cadre can still revive its exclusivity through a combination of non-financial incentives, redesigned evaluation metrics and robust and relevant professional development models. For instance, classroom observations are slowly being rolled out for formative feedback to teachers during the month, but the administrators of such tools (Head Teachers or

ADEOs) are themselves likely too preoccupied and distracted to utilise this tool to its full potential.

Teacher portfolios as a result of such observations are a non-entity during the school year or in school records, nor do they feature on quality indicators used by ESED's monitoring regime. Finally, such dimensions of evaluation do not feature in the government's Performance Evaluation Review proforma for teachers in Grades 12-15 (primary teachers). In sum, a well-intended educational quality component is rendered meaningless to teacher bureaucrats because multiple systemic components do not cohere around a learning-driven narrative. In the process, teachers may be officially 'technical', but in reality, worse off than actual generalist bureaucrats whose daily tasks may not be so demanding of specific pedagogic, classroom management and socio-emotional curative abilities (World Bank, 2019).

According to teachers within KP's own system, it is not financially prohibitive or bureaucratically impossible to accommodate teachers a motivational special status. Recommendations like publicly instituted recognitions of prestige and status (e.g. 'teacher' hours at public service desks or a provincial prize for performance) go alongside more complex, but not impossible, determinations of primary school specialisation.

The latter could be enhanced by involving *servicing* teachers in policy arenas like curriculum development or even the design of specific parts of their own continuous professional development within the larger programme sent to them from DPD. This would contrast with the space that does currently exist for those of teaching background to contribute to such policy developments, but *only* after they have left an active teaching position for an administrative or subject specialist role in one of ESED's attached departments.

Building a variety of reasons and ways in which to demonstrate skill into teacher performance *and* linking these to both their everyday sense of self as well as their mid-to-long-term career journeys is critical (Haertel, 1991; Haefele, 1993; Bruns & Luque, 2015). As Pritchett (2015) underscores, many of these attempts at realigning teaching structures can go a long way in accounting for 'good' teaching through teacher accounts of their time, effort and experience on terms that emerge from within the field of pedagogic bureaucracy, not general management.

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Appendix A: Budget (USD)

| | Monthly Rate | Project Lifecycle |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Team Remuneration | | |
| Principal Investigator | 900 | 10800 |
| Research Associate 1 (10 months) | 240 | 2400 |
| Research Associate 2 (10 months) | 240 | 2400 |
| Sub-total (a) | | 15600 |
| | | |
| Travel (road; petrol; accommodation) | | |
| Principal Investigator | | 15750 |
| Research Associates | | 4000 |
| TA/DA | | 1000 |
| Sub-total (b) | | 20750 |
| | | |
| Logistical Expense | | |
| Laptop/Hardware | | 1000 |
| WiFi | | 270 |
| Hard Drive | | 150 |
| Recorders and Stationery | | 400 |
| Sub-total (c) | | 1820 |
| | | |
| Overhead (10%) (d) | | 4250 |
| | | |
| Total (a + b + c + d) | | 42420 |

Appendix B: Data Sources (work-in-progress)

System profile:

Open-source monitored data from the Education Monitoring Authority

KP Annual School Census from KP Education Monitoring Information System (most recent 2018/19; more are under request for trend analysis)

KP Population Census data (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics)

Annual Status of Education Report 2019 (most recent)

Archival Data:

National Archives of Pakistan

National Library of Pakistan

Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) library, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training

Provincial Institute of Teacher Education KPK

List of Interviewees (access secured thus far):

Taimur Khan Jhagra, former Education Minister KP

Akbar Ayub, Education Minister KP

Muhammad Mahmood Rai, former Secretary, SED Punjab

Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry. Secretary, KP ESED

Gulshad Khan, Additional Director PITE

Education Member, KP Public Service Commission

Education Member, KP Planning and Development Department

Riaz Bahar, President KP Teacher Union (SOA)

Samiullah, General Secretary KP Teacher Union (SOA)

Khadija Bakhtiar, CEO Teach for Pakistan (operational with schools in KPK)

Umbreen Arif, former education advisor to World Bank Pakistan

Appendix C: Consolidated Conceptual Framework for RISE PET-A Projects

As Gershberg (2020) notes in the Guiding Principles document to the RISE Political Economy (Adoption) (PET-A) research programme, a common framework used to analyse education policy and its processes is what Paulston (1977) and others (e.g. Ginsburg *et al* 1990; Arnove 2009) explain as an equilibrium paradigm. Within this worldview, the process of education reform is explained as a temporal progression of policy from constructs associated with ‘tradition’ towards constructs associated with ‘modernity’, such that it appears as, ‘a seamless and apolitical process driven mainly by technical educational and economic concerns’ (Gershberg, 2020, p11). Whether framed as a process driven by increasing rationality (evolutionary school of thought) or as one attempting to correct social or systemic gaps in order to preserve structural order (structural-functionalist school of thought), either approach presents the complex story of education policymaking as a series of neat decisions devoid of conflict, negotiation, power asymmetry and balancing acts between progression and regression.

The RISE PET-A effort therefore frames analytical thinking around education policy processes and their actors and histories around the following key aspects, many of which have informed this deep dive proposition for a study of Pakistan’s teacher identity and career pathways:

- a) a view of education policy—and the broader aims of education systems—as the product of conflict and contestation between competing political and social coalitions of stakeholders that have an interest in the nature of a country’s education system and the changing balance of power between them—in other words, the nature of the political settlement underpinning the country’s political economy and its education system in particular;
- b) an understanding of education policy-making as occurring in a range of domains and specifically those labelled ‘political’, ‘civic’, ‘bureaucratic’, and ‘legal’ by Schiefelbein and McGinn (2017)
- c) an understanding of competing political and social coalitions in terms of their interests, agendas with regards to education policy, and forms of leverage over the policy-making process;
- d) an understanding of learning as taking a variety of forms depending on the purposes/imperative driving the formation and operation of the education system, only one of which is the form measured by PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS;
- e) an understanding of education policy as a key determinant of the forms of learning promoted through the country’s education system;

- f) an understanding of patterns of market-oriented education policy reform as reflecting the way in which structural pressures for reform (emanating from economic conditions that confer additional leverage on political and social coalitions seeking to promote such reform) are mediated by the capacity of competing political and social coalitions to resist reform;
- g) an understanding of the latter in terms of these groups' ability to organize collectively, access the policy-making process, mobilize public opinion or otherwise exercise leverage over the policy-making process.
- h) an understanding of learning outcomes as measured by international standardised tests such as PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS as the product of the changing political settlement and what this implies for the forms of learning pursued through the education system.

Although the specific space of education policy being investigated through this study is outlined above, and will continue to be expanded upon in the more comprehensive proposal that follows this document, this study attempts to join a series of comparative pieces that dive deeper into two components of systems established with a focus around effective learning:

- 3. the development (or lack thereof) of national exams or outcome measures of learning⁵¹
- 4. teacher career paths.⁵²

⁵¹ Most of this component shall borrow from the existing work on assessment development by the Pakistan CRT based at CERP, distinct to this analysis of teacher identity, motivation and career pathways

⁵² The Guiding Principles document asks the following questions around teacher career trajectories: '...understood narrowly, on purpose. (i)n our context, it refers to the progression path in salaries and other benefits. What factors drive that progression? Is it purely age and years of service? Paper qualifications/certification? Or does it include performance-based pay, some notion of progression based on community esteem, or pay for being willing to be deployed to difficult situations, or teaching in subjects for which there is scarcity? Does it involve trial or probation periods? And, importantly, how did any of this change if the country pivoted, or tried to pivot, from an access agenda to an access plus learning agenda?' (Gershberg, 2020, p12)