



MASTER'S THESIS
INTERNATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Decentralisation; the road to better
Quality of Government?

A comparative case study of Multan and Larkana, Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether an institutional reform such as decentralisation results in improved quality of government (better service delivery and less corruption) to the final users –the citizens and at what expense?

In the context of developing states, evidence suggests that decentralisation not only results in aggravating both regional disparities and the capture of local government by local elites.

An apt case study is that of Pakistan, where both conditions are present; decentralisation of government took place and the presence of local elites capturing local governments within the smaller cities of the provinces. It recreates the conditions of a ‘natural experiment’ since decentralisation was introduced in 2000 and rolled back after a decade. Also, we can compare the effects of different compositions of local elites over service delivery, i.e. are they able to capture government to their own benefit? Or on the contrary is government closer to the citizens?

This is a comparative study focusing on two similar cities known for their elite capture: Multan and Larkana. The quality of government is to be measured through the service delivery of education, health care and law enforcement. The results from the empirical data shows an interactive effect between decentralisation and the structure of the local elite: the result is multifaceted: increased regional disparities, increased quality of services, and contrary to theory –increased corruption. Where the local elite is made up of more than one clan, there ensues competition effectively delivering an improvement of services. Whereas, in a monopoly situation the overall effect of decentralisation results in stronger capture of local governments.

Overall, in Multan, the three services have improved. However the citizens’ perception also highlights an increase in corruption. The structure of the local elite in Multan is such that Multan has a number of local elites that are at “loggerheads”. This is evidenced by the number of families as well as the division of its members of National Assembly within the city. It is the stronghold of the present Prime Minister Gilani.

Larkana on the other hand has suffered in all three sectors. Education – a lot of “ghost schools” overshadow an efficient education system preventing children from going to school; healthcare has not reached the final users as was planned; and the law enforcement has not shown signs of improvement it was meant to, while corruption has become rampant. The city of Larkana is the stronghold of a single clan - the Bhutto family.

To my parents

1. Introduction

Throughout history policy makers have experimented with governance systems in search for better Quality of Government. Decentralisation evolved as the solution to the failure of the centralist state. Decentralisation takes place when the central government transfers powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Ribot 2002). As such, it gives lower levels of government greater authority in delivering services. Decentralisation ultimately involves a shift of power and resources away from central government, the three main types differentiated between are fiscal, political and administrative (Weitz, 2010).

Recently, decentralisation has been promoted in policy circles both as a means of improving service delivery as well as a tool for combating corruption. Several developing countries, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Pakistan, among others, have undertaken significant steps towards shifting powers to sub-national tiers of government. (Aspinall and Berger 2001, Ma 1996, Rodriguez, 1997 Ward and Rodriguez, 1999). The main arguments forwarded are that devolving power would result in an increase in the quality of services due to the local information base in response to local demands, i.e. supply will respond to demand. Furthermore, devolving power to local governments would create more accountability as local governments would be more, accessible and able to be scrutinized by the citizens as final service users, effectively using decentralisation as a tool to combat corruption.

However, the debate within the Quality of Government (QoG) literature remains divided, there is evidence that both supports and contradicts these hypothesized effects. In the context of developing countries can an institutional reform (decentralisation) lead to an increase in the quality of services (efficiency, efficacy, or economy; or the three of them) at the local level? Is it an effective tool to combat corruption or is there a trade-off? How does the local power structure affect the process, if at all? Does decentralization matter for regional disparities?

This thesis intends to answer the above posed questions through a comparative case study of two cities within Pakistan. Both cities – Multan (Punjab) and Larkana (Sind) – have similar preconditions and were part of the nationwide decentralisation process that was implemented

by the Musharraf government in 2001. The institutional reform yielded extremely different results as regards the quality of government in these similar cities. Multan saw an increase in the quality of services, specifically within its healthcare and educational services, alongside an increase in corruption. Whereas, Larkana on the other hand, witnessed increased corruption with next to no improvement in the quality of services, evidenced through the spread of “ghost schools” and unattended Basic Health Units –which were part of the same sub-national government schemes implemented in both cities. Decentralisation may lead to increased corruption in developing countries but not necessarily at the expense of efficiency, the present case is illustrative of situations where there is a trade-off, as in the case of Multan where services improved and corruption increased, and on the other end of the spectrum, it can lead to detrimental situations as has been the case for Larkana. A comparative study of the two cities can help understand the possible mechanisms that resulted in the contrast between the two cities.

The contributions of my research are twofold. It is a contribution of a descriptive nature to the literature on decentralization and quality of government (QoG): it shows that there is more than one variable of good governance, i.e. the characteristics that we tend to associate to good governance or quality of government do not necessarily go hand in hand. In the literature less corruption is normally associated with high QoG. (Holmberg, Rothstein and Nasiritousi 2008) However, it appears that an institutional reform such as decentralisation, which is hypothesized to improve quality of government (consisting of the two variables; quality of services and reduction in corruption), instead leads to an increase one aspect of QoG (quality of services) at the expense of another (i.e.) increase in overall corruption. The study shows that there can exist a trade-off within the desired effects of the institutional reform: decentralisation may in fact lead to an increase in the quality of services, simultaneously as an increase in corruption, as in the case of Multan. On the other hand the decentralisation effort can result in the increase of corruption without any improvement in QoG, instead deterioration, as the case of Larkana shows. The underlying reason is the type of local elite structure that exists; if there is a situation of competition between the local elite that has captured the local government, then there will be a “trade-off” whereas a monopoly situation will result in capture to increase without the positive outcome that decentralisation is predicted to bring about.

Furthermore, as indicated by Bardhan the data below provincial level is often scarce, therefore this study will add to this existing gap in the literature as well as add empirical data to the studies of local capture of local governments.

Data sources include interviews with service providers within the three services; Healthcare, Education and law enforcement, government officials, NGOs working directly in both cities.

The thesis is structured as follows: First the literature will be reviewed, Second research methodology, Third, the process of Decentralisation in Pakistan, Fourth; analysis and discussion of findings to answer main questions of thesis. Last section concludes and gives recommendations.

2. Decentralisation

2.1 What is it?

In the last two decades one of the mantras within the governance realm has been decentralization. The decentralization wave has swept across the globe, ranging from the empowerment of the regions with the European Union, to that of developing nations' adaptation as part of policy experiments meted out by the World Bank, as evidenced by the Bank's embracing it as one of the major governance reforms on its agenda (see for example, World Bank, 2000; Burki, Perry and Dillinger, 1999).¹

As pointed out by Bardhan "different people mean different things by decentralization."² The core idea of decentralisation was presented by Tiebout within the fiscal federalism literature. However, for the purposes of this study, the definition provided by Ribot (2002) will be utilized: "*decentralisation takes place when central government transfers powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy*"

¹ Shah and Schuter (YEAR)

The goal of decentralization is to bring government closer to the people, effectively increasing the accountability mechanisms. When there is local government, the local inhabitant will be able to demand results of the tax he is paying. The ultimate goal of decentralization is to improve service delivery in response to the ultimate user, i.e. the citizen. To sum up, as pointed out by Rodrigues-Pose “the recent wave of decentralization has, according to the ‘new regionalist’ literature in political science, tended to be justified on the grounds of a supposed greater capacity of subnational governments to overcome the failures of the centralized state (Bardhan,2002, 185), to deliver improved economic efficiency (Keating, 1998; Morgan, 2002)”

2.2 To devolve or not to devolve?

There is a growing empirical literature on the association between institutions –for example, the structure of government and political regimes -and the quality of government. (De Mello 2010). Regarding links between decentralisation and quality of government Fjeldstad’s (2004) literature review shows a clear division between scholars on this matter; on the one hand there are those that argue in favour of decentralisation, on the other, those that argue against. On the one hand, a range of potential benefits are forwarded in support of decentralisation, such as; it reduces the role of the state, by fragmenting central authority and introducing more intergovernmental competition and checks and balances, in turn creating more accountability. However, Rose-Ackerman (year) cautions that fragmentation of political power is not necessarily effective; pointing out that under some conditions, a system of multiple veto points is particularly subject to improper influence and a federal system may simply give state and local political leaders leeway to enrich themselves at public expense.

Furthermore, one main argument forwarded in favour of decentralisation is that of efficiency –that decentralisation improves service delivery; supply will respond to the actual demand as local service provision would have the local information base hence be better at provision than the central state (e.g. Fisman and Gatti 2002, Huther and Shah 1998, and Adsera et al 2003). Decentralization is also regarded as a way of diffusing social and political tensions and ensuring local cultural and political autonomy. (Bardhan 2002)

On the other hand are those that argue that decentralisation leads to more corruption. (Treisman 2000, Tanzi 2004, Gerring and Thacker 2004, and Prud'homme 1995). They argue that decentralisation reduces accountability because of the multiple layers of government that come into existence, blurring the divisions between the different tiers and making it difficult for the citizens to direct their complaints or credit in regard to services delivered. Here the centralized state is able to offer more monitoring of the system.

2.3 Decentralisation in developing countries

In order to better understand the nuances of decentralisation and its effects, latest research has focused on the settings in which decentralisation takes place, i.e. developing countries versus developed ones.

Decentralisation in high income countries has, if anything, been linked with a reduction of regional inequality. In low and medium income countries, fiscal decentralisation has been associated with a significant rise in regional disparities, which the positive effects of political decentralisation have been unable to compensate. Policy preferences by subnational governments for expenditure in economic affairs, education, and social protection have contributed to this trend. Whether the global transfer of authority and resources to subnational tiers of government may yield different results in terms of territorial equity in the developed and the less developed worlds and across countries which have diverse histories and levels of decentralisation and which have adopted different paths towards it. On the whole, the positive and negative effects of fiscal and political decentralisation may offset one another, capacity and financial resource constraints and weaker endowments in the poorer regions of lower income countries may exacerbate the negative impact of decentralisation on territorial inequality. Less developed countries with already existing high territorial imbalances will, as a consequence, tend to exhibit growing inequalities once they decentralise, while the effect of decentralisation in the developed world may be either neutral or even contribute to a reduction of regional disparities. (Rodriguez-Pose, 2010)

Challenges

An important issue pointed out by Bardhan (2002) is the different type of challenges resulting from decentralisation in the developing world when compared to the developed. In terms of developing and transition countries, an essential fact to keep in mind is that decentralisation poses different issues in the institutional context than those faced by developed countries, hence the danger posed when trying to draw lessons for them from, say, the experiences of U.S. states and city governments. Likewise, Bardhan (2002) focuses on decentralised delivery of public services in the specific context of developing nations, warning of the danger of local elite capture being alarmingly present.

The issues that may arise in the institutional context during the decentralisation process in developing states, include voting –which does not necessarily act as a representational tool. Furthermore, a pertinent issue present in developing states is that of local elites whose stronghold can be strengthened through the introduction of local governments and therefore may inhibit the desired outcome of decentralisation.

2.4 Voting not a representational tool

The basis on which decentralisation has been justified in developed countries include people mobility – “voting with your feet” – showing the citizens preferences for goods and services. This issue is highly relevant in the context of developing states because in most developing countries, the problem is not to reveal the fine differences in preferences between jurisdictions but to satisfy basic needs, which are—at least in principle—quite well known. The assumption is that the taxpayers/voters of each jurisdiction will express their preferences in their votes. This hypothesis bears little relationship to local electoral behavior present in developing countries. Local elections, when they exist, are usually decided on the basis of personal, tribal, or political party loyalties. People vote for a mayor they know, a member of their group, or someone they relate to having power, which could be exercised if needed, including solving your problem e.g. going to court regarding a property matter. (Prud’homme, 1995) Therefore voting may not be an ample tool to represent the preferences of the local

population as is assumed by the above mentioned model.

2.5 Local elites

Another challenge resulting from decentralisation, in the context of developing states, is that it may facilitate capture³ of local governments by interest groups (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000; Prud'homme, 1995, Tanzi, 1998). Through devolution the local politician has more autonomy and has more freedom to act as he pleases in the absence of power sharing with the central government. (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2002). This builds on the Madisonian view, as expressed in the *Federalist Papers* –the lower the level of government, the greater is the extent of capture by vested interests, and the less protected minorities and the poor tend to be. Such a situation would further enhance local elites' capture of local government, an area researched within the World Bank's research unit by Anwar Shah, as well as by Bardhan and Mookherjee (2002). The situation can arise even in the relatively few democratic developing countries, where the institutions of local democracy and mechanisms of political accountability are often weak. Thus, any discussion of delivery of public services has to grapple with issues of capture of government at different tiers by elite groups more seriously than is the custom in the traditional decentralization literature. (Bardhan, 2002;192).

The character of local elites can vary from country to country. In Colombia the local elite consists of a handful of families that take turns in sharing power, where a quota system has evolved, wherein each family takes its turn in running the political scene.

Furthermore, Anirudh Krishna delves into the local elites of North India, tracing how the local elite structure has evolved through the access to information, where previously the old 'wise' men retained power through their monopoly of access to knowledge, the 'naya netas' (literally new politician) has taken over the local power base through their access to knowledge of the

³ (Shah, 2005) *State capture*: Collusion by private actors with public officials or politicians for their mutual, private benefit is referred to as state capture. That is, the private sector "captures" the state legislative, executive, and judicial apparatus for its own purposes. State capture coexists with the conventional (and opposite) view of corruption, in which public officials extort or otherwise exploit the private sector for private ends.

outside world and their willingness to share this with the locals.⁴ The naya netas are more educated and accessible to the local population and their openness and know-how is what keeps them in power because the citizen is able to turn to them with all matters of concern, at any given time. The monopoly of the ‘old wise men’ has broken and shifted to those more willing to share information (of all kinds.) (Krishna 2007)

A third type of local elite is that found in Pakistan; where the local elite, consisting of the landed gentry, continues to retain its power; through its monetary power coupled with their access to topnotch education that places them in positions where they have access to information and worldly knowledge –dominating the political realms of society. According to Gilmartin (1988) and Ansari (1979) these local elites can transcend local to national levels. An added factor that has been absent previously in this conjunction, is the power these elites exercise through their religious positions of *sajjadia* and *gaddi nashins* (literally in prayer, and seat holders), an elevated position of sainthood status that has created a situation where they are treated as demi-gods.

2.6 Structure of local elite

The power base of these families as it exists has resulted in decentralization increasing their capture of local government. In their paper exploring decentralisation and its impact on local politicians' accountability, Keefer et al (2005) touch upon the power structure at local levels in Pakistan, and how local capture of governments by local elite can be aggravated. They focus on the importance of the power structure.

“First, anecdotal evidence (e.g., Gazdar 2000) suggests that special interests, whether they be landowners or family or clan lines (zaats), appear to be no more cohesive at the local than national levels. In some rural areas, a single family or landowner is dominant; in those circumstances, decentralization will increase special interest cohesiveness and reduce public sector performance. In most areas, however, there are multiple clans and landowners who are often at loggerheads and do not form political alliances; special interests are therefore

⁴ Kitschelt, Herbert; and Wilkinson, Steven I.. Patrons, Clients and Policies. Cambridge University Press, 2007. Cambridge Books Online. Cambridge University Press. 08 August 2011 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511585869.006>

likely to be divided rather than cohesive in both national and local elections.”

The article suggests that in the situation where there is a single family constituting the local elite; decentralisation would heighten the capture of the local government, effectively impeding the goals of improving QoG. Whereas, if the local elite structure is made up of more than one family, a situation of competition ensues, in which case decentralisation would still be able to achieve its goal as set out. This paper theoretically builds upon this proposition and empirically aims to test it.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach of this research is of a qualitative nature. It is a comparative case study of the cities of Multan and Larkana, in Pakistan. Case studies are essential for description, and are, therefore fundamental to social science. (King, 1994). Comparative case studies can yield valid causal inferences when, as elaborated by Alexander George, a method of “structured, focused comparison” is used, emphasis on the way data is collected.

After carrying out a literature review, I studied the primary sources Local Government Book in combination with the Local Government Ordinance of 2001, the legal basis for the implementation of the Local Government System. That was followed by closely studying further secondary sources that explored the local government system of Pakistan and its impacts together with the current situation. Preliminary research was carried out to map out the different impacts experienced by the cities of Multan and Larkana. In order to further understand and substantiate the impact of the local government system on the end users, field research was carried out.

The field research was undertaken in the cities of Karachi, Islamabad and Multan, where I conducted interviews and collected data mainly from the non-governmental organisations; Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE) and Transparency International Pakistan (TI). I extensively studied the surveys carried out by the DTCE which mapped the

progress of the local government system, of which three separate social audits were carried out, 2001/2002, 2004/05 and 2010.

I conducted a total of seventeen interviews during the months of March, April and May 2011. All interviews were conducted in Urdu by myself. Eleven of these were semi-structured interviews with providers and observers of the three services of education, health care and law enforcement. Semi-structured interviews were opted for in situations where it was unlikely to meet with the interviewee more than once. Six informal interviews were carried out with government officials involved in the implementation of the local government plan, the Chief consultant and the chairman of the National Reconstruction Bureau and members of the Rotary Club Karachi, as well as the chairman of the TI Pakistan chapter. This type of interview was carried out where I had had more than one meeting with the interviewee.

One of the main limitations I faced was not being able to travel to Larkana for conducting interviews with the local service providers. This was acted upon as per the advice of former secretary of Sindh, specifying primarily security concerns for females within the area. Therefore, in order to get interviews relating to the services of education, healthcare and law enforcement in Larkana, these were carried out with officials that have been active in the city as part of service provision as well as NGO members that have been directly involved in the educational, healthcare and law enforcement sectors of the city.

The main aims studied through empirical research were the following;

- To investigate the theory that decentralisation increases regional disparities in developing nations and is positively linked to improvements in QoG, that is how end users perceive the local governments' role in improving the quality of government – in this case local service provision.
- To understand the varying effect of decentralisation on QoG depending on the structure of the local elite's coupled with their dual political and religious roles. Seeing to what extent the structure of the local elite affects the results of decentralisation.

Local experts from the three sectors of education, healthcare and law enforcement were interviewed – including teachers, principals, doctors, hospital management, as well as former

and present mayors. These sectors were investigated as they are an established measure looked upon within the literature on decentralisation and quality of government. Criticism raised against the use of these, by a Red Cross researcher, was that they are considered as Western measures that are not applicable to the local situation present on ground in a developing country like Pakistan. The reason for the sample selection of the local experts is that these are the people that can give an insight into the workings of the local governance and also because perceptions play a significant role in the assessment of quality of government.

The interview guide utilized was largely based on that of the Quality of Government Institute's EU Commission Report regarding "Sub-national variation of QoG in the EU." The guide was chosen due to its relevance in utilizing local experts from within these services and its focus on sub-national variation. (Berard 1995: 212).⁵

4. Decentralisation in Pakistan– through the ages

Local government is no stranger to Pakistan. It has been present at village level before the partition of the Indian Subcontinent, in the form of the local *panchayat* (literally council of five), which performed administrative, judicial and sometimes developmental functions (Majumdar 1960, Basham 1954).⁶ However, deliberate decentralisation, implemented by the government as part of its governance strategy, occurred three times in Pakistan's history. Each time carried out by military governments; more willing to create a bottom-up system in order to sustain the top-down regimes that they ran; Generals Ayub Khan, Zia ul Haq and the latest local government system as implemented by Musharaf. (Cheema et al, 2005). Each decentralisation attempt will be looked at below.

⁵ See Annex 1 *Interview Guide*

⁶ Cheema et al (2005)

4.1 Ayub Khan's Basic Democracies

The first attempt at decentralisation was carried out in 1959 under Ayub Khan's leadership. The new local governments, established under the Basic Democracies Ordinance, 1959 and the Municipal Administration Ordinance 1960, comprised a hierarchical system of four linked tiers. These were sub-provincial tiers, similar to that of the British system that was in place pre-partition, where the system was under the bureaucracy through the mechanisms of "controlling authority" of the District Commissioner, Commissioner and Government. Although the new tiers were given many new functions they were practically handicapped due to a severely curtailed fiscal capacity as well as their limitations imposed by the "controlling authority" that could reverse any decision at their behest. (Siddiqui 1992). The local elections were carried out on a non-party basis. As a result of this, the programme being instilled by a military government without an elected government, the entire system was rolled back when the elected civilian government came into place in 1971. (Britannica, 1992)

4.2 Zia's Local Government Reforms 1979-1985

Local governments were revived through the Local government Ordinances (LGOs) and local bodies were elected in all four provinces during 1979 and 1980. (Jalal 1995) Although politically important they were not complemented by any further decentralization of federal or provincial administrative functions or financial powers to the local level. (Cheema et al 2005). Like the first attempt at decentralisation by the Ayub government, the increased importance of local governments as a means of political legitimacy did not translate into their substantive empowerment. In lieu with Ayub's decentralisation effort, Zia's local government legislation retained suspension powers in the hands of the provincial government, maintaining the weak stance of the local governments. Furthermore, Zia too continued to hold local elections on a non-party basis. Historical evidence suggests that these measures resulted in the localization and personalization of politics at the local level (Wilder 1999). In spite of its second attempt, local government was rolled back to provincial levels once the new elected government that came into power in 1985.

4.3 The Devolution Plan

The latest local government system was introduced by General Musharaf in 2000. It formed part of the “Seven point Agenda” that aimed for National Reconstruction. The “Devolution of Power” was implemented after a series of local elections were held in August 2001. The legal basis for devolution of power was the Provincial Local Government Ordinances of 2001. Its implementation was carried out by the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), through which both fiscal and administrative decentralisation took place. The rationale for decentralizing governance was twofold; firstly as a tool to counter the mass corruption that was present in all sectors of governance, secondly to make local service delivery more efficient. (Local Government Book 2002)

Unlike its predecessors, the latest attempt at local government, devolved administrative and expenditure responsibilities to local levels, which involved changes in the administrative level of decision making, the accountability of the decision making authority (political or bureaucratic) and the nature and amount of fiscal resources available. The devolution process substantially restructured the sub-provincial (district and below) government structure. There were three tiers of local government; District, Tehsil (towns) and Union Councils (village level). A new elected government was created at the district level and politically linked to local governments at sub-district level. The elected government transferred a large proportion of service provision to the local level, including education and healthcare, however the departments of police and irrigation were retained by the Provincial Governments.

The local governance system brought in by the Devolution Plan lasted for almost an entire decade. It recreates the conditions of a ‘natural experiment,’ where an institutional reform was implemented for almost an entire decade and then rolled back at the behest of the present civilian government, to the predecessor District Commissioner (DC) system where the DC is accountable to the provincial government, once again removing powers from local levels.

Unlike the previous local government implementation efforts this one brought about changes that were felt by people to the extent that many service providers are sceptical about the reform being rolled back. The relocation of government tiers to the provincial capitals,

(Lahore, Punjab and Karachi, Sind) has evoked concerns about smaller cities/towns being neglected.

5. The social structures

An important aspect that needs to be considered is the social structure in which the devolution plan was implemented. One of the undercurrents that still persist both inside and outside of the cities is that of the *biradari* system: local tribal structures where clan relations are maintained and affect everyday life so much so that it spills over into the voting patterns of the country itself.

5.1 Biradaris

The tribal/clan system is the basis for much of the rural local organization, which draws widely on idioms of biraadari solidarity –idioms that suggest the importance of genealogy in the construction of local systems of organization and authority. (Gilmartin, 1979) Many tribes were pastoralist, ranging over large areas of grazing land.⁷ Local identities were and continue to be, based on tribal links, none of which, geographically, was within a so called ring-fence. The tribes could spill-over into neighboring regions, however, tribes maintain headquarters of sorts, where –according to Tupper, “they congregate in strength.”⁸ The Bhutto clan’s strength congregates in Larkana whereas the Gilani and Querishi clans’ stronghold is found in the city of Multan.

The evolution of the local elites to their present positions can be traced back to the local tribal structure that has been prevalent in Pakistan for centuries, which was institutionalized by the British during the sub-continent’s colonization.

⁷ Pg. 14 C.L. Tupper (*Punjab Customary Law (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1881), 1:2*. “Tupper argues that one ‘native institution’ that existed was that of the “tribe” (birdaarii)

⁸ Pg. 20 of Gilmartin (Baden Powell, *Land Systems, 2:611*)

5.2 *Waderos, Zaminadars – the local elites of Pakistan*⁹

A phenomenon that has persisted in Pakistan has been that of its landed gentry, also referred to as feudal lords, which was recently covered by The Washington Post, entitled “Pakistan’s Modern Feudal Lords.”¹⁰ Through his article- covering the Sindi feudal, Jatoi- Lancaster manages to capture the respect and authority that the locals pay to the elite. The landed gentry dominate within the interiors of the provinces, away from the cities –even 50km outside a city such as Multan - where rural lifestyles are maintained even today. The landed gentry referred to as the feudal lords, form the ruling class of the country at all levels; local, provincial as well as national, exercising not only economic but also social and political power.

Ahmed (1996) provides a good summary of the present day situation of the landed gentry within the country and the power they enjoy through their position as landlords. “The landlord class, which continues to be of analytical and political interest, also has an uneven presence among different ethnic groups. In absolute numbers and economic, social, and political power, first come the landlords of lower and western Punjab, most of who are Siraiki-speaking, but closely integrated with the Punjabi ruling class... The [former] President of Pakistan, Farooq Leghari, is a good example.[Present prime minister Syed Yousaf Reza Gilani of Multan is a good example.] Next come the landlords of Sindh, who in the absence of a Sindhi bourgeoisie and a strong middle class, enjoy the position of being economically, socially, and politically the most powerful class of the Sindhi society [present day example is President Asif Ali Zardari of Larkana].”¹¹

6. Why Multan and Larkana

In line with Keefer et al(2005), Multan and Larkana provide a poignant comparative case

⁹ *Wadero*: Sindi term for big landowner, and *zamindar*: lit., landholder: under British law, designated as a person recognized as possessing proprietary rights over land. Ansari, S. *Sufi Saints of and State Power: The pirs of Sind 1843 -1947*.

¹⁰ Lancaster, John. “Pakistan’s Modern Feudal Lords” *Washington Post*, April 8, 2003

study. Both cities suffer from the local governments being captured by local elite and were part of the decentralisation process implemented by the NRB. (Shah 2011) The interesting aspect of the decentralisation process has been the different results that it achieved in Multan and Larkana. That of interest is the different results in QoG in connection with the different power structure of the elite in each city and the outcomes both cities experienced as a result of the instilling of local governments. Regional disparities grew stronger, Multan's QoG improved whereas that of Larkana's remained either stagnant or worse. Due to its improved QoG the World Bank's *Doing Business* has ranked Multan as the second best place to start up a business, whereas Larkana has become the focal point for international development efforts (UNDP, 2011), evidenced through the city serving as Sindh headquarters for both the UNDP as well as the Red Crescent operations centre with majority projects concerning education and healthcare focused in the city itself.

6.1 The structure of the Local elite

Multan

Multan's local elite is made up of the Gilani and Qureshi clans. They constitute both the political and religious elites and have maintained these positions since pre-partition. As hereditary sainthood has passed from father to son, so have the various political appointments shared between the two clans. The Gilani family has served as governors of Multan since the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan and have continued to be in the political lime light till present day where Syed Yousaf Reza Gilani serves as the country's Prime minister.¹²

On the other hand is the Qureshi family. The British acknowledged the importance of this family as the most powerful within the district, both due to its landholdings but also due to its dual role of religious leadership. "In no division are there so few Chiefs as in that of Mooltan...In the Mooltan District, the foremost and most influential man is Mukhdoom Shah

¹² Lepel Griffin and Charles Massy, *Chiefs and Failikes of Note in the Punjab**(Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1910), 2:324.

Muhmood, the Head of the Shrine of Bahawl Huq.”¹³ The political and religious stronghold of the family is in place even today: politically, Shah Mehmood Querishi served as the Foreign Minister (2008 -2011) and presently serves as one of the main Members of National Assembly (MNA) representing Multan. Religiously, the clan is the custodian of the shrine of Baha’uddin Zachariya, whose lineage they are said to be from. Their religious following is spread throughout South Asia.

The rivalry of these two families for influence within Multan dates back to pre-partition Gilmartin (1988) discusses the factional rivalry that has centered on the political opposition between the two leading religious families of Multan city, the Querishies, sajjada nishins of the Suhrawardy shrine of Bahawal Haq, and the Gilanis, sajjada nishins of the Qadri shrine of Musa Pak Shahid. The political opposition can be traced back in history where Querishis and Gilanis battled for control of the district board and the Multan Municipal Committee through the 1920s and 1930s. The first non-official chairmen of both of these bodies were Gilanis; the two factions traded control on more than one occasion. Querishis and Gilanis also dominated contests for the provincial Council and for the central Legislative Assembly. The latest political opposition played out between Shah Mehmood Querishi and Prime Minister Gilani earlier this year, which resulted in Shah Mehmood Querishis resignation as Foreign Minister. (Daily Times, Feb 2011)

Friction between the two families has been at the political level whereas on the level of religious leadership both families have maintained their strongholds and followers through the separate shrines. The political rivalry is evidenced through the fact that both clans have historically sided with different political parties, as well as the allegiances of the different Members of National Assembly as recorded by the electoral commission. (The present prime minister, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, hails from the Gilani clan of Multan and also serves as the MNA representing Multan, of which there are a total of six MNAs. From the Querishi family, Shah Mehmood Querishi served as the foreign minister until his recent resignation. He too serves as one of the main MNAs representing Multan.

¹³ Secretary, Board of Administration, Punjab to secretary, Government of India, Foreign department, 13 September 1860 (Board of Revenue, file 131 /1575.)

Larkana

Unlike Multan, Larkana has remained the stronghold of a single clan -the Bhutto's.¹⁴ As a *wadero* family their landholdings increased during the service of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, who was given many honours of land grants as well as knighthood during his tenure with the British administration. When Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto stood for elections he rallied support with the help of the local Sindhi *pirs*, whom helped strengthen his electoral base. The support of the religious leaders was pivotal in the resulting victory. (Ansari,1992). The family has remained in the forefront of the Pakistani political scene ever since – Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto – served as foreign minister (1963), prime minister (1973 –77) and president (1977), Benazir Bhutto (1988, 1993- 96). Today the city is synonymous with both the Bhutto clan and the political party that was put in place by Z.A. Bhutto the People's Party of Pakistan (PPP).

Since the formation of the PPP it has been synonymous with the Bhutto family name. The leader of the PPP has always been a member of the family itself, beginning with Z.A. Bhutto, Begum Nusrat Bhutto (1979), Benazir Bhutto (1986 -2007), and at present it is headed by Bilawal Zardari Bhutto. Traditionally the Bhutto family hold *wadero* status, their transition into the religious/spiritual leadership role took hold as a result of the mysterious deaths of its members as famously predicted by Z.A. Bhutto. (Taseer, 1979). Their graves are presently treated as shrines by their followers where respects are paid and intercession sought, both on religious and political planes.

6.2 The dual role of the local elites

Many a times the local elites played the role of intermediary on more than one front, that is both 'political –between the central government and the local population –and religious –that is the role of intermediary between God and the locals. These families enjoy a power that is revered as holy; some families trace their lineages back to the family of the prophet

¹⁴ Taseer, Salman (1979) *Bhutto: a Political Biography*
Ansari, S. (1992) *Sufi Saints and State Power –The Pirs of Sind, 1843 -1947*

Mohammed, and are considered *pirs* (the local term for saints), whereas some have acquired saintly status due to their services to the country, as is evidenced by the example of the Bhutto family. The ‘sainthood’ authority is seen as hereditary (Ansari, 1992) and is passed on to the offspring of the present family heads.

In order to fully understand the role played by these local elites it is important to look at the duality of their roles in these respective cities. In general, to be able to retain political power a candidate must have the support of the religious leaders, this has been the pattern since pre-partition and is still the case today.

The local elites in both Multan and Larkana play a dual role, they are both political leaders as well as religious/spiritual leaders. This position is robust, their religious power strengthens their political power. As ‘holy men’ their actions within the political realm at the local level are not questioned nor doubted by their followers (both political and religious followers in this case). If the power structure resembles that of Larkana where there is a monopoly of one family then decentralized governance increases their powers, where the local executive district officers (EDOs), who are responsible for the delivery of public services at the district level, are more concerned with satisfying the local elite in order to secure their own positions as well as eventual ‘cuts’ in contract fees etc, instead of performing their prescribed roles as government servants.

However where local power is fragmented between more than one clan, a situation of local competition is present, creating a system of checks and balances, allowing for improvements to trickle down to local population, evidenced by the fragmented representation of the six members of national assembly (MNAs) at the National Assembly.

7. Bottom up governance: the view from below

Overall QoG

The first impressions of both Multan and Larkana are very similar. Multan portrays a powerful presence of the Gilani clan, superimposed with large posters as well as banners of

the Prime Minister at every 25 to 30 metres, along the roads being driven. On the other end of the spectrum there is the city of Larkana. The first impressions, as expressed by Red Crescent researchers, are the prominence of Shia culture, various symbols and salutations to Imam Ali and his family; the sect to which the Bhutto family belong and practice. Hand in hand is the looming presence of the Bhuttos, through banners portraying various family members of the Bhutto family at every turn, reinforcing the city as the stronghold of the Bhutto clan.

The Social Audit of Local Governance and Delivery of Public Services (UNDP 2010) provides a comparison of three separate audits carried out by the DTCE at the district level. Results from this indicate upward trends in household satisfaction with government services pertaining to the provision of education and healthcare as well as law enforcement.

The data from the interviews together with that of the Social Audits empirical data, indicate that comparatively to Larkana (Sindh) the districts of Multan and generally those within Punjab are doing much better, within education and health the local governance system has delivered. There is a marked difference between Sindh and Punjab in terms of delivery of these services. However, in contrast to the Social Audit's findings (UNDP 2010) the interview data indicates general dissatisfaction and distrust of the local law enforcement, i.e. the local police and the courts.

From the interviews with the local experts in Multan, the impression gathered is that the local government takes interest in the betterment of its people, whereas the experts in Larkana point to collusion within the bureaucracy (EDOs) and the elected local government staff – local *nazims* - forwarding the proverb of the Raja and the horse.¹⁵

¹⁵ Interview with former and present local nazims: “Let me give an example. There was a raja who was raising a horse. He had a servant who had orders to feed the horse 5kgs of chickpeas, so what the servant did was he would feed 4 kgs to the horse and keep a kilo for himself. The horse was getting weak as he wasn't getting enough food. So the Raja said that the servant must be swindling some of the fodder that he is being given for the horse. So he employed another servant, to supervise the first horse caretaker. The first servant and the second servant came to an agreement, that they will keep one kilo of grain each and feed only 3 kgs to the horse. The horse continued to get weak. So the raja suspecting this hired yet another servant that should supervise these two first servants that he had. So now all three servants came to an agreement of keeping a kilo of grain each and feeding the horse 2 kgs. This way the horse was getting weaker and not getting anything. That is exactly how our government is like, each tier of government is eating, just like that horse this country is starving and dying on all aspects.”

7.1 Education

A lot of importance is given to education as it has become the basis on which even mediocre jobs are gained. The relative user satisfaction since 2001 has had an upwards trend, with 58% of those interviewed as part of the Social Audit (UNDP 2010) reporting relative satisfaction, an increase from 2002 and 2004. In all aspects of education Multan (Punjab) is constantly ranked higher than Larkana (Sind); enrolment figures, the gender gaps in enrolment being much higher in Larkana than that of Multan, where the general literacy of girls has constantly been going up, as well as overall literacy rates.¹⁶

Multan

The district system has helped to improve local set-ups, Multan has been a focus of the government one of the examples is the provision of tertiary education - university education. From the interview data gathered, the perceptions are that universities have improved; the facility of being able to pursue doctoral studies have now begun in quite a few disciplines, which previously was unavailable to students. Another factor that has enabled higher education is that more university campuses have been established. Earlier there were only 2 universities in South Punjab (University of Multan and Bahawalpur).

The number of subjects offered has improved too, and subject specialists have also come to the universities. Before there were only a handful of subjects within which masters degrees were offered. On the other end, the opinions voiced were that primary level education has not seen such a change, nor at the secondary level.

Incentive schemes

The local governments introduced incentive schemes, which were monetary at first but when the local government could not scuff up the money then the teachers were awarded appreciation certificates that recognised their services, this was at district and tehsil levels.

¹⁶ Children (aged 5-14 years) Enrolled in School:
Multan; Girls 81.16% and Boys 86%
Larkana: Girls 60% and Boys 72%

When speaking with the principal of the local Girls College (which has a population of 600 students), the improvement in the quality of education that the students were being offered had improved immensely. The local government introduced incentive mechanisms for both students and staff. Out of the staff, a handful had won competitive incentive schemes both at district and tehsil levels, an indicator to both the local community and the staff of its improved results.

The incentive schemes for students introduced were stipend schemes for pupils, where the pupil receives 200 rupees a month and also more books have been provided to the schools. The stipends have been a way to encourage education especially among girls.

These schemes have increased a lot, and are awarded on the basis of the school's performance. The principal of the local boy's school (a population of 900 students) informs that last year the school performed quite well in the district, so each teacher was awarded 6000 PKR per head. The amounts have increased from year to year, the present amount offered per teacher at 10,000:- PKR.

The latest incentive scheme has been the "best teacher award" at district level, where the teacher with the best performance will be awarded 50,000:- PKR. So yes, there are a lot of incentive schemes that are in place. School staff are informed of the incentive schemes beforehand, however there can be gaps in the access to information as one local expert pointed out.

Improved schools/ing at expense of more corruption?

The general consensus of the local experts was that the quality of schools has increased but also that corruption has most certainly increased. The situation explained is that previously there was only one person to bribe, whereas, with the increase of government levels, there is bribing required at every level. The reflection is that the initial idea was good but the execution was not done properly.

An example is that of the local Girls College visited. The principal points out that in order to bring about change, there must be an enabling environment, not just a change in labels and titles. “They made us change the name of the school to English Medium High School. In practice however, the situation is that none of our teachers have had training to become English medium teachers, there are 600 students and only a staff of 20 teachers. Now tell me, in the nursery each class can have up to 60 pupils, how can a teacher cater for that many students on her own and also give them any form of good education? The teacher is supposed to tend to all the pupils’ needs but how! All that has been done is the signboard is changed.”

The renaming of the school highlights the practice of bringing change on paper and none in practice. The improvement in quality appears to be the result of the individual efforts of staff within the various schools. However, in order to bring about sustainable change that will raise the general standards, specific training is needed, as pointed out above. The education experts point out that the government has imposed a minimum of 30 students per teacher. This however is seen as a drawback by the teachers, who find that they cannot pay sufficient attention to weaker students, and are forced to carry on the lesson in order to fulfil the assigned syllabus.

Further, an explicit example of petty corruption having increased is in relation to the release of the annual budgets of the local schools. Previously the budgets would be released directly into the respective accounts of the schools (by the Provincial Government). At present, the budget is released into the schools account by the district accounts’ office, which falls under the EDO Education. Later, an officer from the accounts’ office pays a visit to the school, where he collects 15% of the budget released as part of his “commission” for having done his job. The result is that the book keeping records are transparent, with no evidence of bribes. If the “commission” is not paid, release of the payment is withheld by the local accounts office, creating unnecessary hinders in the school’s carrying out of its day to day activities, therefore in order to keep things flowing smoothly, the “commission” is paid.

Furthermore, criticism is raised regarding the monitoring mechanism that the local government has instilled. It was put in place to check on teachers, from the National Commission for Human Development. They observe and report, however no action is taken.

One of the cases given was where a teacher was tardy on a regular basis, which the school wanted to alter. A government monitor was brought in to monitor the situation, but all that was done was recording. The assurance that no action taken has resulted in the teachers not being motivated to alter their behaviour. If a complaint regarding a teacher is reported, via the clerk, and if the clerk and that teacher are on good terms, then he will never actually get the report to the Executive District Officer (EDO) of Education. That's the end of the case. The District Coordinating Officer (DCO) is bound by the report of the EDO, and in turn the school is bound by the DCO, it is a catch-22 situation.

The situation reinforces the grievance that the local government system has merely created new layers of government on 'paper' where there is a large gap in the checks and balances that would apply to the local bureaucracy and its interaction with the local staffs.

Larkana

The quality of education provision in Larkana has lagged behind that of Multan. While acknowledging that government schools are free of cost (which was the primary reason listed for sending their children to these facilities) the general concern was the under-provision of schools facilities themselves.

A persistent problem faced by the city is that of "Ghost schools". The interview with NGO workers that have been active in the local education sector shed some light on the situation.

Experts agree that the problem is wide – teacher absenteeism, lack of basic amenities such as drinking water and toilets as well as inadequate supplies of text books. Sometimes there exists all the paperwork, but when you come to the location there is not even a building present. If there is a building, it is a construction without a school in it.

The last school spontaneously visited, was a building made up of ten rooms. Out of these ten rooms only 5 are being manned by a teacher physically present. When the administration is questioned as to where the missing teacher of the first room is, we are informed that she is on maternal leave. This can of course be a situation that can occur anywhere. However, suspicion

was raised when the same explanation was offered regarding the absence of teachers in the remaining four classrooms. The principal either does not have anything to say or just reports that the teacher is either on sick leave or maternal leave. Upon this, the pay roll is inspected, where salaries of 10 teachers each month are being dispensed and these are ‘signed’ for by the recipient teacher, not by signature but by thumb prints.

Another problem that is said to affect the enrolment rate of girls, aged 12 and above, is the lack of toilet facilities. When the staff is questioned about what facilities students utilise in their 8 hours spent at school, it is explained that students utilise the facilities of the homes surrounding the school if needed. Such problems are reported in the interiors of both provinces of Punjab and Sind.

A recent problem reported was that of a private company renting children for the days of inspection –those inspections carried out by international donors within the development sector. The discovery of this was first covered by the local media when the incident occurred in Toba Tek Singh. (Interview with Ijaz Naqvi. Former MOD head)

Increased “schools” at the expense of more corruption?

The continuing presence of “Ghost Schools” are the result of development funds that have been deviated -resulting in an increase in education quantity (school buildings) but no increase in education quality. The situation in Larkana is such that the provision of schools has ‘increased’ merely on paper, the quality of the schools is not reported to have improved, neither from the results of the interview data nor from that of the Social Audit (UNDP 2002).

The issue of “ghost schools” is the result of corrupt activities between the local EDO of Education mismanaging funds, together with the bureaucracy that has failed to maintain a standard through regular inspections of facilities and approving budgets without correlating to the results on site.

7.2 Healthcare

Multan

The overall quality of healthcare provision has improved through various measures; some of these include efforts within the private sector as well as those provided by the government. There have been different NGOs starting different health programs, more hospitals have been made in Multan and Khanewal. Even on the government level there has been much improvement. One example given by the government doctor, is the presence of the Nishtar Medical College. It is a teaching hospital in Multan, which is world renowned, where there has been improvement in healthcare provision as well.

One comparative example given was that prior to the local government system, the doctors would not actually see the patients; however this no longer is the case. One of the reasons mentioned is that on the local level, the regulations have been tightened around doctors, especially where teaching doctors have been told to take up their quota outside the hospital, so that people find out that there are professionals to tend to you. One of the medical experts is quick to point out that health services improving is not limited to its provision but is also health prevention, in the case of local sewerages being covered, preventing diseases from spreading etc, a measure that has been successful in Multan.

Regarding provision of primary healthcare, improvements included provision of TB meds being available at all health stations, at the Basic Health Units (which is at a distance of 4km), at the Tehsil level, followed by the bigger facilities available at the District hospital.

The service of Basic Health Units is available at every twelve kilometres, this was argued to be an improvement by some whereas others voiced that local charity hospitals, such as that of Omar Medicare, were taking on majority of the primary healthcare load, free of cost, but privately-run.

A reason attributed to the improvement in the quality of healthcare is the recruitment at local level. It was efficient time wise; if there was a slot open, it was made public immediately and

one could apply to their locality and remain within range of say wherever one is perhaps living.

Now as the recruitment of public staff has been taken back by Lahore (due to the reverting to the old Provincial set ups), the allocation of jobs will be as bizarre as it had been before the implementation of local governments; where a person living in Attock will get a post in Dera Gazi Khan and the worker from Dera Gazi Khan appointed to Attock. Through the recruitment of locals at the local level, there was a local trust and a relationship that the medical worker as a local wanted to maintain.

Another factor is increased manpower; there is more trained staff. Previously the healthcare system was dependent on Lahore and Rawalpindi. If one fell ill or needed anti-natal care, or in the case of childbirth, there was no local facility. Since the introduction of local government, there has been an improvement at the *tehsil* (sub-district) level, where departments have either been created or expanded –such as cardiology, gynecology, all are now available at the tehsil hospitals instead of the capital of the district, relieving a lot of the load.

Healthcare – no strings attached?

Increased healthcare provision has come at a price - increased corruption at the local level. An interview with the local charity hospital underscores that the improvements that have taken place have been with strings attached. After the floods of 2011, funds were released to the affected districts' EDOs Health to cater for the medical needs of the flood victims. The EDO Health had approached the charity Omar Medicare, to help set up medical camps in affected zones. The management of Omar Medicare agreed to the proposition and set up a total of 3 medical camps in conjunction with the local EDO Health.

Omar Medicare set up camps where they provided: medicines and the services of their own doctors that the NGO employs as well as their own equipment. There were picture opportunities where the EDO Health attended and the event was covered by the local press

and media, in which the article detailed how the EDO had allocated 500,000 Pakistani Rupees in cash funds in order to hold each of the medical camps.

The management of the charity explicitly rebut the claim, showing records of how the costs were borne by the charity itself, and that they had not received any money from the EDO to hold the medical-camp. Instead Omar Medicare had provided all equipment, medical and other, medications, provided the services of their own medical staff, as well as paid for their own transportation –including costs of petrol. They had only interacted with the EDO when he came for the event to be recorded by the media.

Upon this information that was flashed in the local media, the head of Omar Medicare, a local landlord, contacted the EDO that had brought the proposal to its management. The alleged corrupt act was questioned whereupon the EDO Health offered an explanation that “we all need something to live on” and offered to give a portion of the financial gains to the Charity’s director, which was rejected. This resulted in Omar Medicare suspending all future cooperation with the local government regarding health provision. The reasons provided is that being charity they work on reputation and cannot afford to taint this reputation by involving themselves with the corrupt officials.

Larkana

The situation in Larkana is in stark contrast to that of Multan. There is an increase in the presence of NGOs, both local and international, that are providing immunization facilities. However, according to households interviewed 40% considered that they had no access to government healthcare, whereas 28.4% of the households were dissatisfied with the services. (UNDP 2010)

Basic Health Units (BHUs) that were part of the predicted improvements that local government was to bring to primary healthcare provision, are still not in place. The locals complain that the few BHUs that actually are in place are not manned by certified medical

staff; sometimes they are staffed by a dispenser at others it can be the *chaprassi* (Urdu for caretaker).

The amount of citizens turning to government facilities reduced over the years, and this was mirrored by an increased use of unqualified practitioners, such as natural healers or local *hakims* (local Ayurveda healers.) The reasons mentioned is the ease of access and the fact that these unqualified practitioners are always available, even for home visits (DTCE/CIET social audit 2004/2005).

Another complaint that continues to be present is the lack of medicines at the government medical facilities, both absence of emergency medical staff and lack of medicine is said to have resulted in fatalities in some situations.

No Healthcare –still strings attached

The most common question raised by the local experts is where are the funds going if there are no results on ground? One problem is that the locals are unaware of the reporting systems, that is where to lodge their complaints regarding the lack of facilities available. On ground the strong presence of healthcare programs being offered are those by the NGOs on ground, of the households interviewed a total of 45% had got children immunised through drive of government. Over the years the private healthcare providers have seen an increase in patients, because many of the locals complain that, when a doctor finally is available at the clinics they are more interested in running their private clinics instead of actually tending to the patients at hand. The problem can be related to the fact that nationally the doctors have been striking since the start of 2011, regarding pay scales being a dire 22,000:- PKR a month, whereas a constable inspector is making 23,000:-.

7.3 Law enforcement

Police

The one service that was not fully decentralised was that of the law enforcement – the police force. Initially the police functions were planned to be devolved to the district level, however

till date it falls under the purview of the federal government, even though politically, the police is answerable to the district *nazim*. The fact that the recruitment as well as all aspects pertaining to the police employment still falls under the federal government, has effectively resulted in same opinions from both Multan and Larkana.

The results from the Social Audit (2010) show that in cases pertaining to personal safety in Multan, only 20.5% would contact the police, with only a 13.1% in Larkana. The numbers decrease drastically in both cities in cases pertaining to the reporting of a threat to personal property; Multan 6.6% and 5.5% in Larkana.

The opinions about the police were similar in both Multan and Larkana where the overwhelming majority interviewed believed that the police was not there to help you, in fact if you had been robbed or mugged it is better to ‘deal’ with the situation on your own, because reporting the crime to the police is met with hindrances and unhelpful behaviour on the part of the police officers. The experts felt that, if one went to the police apart from not receiving any help, one should expect to lose even the little you have left, in bribes etc.

Both cities reported no improvement in the local law enforcement. The citizenry in both cities highlighted the absence of trust in the police force and the courts to deliver justice. Anecdotal evidence that was presented was that in majority of the situations, wherever there has been a dacoit or robbery, the police is said to be party to the act itself. Having prior knowledge of the robbery puts the police in a position to extort a ‘fee’ for their service of registering complaints and carrying out investigations, the fee varies according to the victim, the richer the victim is perceived the higher the fee.

The apparent change however has been seen in an increase in the number of police stations available, the force suffers from corruption they remain inaccessible to the public.

A factor common to both cities was that of fear. The experts report fear as the main cause of not turning to the police, being scared of them and their ways, which include misuse of power wherever and whenever, such as reporting a fake case and use it against one.

Elected local officials

Another aspect of the overall quality of government improving is that of accessibility of local government servants. The local government staff such as the union councillors, UC, (the lowest tier of local government), are elected from within the people, as such they are willing to meet with the citizens. At this level it is easier to meet, if there is a grievance you know exactly who one should turn to. If the matter is within their power they will be able to help resolve your issue, if outside their purview they will take the issue further up such the local government hierarchy, such as the *tehsil nazim* (sub-district level) or district nazim; to the level where it can be resolved. The previous set up, prior to the Devolution Plan, made it impossible to meet with the politicians and the MNAs etc. as they were based in the provincial capitals and would only be seen during election times. But as the UCs are from amongst the local population they are easily available as are the mayors. Resulting from this, the way one is approached by the police also became different. They would actually register your complaint and try to resolve matters unlike before when the complaints would go unheard.

Impartiality

The overall impression from the empirical data is that political might and economic influence will affect the impartiality of services offered. A factor that differed strongly between the two cities was that of impartiality on the basis of ethnicity.

In Multan, comparatively to Larkana there is not much importance given to the cultural differences, like ethnicity. There is more tolerance reported in Multan, which is also evidenced by the fact that there is so little ethnic violence there. One reason for this can be the diversity of the local population of the city itself, whereas Larkana is ethnically much more homogenous.

One of the medical staff elaborates on his experiences when serving in Larkana “I have been stationed within the interiors of Sindh and there I have witnessed a lot of difference in

treatment. If a Punjabi were to be at a Sindhi hospital, then the Sindhi will be seen first then the Punjabi.”

8. Wadero/ Zamindar System?

The general impression when asked the importance of belonging to a wadera family background in order to get into the political scene is overwhelming – this is the overarching prerequisite if one wants to be in politics. Out of all the experts interviewed all agreed that in order to get into politics, having good rapport with the local elites was not sufficient, but one must be from those families. The explanations offered are that both power and money are needed in order to get into the so called ‘game’.

An example is the present Paksitani Parliamment, in which only a handful of MPs are there due to merit, otherwise all of them are there because of their family history and background. Examples abound, one in point is the current leadership of the country; the President, Asif Ali Zardari, is a wadero married into the Bhutto family; Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Reza Gilani, local elite of Multan, Foreign Minister Khar; the daughter of the prominent wadero Khar of the Punjab.

PM Gilani’s tenure as PM has said to make a huge difference to the family’s stronghold within political power, because from the start politics has been within the stronghold of some families, it is not changing hands, it has been coming down in the family. There are no new people.

Patterns can be traced of how one clan spreads its tentacles in the political arena; placing one of its members into one political party, simultaneously as another family member is joins the opposition. It’s the same tactics with different faces. Furthermore, in Pakistan, the *wadero* families whether they are in Sind or Punjab, all are somehow related. The patterns are such that they intermarry in order to keep alliances.

The interesting trend however was that the overwhelming majority mentioned the stronghold of these families to be prominent at the district levels, from where they compete for the seats in the Provincial and National Assemblies (i.e. MNAs and MPAs). It is at these levels, national and provincial, where the local elite families rigorously compete between each other especially for the MNA seats, during which much money is spent. In Multan the MNA listings show a clear competition between the local elites whereas the MNA listings for Larkana all belong to the PPP – the Bhutto family’s political party. Where there has been competition there has been a trickle down effect to the local population, however these families are said to always retain the stronghold on their areas; it is a territorial thing.

The competition aspect is seen as positive by the local experts, stating *“if there is fragmentation there is more chances of criticism being raised. Like the example of Multan, there is a situation where a comparison is made by the people. On the other hand if there is one clan then they have a monopoly so they are safe from public scrutiny as well as comparison.”*

One expert explains that every area is under certain MNAs, and the citizenry are obliged to MNAs or Landlords, which results in them casting their votes wherever the MNA or Landlord tells them to. They don’t tend to voice complaints instead they tolerate the injustices that are done to them, for fear of having their situations worsened and also because it is very rare for people to voice their complaints publicly.

The introduction of the local government system has said to have made the government more accessible – the people are able to access the government, whereas before you could not do so when there was the system of MNA and MPA, all of which operated from the Provincial capitals. However, it is only at the sub-district levels that the accessibility is felt. The MNAs are voted from city districts, such as Multan and Larkana. At this level the MNAs, although elected by the citizens, remain unavailable to the local population.

Wilder (1999) manages to capture this attitude through quotes from some former members of the National Assembly from Punjab as saying:

“People now think that the job of an MNA and MPA is to fix their gutters, get their children enrolled in school, arrange for job transfers...[These tasks] consume your whole day....” (p. 196); “Look, we get elected because we are ba asr log [effective people] in our area. People vote for me because they perceive me as someone who can help them...Somebody’s son is a matric fail and I get him a job as a teacher or a government servant. . .”(p. 204).

Apart from giving a gist of the attitude prevalent within the MNAs these quotes also give a starting point to the reasons behind voter selection, of which only a minor aspect is portrayed.

9. Voting: representational tool?

Experts agree that voting today is still strongly based on the biraadari system. Many also argue that the biraadari system itself is not as strong as it used to be. It appears that the weakening of the biraadari system is superficial, because when local experts are asked where they cast their vote the response is “wherever Baba jee (the head of our family) tells us to.”

Reasons advanced for the continuation of these voting patterns are that first of all, that is what has been happening generation after generation. Apart from tradition, the reason elaborated upon is that it is these elders that are turned to in order to resolve matters of concern; ranging from dealing with land titles and getting ID cards or any issue for that matter. The reason is plain and simple – the citizens do not have the same connections as the elders do.

“No one is voting on manifestos. It’s voting by family. The head of the family keeps the IDs of all its family members and you say ‘here take 200 rupees and go vote tomorrow’ The reason they vote for their own people is because they know that only their own biraadari member will help them in time of need, an example is that of going to the courts... The Varraich will get the Varraich vote and the Gilani will get the Gilani votes.”

The voting is not based on the basis of the individual – it takes the form of communal voting. The question of poorer farmers voting for someone they believe in does not occur because

they are more concerned with their income and hence would willingly sell their vote, honesty is not priority for the vote collector. Another situation that occurs regularly is exchanging ones vote for a favour to be carried out.

Apart from the biradaari basis of voting, 'vote collection' also ensues at the shrines where the waderas sit, especially during the annual *Urs*.¹⁷ Experts concur that during these occasions, the local elites not only earn a lot of money from the followers that are visiting and donating to the shrines, but also that these instances are key to an insight into the power the local elites exercise, a small example is people touching the feet of these leaders.

The penalties for not casting ones votes in the 'right' direction can be costly for some. An example given by one expert is "the last MNA, he penalized the area that did not vote for him; they get robberies arranged and also keep basic means such as gas connections. If you are a public servant they make life hell for you. They want you to be under their control."

In the rural areas the issue of voting is one of gravity, where the citizens look at who is the most powerful one (when casting their votes) as they are concerned with who it is that can help them in cases of emergency, therefore a person's integrity etc. don't really matter as much.

It is this communal voting, based on the biraadari system that has formed the foundations for the strength of the local elites. It highlights that decentralisation in these conditions, where power structures are as such, cannot bring about true representation as voting is largely based on clan loyalties/connections etc. Voting is not a representational tool of public choices instead it is more of an indicator of the strongholds of the existing clans.

10. Overview of findings and recommendations

Both Multan and Larkana were part of the nation-wide decentralisation programme. Apart from sharing similar social and economic aspects, both cities are known for their local elites

¹⁷ The annual celebration of the death of a Sufi saint and the occasion for a pilgrimage to his tomb.

and their capture of local governments. However the fundamental difference between the cities lies in the structure of their local elites, Multan's is made up of more than two clans, whereas Larkana is the monopoly of the Bhutto family.

The evidence of the competition and monopoly situation is found in the MNA representation; the six MNA seats of Multan being split between the clans that form the local elite, whereas the four MNAs of Larkana all belong to the political party of Larkana's local elite – the Bhutto family.

The effect of the structure of the local elites resulted in the cities experiencing vastly different outcomes as a result of decentralisation. The interactive effect of this was that the QoG in Multan increased alongside an increase in local corruption levels. On the other hand, the effect in Larkana was a lowering of overall QoG together with an increase in local levels of corruption.

The stronghold of these local elites is strengthened through the voting system, which is based on the social structure of biraadaris – which is prevalent throughout the country. The voting system is not representative of the local choices as voting is not individual but on a communal basis.

This study sheds light on how decentralisation can create new layers of government, not effectively bringing government closer to people, only bringing the sub-district level of government closer to the people, while substantially allowing local elites to maintain the hold on power. The study emphasises the importance of nurturing local understandings of concepts such as decentralisation and representation, warning of the dangers that are brought about through implementation of blueprints.

When recommending implementation of decentralisation programmes, policymakers should take into account local social structures. The absence of this has resulted in decentralisation efforts creating stronger regional disparities within the borders of one nation.

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Annexes

I



Annex II



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

MEASURING THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT AND SUBNATIONAL VARIATION

1. Do you agree with where our data places you within your country as regards to QoG? If not, why?
2. Do you think this assessment reflects how foreign investors see your region?
3. Does your region receive more or less FDI, tourism or other outside capital due to its perceived QoG?

MEDIA

4. What level of confidence do you have in the following institutions? :
 - Police
 - Media
 - Government of the region
 - Political parties
 - Business owners
 - Hospitals
5. What level of confidence do you have in the news you get from:
 1. Television
 2. Radio
 3. Newspapers
 4. On-line news agencies
6. Do you consider that there are obstacles to the freedom of press in the region? In your opinion, what are the most important? Is there any specific factor or agent, which hinders or affects the freedom of press today?
7. Do you think that the news you read, listen or watch in the local media, truly reflects what is happening in the region?
8. How independent do you think the media in this Region?

9. Does the media have total freedom to report what is happening in issues of...?:

1. Corruption
2. Security
3. Economics
4. Politics
5. Public health

10. Do you think the media protects or attacks the Government of the Region? Why?

11. Which form of media do you think is more reliable: state-owned, or private-owned? Why?

12. In your opinion, there is more freedom of press today, or twenty years ago? Why?

Recruitment process and working-place

13. Are various types of contacts (personal/ business/ political) important when hiring new employees? Do you think it differs between this region and other regions in the country?

14. What is the percentage of employees who have been hired on a political/personal/business contacts basis?

15. How do you perceive the long-term stability of young employees in public service and their interest in a career within the public institutions?

16. How do you account for the length of the hiring process in the public institutions? (a short procedure might point out at possible corruption, insufficient publicity and political involvement).

17. Could you state the approximate length of the hiring process?

18. What steps could an employee take when discovering that something is wrong on his or her working-place?

18 (i) Without the fear of repercussions at work?

The following situation occurs, a public employee suspects that another colleague (or a political superior) is engaging in some corrupt activity or is giving special treatment to some business/use of the administration at the expense of others. Would he/she report this to some newspaper/ responsible authorities such as the judicial system?

19. Is there adequate protection to rely on, against any unjustified sanction, for those who make such disclosure in the public interest to the responsible authorities or media?

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND SERVICES

20. What strategy is used in your district in order to enforce the compliance and good

conduct of the employees in the public service? Is there any punishment? If so, what? Who imposes it? Or, on the contrary, is there a system of rewards as incentives, e.g. reward/bonus schemes?

21. Can you provide any examples of the measures implemented to enforce good behavior of public authorities?

22. Does the general public (citizens) "voice complaints" when they acknowledge the occurrence of a corrupt act? Does this public opinion have the potential to act as a constraint on the authorities. (Is the public pressure present and effective in the enforcement of good conduct of public officials?)

23. Is corruption investigated in your region by justice courts, the media or NGO's? Are you aware of cases where corruption acts by public officials in your region have been trialed and prosecuted?

24. Are you aware of any particular corruption monitoring mechanism in your region?

Devolutions impact/ changes in region

25. Have you observed a significant change in the quality of public services since the introduction of local government? If so, please specify the level of change:

26. Do you expect Quality of government to change in the next five years (for better or for worse)?

27. Please specify the level of improvement of the services provided by the following public institutions after the devolution:

a. Schools

b. Universities

c. Hospitals

d. Court of law

e. Police

28. What are some positive and negative aspects regarding the public administration during the last 10 years in your district?

Regional Autonomy

29. Regarding the autonomy in this particular district, to what extent are the following

practices/ elements autonomous from the center?

- a. Recruitment of public staff
- b. Design of public structure (organization chart)
- c. Elaboration of regional laws
- d. Control of regional natural resources
- e. Incentives to foreign investment
- f. Allocation of foreign investment

30. Is there any autonomy in this particular region in the organization of the public administration? If so, what particular elements differ?

31. To what extent does the regional organization chart (public structure) differ from the central government?

32. Do you think that the decentralization of public services helps to stimulate entrepreneurship in the region and its counties? Why and how?

33. To what extent do the county or municipalities in the region have a tax legislation of their own?

34. To what extent does the regional autonomy increase QoG?

35. In regard to budget planning, using what criteria is the budget split from the central government? Do the regional distinct district councils have complete or partial autonomy in deciding how the local budget is used?

Impartiality when acquiring the different services; health care services, education and law enforcement.

36. Which of the following factors, do you think could be important when explaining perception of **fairness/bias/impartiality** in the three welfare services; Health care services, Education and Law enforcement in your region?

a) Political influence - “people with the adequate political connections seem to be able to chose the best schools not because of skills but because they have influence...”

b) Economic influence
(e.g. people with more money seem to be able to chose the best schools not because of skills but because they have an economic important influence)

- c) Cultural differences - people who speak a particular language, who “are from here”, or who belong to to “right” ethnic group or identity seem to be able to chose the best schools not because of skills but because they have influence...
- d) Languages differences
- e) Gender
- f) Relatives (close family or friend)

NOTE: In regard to the question below there is a choice depending on what region you are in. The question with positive connotation is intended for the well performing regions whereas the question with negative connotation is for the IP of a under performing region.

37. Can you account for one or more illustrative examples in which one can see how fairness/bias/impartiality/lack of corruption – preferably, but not exclusively, in any of the three welfare services pointed out – has prevailed? That is, some example in which you have said: yes, things work here.

E.g. some partial/corrupt decision was about to be taken (i.e. a child from poor background not accepted in a school, a hotel about to be built on the coast, a bribe from a foreign firm that was offered) but was not (maybe because it went into press, or because other official complained, or because the public official did not accept the bribe).

Can you account for one or more illustrative examples in which one can see how fairness/bias/impartiality in any of the three welfare services could have been affected negatively? That is, some example in which you feel things are not working?

38. How would you compare the perceived impartiality in the three welfare services, health care services, education, and law enforcement to other regions in your country?

39. Are you aware of any particular policy/policies that have been implemented in order to increase the fairness/bias/impartiality in any of the three welfare services, health care services, education and law enforcement?

Annex III

Correspondence with Anwar Shah

A case study would be very interesting but would require major efforts in data collection. It may be less onerous to do an international cross-section study that controls for macro variables that may have some relevance for elite capture e.g. absence of land reforms, concentration of industry ownership, income inequality, incidence of poverty, nature of political finance, concentration of media ownership, democratic participation, election turnout . ethnic and cultural variables, colonial heritage etc.

Since your research focus is on elite capture, Karachi and Lahore may not be good examples. Instead Multan and Larkana or similar towns where feudals dominate politics may be better examples in seeing whether or not 2001 devolution had any impact on political participation , service delivery and incidence of corruption.