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## **Bureaucratic politics in neopatrimonial settings: types of appointment and their implications in Ghana**

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### POLITICAL RESPONSIVENESS: A FUSION OF “CHALK AND CHEESE”.

#### 7.1 Introduction:

The third and final hypothesis formulated by this study relates to the theorisation that hybrid-based appointments shape bureaucrats' responsiveness (Appleby, 1949; Friedrichson, 1976; Waldo, 1980, 1987; Svara, 1999, 2000; West, 2005; Page, 2007; Ferrez 2009). Proponents of the hybrid model posit that a sound combination of politics and professionalism produces responsive governance. Advocates of bureaucratic reforms through NPM maintain that principals need competent but loyal bureaucrats who may not be necessarily partisan but competent to implement politically responsive agenda (Peters & Pierre, 2004). Here, the expectation is that since political principals are held accountable by the voting public by way of elections or re-elections into government, it is only fitting that principals appoint professional bureaucrats with political lenses to responsively accomplish civic interests or agenda on behalf of the voting public. Based on this expectation, this chapter sets out to empirically examine the theoretical hypothesis that *“The more hybrid-based the process of appointment is, the more likely a bureaucrat is to be responsive”*. The subsequent discussion has, therefore, conducted an empirical assessment regarding the actual effects of hybrid-based appointments on bureaucrats' responsiveness. Grounded on the results obtained from the data gathered, this Chapter discusses four main findings.

The first discussion focuses on the empirical relationship between hybrid appointees and political responsiveness, autonomy and loyalty. Here, the study finds that hybrid appointees have a positive and appreciable association with responsiveness, except that it is not an absolute one. Similarly, these hybrid appointees are also found to be demonstrably autonomous as well as loyal under different circumstances which are explored in detail. The second discussion of this chapter is related to the empirical evidence that hybrid appointments are the most predominant type of bureaucratic appointment in Ghana and explores why this is the case. The third examination of this

Chapter, however, discusses the advantages of hybrid appointments as well as the risks associated with it whilst the fourth discussion summarises the key findings of the chapter.

## **7.2 Complementarity and Hybrids: Towards bureaucratic responsiveness.**

The opening paragraph of this Chapter has recounted the theoretical formulation of the hypothesis between hybrid appointees and their expected responsiveness. The subsequent discourse, therefore, engages in an empirical discussion regarding the extent of hybrid bureaucrats' level of responsiveness as theoretically postulated. To do this, an index-score of responses to the multi-item variables was used to determine hybrid appointees as an independent variable using a combination of merit and patronage indicators. However, responsiveness as a dependent variable was measured using three specific items: advancing superiors legitimate or justifiable interests in performing duties, downplaying personal justifiable interests in performing duties and finally, advancing office's justifiable interests in the performance of duties. These were all rated on a scale of 1-7 by respondents in a standard questionnaire.

As stated in the previous empirical chapters, the p-values were used to determine the direction of the relationship while the r square was deployed to ascertain its impact. To discuss the key findings from the survey and interview data regarding the effects of hybrid appointments on bureaucrats' responsiveness, the chapter relied on a one-way ANOVA, regression and thematic analyses to inform the discussions. The one-way ANOVA was run to compare the groups to establish whether there were differences among appointment types studied or not (Appendix 1). To do this, there was a disaggregation of appointment routes into factors which influenced respondents' current appointment into the civil service and that which influenced respondents' colleagues' current appointments into the civil service. The results showed that there exists a statistically significant difference at five per cent ( $p < 0.05$ ) level between the three appointment routes:  $F(3, 271) = 67.388$ ,  $p < .05$ . Post-hoc comparisons employing the tuckey-HSD test revealed that the mean score for hybrid-based appointment route

(M = 2.651316, SD = 0.69301) was significantly different from merit-based appointment route (M = 1.34, SD = 0.71742) and patronage-based appointment route (M = 2.18, SD = 0.69076).

To examine whether variations in appointments existed in terms of respondents' colleague civil servants' current appointments into the civil service, another ANOVA was performed. The results here, as well, were statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level:  $F(3, 271) = 65.516, p < .05$ . Post-hoc comparisons using the tuckey-HSD test for the category of colleague civil servants also showed that the mean score for hybrid-based appointments (M = 2.7817, SD = .52072) differed significantly from merit-based appointments (M = 1.6866, SD = .89119) and patronage-based appointments (M = 2.2791, SD = .59062). This implies that the factors which influenced the appointments of civil servants into the civil service are distinct and that civil servants who come into the service through hybrid-based appointment processes are different from merit-based and patronage type of appointees. Regarding the examination of the relationship between hybrid appointees and responsiveness, the summary of statistical analyses regarding the effects of hybrid appointments on bureaucrats' responsive attitudes and behaviour is shown in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: A summary of Hybrid-Responsiveness Regression results**

Variable(s)	Mean( $\mu$ )	Std (X)	(pX,Y) with Hybrid	R-square (R <sup>2</sup> )	b	$\beta$
Responsiveness	38.7737	7.90603	.397*			
Omnibus Hybrid	44.6241	11.04209	.397*	.157	0.284	0.397
<b>Multiple Regression results of Hybrid-based factors</b>						
Responsiveness	38.7737	7.90603				
General Patronage factors	25.0328	9.65384	.299*		0.253	0.309
General Merit factors	19.5912	5.76023	.260*		0.374	0.272
<b>Standard Linear Regression</b>						
Autonomy	39.0766	9.99073	.279*	.078		
Loyalty	41.1788	8.56824	.388*	.151		

\* Significant correlation at  $p < .05$

Table 10 contains results obtained from the different levels of standard linear regression analyses conducted such as bivariate simple linear, multiple and hierarchical regressions based on the study's survey data gathered. Through simple linear regressions, the table shows results

of values for the correlation between the omnibus hybrid as an independent variable and the hypothesised dependent variable of responsiveness ( $\rho_{x,y} = .397$ ) as well as other non-hypothesised dependent variables of loyalty ( $= .388$ ) and autonomy ( $= .297$ ). The table also contains standard multiple-regression results for values of factors which explain hybrid: general merit factors and general patronage factors. Interestingly, these indicators are found to be positively and significantly correlated with responsiveness, demonstrating that civil servants who are appointed through hybrid-based predictors tend to influence the level of responsiveness exercised by civil servants in the execution of their duties.

The standard multiple regression was also adopted to evaluate the association between the factors that explain hybrid-based appointment, i.e. the merger or combination merit and patronage factors and the dependent variable of responsiveness. Both general patronage (all patronage items) and general merit (all merit items) had significant positive regression weights with responsiveness. It, however, shows a higher contributory weight of patronage factors (.299 almost 3) compared with the merit factors (.260), suggesting that the contribution of patronage considerations of hybrid appointees to political responsiveness is higher than the contribution of merit factors to their responsiveness. The multiple regression model of the two predictors – merit and patronage – produced  $r^2 = .163$ ,  $F(2, 272) = 26.433$ ,  $p < .005$ .

Furthermore, the table also contains hierarchical regression results after controlling for the influence of variables such as age, sex, level of appointment, type of appointment, policy area, educational qualification, type of institution and ethnicity (region of origin). Other statistical results captured in the table include the Means ( $\mu$ ) of various variable relationships, standard deviations, alpha and beta values as well as  $r^2$  (coefficient of determination) of the various regression models conducted. These statistical results have also been integrated with results of the in-depth interviews in a complementary fashion to engage in the ensuing discussion regarding the influence of hybrid appointees on bureaucrats' responsiveness.

Using both standard linear regression and multiple linear regression analyses, an

evaluation of how hybrid appointments predict responsiveness was conducted. Standard linear regression was employed to evaluate the omnibus relationship between the hybrid- criteria of appointment and responsiveness in the civil service. The results from Table 10 demonstrate that the hybrid appointment model is positively and significantly correlated with the responsiveness criterion, meaning that bureaucrats who are employed based on the hybrid type of appointment in the civil service are responsive to the directives of their principals in the execution of their duties. The linear regression model with omnibus hybrid predictor produced  $r^2 = .157$ ,  $F(1, 273) = 50.790$ ,  $p < .005$ .

What this finding essentially implies is that as the level of hybridity increases, so does the level of responsiveness. The finding also indicates that hybrid bureaucrats demonstrate appreciable levels of political responsiveness in the execution of their duties, except that their responsiveness is not unquestionable. The statistical evidence indicate that hybrid bureaucrats may be able to influence, alter or reject some instructions of their principals. This is expected given that hybrid appointees in paying sufficient attention to legal, professional and technical requirements may occasionally be constrained in being responsive when confronted with unconventional instructions or interests from principals. As principals also trust that hybrid appointees are loyal to them owing to the role they [principals] played in their appointment, they sometimes put forward pure political or parochial interests for execution which are sometimes declined by these hybrid appointees. This is especially the case when these hybrid bureaucrats are circumspect about their legal remits, their reputation as well as professional integrity in the bureaucracy. Thus, it is understandable when hybrid appointees as professional bureaucrats with political lenses are not found to be absolutely responsive to their principals.

The above finding is also reinforced by a separate regression analysis regarding the relationship between hybrid appointees and dependent variables other than the hypothesised dependent variable of responsiveness. As indicated in previous chapters, the objective of this test is to be able to ascertain whether it is theoretically fitting to advance the argument that

responsiveness is predominantly associated with only hybrid appointees. The results indicate that the hybrid-based predictor has a positive correlation with autonomous and loyal attitudes and behaviour as shown in Table 10. This finding inversely clarifies why hybrid bureaucrats' responsiveness is not absolute. The standard linear regression model with the hybrid-based predictor on autonomy produced an  $R^2 = .078$ ,  $F(1, 273) = 22.962$ ,  $p < .005$ .

As expected, hybrid appointees' impact on autonomy is weaker ( $=.279$ ) than their normally hypothesised relationship with responsiveness ( $=.397$ ). In reality, therefore, hybrid bureaucrats exercise a certain level of autonomy in the exercise of their duties for which reason their responsiveness is not found to be absolute; yet, their share of responsiveness is found to be notable based on Cohen's classification. Interestingly, however, the weight of autonomy demonstrated by hybrid bureaucrats ( $=.279$ ) is more impactful than the autonomy demonstrated by merit appointees ( $=.218$ ) as discussed in chapter 5. The implication of this finding is that despite hybrid appointees' predisposition and sensitivity to the political interests of their principals, they do not indiscriminately comply with political and most probably unconventional interests.

Indeed, insights from key informants (based on the in-depth interviews - see appendix 7) reveal that hybrid appointees demonstrate the level of autonomy they do because it will take an unwise hybrid bureaucrat to blindly pursue the interests of their principals especially if it can be detrimental. This is because hybrid bureaucrats "may have difficulties in naming the patron who instructed them to engage in unconventional ventures due to the risks of victimisation" (Interviewee 23, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). Therefore, since hybrid bureaucrats are rational beings, they occasionally evaluate the situation and choose to advance expedient interests. This is obviously why they demonstrate some level of autonomy to the detriment of the principal's interest.

The fact that the impact of hybrid appointees' autonomy outweighs that of merit



appointees also suggests that principals grant hybrid appointees more autonomy and are more willing to heed to their counsel due to trust and loyalty than they would do with merit appointees. This should not be astonishing because when principals assume office in the bureaucracy, they are susceptible to view merit bureaucrats or bureaucrats not appointed by them with suspicion. This is especially the case with top bureaucrats who might have enjoyed a close working relationship with the principals' predecessors. To this end, it would seem perfectly reasonable why principals will grant hybrid bureaucrats more autonomy than merit appointees (who they suspect). Indeed, further empirical results from this study explain the goodwill enjoyed by hybrid appointees as they are trusted to be more loyal than merit bureaucrats. The standard regression analysis conducted regarding the relationship between hybrid appointees and dependent variables other than the hypothesised dependent variable of responsiveness found that the hybrid appointees had a positive correlation and significance with loyalty as shown in Table 10. The standard linear regression model with the hybrid-based predictor produced an  $R^2 = .151$ ,  $F(1, 273) = 48.259$ ,  $p < .005$ . Indeed, the impact of loyalty demonstrated by hybrid appointees was weightier ( $=.388$ ) than merit appointees ( $=.134$ ). In practical terms, this means that hybrid appointees' loyalty to their principals is very noteworthy.

Due to the loyalty elements in hybrid bureaucrats' appointment through patronage, it is understandable that they will be demonstrably enthusiastic in offering considerable devotion to principals. This is especially the case under legitimate situations where these appointees can leverage or manoeuvre to prosecute justifiable or legitimate demands. Yet, these hybrid appointees are also compelled, when necessary, to defer to legal and conventional bureaucratic practices to avoid scandals. These circumstances of loyalty offer justifications and plausible explanations regarding why hybrid bureaucrats can enjoy autonomy than merit bureaucrats. While merit bureaucrats are usually put under surveillance or marginalisation due to insufficient trust or political loyalty in the eyes of principals, hybrid bureaucrats are allowed sufficient space to operate.

The regression results or findings of notable autonomy enjoyed by hybrid appointees can, therefore, be attributed to the significant amount of loyalty and trust they enjoy with their principals. This is because, under the circumstances of loyalty, principals are predisposed to grant hybrid appointees autonomy and discretion. As argued by Lupia & McCubbins (2000), principals are likely to vouch for the attitudes and behaviour of bureaucrats in terms of delegation or policy execution believing that they would take the same course of action given the same information. This was succinctly couched by McDonnell (2017: 498) when he argued that “significant discretion [autonomy] is only tolerated where loyalty is assured”. The partnership between principals and hybrid appointees does, therefore, positively engender political responsiveness, efficiency and performance when principals have a satisfactory view of loyalty and trust of hybrid bureaucrats. This allows them to exercise professional discretion with assignments that sometimes include unconventional ones (McDonnell, 2017: 498).

Scholars of the new “developmental neo-patrimonialism” paradigm have underscored the positive effects of a combination of merit (competence) with political alignments (hybrid appointees) by maintaining that subtle political considerations in appointing qualified professional bureaucrats are desirable. According to this school of thought, this is because when it comes to the functions of bureaucrats, two key variables matter, and one without the other can result in catastrophe. As advanced by an interviewee, “competence is very important and loyalty is more crucial, so, we need a combination of competence and loyalty” (Interviewee 26, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). Based on these arguments, Ghanaian principals, at a minimum, deploy hybrid appointees believing that the probability of securing political responsiveness is boosted while mitigating the risk of adverse selection on their part when they opt to hire pure patronage appointees predominantly based on loyal considerations alone.

A key informant from MLNR argued that for principals to achieve responsive competence, principals must work with bureaucrats “loyal to them because if your subordinates are not loyal to you, lots of things would be going on without your knowledge...you need people to tell you what’s

happening, so even though we talk about cronyism and patronage [negatively], it is not that it is always bad” (Interviewee 29, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018; MLNR). The argument here is that it is not necessarily the case that principals prefer to work with their own people *per se* but because they require available and reliable personnel to work with. But these principals can only safely trust the information shared by loyalists, and loyalists, are secured within the bureaucracy when patronage is in the equation.

### **7.3 The Predominance of Hybrid Appointees in Ghana.**

Proponents of hybridity such as Mosher (1982: 185) maintain that hybrid appointees are suitable in avoiding the problems associated with exclusive merit or patronage bureaucrats. To verify this, this Chapter empirically examines the predominance of hybrid appointments and their rationale within the Ghanaian context. The evidence adduced in chapter 4 (shown in the frequency distribution) reveal that hybrid appointees are more predominant in Ghana’s bureaucracy than exclusively merit or patronage-based appointees. Same could be true of other SSA countries given the politico-administrative dynamics prevalent in these neo-patrimonial settings. As noted by one expert informant regarding which type of appointment is predominant in Ghana, s/he argued that “...it is plainly a hybrid system. There is no single public sector agency that recruits purely based on patronage and you will not also find any public service institution that recruits entirely based on meritocracy, it is a blend” (Interviewee 26, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). In the view of another interviewee from sociological expertise, the informant argued that given the inherent patrimonial and Weberian characteristics of the Ghanaian bureaucracy, Ghana’s bureaucratic system is a hybrid system and that:

*whether I recommend or not, Ghana will practice it for a long time to come [because] the country cannot follow a purely meritorious based system of employing people...the fact is as it has been in the past, the Ghanaian is employed based largely upon hybrid method – you are qualified but some additional motivation supports your application to get you an*

*employment* (Interviewee 23, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG).

A common explanation offered by informants for the circumstances under which hybrid bureaucrats are predominant is that in neo-patrimonial settings like Ghana, while consideration for an appointment is underway, political, social and sometimes economic networks appeal to their acquaintances who are in a position to influence those appointment decisions. This results in a high probability that the familiarity will enhance the chances of some over other competitors even in situations where technocratic competence matters a great deal. However, they maintain that when bureaucrats' appointment is influenced by familiarity, it does not imply that it is "a substitute of competence". But rather, it may indicate that it plays a complementary role. This is because, at the end of the day, "individuals must possess the requisite qualifications before they are allowed to enter the system" through subjective considerations (Interviewee 24, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). According to a key informant:

*one would say that in Ghana loyalty alone cannot earn you an appointment whether in civil service or public service – at the end of the day, the question has to do with is the person qualified for the job and politicians are fully aware of that – no matter how a person is loyal to the government, if the person does not possess the requisite qualification, he certainly does not have a place in public or civil service. So from loyalty to the political regime to qualification and everything, one can say that even though there is patronage, no doubt about that – at the end of the day qualification matters because the politician who is to push you into the public or civil service would have to prove that you are indeed qualified to play the role the regime intends to assign to you, so it is certainly a hybrid system'* (Interviewee 24, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018; Jubilee House).

This argument suggests that whilst personal networks can open the door for [prospective] bureaucrats, it is their qualification which eventually clinches the deal. In fact, there are several

instances where attempts to get cronies appointed have failed upon further scrutiny of their academic qualifications. The key informant continued that, “politicians are [therefore] mindful and would not insist that unqualified people are hired into the system simply because they are aligned to the ruling party” (Interviewee 24, 7th October 2018; Jubilee House).

Furthermore, with the advent of NPM which sought to curtail direct patronage practices in SSA, Ghanaian principals resorted to hybrid tactics because they still require political responsiveness from an increasingly fragmented bureaucracy. As earlier cited, the problem faced by political principals when dealing with autonomous bureaucrats is one of political responsiveness. Since merit appointees are presumed to function with a mindset of neutral competence, principals strive to apply not only qualification but also personal or political compatibility criteria as the test to securing political responsiveness in a constantly turbulent arena. There is ample evidence to argue that Ghanaian principals sometimes successfully impress on hybrid bureaucrats by “redirecting them or reshaping their decisions to meet the current needs of the time” (Interviewee 27, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). By such actions, hybrid bureaucrats and principals mutually benefit when both of them can efficiently work together under “I scratch your back, you scratch mine” arrangements.

Under Ghana’s Weberian modelled bureaucracy, even though bureaucrats are ideally set up to professionally function autonomously, they are still required to defer to the political principal in terms of accountability. While autonomy may thwart such expectations, hybrid bureaucrats offer a middle ground as they apply their skills and expertise to function in a way that accommodates political interests. In their bid to be responsive to their principals’ directives, hybrid bureaucrats, as partners, find common grounds “to justify” the legitimate directives and interests of their principals in the bureaucratic space (Interviewee 8, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018; MOH). This is why Putnam (1973; 1975) argued that political bureaucrats (hybrid) operate with pluralistic interest and are conscious of “political realities” and treat political influences by principals as legitimate.

Insights from key informant interviews (appendix 7) further disclose that Ghanaian hybrid bureaucrats can demonstrate responsiveness to their principals by maintaining “a fine blend between doing things at whims of their supervisors’ interests but in line with the existing policies” (Interviewee 6, 27th September 2018; MOH). Some of this study’s key informants and experts with political orientation have argued that whilst pure patronage bureaucrats may be undesirable, pure merit appointees can also be catastrophic. They maintain that for efficient bureaucratic performance, therefore, although civil servants’ technical competence is necessary, it can be insufficient to drive organisational performance; hence, must be accompanied with a certain commitment usually elicited along patronage-network lines.

As noted by an expert, some bureaucrats give off their best not because of their commitment to the public or bureaucratic interests *per se*, but due to their personal relationship or commitment and their desire to see their principals succeed. He maintained that some bureaucrats behave in conformity to the resolve that “you are my boss and I do not want you to fail”. Given that this level of personal loyalty has significant implications for bureaucratic attitudes and behaviour, any attempt to rule out patronage factors in favour of pure meritocratic appointees has the potential of running political responsiveness into glitches and complications. Recounting the arguments of Knoke & Wright-Isak (1982), they maintained that bureaucrats’ attitudes and behaviour can be influenced by affective bonding to serve their principals. Kim & Vandenabeele (2010) also argued that bureaucrats may identify with their principals and their sense of oneness with those they identify with brings a willingness to professionally serve their interests.

Likewise, some informants argue that once a political party is elected with its manifesto “it has a direction it wants to tow and there are certain positions, especially the top management... it is good that they bring somebody who believes in the ideas – who appreciate the issues and want to toe the line of the government of the day” to ensure political responsiveness (Interviewee 17, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018; OHCS). Governments come with visions but these visions only become reality if competent and politically attuned [hybrid] bureaucrats implement it. Occasionally,

existing bureaucrats may be unable to implement some of these visions because “they call for new education, new orientation and new exposure” (Interviewee 18, 3rd October 2018; OHCS). Some of the competent personnel capable of executing such visions may be located in the private sector, in academia or research institutions (outside the civil service). Therefore, it is only fitting that the reality of hybrid appointments is acknowledged unless principals are placing “square pecks in round holes, that is where the problem is”. However, if for instance:

*The president appoints a minister of finance, who was a manager/owner of a Databank or financial institution, he/she [may] merit that, and is going to give good results. But, if you go and bring a journalist to be a minister of finance or an adviser to economic planning, that one is purely putting round pecks into square holes. So, we must make a distinction, when a politician brings an expert into a field, that one we should not [frown upon], though the mode of appointment is wrong but the person is qualified, so he/she is likely to deliver. But, if the mode of appointment is wrong and the personnel coming in is also out of place, then that is when we have a disaster”* (Interviewee 3, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018; MLNR).

From a practical viewpoint, the above argument suggests that in neo-patrimonial regimes, experts and observers have come to acknowledge that hybrid considerations in appointments are a reality. Ferrez (2009) and Sigman (2015) argued that even in advanced democratic countries like the US, purely merit-based appointees can be considered as endangered species in the bureaucracy. This is because in the world of politics and bureaucratic efficiency, principals are unable to withdraw to the sidelines whilst some mechanical processes are deployed to select bureaucrats who these principals are required to work with to meet political goals or interests. Instead, principals participate or influence appointment decisions by subtly fusing patronage- based factors with merit ones within the bureaucracy in the anticipation that such tactics will engender bureaucrats’ political responsiveness.

Indeed, some key informants further argued that depending on the type of bureaucracy or

level of appointment, merit factors such as qualification and experience tend to carry more weight because “you either pay attention to meritocracy or kill the institution. But, for lower-level staff, you can do a blend” (Interviewee 26, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG). This argument was validated by a hierarchical multiple regression conducted ( $r^2$  change = .135,  $F(2, 272) = 14.235$ ,  $p < .005$ ) which revealed that merit-based appointment route (beta = .289) and patronage-based appointment route (beta = .265) made statistically significant contribution to the appointment of hybrid bureaucrats. As can be seen, the weight of merit factors (.289) was more than patronage factors (.265) in appointing hybrid bureaucrats. This, therefore, indicates that merit considerations for appointing hybrid bureaucrats outweighed patronage considerations; yet, both impact the level of responsiveness exhibited by hybrid appointees in the performance of their duties.

Regarding the type of bureaucracy, the findings indicate that the extent of hybridity and level of responsiveness by bureaucrats, among other factors, can depend on the type of bureaucratic institution. Considering Ghana’s ministry of finance (MOF), for example, this is a specialised bureaucracy where a specific type of expertise is extremely crucial to ensure the functionality of the entire Ghanaian state; therefore, patronage and political connections should not supersede competence and qualification. According to a key informant who also conducted a study at the ministry:

*there is strong evidence that educational qualifications matter a big deal, but, what is even more important is practical experience. People are recruited based on ‘who you know’ but, these factors only play a complementary role – they don’t substitute the role that competence or educational qualifications will actually play. And you can easily understand the reason why because, if there is no effective budget and the finance minister does not function, it means that there is no Ghanaian state. So, depending on the importance of a particular civil service institution, you will find these factors playing out differently* (Interviewee 26, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG).



This indicates that while patronage considerations are usually factored, merit factors are seldom completely compromised or short-changed at the MOF. To practically illustrate this, an example is cited of the current finance minister who deployed hybrid strategies to assemble trusted loyalists. In assembling the team to help him deliver his mandate, the minister, among other strategies, appointed his known associates from his private bank (Data Bank) in addition to party allies from within the ranks of the ministry to occupy strategic positions. For example, in May 2017, the minister as the chief principal of the ministry elevated the chief economic officer to director of budgets and the chief budget analyst to director of public investment division. He also reassigned his loyal personal technical advisor to the director of the financial sector division of the MOF. Furthermore, he posted out all perceived politically tainted bureaucrats capable of sabotage to less desirous portfolios such as reassigning the then Controller & Accountant General appointed by his predecessor (political opponent) to the finance ministry without any portfolio.

In addition to the above, in January 2019, the finance minister promoted his politically known allies to strategic and influential positions. He reorganised top bureaucrats in the ministry by creating two new coordinating directorship positions to deputise the Chief Director and appointed or filled them by promoting qualified bureaucrats known to be sympathetic to him and his party (NDC Press Conference, 2019). It was reported that the minister further “supplanted a number of highly- qualified and seasoned technocrats, and in their stead, placed middle-level cronies from databank to occupy top roles responsible for implementing government’s economic and financial policies” (NDC Press Conference, 2019). Among other examples, the minister is reported to have appointed key erstwhile databank employees into the MOF. They include Ernest Akore, a former non-executive director at Databank, who is now a board member of the GRA under the ministry; Felicia Gyamfi Ashley, a former HR manager at databank who is now a member of the entity tender committee of the MOF, Ntiwaa Daaku Kwakye, also a former staff of databank who has also been fixed at the MOF and Mr Sampson Akligoh, the current director of the financial sector division of the MOF. Mr Akligoh was

actually the vice-president at databank and held the post of head of research and fixed income strategy at the same bank before being drafted into the ministry by the current finance minister.

By employing this strategy, the finance minister announced his confidence, trust and loyalty as well as their technocratic competence since their political thoughts are aligned to his priorities. He concluded that the MOF was “poised to be more professional, efficient, ethical and responsive to all stakeholders and to transform Ghana beyond aid” (Ken Ofori-Atta, Minister of Finance, 2019). So, while in other bureaucracies, pure patronage appointments are more prevalent, hardly do technical or professionalised bureaucracies like the MOF compromise on competence in appointing at, say, the directorship levels. These are levels where incompetence cannot be hidden. As articulated by an expert informant about these specialised bureaucracies, “what you will expect essentially is that the extent to which ethnicity and political connections will play a role in determining who gets appointed there, would much more likely be less than what you will see in a ministry like education” (Interviewee 26, 9th October 2018; UG). This argument seems to be supported by the example from the MOF that both educational qualifications and experience matter but so do trust and loyalty.

Interestingly, after this hybrid induced appointments by principals of the finance ministry, since 2017, Ghana’s economy has been currently touted as one of the best performing economies in the world by the IMF and World Bank. The IMF projected a “growth rate of 8.8% in its world economic outlook, which would make Ghana the fastest growing economy in the world in 2019. Last year [2018], the country’s economy grew by 5.6%, putting it in the sixth position”. This stellar performance of the Ghanaian economy is attributable to a responsive and efficient MOF team organised along a hybrid model.

This practice of elevating politically sensitive but qualified bureaucrats to strategic positions within bureaucracies as well as fusing in loyal professionals are hybrid tactics deployed to achieve responsiveness. Ayee (2013), in examining the politicisation of Ghana’s bureaucracy

under democratic governance, underscored the deployment of hybrid tactics by principals through bureaucrats' open signals of their political or ideological leanings which usually earns them career speed if their party win power or suffer career deathblows when their party is vanquished after an election. As clearly stated by the chairperson of PSC "some civil and local government staff are joining parties and engaging in active political activities, attending political rallies, standing for elections in the primaries while still holding office," she said, adding "the irony is that even when such staff lose the primaries, they have the audacity to remain at post."

While the above example from MOF demonstrates that hybrid appointees' responsiveness is related to the type of bureaucracy, other key experts argue that hybrid appointees' responsiveness is also contingent on their hierarchical level in the bureaucracy where "at the management level, certain interests are served". At the operational facet of middle to lower levels, bureaucrats are mostly expected to comply with instructions from above (Interviewee 6, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018; MOH). This argument is acceptable since it is evident that usually, middle to lower-level bureaucrats typically possess inadequate mandate to gain them any influence over interests except those handed down the ladder by principals through the hierarchical chain of command. Thus, while top hybrid bureaucrats can have the mandate and political sensitivity to pursue their principals' legitimate interests, the same may not be said about the middle to lower hybrid bureaucrats. This is because since policy implementation within the civil service is largely instructive, top hybrid appointees who subscribe to the interests of their patrons mostly cascade or trickle down specific instructions from the top - down the organisational ladder. Most often, those lower bureaucrats oblige to those instructions of their immediate principals.

It is, therefore, understandable that some informants argue that the hierarchical levels of political principals and top hybrid bureaucrats affords them the space to influence and ensure that their will is executed. Besides, middle to lower bureaucrats are accountable to political and bureaucratic principals who are situated in a position to evaluate, review, modify or redirect their

work. While Johnson & Libecap (1994) define bureaucratic hierarchical distinctions, these distinctions do not suggest autonomy but rather, an institutional arrangement that ensures a cycle of delegation from the top to the bottom of the bureaucracy to fuel responsiveness. Breton & Wintrobe (1982), therefore, argue that hybrid/political bureaucrats, as partners, have access to principals where they conclave and fashion out arrangements of interest delegation that is executed to perfection.

These distinctions, thus, hardly allow middle and lower-level bureaucrats to exercise autonomy outside the interests of their principals (political & bureaucratic) in the course of their duties, except for responsiveness. Since the civil service is a hierarchical structure, bureaucrats, in executing their duties, may not contact the political principal's office by themselves but go through their immediate principals who are tasked with mapping political wills into outcomes (Corina & Escartin, 2014). The subsequent discussion briefly evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the hybrid-responsiveness arrangements.

### **7.3.1 The Strengths**

In examining the positive effects of political responsiveness hybrid bureaucrats provide to principals in the bureaucracy, this study alludes to evidence cited under the MLNR. This is related to one of the politically charged issues affecting Ghana as a country with dire political ramifications, i.e. illegal small-scale mining also known as “galamsey”. This menace was one of the sticky points in the country's electioneering campaign in 2016. Due to widespread youth unemployment, erstwhile Ghanaian principals had battled with and had been unable to curb the practice of indiscriminate illegal mining which polluted the country's water bodies, destroyed ecosystems and killed thousands of youth as a result of its hazardous operations. The sector evolved into a highly intertwined or intricate web of covert and overt operations with varying degrees of legal violations (Teschner, 2012). It was also bedevilled with “political leniency and law enforcement corruption” which led to a booming illegal small-scale mining system under

abysmal government control (Teschner, 2012: 308).

However, the current political principals based on the advice and efforts of hybrid bureaucrats such as the chief director and other directors under the MLNR pursued a devised blueprint to end the menace by regularising the practice into a responsible, environmentally-friendly and sustainable one. In no time, significant progress or successes had been recorded by political principals who appointed politically sensitive technocrats into an “inter-ministerial task-force against illegal mining”. After putting a moratorium on the menace using heavy military as a first measure, it crafted detailed legislation and operational remedies to regularise the practice to accommodate the livelihood needs of those engaged in the “*galamsey*”. It also aimed at preserving the integrity of the country’s environment and water bodies.

These bureaucrats, as the professional and technical implementers of the task, facilitated the establishment of community mining schemes which registered over a hundred cooperatives in *galamsey*-prone districts made up of over 4000 trained artisanal mining graduands (MLNR, 2019). A monitoring system was also put in place which included district mining committees at the various mining districts whilst about 500 mining guards were trained to man the aforementioned offices. They were provided with logistics like vehicles, motorbikes, drones and mobile communication gadgets. To this end, the current political principals have been highly commended for their responsive intervention to both the general interests of the citizenry and the parochial interests of hitherto illegal small-scale miners who were poised to punish political principals in the next general election for taking away their means of livelihoods.

This example lends credence to the assertion that elected principals are often held accountable for public services delivered even when they are not the direct implementers. Perhaps the political accountability to the electorate incentivised principals to employ hybrid bureaucrats to provide political responsiveness because these principals sensed that the repercussions will be adverse unless a positive and dramatic intervention took place. As Friedrich (1940) once argued, “an official should be as responsible for inaction as for the wrong action; certainly, the average

voter will criticise the government as severely for one as for the other since political executives are directly or indirectly responsible to the electorate”.

A review of Michael Roll’s (2014) pockets of effectiveness in developing countries reveals that Roll’s argument basically confirms Grindle’s (2012) assertion about the progressive nature of hybrid appointees. This is because Roll (2014) offers significant indications of how bureaucracies function effectively in providing public goods and services in the predominantly dysfunctional or weak environments where principals leverage on political and professional considerations. The main thesis gleaned from his argument is that an efficient and convenient marriage of patronage (political considerations) and meritocracy (competence and organisational leadership) shape positive attitudes and behaviour which inform effective performance. This argument provides an answer to the question of why “these pockets of effectiveness” exist in predominantly inefficient environments by pointing to professional appointees with political lenses conveniently termed as the hybrid. Therefore, from neo-patrimonial settings where bureaucracies are found to be effective and efficient, these results are attributable to a shift from pure patronage practices to hybrid ones under NPM reforms. That is a situation where politically recruited professionals implement political interests as partners rather than followers.

Evidence from this research also shows that hybrid bureaucrats in the bureaucracy are also able to interpret bureaucratic legal regulations in a manner that satisfies their superiors’ point of view (Interviewee 21, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018; IDEG). A key informant indicated that while most principals and top bureaucrats take political decisions, hybrid bureaucrats interpret the rules in a way to “promote the justifiable interest of their principals” which affords them to be responsive to these principals (Interviewee 17, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018; OHCS). This is because, conventionally, hybrid bureaucrats prefer to partner in executing their superiors’ interest as long as it reflects the goal of the organisation and sometimes even if it does not. Hence, this situation justifies the assertion that how bureaucrats are appointed “would have implications on how [they] behave” (Interviewee 26, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018; UG).

### 7.3.2 The Costs

Even though the preceding discussion seems to advocate the appropriateness of hybrid appointees and their political responsiveness, they are not without risks and can actually be negative. Mathieson *et al.* (2007: 10) argued that even though “the objectives of political involvement in senior appointments are usually responsive policy and implementation rather than patronage in the form of jobs to party faithful or family members”, whether political appointments can realistically be restricted to the fine purpose of maintaining democratic control is questionable. Indeed, there are shreds of evidence in the Ghanaian case to indicate that hybrid bureaucrats have been occasionally abused and manipulated to execute the questionable interests of principals within the bureaucracy. As discussed in the previous empirical chapters, these manipulations happen because of the almost unlimited schemes principals wield over bureaucrats’ careers.

Indeed, under neo-patrimonial regimes, once principals have the powers to influence the careers and means of livelihoods of bureaucrats, these principals can always scheme to have their illicit interests prosecuted. Accordingly, it is common to witness hybrid bureaucrats within the Ghanaian bureaucratic space defend certain actions or interests “in a way that you can easily see that it is just a way of pleasing a particular political master... otherwise, there are certain things that appear quite obvious and that their explanations seem not to be making a lot of sense or logic” (Interviewee 26, 9th October 2018; UG). It is not surprising that hybrid bureaucrats sometimes also execute their principals’ illicit interests in the bureaucracy. The only difference as far as the type of a bureaucrats’ appointment is concerned is the severity of the manipulations as established in the regression analyses conducted.

For example, a hybrid appointee indicated that despite their competent advice, principals sometimes “compel” them to facilitate unconventional transactions because if they decline, they are likely to be sidelined or victimised. Accordingly, hybrid bureaucrats also:

*dance to the tune of the politicians, knowing very well that what the politicians are bringing*

*is not the best but for fear of being victimised, [they] have to kowtow to what the politician is forwarding...so from my experience, some superiors give orders that are way out in terms of the standards set but because that person has control over you, it seems you have to justify it by all means* (Interviewee 8, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018; MOH).

This situation is part of the pessimism of sceptics who frown upon any form of subjective considerations (patronage) even alongside merit factors; an example is Kristinsson (2012). The argument was made that once the political shield for bureaucratic autonomy is pierced, appointments to the bureaucracy are likely to open not only to legitimate interests for governmental effectiveness and efficiency but to other compromised or parochial interests as well. Thus, the bureaucracy can be basically insulated not by regulations or technical arrangements, but by a political will in favour of bureaucratic autonomy.

Insights from the in-depth interviews of this study also illustrate another downside of hybrid bureaucrats; that is, the occasionally biased or tilted advice or information they give to their principals to influence decisions or direction to service their self-centred interests. A case in point is reported in the Ghanaian media regarding the advice of top bureaucrats working at GNPC to their principals to the effect that certain cash donations could be made by principals under the bureaucracy's social responsibility commitment, only to saddle those principals in a public crucifixion for dolling out public funds to political clients in the name of honouring social responsibility.

Furthermore, in some other instances, hybrid appointees initiate their own proposals which are informed by their deep-seated professional biases and information where the political principals may lack the know-how or information, time and skills to make an informed decision. In the end, principals rely on these trusted hybrid bureaucrats who have control over information and push home their personal preferences. As Miller & Moe (1983) argued, principals make decisions following the rule of thumb that trusted and loyal bureaucrats guide. Hybrid bureaucrats



have, therefore, used the trust they enjoy and their characterisation as professionals to successfully compete for influence in decision making (Kaufman, 2001).

Additionally, in their zealous bid to be politically responsive to their principals, hybrid appointees can be counter-productive or inimical to the interests of the bureaucracy or the public. A clear example of hybrid bureaucrats' implementation of their principals' preferences even in the face of glaring disagreement with many stakeholders is the current implementation of the country's FSHS policy. Sufficient evidence gathered from these stake-holders reveal that hybrid bureaucrats support principals' in:

*...implementing it because that is what the political regime wants. And it is not as if free SHS is not good...but, the universalistic approach being adopted and the extent to which it is draining national coffers as well as creating other problems that are difficult to handle are some of the reasons why they are against it* (Interviewee 21, 3rd October 2018; IDEG).

According to a key informant who was part of a team that worked on the current long-term educational sector plan for Ghana (2018 – 2030), their discussions with various stakeholders show that they have a lot of issues with the FSHS policy. But because trusted hybrid and patronage appointees advise the principals by telling them it is sustainable and drive its implementation, a culture of silence has taken over. Thus, the hybrid bureaucrats have sometimes utilised the goodwill they benefit from the principals to support push an unpopular agenda down the throat of the public.

## **7.4 Chapter Summary**

The summary drawn from the above results and discussions on the influence of the hybrid criteria on bureaucratic responsiveness is that hybrid appointments do not only significantly shape bureaucratic responsiveness and efficiency, they also enhance accountability and governance of bureaucrats in the day to day running of the bureaucracy. The

discussion also shows that hybrid bureaucrats are the most predominant type of bureaucrats in Ghana. Furthermore, the discussions in this chapter show that hybrid bureaucrats demonstrate competent sensitivities to their principals' interests, with an understanding that under democratic governance, compliance to their superiors' directives and interests is ultimately being responsive to the will of the public. Additionally, whereas both merit and patronage considerations are determined to be appropriate complementary factors of hybrid appointees, the share of influence of patronage factors to hybrid appointees' responsiveness outweigh the contribution of merit factors to their responsiveness. However, the share of merit factors to appointing a hybrid bureaucrat marginally outweigh that of patronage.

It was also found in this Chapter that hybrid bureaucrats are not just restricted to responsive attitudes and behaviour, but that they also possess some level of autonomy (where necessary) and notable loyalty. It was further found that despite the arguments in support of hybrid tactics by principals in running bureaucracies, it is not without risks as zealous principals still possess the authority to compel hybrid bureaucrats to engage in inappropriate deals. Thus, in the end, as hybrid appointees are politically responsive, such responsiveness may lead to undesired repercussions for bureaucracies and the public's interest at large. Detailed conclusions about these findings are contained in the next Chapter.