

ECONOMICS RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES 18-2021

Citizen trust, administrative capacity and administrative burden in Pakistan's immunization program

By

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Sameen A. Mohsin Ali is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Mushtaq Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences (MGSHSS). She completed her PhD in Politics and International Studies from SOAS University of London in 2018 and a Masters in Comparative Politics (Research) from the London School of Economics and Political Science as a Commonwealth General Scholar. Her work on bureaucratic and party politics in Pakistan has been published in *World Development* and *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. Dr. Ali is co-Director of the Women in Public Service in Pakistan Oral History Archive and is a faculty advisor at the Technology for People Initiative (TPI). She is involved in various research projects as principal as well as co-principal investigator. She is also a fellow of the Mahbub-ul-Haq Research Centre. Dr Ali's research and teaching interests include governance, state capacity, bureaucratic performance, and party politics in South Asia, public health governance, and the politics of donor engagement in LMICs. She teaches a range of courses, including Introduction to Political Science, Introduction to Comparative Politics, Politics of Pakistan, and Governance and its Discontents.

Abstract: Pakistan has the highest infant mortality rate in South Asia, is one of two countries where wild polio is still endemic, and is ranked third for un- or under-immunized children. Why is this the case when considerable donor and government funds have been spent on Pakistan's Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI)? Based on a year of mixed methods research in district Kasur in Punjab, Pakistan, we focus on vaccination as a site of interaction between citizens and the state and apply the concept of administrative burden to explain vaccine hesitancy in Pakistan. As immunization is a non-means tested program where the state approaches citizens expecting full compliance, we argue that learning, psychological, and compliance costs are exacerbated by the context in which parents interact with frontline bureaucrats. Citizens' distrust of an often absent or coercive state and low administrative capacity (specifically overburdened staff, inadequate facilities, and rushed digitization) have a multiplier effect on administrative burdens imposed on parents of young children in accessing immunization programs. Therefore, attempts by the state to vaccinate citizens often exacerbate distrust, and limited capacity hinders the state's ability to reduce the burdens experienced by citizens.

Date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Time: 04:00 P.M. (PKT)

Zoom meeting link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88551492663?pwd=RVUzMFZBanVDVHJKYmpMQmNuRFpHUT09>

Meeting ID: 885 5149 2663

Passcode: 6miczd