Investigating the Importance of Landed Power and other Determinants of Local Body Election Outcomes

by

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I. Introduction

The military government in Pakistan, which assumed power in October 1999, is in the process of devolving responsibility or power to union council, *tehsil* and district levels.[1] This has sparked concerns about whom, in the current socio-economic milieu, power will devolve to. In this monograph, we explore what the constraints are with regards to political participation and what the determinants of electoral success and failure are.

Since the rhetoric for devolution was that it would result in empowerment of people at the grassroots level, a controversy emerged on whether this was likely to happen. On the one hand, civil society groups contended that this devolution would merely strengthen the existing landed power structure, since now the district administration, police and judiciary will formally report to the district *nazim*.[2] As it is, they argue, even when the district administration had a separate line of authority, they did the bidding of the feudal lord in cahoots with the police and courts. Thus, instead of serving the ordinary people, they oppressed them.[3] On the other hand, the landed gentry, such as members of the Farmers Association of Pakistan, argued that this perception is misplaced and, in fact, the size of land holding is not a factor in

1 Government of Pakistan (2000). The province and the federal government are the tiers above the district level and wards and villages are the tiers below the union council level.

2 Governor or Mayor is the closest approximation for *nazim*. Prior to the devolution plan, the district commissioner, a member of the civil service elite district management group, exercised administrative, law and order and judicial authority over the district.

3 Yasin (1999, p. 22).

even district level elections, leave alone elections at lower tiers such as the union councils. The purpose of this study was to do a rigorous and objective investigation of this issue.

Under the devolution plan, direct elections are being conducted at the union council level over three phases.[4] In all, 21 seats are being contested including the joint *nazim* and *naib* (deputy) *nazim* ticket.[5] There are eight general seats, which can be contested by women, four worker/peasant seats, which can also be contested by women, four general seats and two worker/peasant seats reserved for women and finally a minority seat under a separate electorate system.[6] The worker/peasant seats address the issue of exclusion of poorer groups from the electoral politics and this is a less radical method of achieving inclusion than say, land reform.[7] In section II, we discuss some of the main conceptual issues pertaining to elite capture and local body elections. In section III, we review the debate regarding landed power and representation in more detail and report the evidence that has a bearing on this

4 At the time of writing, the first and second phase union council elections for 18 and 20 districts were completed in January and March, 2001 respectively. The third and fourth phases are expected to be conducted for 19 and 31 districts in May and June respectively. The remaining districts, excluding AJK (Azad Jamnu and Kashmir) and Islamabad, will have elections in the fifth phase in July.

5 The *nazim* and *naib nazim* at the union council level will automatically become the councilors at the district and *tehsil* level respectively. All councilors will subsequently elect the *nazim* and *naib nazim* at the higher tiers. All local body assemblies are expected to be in place by August 14, 2001.

6 The minority groups protested the separate election system that they view as marginalizing them from the mainstream, and hence most boycotted the first phase and have announced a continued boycott. Ninety one percent of minority seats remained unfilled in phase I.

7 Maximum land ownership of 5 acres or demonstrated worker occupational categories are the criteria for contesting the peasant and worker seats respectively. One could argue that having reserved seats are against the democratic norm of full and unrestricted participation by all. However, we support such reservations in the short run as affirmative action against political and social exclusion.

debate. We outline our research method in section IV, and qualitative and quantitative research findings are presented in section V. In section VI we present procedural recommendations based on feedback from the field regarding improving the election process.

II. Conceptual issues: elite capture

Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000) draw on the existing literature to extend a model of capture of elections at the local and national levels. The hypothesis is that the lower the level of government, the greater the extent of capture by vested interests. One of the findings that emerged on a conceptual level is that capture increases with illiteracy, poverty and inequality. The reasoning is that voters are likely to be better informed at the national level or the rich less well organized and confront greater communication and coordination problems at the national level.

The overall conclusion is nuanced and a number of determinants of capture are identified which "pull in different directions." These determinants or the parameters of the conceptual model include party based electoral competition, campaign funds and district heterogeneity. While the parameters identified above are important in a mature democracy, wealth and landed power are likely to be critical in a less established one.

We concur that elite capture in rural constituencies is important, even at the lower tiers. However, the mechanisms via which various variables influence electoral outcomes differ a great deal from those identified for a mature democracy. Bardhan and Mookerjee's analysis of mechanisms is party politics specific, given the different political context of the analysis. The associations identified in the equations below represent our view of these mechanisms in Pakistan's rural context, and, in section V, we empirically test our hypothesis with qualitative and quantitative evidence.

$$V = V (E (SD), E (CS), I) \qquad (1)$$

Where

V	=	Votes
E (SD)	=	Expected service delivery
E (CS)	=	Expected community service
I	=	Intimidation

Thus equation (1) suggests that voting (V) is premised on several key factors. First, the expectation that the individual concerned will be effective in delivering services (SD). These include services across the board such as in the social sector and assistance with the administration, police and the judiciary. This has been referred to by Wilder (1999) as the ability to deliver patronage. Second, individuals may also secure votes by developing a reputation for doing work for the community (CS). Finally, brute force (I) may be an adequate basis for securing votes, by cultivating gangsters or other means, if the candidate neither has the track record for delivering anything nor has the intention of delivering anything.

In short, votes are cast based on perceive political effectiveness of candidates or their perceived ability to deliver services or patronage. This in turn depends on the candidates networking ability and that in turn depends on their wealth and landed power.[8] Similarly, it is the landed and wealthy that have the means to engage in community service on the positive side or engage in intimidation on the negative side. Hence, the bottom line is that political effectiveness in local government elections depends on the candidate's wealth and landed power. This is more so the case because candidates perceived as effective by virtue of their networking ability also command the loyalty of their *beraderi* (clan) and can secure party affiliation.

8 Landed power can be defined in absolute terms as the total size of land holdings or in relative terms as the ratio of individual land-holdings relative to the total stock of lands possessed by the village.

PE = PE (((NWA(LP,W)), CL (NWA(LP, W)), PA (NWA(LP,W)), I (LP, W)) (2)

Where

PE	=	Political effectiveness
NWA	=	Net working ability
CL	=	Clan loyalty
PA	=	Party affiliation
L P	=	Landed power
W	=	Wealth

The main point in equation (2) is that wealth and power drives all the determinants of political effectiveness. This point is important since it has long been thought that clan loyalty or party affiliation are independent determinants of political effectiveness. If we are right, the political implications are of widespread exclusion. While there is never a level playing field in the political domain, political maturity ensures wider access to public office.

The conceptual framework above suggests that one means of providing wider political access would require diffusion of power, and land reform would be the most obvious policy measure. However, if administrative, judicial and police reform provides wide access to services, voting criteria is likely to become issue based and notions of political effectiveness would change. Also, as earlier indicated, the government in Pakistan is attempting to provide wider access by reserving seats for the excluded, i.e. women, peasants and workers. Unfortunately, by virtue of concentration of wealth, the rich can subvert reform attempts and an analysis of reserved seats is instructive in this regard and hence provided in section V. First, we turn to the debate about landed power and political exclusion in more detail.

III. The debate and some evidence

Civil society groups argue that while poor salaries of district administration, police and the judiciary are part of the problem, the real problem is that large landlords (and other influentials)

have been able to exploit the needs of the police and courts to serve their purpose. Had land been completely equally distributed, the abuse of police and magistrates would still be present without far reaching police and judicial reforms. However, given very unequal land holdings, it is likely that feudal power would be able to subvert such reforms. Thus the issue of land concentration, as a source of power that would allow the capture and subversion of district government via elections, is perceived as a real problem in many districts.

Ultimately, whether or not landed power can be parleyed into electoral power is an empirical question. Wilder (1999), in a very insightful and valuable study, has argued, using interviews, secondary data, constituency returns and polling station returns, that voting patterns have changed in the Punjab Province away from feudal power and other social determinants like caste towards party tickets i.e. party candidates most likely to deliver "development" or "patronage" are likely to be elected. This is how he explained the electoral defeat of many major PPP (Pakistan People's Party) landholders by PML (Pakistan Muslim League) candidates in the 1997 elections. While the empirical exercise in fairly convincing, voting for party does not preclude that votes are still captured by landed and other sources of power. Instead, Wilder's analysis suggests the overlay of another dimension on the existing social determinants of voting behavior in Pakistan's political culture.

In other words, those reaching the assemblies may have a party identification, but still be local notables backed by landed or other sources of power (this is an issue we explored in our study). In a UNDP/NORAD funded report, Adil et. al. (2000, pp. 12-14), using interviews and press reports, determined that large landlords are the largest group in the National Assembly and have managed to hold about half the seats since the 1970 elections. Beyond that, the report shows that electoral politics have become a preserve for the rich.

Despite this evidence, some have argued that feudalism in Pakistan is dead due to a natural process of land fragmentation resulting from Islamic inheritance laws and perhaps inheritance dissipation. Perhaps this is so in some districts and *tehsils*. However, aggregate statistics suggest an increase in land cultivated by large farmers. Table 1 below presents the size distribution of farm holdings to highlight this point.[9]

Table 1: Change in land ownership and cultivated area by farm size.

	1980		1990	
	% of farms	% of cult. area	% of farms	% of cult. area
Farm size (acres)				
< 5	74	38	81	43
5 - 10	17	26	12	23
10 - 20	6	17	5	15
20 - 60	3	16	2	12
> 60	-	3	-	7

Sources: *Economic Survey 1992 - 93*, Statistical Supplement, p. 77 for the 1980 numbers and *Economic Survey 1995 - 96*, Statistical Appendix, p. 53 for the 1990 numbers.

Notes: 1 acre = 0.4047 hectares.
\- = on-significant percentage statistically.

Two points are particularly noteworthy. First, large farms accounted for a negligible number of total farms in both 1980 and 1990, but the area they cultivated more than doubled from 3 percent to 7 percent. Second, it is evident from the table above that the middle farm size categories are thinning out and there is greater cultivation at the smallest and largest farm-size category. Despite the pattern evident from the data above, M. H. Khan (1999, p. 121) has shown that the gini coefficient, which in this case measures the concentration of land ownership, while still very high at above 0.5 in 1990, has declined over a 40- year period[10].

9 This table is drawn from Khan (1999, Table 10.7).

10 The gini co-efficient varies from 0 to 1 with the former representing complete equality and the latter complete in equality.

Another source of information about the influence of large landlords is the information collected by the public hearings on devolution conducted by civil society organizations in districts across the country.[11] Forty-two hearings were conducted and the reports of twenty-six were made available for analysis. The purpose of the exercise was to document voices from the grassroots level concerning their perspectives on power devolution. The participants in the assemblies included social workers, development practitioners, political activists, media persons, students, teachers, doctors, ex-politicians, government functionaries, traders, farmers, trade unionists, lawyers, imams, college teachers, landlords and youth. The average numbers of participants in the assemblies were 180 males and 45 females, although the participation varied a great deal across districts.

The standard method followed was to first have a pre-assembly preparatory process that included two main activities. First, over a period of several weeks prior to the assembly, locals were contacted and the purpose of the assembly explained and preliminary discussion on devolution initiated. Local government functionaries were also contacted and informed about the process. Second, one-day group work was held a day prior to the assembly which led to a set of recommendations. These recommendations were reported back to the plenary on the day of the assembly and discussed. The consensus, if achieved, and minority views, if it was not, were documented.

In the group work, questions were asked on the various aspects of devolution including barriers, location and structure of government, functions, relations between representatives and the administration, representation, electoral process, financing and sustainability issues. The relevant question from our point of view was on the main perceived barriers to an empowered community. Table 2 below documents that 22 out of 25 communities that explicitly identified *waderaism*, *khangiri*,

11 The process was managed by about fifty such organizations.

jagirdari, *sardars*, "feudalism" or landlordism as among the barriers as a barrier to empowerment at the grassroots level..

Table 2: District public hearings identifying feudalism as a barrier to empowerment at the grassroots level by provinces

Province	Total	Number identifying feudalism as a barrier
Balochistan	3	3
Punjab	7	6
NWFP	10	8
Sindh	5	5

Source: Public hearings report.
Note: One report from Sindh was not used since it followed a different format and this particular question was not asked.

Given that feudalism is clearly perceived as an impediment to grassroots empowerment, the fear therefore is that those being directly elected or those being elected via the reserved seats (women, peasants and workers) will be directly or indirectly influenced or beholden to the local landlords [12].

While this is interesting information, this evidence can only be viewed as suggestive. First, the public hearings drew a self-select gathering that is in no sense a random sample in a statistical sense of the word. Second, even if this was evidence from a random sample of households, critics argue that, on a sensitive issue of this nature, tacit coaching for desired responses is likely. Thus, further research was needed to study the impact of landed power on local body election outcomes. This research is an attempt to provide evidence in this regard.

Land is by no means the only source of wealth, connections and the ability to deliver patronage. We therefore explore other avenues of influence bartering. Finally, it was conjectured that in the absence of party based elections, *beraderi* (clans or kinship)

12 For interesting views for and against land reforms for effective devolution see Kothari (1996, pp.35) and Manor (1998, pp. 58)

will play an inordinately important role in local government elections. We also explored this issue.

IV. Research method

We purposely selected two districts, Larkana and Muzaffargarh, out of the eighteen districts in which the first phase of local government elections were conducted. Out of the eight districts in the Punjab, we selected Muzafargarh, because we expected a strong role of landed power. Elections were held in three districts of Sindh. We selected Larkana based on its rich political culture. We were informed that landed power is more significant in Jacobabad and Shikarpur. However, Larkana has a rich political history and we therefore expected party politics to dominate despite the ban on parties. There was a possibility that we might not have found the influence of landed power on electoral politics in Larkana compared to Jacobabad and Shikarpur. However, we chose Larkana, since we thought it would be interesting to test our hypothesis pertaining to landed power and election outcomes in a district in Sindh that is perceived to be dominated by party politics. This gave us the opportunity to explore the interaction between landed power and party politics.

Two rural *tehsils* were randomly selected in each district and, within them, two union councils were selected randomly. Thus, there were a total of eight union councils in the sample. Within the selected union councils, we attempted to interview all candidates who participated in the elections to get both points of view. We had a very high success rate in this regard across all union councils.[13]

Apart from structured questionnaires eliciting responses from the candidates, we conducted focus group discussions in each village of the union council in which a candidate resided. The interviewers maintained a field diary for their field reports and the qualitative sub-sections are based on these reports and the field-team leaders own observations and participation in the group

13 The response rate was 80 percent or better.

discussions. Finally, we also randomly selected two villages in the union council and randomly selected 10 percent of the households in the selected village to get a voter response on a structured questionnaire.[14] We interviewed 265 candidates, 452 voters and held 92 focus group discussions

Thus this study draws on several sources of information. Each of the four intensively trained man-woman teams had a field-team supervisor working with them. The training included mock sessions to achieve questionnaire familiarization and refinement of field-technique and a one-day pre-test session in each district for the same objective and for testing the questionnaires and evolving the field-strategy. Thus the questionnaires went through several iterations before being finally used in the field.

Given our method, we can confidently say that our results are representative of the two districts we selected. This is as we intended it.

V. Findings

A. Qualitative results

As indicated in the research method section, the results reported in this qualitative section are based on a synthesis of field reports based on focus group discussions in each union council (UC) village in which there was a candidate.

1. Muzaffargarh

A. *Background*[15]

Muzaffargarh district is one of the hubs of traditional power elites. The Khar family resides in this district as do many other

14 In Sindh, deh is an informal tier between a union councils and a village. In Larkana, an average union council has about 10 dehs and each deh has about 10 villages. We discovered in the pre-test that the size of villages was extremely small in some cases. Even a colony of 5 households could get itself registered as a village. Because of this, we decided to randomly select four villages in Sindh to be included in the sample.

15 The background sub-sections are based on general observation and discussions conducted by the field team leaders.

well-known and established political families. While Muzaffargarh is a rich agricultural area, most of its inhabitants are poor, underrepresented in decision-making institutions, and poorly educated. This is a result of severe income and resource inequalities in favor of the landed elites. In recent years, industrialists have also become influential, especially those owning sugar and cotton mills. The socio-economic position of the common person in Muzaffargarh has improved only slightly over the past few decades. Women in this part of the country are marginalized and their participation in public life is minimal. It is even considered taboo for a woman to actively pursue an education, let alone engage in politics. Nevertheless, both the domination of traditional elites and women's subordination seems to have decreased to some extent over the past few decades.

B. Analysis

The predominant issues that came to the fore in this election are those of landed power and *beraderism* (clan loyalty). The role of political parties, including religious parties, was also prominent, albeit to a lesser extent although allegiances are often not overt. This is what we have found in Muzaffargarh. The true extent to which power peddling has taken place at the local level will be revealed when *tehsil*/district, and then later on, provincial and national elections are held. Nevertheless, judging from the first phase elections, it is quite clear that the above-mentioned themes will be central, and it can be expected that there will be inter-linkages between the various sources of power that facilitate planned political outcomes.

While the picture painted above would imply that there is very little to feel optimistic about, a broader perspective provides some hope. For example, the general *mazdoor/kissan* (worker/peasant) seats were filled across the board and the opportunity for peasants and workers to participate was availed to a large extent. Similarly, a large number of women's seats were filled – this is congruent with the findings of the government, and other civil society organizations, that approximately 85 percent of all women's seats in the eighteen districts were filled. It may seem odd to frame

this as a positive sign, but the 33 percent representation for women is a new policy initiative, and, given that, just the filling of seats is a step forward [16]. Fieldwork indicated that many women councilors-elect are in the rubber stamp category, but these are perhaps landmarks on the long road to change.

In all, in the four union councils (UC) covered in Muzaffargarh, there were at least 45 candidates contesting elections. At an average of over two candidates per seat, this was slightly higher than the national average of about two. Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, the enthusiasm with which candidates took part in the election was tempered by the reality that those contesting the councilor/peasant/worker seats were only as important as the *nazim/naib nazim* pair that they supported. This election was shaped by *beraderi*/landed power/political party influence, to the extent that dominant political forces felt it worth their while to influence outcomes.

A disturbing but not unexpected finding was that in all four UCs, the seat for minorities remained vacant. All in all, the minority boycott across the country was quite effective, indicating the general discontent with the government's decision to to insist on separate electorates.

An important related issue in this regard is that this area of the country is a stronghold of the religious right parties, including the *Sipaha Sahaba*, *Tehrik-e-Jaffria*, and *Lashkar-e-Tayaba*. We observed their influence in a number of different ways. Many candidates who were supported by these parochial groups won, but interestingly, there were not too many cases in which entire panels representing these interests won. One union council, Jatoi Shumali, had the Senior Vice-Chairman of the Sipaha Sahaba win the *nazim* seat. We had originally planned to include this UC in our study but were "discouraged" from doing so by local clerics who proclaimed that we were infidel outsiders attempting to import unethical values into the area.

16 As pointed by our colleague Saba Gul Khatak, this again needs to be seen in the context of the cost of arresting the political process.

The nexus between established political groups and these religious forces was clear for all to see. In closely contested elections, all sorts of methods were used to try to discredit the opposition. Unsuccessful religious groups alleged there was widespread vote fraud and they resorted to moral arguments to push their interests. In general, the local culture seems to be one of submission to such forces, and this was reflected particularly in the inability of women to really play a notable role in politics. Voters were careful to not make any decisions that might result in a backlash either from reactionary forces or from the established elite.

This is one of the main reasons why it is important to reiterate the significance of the reasonable percentage of women's seats that were filled. Foremost in this regard is the fact that one woman was elected *nazim* in the of Jhalarein in Tehisil Jatoi UC. While this woman would not have been elected if she were not the wife of a local notable, the fact that it was acceptable for voters to vote a woman as *nazim* is a significant step. It helped that the family had a good reputation due to their having done service for the community. In any event, the reason why it is important to acknowledge this as a relative victory is that only when women come to the fore is it possible for them to assume a greater say in decision-making.

At this juncture, there was not a great deal of overt posturing by the political parties largely because they have been formally banned from taking part in the elections. Nevertheless, the established political networks are reliant largely on party support, and there seems to be reasonable evidence to suggest that this trend prevailed in this election too. While this election was to a large extent dominated by the *beraderi* vote, the smaller *beraderis* were not able to play as much of a role as they simply could not compete with the larger *beraderis*. They were however able to make able to make modest gains. For example, the Chauhan *beraderis* won all the women's seats in Dammer Wali Shumali. However, the larger *beraderis* took control whenever significant positions of power were felt to be at stake.

This also brings into focus the debate about the multi ward system. Larger constituencies harmed those without established political credentials, and those whose vote bank was founded upon smaller *beraderis*. It was very evident from field observation that the inter-related dominance of the landlord and large *beraderis* was exacerbated by the formal absence of political parties and the multi-ward system.

It is conceivable that under the umbrella of a political party, smaller *beraderis* could have mustered up votes through the formation of alliances. This view is supported in part by some evidence that political parties tended to operate as buffers for weaker candidates. In this way, those candidates (particularly those on the *nazim/naib nazim* ticket) who were interested in co-opting as many candidates as possible on their panels, developed allegiances with political parties. What this means is that alliances were not necessarily based on established groupings, but more on what was convenient to all parties involved. This is different than in say, Larkana, where the PPP has consistently dominated politics and most of its stalwarts remain the same.

In Muzaffargarh, the only permanent and long-standing allegiances with political parties were observed in the *jihadi* parties[17]. This, of course, is a different dynamic than that of the mainstream parties. Nevertheless, one can expect that alliances will become stronger over time, as posturing and lobbying has already started taking place for elections at the district levels. Despite the claims of parties such as *Tehrik-e-Insaf* that they have made inroads at the local level, there seems to be little evidence to support the notion that parties other than PML and PPP have really established themselves as viable political forces at the grassroots level.

C. Conclusion

There seems to be a fair amount of disappointment expressed by local people about the elections and failed expectations. This has

17 Religious parties advocating armed liberation struggle in Kashmir.

as much to do with a low level of awareness and a feudal mentality throughout the area as it does with the lack of alternative leadership options at the local level. There is no question that certain paradigms are beginning to be challenged. For example, the fact that local people are willing to discuss the long-standing reign of terror of the Khars is progress. But there is still a limited understanding of politics beyond the casting of a vote or of collective action and of affiliations beyond *beraderis*. The result is that people (males) were excited about the notion of devolution, but with social structures largely unchanged, there is little that was really likely to change.

This point needs to be distinguished from the notion that voters have no idea of who they are voting for and why. This is true to a large degree in the case of women voters, because they often vote as part of the family or *beraderi*. But poor voters are very well aware of the options available to them and vote with all these options and consequences in mind. The point being made here is that, so far, the options constrain them to operate within elite power dynamics.

2. Larkana

A. Background

A large majority of the people in the villages we visited in Larkana live in poor conditions. There are very limited facilities in the villages: schools, health care centers or alternative sources of livelihoods. Almost in every village, people told us that they want infrastructure like natural gas, schools, hospitals and a sewage system. Given the current drought, the poor also do not have water to irrigate their, or their landowners' land. Even medium landowners appear to have a poor standard of living. The lack of facilities and class biases of the district administration has further increased people's vulnerabilities and has made them more dependents on big landowners, a dependence that influences their voting patterns.

We randomly selected two *talukas* (tehsils) out of the seven in Larkana, Miro Khan (northeast) and Warah (southwest) for the research. In Miro Khan, there are seven union councils and

we selected Sijawal and Karira. In Warah, there are nine union councils and we selected Khandoo and Mirpur. As in the case of Muzaffargarh, the analysis below is based on a synthesis of findings in four union councils.

B. Analysis

Hierarchy of waderoism*: "Wadero"* is a Sindhi word derived from "*wado*". *Wado* means big, large and elder (in terms of age, wisdom, respect and influence). It does not have any direct linkage to the person's landholding but represents a sign of respect. *Wadero* or w*ado* is an informal head of the village. In rural Sindh, landholdings play a crucial role in peoples lives. By virtue of being a landowner, the *wado* acquires a position of leadership and reverence and is called *wadero*. He is looked up to for mediating conflicts and assisting people. All villages have a *wado* or *wadero* and all *beraderis* have their own *wado* also.

However, *wadero* is not a static concept and it has many contours to it. While every village and *beraderi* has its own *wadero*, if people of the village belong to one *beraderi*, the *wadero* of the *beraderi* is the same as the *wadero* of the village. However, if there is more than one *beraderis* in the village, then every *beraderi* has its own *wadero*. In village Tharhri, Brohi, Mastoi, Magsi and Punjabi had their own respective *wadero*. In a small mud house village of haris like Engineer Jo Goth in union council Sijawal, Ali Akbar Brohi is the *wadero*. He has only fifteen acres of land and he himself is a *hari*. Other villagers voted according to his instructions. In a big village like Sijawal, Dur Mohammad Magsi is the *wadero* with 300 acres of land and people voted for his son, nephew, sister and the land manager and his sister.

We observed a classic pattern of patron-client relationship along the hierarchy of *waderoism*. In ascending order, each patron himself is a client of a more powerful patron in the hierarchy. For example, in village Tharhri, the *wadero* of the Magsi *beraderi* asked people of his *beraderi* to vote for Manzoor Ahmad Magsi and his panel in union council Sijawal. Manzoor Ahmad Magsi is in turn supported by Mir Nadir Magsi, a big landlord and a former

MNA. The expectation is that Manzoor Ahmad Magsi will serve Nadir Magsi's interests in the district, provincial and national level elections. The voting behavior of the Magsi people living in a small village is controlled by their *wadero*. However, the chain goes up to the big landlord. There are of course many exceptions to this pattern. However, this is the general pattern that we observed in most places. Landowners have sharecroppers and they vote in block as instructed.

Big landowners played an active role in the formation of candidate panels for the various union council seats. However, they chose not to contest elections at the union council level. Mir Nadir Ali Magsi facilitated panel formation in union council Sijawal and Karira in *taluka* Miro Khan and Nawab Shabir Chandio did the same in union council Khandoo and Mirpur in *taluka* Warah. They will inevitably use their influence over union council members in the district, provincial and national level elections.

Panel (party) elections: The attempt to hold elections on a non-party basis in Larkana was thwarted. In all four union councils, elections were generally held on the basis of a panel of candidates formed for the various seats on a party basis. In *taluka* Miro Khan, a PPP panel won the elections. In union council Sijawal, *nazim* Manzoor Ahmad Magsi and n*aib nazim* Manzoor Alam Bhutto led the PPP panel. Aziz Rahman Bhutto contested the *nazim*'s seat on the Sindh National Front's panel and lost the elections. Zulfiqar Bhatti contested elections independently and lost. Similarly, in union council Mirpur of *taluka* Warah, panels were formed on party lines. Ghulam Mustafa Chandio and Saleemullah Choliani contested on PML (N)'s panel, while Mohammad Chandio and Ali Nawaz Chandio won the elections on "Awam Dost" (PPP) panel.

Interaction of party, beraderi and landed power: A finding we view as most significant concerns the overlay of party, *beraderi* and landed power. Big landlords are also local party leaders and they are also the *wadero* or *wado* of their *beraderi*s.

The intersection of various sources of power is concentrated in one prominent influential or prominent land owning family. Mir Nadir Magsi, the local PPP leader (and an ex- PPP MNA) has thousands of acres of land and is also the *wado* of Magsi tribe in Upper Sindh. He set the stage for elections in *taluka* Miro Khan. The story of *taluka* Warah is no different. Nawab Shabir Ahmed Chandio is the PPP president of district Larkana (another ex-PPP MNA), has 10,000 acres of land and is the *wadero* of Chandio *beraderi* in Larkana. He played a crucial role in panel formation in *taluka* Warah.

In a small *hari* village, Rahim Dad Ji Wand in union council Sijawal, everyone belongs to Gopang *beraderi*. Villagers initially told us that they voted for PPP candidates. On further probing, they told us that they were told to vote for PPP by their *wadero* Hizbullah Khan Gopang. Hizbullah Khan Gopang lives in another big village and has 15,000 acres of land sharecropped by the villagers. Voters also told us they themselves like PPP. Hizbullah Khan Gopang was initially affiliated with PPP, switched sides and joined Muslim League and has now re-joined PPP. We asked villagers whom they voted for in the past elections when Hizbullah had changed his party and joined PML (N), and were told that they had voted for the PML (N) candidates then, though a few secretly voted for PPP.

Politics of pacts: Pacts were negotiated among the influentials of the area in both *taluka* Miro Khan and Warah union councils to stage-manage the whole process of elections. This reflects the degree of control of landowners over people. In union council Sijawal of Miro Khan and union council Mirpur of Warah, panels were formed along party lines and almost every seat was contested. Influentials here were unable to divide seats amongst themselves and competed with each other in the elections. However, in union council Khandoo of *taluka* Warah and union council Karira of *taluka* Miro Khan, landlords were able to divide seats among themselves and their "clients." Abros, Chnadios and Brohis negotiated a pact in union council Khandoo and the whole union council was elected unopposed. Similarly, Magsis and

Khuhawars - big landlords of the area – negotiated a pact and the union council was elected unopposed except for general seats. Even on general seats, the candidates supported by the pact leaders in Karira won a majority of the seats.

Village based voting: The rationale of holding elections for the whole union council was that villagers would have the chance to vote for candidates of the whole union council. This did not work since villagers did not treat the union council as one constituency. They simply identified candidates at the village level to cast votes for. Thus, in big villages, people voted for more candidates than in small villages.

For example, in village Sijawal, people voted for *nazim, naib nazim* and for three other candidates of their own village/panel. One candidate was the village *wadero*'s son and the peasant/worker candidates were the village *wadero*'s land manager and his sister. In village Sonharo Bhatti, people only voted for their *wadero* Zulfiqar Bhatti and for three other candidates of his panel. Similarly, in union council Karira, people in medium and small villages only voted for the candidates of their villages.

Mandatory education qualification: Mandatory educational qualification for *nazim* and *naib nazim* disbarred many traditional local politicians from contesting elections. However, members of their family or their "clients" filled the gap in most cases. Shafiq Ahmad Khuhawar is a big landlord in union council Karira with experience in contesting elections. He could not participate in elections because of his illiteracy. Had it not been for the mandatory educational qualification, he would have contested the *nazim*'s seat. He decided to support the *wadero* of another influential *beraderi* instead. Shafiq Khuhawar's son, Shakeel Khuhawar, was elected unopposed on the *naib nazim* seat.

In union council Khandoo, Brohis faced a similar problem. They supported a representative of Wains *beraderi* for *naib nazim*'s seat because they were disbarred from contesting elections. The

Mandatory educational qualification appears to bring in a more polished version of the same people.

Reservation of seats: Marginalized people have been successful on peasant/worker seats and women seats. However, they have been able to contest elections due to the patronage of local landed influentials. Almost all the peasant/worker candidates work for their *nazim* or councilor landowners. Similarly, almost all the women are either poor relatives of landowner candidates or their maidservants. Zohra Khoso in village Gul Mohammad Chachan was an exception. Although, she was supported by the village's *wadero*, Abdul Ghaffar, she herself belongs to a respectable Khoso family in the village. She does not observe *purdah* and she mediates conflicts among the women in the village.

Most of the women candidates were told by males of their family to contest elections and most of them did not know which seat they were contesting. Despite the fact that the majority of candidates on reserved seats did not contest elections in their own right, yet this is a positive development. The very fact that they have been able to become members of the union council may make some difference for them, their families, *beraderi*s and villages to a limited extent.

Free and fair elections: Losing candidates and their supporters often complained about the opponent's intimidation, polling agent's rigging and administration's biases. In union council Mirpur, we heard repeated complaints of Nawab Shabir Chandio's intimidation. We were also told that the administration sided with Nawab Shabir Ahmad Chandio. In one of the villages of a losing candidate, people told us that Manzoor Ahmad Magsi threatened them. They also complained that Manzoor Ahmad Magi distributed 500 rupees to buy votes in their village. In another village, Luqman Sial, women told us that the opposition distributed sugar to buy votes. Mastoi were alleged to have distributed flour among voters in another village Tharhri.

However, such claims were not confirmed. The majority of people told us that elections were generally free and fair.

C. Conclusion

People did not vote "independently" in the true sense of the word, since their voting behaviour was guided by local influentials. In Larkana, land plays a crucial role in determining the layers of local hierarchy. A big landlord is also the *wadero* of the *beraderi* and the local leader of a political party. There are layers of hierarchy and land holdings and *beraderi* affiliation converges at the top and it leads to concentration of power of influential individuals and families. We observed a classic pattern of patron-client relationship in Larkana. Big landlords set the election stage in all four union councils, they delegated responsibilities to medium and small landowners and voting behaviour was guided accordingly. Sharecropping, poverty and disempowerment of people contributed to the influence of big landowners. The landed class is not only a source of livelihoods for the rural poor, but also mediates between the state bureaucracy and the poor and assumes added significance in their lives.

Elections were held on non-party basis, but panels were formed in all union councils on party lines. Since villagers vote for the candidate of their own village, the idea of treating the whole union council as one constituency did not work. However, the NRB rightly anticipated a reduction of intra-beraderi conflicts at the village level. However, it did not anticipate the overall electoral dominance of the large *beraderies* in the multi-ward system.

Government seriously needs to think not only how to handle the influence of landed power in electoral politics, it also needs to envisage policies to empower rural poor and marginalised by improving the judicial and administrative bureaucracy.

B. Quantitative results

Both the household and candidate questionnaires have been used to address the landed power issue. We start out by comparing the profile of candidates in terms of education, assets and land ownership with that of households in the randomly selected villages in the union council. Also, we contrasted the winning with the losing candidates using the same indicators. Next, we review the perception of fairness of the election process both among households and candidates. Finally, using various disaggregations, we consider the perceptions of the households and candidates on power issues. Our quantitative data is based on the following sample and survey response rates:

Table 3 A. Total number of candidates, household respondents and focus group discussions

Sampled categories	Larkana	Muzzafargarh	Total
Candidates	96	169	265
Voters	182	270	452
Focus group discussions	52	40	92

Source: SDPI survey

Table 3 B. Candidate response rates by union council

Districts and Union Councils	Total candidates	No. interviews	Response rate (%)
Larkana			
UC Sajawal	40	34	85.0
UC Karira	23	21	91.3
UC Mirpur	24	21	87.5
UC Khandoo	20	20	100.0
Sub-total	107	96	89.7
Muzaffargarh			
UC Dogar Kolasra	54	38	70.3
UC Daira Din Pannah	56	45	80.3
UC Dammer Wala Shumali	42	38	90.4
UC Jhalarein	56	48	85.7
Sub-total	208	169	81.2
Total	315	265	84.1

Source: SDPI survey

For the comparative analysis, we removed the ten village households that owned more than 100 acres of land, since they were clearly outliers, and the resulting comparative profile is reported below in Table 4.

Table 4. Socio-economic profile of candidates and sample village households

Profile	Candidates		
	Nazim/naib nazim	General seats	Sample village households
Mean educational attainment (yrs.)	12.22	6.57	2.13
	(2.07)	(4.50)	(3.78)
Mean land holdings (acres)	195.76	28.12	5.66
	(798.63)#	(51.35)	(10.18)
Percentage rich households @	45	13.1	3.2

Source: SDPI survey data.

Note: @ = A rich household is defined as one that either possesses a VCR or a car.
Parentheses contain standard deviation.
\# = The large standard deviation for the candidate mean land holding is accounted for by a candidate who owned 5000 acres of land.

In Table 4 above, the average household socio-economic profile is contrasted with that of candidates for the *nazim* / *naib nazim* and general seats. It is clear that the candidates for *nazim/naib nazim seats* were a select group who were much better educated, richer and possessed much larger landholdings than the candidates for general seats.[18] Similarly candidates for general seats are much wealthier and more educated than the general population. For our analysis, the differential in landholdings is particularly striking. This contrast in the socio-economic profile of the general population relative to candidates provides justification for the reserved peasant/worker seats. Table 5 below contrasts the socio-economic profile of the winning and losing candidates.

18 The higher mean education is no doubt influenced by the minimum education criteria for the candidate

Table 5: Socio-economic profile of winning and losing candidates by type of seat

	Nazim/naib nazim seat		General seat	
Profile	Won	Lost	Won	Lost
Mean education (years)	12.43	11.95	7.08	6.00
	(2.38)	(2.01)	(4.75)	(4.23)
Mean landholdings	441.15	80.54	37.22	20.24
(acres)	(1370.72)	(155.27)	(55.74)	(46.74)
Percentage rich [@]	57.1	40.9	27.0	1.4

Source and notes as in Table 4.

For the *nazim/naib nazim* ticket, which is the coveted seat about two-thirds of the winning candidates were rich compared to about two-fifths of the losing candidates. Also, on average, winning candidates had about six times more land. In absolute terms, mean landholdings of 441.2 acres constitutes considerable landed power.

We explored the associations implicit in Table 5 more rigorously using multivariate analysis in a companion paper.[19] Our findings indicate that, as expected from the summary reported in Table 5, wealth and absolute landed power are positively and significantly associated with the probability of winning.

Candidates were also asked about their most important source of income for funding their election. The results reported below in Table 6 confirm the findings above regarding the importance of being landed for being a candidate.

19 Khan (2001).

Table 6: Candidates' response regarding the most important source of income for the election by type of seat

(Percentages)

	Type of seats	
Income source	*Nazim/naib nazim*	General
Land	81.6	72.6
Business	5.3	11.1
Salary	-	1.5
Family	10.5	6.7
Patron		3.7
Beraderi	-	3.0
Others	2.6	1.5
Total	100	100

Source: SDPI sample survey.
Note: Percentages do not add to exactly 100 due to rounding errors.

Eighty-two percent of those contesting the *nazim/naib nazim* seats reported land as the main source of income and if the family support is based on landed wealth, this goes up to 92 percent. Even for candidates on general seats, landed income was the main income source for contesting elections for 73 percent of the candidates and adding family support to this takes it to almost 80 percent.

We next explored perceptions of candidates regarding why they won and the results are reported below in Table 7.

Table 7: Percentage of winning and losing candidate responding in the affirmative on the fairness of the elections.

Response on	Won	Lost
Process free and fair	93	32
Elections well-managed	55	24

Source: SDPI sample survey.

Table 8: Candidate's perception of the most important reason for winning by gender, education and district

(Percentages)

Response for Winning	Gender		Education		District		
	Female	Male	<Matric	>Matric	Muzzaffargarh	Larkana	Total
Community service done	16.7	29.0	26.5	24.4	45.2	6.4	26.7
Prominent landlord	6.7	15.1	8.9	20.0	3.2	22.6	12.5
Support of prominent Landlord/influential	46.7	21.5	30.4	22.2	8.1	46.8	27.5
Party support	-	3.2	3.8	-	-	4.8	2.5
Beraderi	26.7	25.8	29.1	22.2	33.9	19.3	25.8
Religion	3.3	-	-	-	1.6	-	0.8
Good moral character	-	5.4	1.3	11.1	8.1	-	4.2
Total @	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: SDPI sample survey.

@ Not exactly 100 percent due to rounding errors.

Community service is perceived to have played a fairly big role, particularly for male candidates and those winning in Muzaffargarh. However, other than this, the subject perceptions accord with the objective analysis. Being a prominent landlord, or the support of a prominent landlord/influential, and *beraderi* (clan loyalty) are perceived to be the main determinants of winning. As indicated by the qualitative findings, there is an interaction of these two factors because the head of the clan, generally a large landlord, draws the votes. Landed support or clan loyalty were cited as the main determinants by about three fourths of the female and three fifths of the male candidates respectively. Almost half the female candidates cited the support of a prominent landlord as the main reason for their victory. However, the inter-district contrast is prominent with about six

times more candidates citing this as a reason in Larkana relative to Muzaffargarh. Many more among the more educated, but still only 11 percent, noted "good moral character" as the most important determinant of winning compared to 1.3 percent among the less educated.

We solicited a response from voters regarding their most important voting criteria and these results are reported below in Table 9.

Table 9. Voter's response on their most important criteria for voting by gender, education and district

(Percentages)

	Gender		Education		District		
Criteria	Female	Male	<Matric	>Matric	Muzzaffargarh	Larkana	Total
Community service done	6.7	18.1	11.7	19.5	17.9	4.3	12.4
Community service promised	1.3	3.1	2.0	4.3	3.7	-	2.2
As instructed by family	23.3	4.0	14.4	6.5	17.9	7.1	13.6
Prominent landlord/influential	20.6	14.1	17.9	10.8	17.2	17.6	17.2
Beraderi	19.7	23.8	21.6	23.9	22.8	20.3	21.8
Party	4.9	4.4	4.7	4.3	0.4	11.0	4.7
Religion	1.0	0.4	0.7	-	1.1	-	0.6
Personal	0.5	0.4	0.5	-	-	0.5	0.4
Others	22.0	31.7	26.4	30.4	18.7	39.0	26.9
Total @	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: SDPI sample survey.
@ Not exactly 100 percent due to rounding errors.

Once again, the two factors that, according to the voters, are the main determinants of voting behavior are landed power (voting for a prominent landlord or influential) or *beraderi* (voting based on clan loyalty). Beyond this, as might be expected, many more women (23 percent) than men (4 percent) voted as instructed by the family, and fewer women reported voting based on community service delivered by the candidate. However, the flip side is that 77 percent of the women implicitly reported voting independently. Landed power and clan loyalty (even more so) are the main determinants of voting even among the more educated (equal to or more than 10 grades), although about a fifth (about twice as many as the less educated) reported voting based on community service.

Inter-district variations can be quite large, but not so across the two main determinants (landed power and clan loyalty) identified earlier. While wealth, landed power and clan loyalty consistently emerged as key variables across the board, voting based on religion, in particular, or party based affiliation consistently showed up as unimportant determinants of voting or winning.

The perceptions of candidates with regards to the main determinants of why they lost reported below in Table 10 are also instructive.

Table 10. Candidates perception of the most important reason for losing by type of seat [#] (Percentages)

Reason for losing	Type of Seat	
	General	Other
Lack of support from influential	31.9	24.0
Lack of *beraderi* support	12.8	12.0
Lack of funds	4.3	5.3
No political party support	4.3	6.6
Election admin. problem [@]	14.9	16.0
Admin. supporting opposition	10.6	9.3
Rain	4.3	4.0
Corruption	17.0	18.7
Total	100	100

Source: SDPI sample survey

Notes: Percentages do not add exactly 100 due to rounding errors

\# Only 15 *nazim/naib nazim* candidates out of 40 responded and most blamed the election administration. However the sub-sample size is too small to present the results

@ included voter list problems and early closure

While the lack of support from an influential or clan accounted for about 45 and 36 percent of those who contested general and reserved seats respectively, about two-fifths cited the election process and management related reasons, including corruption as

the main determinants of losing.[20] We explored the issue of fairness of the election process further by eliciting responses from both voters and candidates.

Table 11. Percentage of households and candidates responding in the affirmative on the fairness of elections.

Response on	Voters	Candidates
Voted freely	94.3	-
Process free and fair	83.7	63.5
Elections well-managed	77.8	41.0

Source: SDPI sample survey.

By en-large, the voters reported that they voted freely, though a much larger percentage of voters considered the election to be "free and fair" and well managed. One would expect the losing candidates to complain more about the process and this is indeed the case as evident from Table 12 below.

Table 12. Percentage of winning and losing candidate responding in the affirmative on the fairness of the elections.

Response on	Won	Lost
Process free and fair	93	32
Elections well-managed	55	24

Source: SDPI sample survey.

Even though one expects more complaints from the losing candidates, the fact that only 68 percent thought the elections were free and fair and that only 24 percent regarded them as well managed is grounds for concern. We explored further the nature of complaints and 32 percent of those who lost claimed that the voters were intimidated and 68.4 percent attributed this to big landlords. Just over a fifth of the candidates claimed to have been

20 There was not much difference in responses by gender, education or district.

personally intimidated and three-fourths of them attributed this to large landlords.

Finally, we used the data to explore how stringently the election administration was enforcing the reserved seat clause. Our findings showed that enforcement was apparently not strict since, of the 32 candidates contesting the peasant/worker seats, 13 had landholdings above the five-acre ceiling and 12 out of these 13 won.

The qualitative and quantitative findings reinforce each other in that both pick up the key influence of landed power and *beraderis*. Interestingly, the interaction between these two and also the interaction between landed power and party politics only became evident from the qualitative survey. Also, while the quantitative analysis suggests an insignificant role for religion and political parties, the qualitative analysis indicated that the role of political parties was much more significant, particularly in Larkana.[21]

VI. Election process recommendations

A. Almost every individual complained about incorrect voters' lists in Larkana and Muzaffargarh. The lists did not have the names of many eligible voters. Incorrect voters' lists were published. In one village, the lists had the name of a grandson while the grandfather's name was missing. In others, men were listed in women's lists and vice versa, while some were listed in different union councils altogether. The press also extensively reported on the mismanagement of voters' lists.

B. There were mixed views about the use of multiple sources of identity in the elections. Some people appreciated it. Others thought it had made manipulation possible and

21 We also sensed in the pre-test in Sargoda, Punjab, that individuals were reluctant to identify any political affiliation. The more in-depth interviews and focus group discussions seems to have teased out this influence.

only "identity cards" should be used as the source of identity. Some people complained that they were not given identity cards despite the fact that mobile teams visited their villages and got the forms filled. Generally, people appreciated introduction of multiple sources of identity.

C. Use of five ballot papers, one each for the different kinds of seats, seemed too complicated for rural voters to comprehend. The process needs to be simplified. Some candidates told their voters to stamp only one symbol and that was easier for them to remember.

D. The administration issued a chit to each voter after checking his/her name in the voters' list. They were asked to apply their thumb impression on the chit and allowed to go inside the polling booth. Voters went inside and applied their thumb impression on ballot papers while they were supposed to stamp them; hence their votes got rejected. Application of thumb impression on the chit and stamp on ballot papers was confusing for many.

E. Some voters complained that symbols were not clear on ballot papers.

F. An old woman in one village thought a young girl should accompany elderly woman.

G. Voters' education was perceived as necessary and people also thought that the candidates should have more polling agents to help voters.

H. Some people from small villages complained that polling booths were too far away from their villages, and they could not travel such distances to cast their votes.

I. The administration changed two candidates' symbols without informing them in union council Sijawal. They came to know about it at the last moment. Such symbol changes without the prior permission of candidates should be avoided.

J. The official polling staff of the government should not live in any candidate's home or eat at his/her place before elections. This provides an opportunity to some

candidates to influence the staff. Polling staff should be officially accommodated and no polling agents have any links to any candidate whatsoever. In Muzaffargarh, there were widespread reports that women polling agents were involved in a great deal of vote influencing, particularly amongst uneducated women voters.

Summary and conclusions

The research question we explored is whether rural grassroots democracy is possible in Pakistan without fundamental structural reform? Our concern was that landed and other sources of power may be able to subvert true political participation that is required for a free and fair electoral process. Our hypothesis is that in Pakistan's rural political setting, individuals vote for those that are able to facilitate the delivery of services or provide patronage. This could include mediating with the state for the delivery of social sector services, or to ensure the provision of administrative, police and judicial services. Alternatively, a more cynical interpretation is that it could mean running interference with the state to provide protection from the administration, police and judiciary.

Following this line of argument, our hypothesis is that only wealthy individuals would be capable of delivering services or patronage, even if it be community service. If this were the case, wealth, whether landed or derived from another source, would emerge as the basis for winning elections. The question that would follow is: what is the minimum level of reform that is necessary to ensure a reasonably level democratic playing field? We return to this issue at the end of this section and proceed now to explain the method used for this study and to summarize the main findings.

We purposively selected two out of the eighteen districts in which local government elections were conducted under the military government's Devolution of Power Plan, August 14, 2000. Muzaffargarh was deliberately selected out of the eight districts of the Punjab Province because we anticipated a high level of landed

power would come into play, and we sought to understand the dynamics of, if and how, at the local level, such power may result in political exclusion. Larkana was selected because the government had announced the elections to be non-party and, because this is a district that has historically demonstrated a very high level of political participation. We sought to understand if it is possible to attain such political exclusion, and, if not, how traditional political parties manifest themselves in local government elections. We also sought to understand the interaction of landed power and party politics. After the first stage of purposive selection, selection of lower local government tiers (*tehsils* and union councils), and also villages and households was random. Thus it is possible for us to claim that our findings are representative for the selected districts.

Since one of our findings is that there is substantial inter-district variation, we cannot claim any wider representation, other than to districts that have a similar socio-economic and political structure to the districts purposively selected. However, this is as the study was planned. The motivation of the study was to address the assertion that landed power is no longer a force in Pakistan and that, even if this is not true, it is certainly not manifested at the union or even the district level. Our goal was to go beyond assertions and empirically test this hypothesis. If we demonstrated otherwise, the burden of proof then lies on those who assert that "feudalism" in Pakistan is dead.

We relied on several sources of information to cross check our findings. Focus group discussions were held in all villages in which we located a candidate. One main sources of information were the field reports written by each of the two field-teams for each union council based on focus group discussions, observations and one-on-one interviews. The field team leaders subsequently synthesized these field reports into district summary reports. The other main source of information was structured questionnaires. These were used to interview union council candidates. Since the perceptions of those who win can differ greatly from those who lose, we interviewed both. We also used a

structured questionnaire to interview voters via a sample of 10 percent of households in selected villages. Candidate and voter data sets were generated by these structured interviews. The field reports representative "qualitative" analysis and the datasets were used for the quantitative analysis. The two often complemented each other, although at times there were interesting differences that we flagged.

The questionnaire responses contained two kinds of information. First, there was the "objective" information based on candidates and voters socio-economic information. It was possible to relate this information to the decisions made and to outcomes like winning or losing the elections. Second, there was the "subjective" information based on voters' and candidates' perceptions. Both kinds of information were utilized for the analysis and again they often complemented each other.

The most significant finding from the qualitative analysis for Muzaffargarh was that landed power and *beraderi* are the two main factors explaining electoral success and that there is a complex interplay between them. Thus, while *beraderi* was important, it was the prominent landed families within the *beraderi* who called the shots. As expected, the multi-ward system made the bigger *beraderis* more influential due to their ability to field panels. The religious parties were influential in a few union councils, but our field-team was barred from studying the union council where one such party won the *nazim* seat and an alternative selection had to be made. Women generally were unaware and primarily did the bidding of the men-folk. The losing candidates alleged that there was significant interference from the election administration. Finally, the influence of political parties generally stayed in the background.

In Larkana, there was a much more overt role of political party affiliation in addition to landed power and *beraderi*. However, once again, this role was subsumed in the person of the influential *wadero*s (generally large landlords). Other than the role of political parties, the findings that emerged from the qualitative

study for Larkana were very similar. Large landlords called the shots, made the panels and either made pacts or competed with other influential groups for seats. When candidates were debarred from competing on the coveted *nazim* or *naib nazim* seat due to educational restrictions, they backed a relative or another influential. Workers, peasants and women got elected based on the patronage of the large landlord. The qualitative analysis is reported in the text and the detailed case studies appended. The latter are consistent with many of the media reports that appeared following phase one the elections.

The quantitative analysis enables us to report more specific details. Candidates are a select group, particularly those contesting the *nazim* and *naib nazim* seats, who were much richer (defined as households that possessed a VCR or a car) and possessed much more land than the general population. Similarly, winning candidates were much richer than the losing candidates. The average land holding of 441 acres for the winning candidate, about six times more than that of the average landholding of the losing candidate, is particularly notable. Statistical analysis confirmed that being rich and landed power had a significant positive association with the probability of winning elections. Eighty-two percent contesting the *nazim* seat and 73 percent contesting the general seat indicated that land was their main source of income for contesting the election. If support from family is land based, this goes up to 92 percent and 80 percent respectively.

The subjective perceptions accord with the qualitative analysis and the "objective" analysis, indicating a very strong role of landed power in winning elections. Being a prominent landlord, support of a prominent landlord, and *beraderi* were perceived by the candidates as the main determinants of winning. Again, the two factors identified by the voters as the most important determinants of voting behavior were landed power and *beraderi*. This is true across districts, despite differences on other counts, and also true for the more educated (> matric) as well as the less educated.

By en-large, voters were satisfied with the elections. Most (94 percent) reported that they voted freely, found the process free and fair (84 percent) and thought the elections were well managed (78 percent). However, it is a cause of concern that only 32 percent of the losing candidates thought the process was free and fair and only 24 percent felt the elections were well managed. Further, a sizable number of the losing candidates attributed their loss to the intimidation of either the voters or themselves by large landlords.

In conclusion, we return to the issues raised in the opening paragraphs. Are the structural conditions in rural Pakistan adequate to enable adequate political participation via the electoral process? Based on both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, we think the answer is no because the concentration of landed power and wealth results in systematic political exclusion. This is the case even at the local government level where large landlords are not expected to be players. The obvious policy conclusion is that a state concerned with political inclusion needs to find a way to diffuse power. Land reform is an obvious instrument for this, and, as evident from the experience in several countries, it has had other benefits as well such as livelihood security and higher economic growth via agricultural productivity and associated industrial linkages.

However, land reform, the first best option, is found to be politically difficult due to the political outreach of large landlords or modern day large "farmers", no matter what government is in power. There are alternatives and the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) decided upon reserved seats to ensure political inclusion. Unfortunately, at the moment, it seems that a large proportion of those who win reserved seats do so at the bidding of the influentials. Also, much better enforcement is required by the election administration to ensure that the specified criteria are being implemented. Finally, as in the case of women, affirmative action is needed for minorities and the most deprived like the *kammis*.

We agree that in the long run, political participation and representation based on reserved seats, even if it is constrained as indicated, may generate a dynamic of its own and lead to more meaningful political representation and inclusion. This is particularly so if the political process is allowed to continue at all levels without external intervention. Those who have faith in democracy believe that the vote, exercised in an institutional setting that checks political manipulation, represents an adequate self-correction mechanism of the system. However, other alternatives are needed in the short to medium run.

If the landed and wealthy were able to garner votes based on their ability to influence the delivery of services, clearly their influence would recede if this service delivery were no longer dependent on them. Thus, for example, if social, administrative, police and judicial services are available impartially to all, the rich lose the special edge that they have in the system as it exists today. This devolution of power plan is designed to attain precisely this. Assuming this structural reform survives this government, well-intentioned politicians need to carry this reform process much further. Most important of all, they need to ensure that the village and ward councils are truly empowered and accountability and executive authority is vested in them to ensure sound service delivery. Unfortunately, until power configurations change adequately, there is no guarantee that even village and ward councils will not be captured and, in effect, represent the will of the influentials.

One counter-argument to this concern is that political representation in any democracy is the playing field of the wealthy. While this is true in varying degrees, political manipulation of a systemic nature and of the election process is generally much less of a factor. Institutional checks are in place to ensure a fair process for all political parties and the voters and, over time, political maturity ensures wider access to public office. On a macro level, institutional checks are clearly required such as via strengthening the election commission and ensuring proper transition mechanisms from one political government to the next.

On a local level, building countervailing power to elite domination is essential. Reservation of seats, de-linking service delivery from wealth, and information systems of the kind mentioned in the devolution plan, but which will take much time to put into place, are important reforms. However, we see these as complements and not alternatives to land reform that in our view remains as the most important source of power diffusion required to create a robust democracy.

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