First Draft

STATE, COMMUNITY, AND UNIVERSAL EDUCATION:

A Political Economy of Public Schooling in Rural Pakistan

Haris Gazdar

Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Basic Question

This study is about primary schooling in rural Pakistan. Specifically, it is about the functioning or malfunctioning of the government primary schooling system in these areas. The goal of universal basic education through universal participation in the schooling system among children of school-going age is taken as the fundamental standard against which the range, quality and effects of public action or inaction will be judged here.

Constraints to the expansion of basic education are multi-faceted, and arguably mutually enforcing. The performance of the government schooling system in terms of its reach, quality and effectiveness is the main subject of attention here. In this regard the present study hopes to add to previous and parallel work in development economics on the constraints to universal basic education in Pakistan and other developing countries.[1]

Basic education is interpreted here as functional literacy and numeracy -- or the ability to read and write simple text and to carry out simple arithmetic calculations. It is obvious, of course, that the precise meanings of terms like "simple text" and "simple arithmetics" can themselves be subject to a wide range of interpretation. The idea here is to work with the most minimal conditions of literacy and numeracy in the first instance. It is quite justifiable to eschew some of the more ambitious higher goals of education for the purposes of the present study, given the fact that even the minimal requirements are not met by a large proportion -- even a majority -- of people in many developing countries including Pakistan.

It might be argued on the other hand, that universal attainment is too onerous a benchmark. Perhaps success and failure ought to be adjudicated with reference to yet more modest goals. There are several important reasons, however, for insisting on universal basic education as the relevant yardstick. For a start, it is an oft-proclaimed and oft-endorsed goal of educational policy by states as well as international organisations. Secondly, the idea that basic education is closely connected with the achievement of other civil, political and social rights in an instrumental manner implies that even a small quantitative deficit from the goal of universalism translates into a qualitatively significant deficit in the accounting of human rights. Thirdly, there is something quite remarkable (and irreversible) in a society moving from a

[1] Much of the work presented in the present monograph is inspired by, and bears family resemblance to, a recent investigation into the state of public schooling in India (The Probe Team, 1999).

position of large-scale or even partial illiteracy to one of full literacy. For a society taken as a whole, the "literacy transition" is as historic an event as the rather better known "demographic transition" from high to low fertility rates. In fact it might even be a more definitive moment given that it implies a degree of active socialisation normally absent from accounts of the demographic transition.

Universal school participation by children is the other main benchmark of educational attainment by a society. School participation is not, of course, a sufficient condition for the attainment of basic educational proficiency. It does, however, appear to be an important necessary condition. The successful completion of the five-year cycle of primary schooling is widely used as an index for the acquisition of basic educational skills by children. In practice the amount of time required is likely to vary enormously according to the ability, sensitivity and commitment of teachers, the pedagogical approach, and the support children get at home an in the wider community. Extensive interviews conducted as part of the present study indicate the widespread belief on the part of rural schoolteachers that children typically require around three years of regular schooling at most, before they gain proficiency in the three R's. This opinion was mostly borne out by tests of children in the government schools covered by the survey. The completion of the five-year primary cycle might yet be important, however, in the degree to which basic educational skills were retained by pupils into later life. Many of the adults surveyed reported having been to school for a few years and still remaining functionally illiterate. It is likely that these individuals reverted to illiteracy in the absence of sustained exposure to schooling.

Children's school participation (and universal participation at that) is an important standard of child as well as social well-being for reasons other than its instrumental function of imparting basic educational skills. Children out of school might be involved in economic activities which are detrimental or even hazardous. Whether child labour is the cause of low school participation, or its effect, the inverse relationship between school participation and the prevalence of child labour is well-established. Furthermore, the socialisation implied by universal literacy is crucially mediated through the school and the process of schooling.

This study is aimed, therefore, at finding answers to some fundamental questions about problems of basic schooling in a society on the wrong side of the literacy transition. Pakistan belongs to a larger group of developing countries, regions and communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America with, arguably, generic problems of economic development. A state with a population of over 140 million, and with historically rooted and specific experiences of social and political change, Pakistan also demands attention as a case study in development in its own right. The fact that it is a state where a majority of the

population remains functionally illiterate, and where a large proportion of children of school-going age remain out of school makes such a study all the more poignant.

1.2 The Study

The work presented here forms part of a larger research programme on universal basic education in Pakistan.[2] The range of issues covered by this research programme includes investigations into the determinants of schooling using secondary datasets, research on the comparative performance of government, private and NGO schools, analysis of the processes of community mobilisation, and studies on the history of education policy, and on the ideological content of government curriculum. The present part of this wide-ranging research programme is focused on the problem of government school performance in rural areas. It aims to complement the work on other aspects of basic education in rural Pakistan. The central feature of this study is a survey of over a hundred government schools.

The failure of education policy is manifest from the abysmally low achievements in any indicator of the population's educational achievement and participation. The failure is starker for females, and for people in rural areas. The issues worth addressing, therefore, are not about whether educational policy has failed, but the extent, nature, and causes of failure, and the possible paths out of failure.

The economic approach has provided an influential framework for the understanding of constraints to universal basic education in Pakistan. Broadly speaking, three sources of constraints to universalisation have been much discussed in the policy and academic discourse.[3] Firstly, there is the issue of the supply of public schooling. Pakistan has been a relative laggard in ensuring the supply of government schools, especially in remote areas. School construction and the provision of public basic schooling in general were not high priority issues for successive military and civilian regimes which controlled state power. The relatively small fiscal allocations to education and basic schooling within education bore testimony to this prolonged sense of apathy towards achieving universal education. This situation began to alter quite significantly from the mid-1980s onwards, when all provincial governments became active in the construction of rural infrastructure, particularly schools. The focus of attention in the policy

[2] Other participants in this research programme include (in alphabetical order) Mehnaz Akbar, Tahir Andrabi, Kaiser Bengali, Lubna Chaudhry, Shahrukh Rafi Khan, and Tariq Rahman.

[3] For a more detailed review see Gazdar (2000) and the literature cited there. See, in particular, Hoodhbhoy (1999), and World Bank (1997).

debate also began to shift towards other, non-supply, constraints to schooling.

The budgetary allocations to public schooling, and particularly to basic education have remained low by international as well as regional standards. The political economy of government expenditure priorities does certainly remain an important theme whose relevance has not diminished even after the spurt of school-building which started in the mid to late 1980s. There are non-trivial issues here of fiscal federalism, the power of vested claims on the public purse, and the absence of any significant lobby for universal basic education. An additional dimension to this level of political economy in the 1990s was engagement with the IMF under structural adjustment borrowing which stipulated a minimum threshold for budgetary allocations to social sectors. The funding thus secured was disbursed in accordance with a Social Action Programme which accorded a high priority to basic education.

There was a view, particularly espoused by governmental circles, that the main constraint to the improvement in educational outcomes was no longer the lack of public schools, but a range of demand-related factors, over which the state or the educational departments had little control. It has been frequently argued that there is limited take-up of free public school places because of poverty, liquidity constraints, as well as cultural attitudes around the issue of female mobility and schooling. The opportunity costs of schooling are high even where out-of-pocket expenses are relatively small -- sending a child to school entails purchasing uniforms, textbooks etc., and also deprives the family of the child's time which might otherwise be used for economic activities or valuable household chores. In the case of girls, these problems are thought to be compounded by conservative attitudes towards the mobility of females, and the social inadmissibility of non-familial mixed gender spaces.

The demand-constraint view was somewhat displaced by the growing realization that there have been serious problems in the quality of the public schooling supplied. The existence of a government school in a particular locality was no guarantee of the effective supply of public schooling. The idea that government schools do not function properly, that teachers are appointed but do not perform their duties, that the physical infrastructure of many schools is derelict, and that there are serious problems of maladministration in the public schooling system, holds wide appeal in popular and policy opinion alike. It has been argued that the demand-constrained view might be largely illusory, as the poor quality of supply does not allow any clear inference about demand.[4]

[4] There are many other aspects of the quality of schooling which are likely to have a direct bearing upon demand. Whether or not a particular school is actually open and functioning, and

The demand-supply debate in the policy literature in Pakistan is partly a debate about where the ultimate responsibility for educational failure lies. If the binding constraint lies on the demand side, then, so the argument goes, the state is "let off the hook". Educational backwardness is then laid at the door of economic backwardness (poverty) and social backwardness (particularly anti-female education attitudes in society). If, on the other hand, it can be demonstrated that parental demand for education is high, and that rural parents are let down by the low quality of public schooling, the onus of reform is thought to lie on the side of the state.

This stylized translation of the economic approach to education into a setting of political debate, however, is misleading. It can be argued that the main responsibility for educational change remains with the state regardless of whether demand or supply constraints dominate. What a clearer understanding of demand-supply issues can illuminate, of course, is where the public intervention should come, how it should be organized, and to whom it should be directed. Even if demand side constraints are found to be the binding ones, the acknowledgement of basic education as a public good necessitates public action for overcoming the demand constraints. If, for example, school participation is low due to poverty, the public schooling system needs to create rewards and incentives for families to ensure that they find it worthwhile to send their children to school. If the problem lies in adverse social attitudes to female schooling, public action needs to be directed towards providing further incentives to female schooling.[5]

The problem of expanding basic education has come to be regarded, with justification, though not necessarily for all the right reasons, as a problem of the efficient and effective functioning of the government schooling system. The justification lies in the sheer size of the system for a start. Despite the rapid growth in both for-profit and non-profit private schooling initiatives, the government schooling system remains the backbone of educational provision in most rural areas. According to national sample survey data, some 86 per cent of children attending school were enrolled in government schools.[6] Moreover, it is the explicit goal of this system to

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whether a teacher is present, are fairly obvious issues. Other aspects of quality that have received the attention of educationists is the importance of relevant curricula and the school culture in schooling decisions on the part of parents.

[5] There are also fairly clear-cut arguments for the state's role in introducing legal compulsion for basic schooling. For a review see Weiner (1991).

[6] Federal Bureau of Statistics (1997).

expand literacy and school participation. The government schooling system, therefore, is a good place to start to look for the constraints.

The emphasis on the efficiency of the government schooling system is also justified because of the widespread view that it, like most other domains of state action, is characterised by rent-seeking, corruption, and political abuse. Teacher appointments, particularly at the primary level, are rarely on merit. The inspection system protects errant teachers and often persecutes conscientious ones. There are stories of ghost schools for which building contractors have been paid, and ghost teachers who draw salaries. There is collusion between teachers and administrators and political representatives who miss no opportunity to channel public resources as private patronage.[7]

The collusion thesis is attractive as a conceptual framework because it allows an integrated view of administrative and political processes. It provides a view on system failure as resulting not only from administrative and policy constraints, but political ones. Hence there is the possibility of identifying possible sites of policy as well as political intervention. The problem, however, is that much of the received wisdom on collusive practices, and the political economy of public schooling in general, is based not on purposive and systematic empirical investigation, but on incidental testimonials, anecdotes, hearsay and insinuation. Dedicated empirical investigation, therefore, is long overdue.

It is useful to sound two preemptive notes of caution in pursuing the causes of system failure. Firstly, the existence of inefficiency and graft within the schooling system cannot be cited as a reason for exonerating, altogether, the low budgetary allocations to education. Inefficiencies do not cancel out the need for greater budgetary allocations. Under some circumstances they ought to lead to the opposite -- if there are yet-to-be-addressed structural problems which lead to an inefficient rate of converting resources into outcomes, then in the short run increasing resource availability might be the only viable option. Secondly, general statements about government inefficiency tend not to advance considered analysis of failure or change, even if they do appear to buttress an ideological anti-state and pro-market perspective.[8] A proper examination of specific cases of government performance are clearly otiose if it is "known", *a priori*, that government system are generically inefficient. It is crucial, therefore, to adopt a more open approach to grand debating themes such as state-versus-market, and public-versus-private.

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[7] See Gazdar (2000) for preliminary evidence on system performance.

[8] This appears to be the thrust of much of the influential policy literature emanating from the World Bank. See, for example, World Bank (1997).

That there are large gaps in our understanding of issues in the economics and political economy of basic education and government schooling in beyond dispute. Gaps in knowledge tend to reinforce the power of established patterns of thinking about possible policy and political responses. Empirical work can be a necessary reality-check, of course, but the collection and analysis of empirical material itself is not a perspective-neutral activity. It would be grossly unfair to suggest that there is dearth of empirical material on government schools and schooling in rural Pakistan. On the contrary, there are many different types of data, of varying scale, scope and quality.[9] The reason for conducting a relatively large amount of primary data collection in this study is to approach the government school from a very particular perspective. It is to ask and to be in a position to answer, questions about performance of the government school within a political-economy framework. There are, obviously, other equally (if not more) important perspectives on basic education and schooling, such as child welfare and child rights, pedagogical development and its politics, language, curriculum, and philosophical approaches to education. These will enter the present study, however, only where they have a specific bearing upon the political economy of the government school.

The collection of primary data on schools and schooling has been an important preoccupation of the research presented here. In fact, it can be properly claimed, that the collection and analysis of primary data form the centre-piece of the work carried out in this part of the research programme. There are some aspects of governments schools and schooling for which other larger surveys exist. These include information on schooling infrastructure, the appointment of government teachers, and school enrolment rates. Some of these datasets, such as the Education Monitoring and Information Systems (EMIS) data are extremely good in terms of coverage, but weak in terms of the independence of the reporting source. Typically, EMIS data are based on returns filed locally by teachers or the local administrative officials of the schooling system. They are not entirely appropriate for a critical analysis of the schooling system, or for that matter, for discovering how the official claims of the system match up with ground realities.

It is, of course, the mandate of the inspection system within the schooling establishment to act as an independent check on performance. Since the present study is interested, *inter alia*, in the performance of the inspection system itself, it is clear that the information processed through that system

[9] The Education Monitoring and Information Systems (EMIS), for example, which collect data on all government schools have been in place in education departments of all provinces for a number of years. Other important datasets include the work of the Academy for Educational Planning and Research, Islamabad.

should be treated with healthy scepticism. School inspections have also been conducted by other sources -- notably the census of schools carried out by Army monitoring teams in the province of Punjab in 1998. These data have not as yet been published. More importantly, many of the interesting questions in the understanding of the schooling system are of a qualitative nature, and which need to investigated in a purposive manner.

The main empirical investigation on which the present study is based is a survey of over a hundred government schools in five distinct rural regions of Pakistan. The government school survey collected data on the schooling infrastructure, teacher appointments, enrolments and some of the other, now standard, aspects of school quality and performance. In some ways, part of the fieldwork closely followed the format of an unannounced school inspection. The survey also generated data of a more qualitative type on school functioning, activities of teachers, and administrative and political processes relating to the school and school management.

There were two further substantive elements of the fieldwork which complemented the school survey. One was a "community survey" or the documentation of a range of quantitative as well as qualitative characteristics of communities where the survey schools were located. The second was a census of selected communities with a focus on the educational characteristics of the population. This census was unique, as far as can be determined, in the studies of schooling in Pakistan, in that it collected data on the social category roughly defined as "caste". The community census data, and particularly the inclusion of information on self-defined social groupings (i.e. caste, tribe etc.) may turn out, arguably, to be a particularly significant contribution of the present study to the understanding, not only of the schooling system, but of social processes in rural Pakistan in general.

1.3 The Narrative

There are five main parts to this current narrative which deal with the various aspects of the research. Firstly, an attempt is made to set out the research questions with close attention theoretical perspectives in economics and political economy (Chapter 2). The discussion starts from fundamental questions such as the rationale for thinking about universal basic education as a public good. It then moves to the dominant ways of thinking about problems of public sector governance. A critical commentary is offered on the received theory, especially in its application to countries like Pakistan.

Secondly, sample selection and fieldwork conditions and methodology are reported in Chapter 3. Among other things, this chapter sketches out the problem of defining communities, and some implications of this problem not only for fieldwork methodology but for other substantive research and policy issues.

Thirdly, the survey results on school performance are reported in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4, in some ways, summarises the main empirical results of this study. It incorporates some methodological discussion, especially with reference to indicators of school performance, and presents an analysis of school performance with respect to various school and community characteristics. Chapter 5 offers further insights into the school and its relationship with the community using case study material. This chapter draws extensively on the theoretical commentary of Chapter 2 in order to interpret qualitative observations on social, political and administrative processes.

Fourthly, the results of the population census of four villages are reported in Chapter 6. This chapter attempts to empirically model the determinants of literacy and school participation. The main additionality of the empirical analysis of schooling and literacy presented here is the ability to investigate the relationship between social grouping and education.

Fifthly, in Chapter 7, an attempt is made to effect a departure from the existing literature on the economics of education in developing countries, by invoking the relevance of communitarian as opposed to individualistic motivations. An alternative perspective is offered to the problem of universalization, and it is argued that this perspective might offer some new ways of interpreting comparative historical experience across countries, as well as specific features of local communities in rural Pakistan.

2 Framing the Issues

2.1 An Economic Approach

Development economics devotes considerable attention to the problem of education and schooling. Educational progress measured in terms of literacy, school participation as well as higher attainment are included in most lists of welfare and development indicators. Economic approaches are also highly influential in the policy discourse on education (as in other subjects). It can be argued that the salience of the economic approach has been enhanced with the increasing involvement of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in across-the-board policy formulation in many developing countries including Pakistan. Economic orientation on the part of the Bank and the Fund is, of course, as it should be. The very basis of their engagement with developing country governments, after all, is to extend or channel external financial flows for the purpose of economic development. The economic agenda of efficiency in resource allocation, therefore, is but a natural one for these organizations to pursue.

The predominant theoretical perspective in the economic analysis of education is the one where education and schooling are interchangeably framed as part of an individual's "human capital". In other words, interest is focused on the way in which education and schooling lead to an increase in an individual's utility by enhancing the value of her labour, or indeed, by providing intrinsic value to the individual. A rather narrow interpretation of this framework focuses exclusively on education and schooling in terms of their pecuniary "rates of return". Other aspects which might be of value to the individual, such as the intrinsic value of being able to read a book or attempt a mathematical puzzle are ignored. In general, the human capital approach need not be restricted to the pecuniary value of education alone, though in practice, empirical work does tend this way.[10]

Economic rationale for public schooling

The human capital approach has the advantage of providing a clear-cut account of the motivation for an individual's demand for education and schooling. Education can be treated much like any other commodity which provides some utility to an individual both directly due to its intrinsic value, as well as indirectly, by increasing the individual's future command over resources. It is acquired at some cost to the individual, and its effective demand and ultimate consumption is determined by the usual equilibrium conditions of equality between marginal costs and benefits. The stylized economic model of education described here is an abstraction, of course, like all other models of

[10] See, for example, Psacharopoulos (1996).

economic behaviour. Its great merit lies in the fact that it creates a logical structure for understanding resource allocation problems in specific and specified circumstances of breakdown in competitive market conditions.

Generally speaking, this happens when externalities are admitted. If, for example, an external effect of a high level of education is higher overall productivity in the economy as a whole, a rational individual will, on her own, tend to under-consume (or under-invest). The marginal social benefit of her education will be higher than her marginal private benefit. There is, therefore, scope for welfare-improving public intervention in inducing the individual to consume/invest more than she would have done left to herself. Externalities in education might also arise with respect to other goals of social or economic policy. If, for example, it is a policy objective to reduce fertility rates, and if an external effect of female education is the lowering of fertility rates (through greater female agency, or through encouraging marriage at a latter age), there would be an economic rationale for public investment in female schooling.

There are other circumstances in which competitive conditions will not hold. Under conditions of incomplete or absent credit markets, for example, an individual's capacity to invest in education will be liquidity constrained. The poor, therefore, will tend to under-invest. If future returns to education are subject to uncertainty, current investment will be subject to a risk premium. If information about future returns is costly, or if access to such information is itself partly determined by the experience of education within a family or some other relevant peer group, current investment will be sub-optimal, and distributed unevenly by population segments with differential information.

A distinguishing generic feature of educational investment is that the investment will typically have to be made by individuals who may not be direct beneficiaries, on the behalf of those who are. Generally, it is the parents who will decide whether, where, and to what level, a child will attend school. Inter-generational transfers within families would tend to overcome this disjuncture to a great extent, but institutional factors which come in the way of such inter-generational transfers might work in the opposite direction. If, for example, the prevalent form of family organization requires adult married daughters to become part of a different household, parents' future (pecuniary) benefits of educating a daughter may not be significant.

The economic case for universal basic education rests on the deviation between private and social economic returns.[11]

[11] The formal statement of this rationale is available from any good public economics textbook. Critics of the neoliberal orthodoxy also tend to adopt this familiar framework (see

The human capital approach provides strong enough grounds for treating education (and particularly basic education) as a public good. The human capital perspective can be stretched further to incorporate a rights-based approach to basic education: the advantage that basic education confers upon an individual includes her access to other civil and political rights. It is also possible, moreover, to think of social welfare grounds from beyond this extended human capital (or individual-advantage) perspective to justify the treatment of basic education and schooling as pubic goods. Imagine a hypothetical society whose members see no particular individual advantage in being literate, but where they do attach some value (for its own sake) to being members of a fully literate society. Universal basic education will then be a public good regardless of its intrinsic or instrumental value to individuals. Demand for education, however, will be motivated entirely by holistic social or communitarian objectives, rather than by an aggregation of individual objectives. This hypothetical (though) improbable situation is mentioned here as a prelude to the introduction, further below, of a more realistic possibility: a society where aggregated individual as well as communitarian motives might be at play.

Public goods, in standard economic theory, are those which are non-exclusive. A healthy environment, for example, is a public good by its very nature: it is technically infeasible to exclude an individual from enjoying the benefits of clean air within a particular locality. The treatment of basic education as a public good, however, is not a matter of technical constraint but one of normative public choice. If universal basic education is a desirable social goal, then the "publicness" or non-exclusivity is not merely an incidental feature -- it has to be a deliberatively constructed characteristic of the schooling system. It is worth stressing the point that while education or instruction in general might well be private goods -- since there are no technical impediments to excluding individual consumers -- the interesting question for universal basic education is the production of basic schooling as a public good. The existence of private supply responses in schooling do not obviate the need for a public response. In fact, under certain conditions, the presence of a private response might exacerbate the problem of public supply.

Government as instrument of community

Whether and to what extent the original motivation for universal basic education is seen in terms of the individual-based human capital perspective, or according to a more communitarian view, the fundamental economic problem is that of producing a public good. The common economic rationale for state or government action in the production of public goods --

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Colclough, 1996).

that is, the costliness of voluntary and cooperative collective action -- also applies to public education.

It is useful to sketch a simple illustrative model for understanding the economic case for state action. One can think of a community ***C*** made of ***N*** member households, with school ***S***. Under the human capital approach, if there are no market or non-market distortion -- or if the private and social demand for schooling is identical -- the school ***S*** could be a private school, paid for by its users.[12] Universal basic education will be ensured as parents attach a (high) positive value to their children's schooling, and are therefore willing to pay for the benefit that education is expected to confer. Even poor parents are able to pay in this scenario as it is optimal for them to borrow against future (enhanced) earnings.

Once various market distortions, informational constraints and externalities are introduced, the market-response, private user-fee school is no longer likely to fulfil the function of universal basic education. Typically, schooling will be restricted to those households which value schooling highly enough, and are not liquidity constrained. In order to establish universal basic education, the community will have to institute some form of public schooling. Public schooling will require some element of subsidy to schooling. The nature of the subsidy will depend on the type of constraint to universal schooling which is faced by a particular community. If, for example, the main issue is liquidity-constrained risk averse poor parents, then a targeted subsidy to the poor would be the right policy. If, on the other hand, the main constraint is an across-the-board private undervaluation of education by all households, a more general subsidy would be required.

The economic rationale for the involvement of the state or government in the provision of public schooling, or at the very least in underpinning the subsidy part of public schooling, rests on the familiar theoretical terrain of the costliness of voluntary collective action.[13] Since the policy objective is the production of a public school, it is impossible, by construction, to exclude children from any household, regardless of the household's contribution to the costs of running the school. Any attempt at voluntary collective action is likely to be vulnerable to the problem of free-riding households. Government, on the other hand, can impose a tax on individual households in order to finance the subsidy. Government action need not be interpreted as coercive, since it might rest on a notionally prior agreement on the part of the community members to submit themselves to a system of taxation and subsidy. In

[12] In terms of the pure model, the rationale for the school itself, as opposed to households tutoring their own children, might rest with economies of scale.

[13] Olson (1971).

the pristine case, therefore, the government can be viewed as an instrument of community action, in fulfilling the community's demand for public schooling (and other public goods such as environmental controls and civil peace).

2.2 The "Good Governance" Paradigm

Whether or how well the government schooling system functions in rural areas is a key question for the reform of the public educational system. Discussion of government performance in Pakistan has tended to be greatly influenced by the "rent-seeking" and governance literature in development economics. Corruption, shirking, collusive practices, and other forms of rent-seeking behaviour are thought to be natural dangers within any public organization where chains of accountability are weak, and discretionary powers abound. This view of administrative failure in the schooling system is not too different from the "good governance" view of public sector performance across a range of activities.[14] The educational system can, therefore, provide a useful entry point into the study of state failure in general in Pakistan and other developing regions.

The so-called "good governance" approach addresses the question of governmental performance within a principal-agent framework.[15] Public organizations such as the education department represents a set of implicit or explicit contracts between different players for the delivery of particular services. Information is costly within the system, and thus the activities of agents are costly to observe. Opportunistic behaviour on the part of public functionaries can lead to inefficiencies within the system. A fuller account of system performance is provided by the so-called "new political economy" literature which incorporates citizens or community members as the principal party.[16] The process of community control over the agents might be an electoral one, in the sense that elected representatives have some incentive to monitor the activities of government functionaries.

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[14] For a succinct statement of this view see World Bank (1992). See also Human Development Centre (1999) for a review of literature on South Asia, and for a further elaboration of the governance theme.

[15] The original proposition that an organization was a "governance structure" which for overcoming principal-agent problems is due to Williamson (1987).

[16] The term "good governance" and "good governance paradigm" will be used here to refer to models of organisations and institutions in which information costs can lead to the problem of moral hazard, and to opportunistic behaviour on the part of individual agents. "New political economy" applies similar logic to political institutions, and specifically, to matters of representation and accountability.

The "good governance-new political economy" paradigm has been influential in the analysis of the performance of public organizations, or more appropriately, in the diagnosis of public failure, in Pakistan.[17] The introduction of this paradigm was a welcome departure from the straightforward policy presumption -- in the face of massive evidence and mounting popular disbelief -- that the formal terms of reference of public employees provided sufficient information for understanding organizational performance and for the design of policy reform. The idea that problems in organizational performance are merely the reflection of capacity-constraints of well-meaning functionaries is the implied basis of solutions such as "more training" and "capacity-building". A corollary of this Platonic view of bureaucracy is that observed opportunistic behaviour is simply a question of individuals' deficit in terms of honesty and moral uprightness.

While training, capacity-building, and the selection of "good" individuals are, undoubtedly, key factors in organizational performance, these cannot be sufficient explanations of success or failure. In particular, the presence of systematic and systemic public failure cannot be put down to the incidental proliferation of inept or corrupt individuals. In this regard, the good governance paradigm provides a more realistic and behaviourally consistent explanation of the performance of public organizations. Comparisons of the performance of government and private schools, for example, have revealed that the work effort of government teachers is lower in government schools despite higher levels of formal qualifications. Government teachers also earn higher salaries, typically, than their private sector counterparts. While private teachers face market conditions, and therefore have an incentive to perform well, such incentives are weaker for government teachers who enjoy secure employment terms. Furthermore, government teachers are organized in associations and unions which can and do engage in collusive and protective practices on the behalf of their members.

The key policy concern which emerges from the "good governance" paradigm is the redesign of institutional mechanisms in order to achieve compatibility between the objectives of principals and the actions of agents.[18] The fact that individual agents are motivated by their own private objectives, and that principals' cost of monitoring are high, needs to be incorporated explicitly into system design. Broadly, thinking about system reform has developed along two themes. Firstly,

[17] The work of international development agencies, led by the World Bank, has been important in this regard. For a more detailed review of this policy literature, see Gazdar (2000).

[18] See Hoenack (1996) for a more general statement of this research agenda in the economics of education.

since the competitive market provides the analytical benchmark for efficiency, a key question concerns whether and to what extent, public intervention can be organized along market lines. In the education sector ideas such as school-vouchers -- where subsidy is directly targeted to parents, while the schooling service is provided in the private sector -- have been examined in Pakistan. While such public-private partnership models can, in principle, provide solutions to problems of incentive compatibility in service delivery, the problem of efficient subsidy administration remains. It is simply shifted to a different rung in the administrative hierarchy of the of state.

A second, and perhaps overarching concern of the "good governance" paradigm is with administrative reform. If it is admitted that some level of activity will have to be maintained within the public sector, institutional reform will need to pay attention to principal-agent problems inside public administrative systems, as well as between citizens and public functionaries. The twin concerns of internal and external accountability have informed much of the discussion of governance reform in Pakistan and other developing countries.

It is important to note that two sets of governance problems are related, but logically distinct. Within the organization the principal is most likely to be the manager, or ultimately, the holder of political office. It is also worth remembering that there is nothing inherently or inevitably democratic about the "good governance" paradigm in general. A generic principal-agent information problem could quite easily be solved in the most authoritarian manner. "Good governance" is democratic only to the extent that there is prior specific identification of citizens as principals and political representatives and public officials as agents.[19]

Much of the policy discussion as well as policy intervention for governance reform in Pakistan has been concerned with the former issue -- i.e intra-organizational principal-agent problems. Authoritarian solutions such as the involvement of the military in civil administrative processes have been conspicuous even during periods of elected civilian government. The most notable example within the educational sector was the province-wide survey of the schooling system conducted by the military in Punjab at the request of the education department of the civilian government in 1998.[20] The

[19] It is also quite possible, that there will be tension between solving the principal-agent problem within public organizations and between citizens and public officials. The fascists' proverbial ability to make trains run on time finds periodic favour in countries like Pakistan where "good governance" has been used more than once as a justification for dispensing with elected government.

[20] The Army survey receives further attention below in Chapter 5.

educational sector was not unique in this regard -- the deployment of the military was widespread in this period of formally civilian rule, notably in the collection of electricity dues. After the coup d'etat in October 1999 which led to the removal of the civilian government, Army Monitoring Units were made integral parts of virtually all civil departments and civil public sector entities.

Even if it is successful, authoritarian governance reform of this type does not fulfil conditions of public accountability. Any monitoring system which does not include some direct or delegated oversight on the part of the true principals (be it parents of children in government schools, taxpayers or citizens) is in the danger of becoming self-serving. In the "new political economy" the standard arrangement for such oversight is the formal political process. Paradoxically, the electoral process has been regarded not as an instrument of oversight, but rather, as a source of capture and rent-seeking in Pakistan. Policy discussion as well as actual attempts at reform have not been directed at existing political institutions and organizations. Instead, attention has been focused at the level of the local community.[21] "Community participation", therefore, is the key concept for the logical completeness of the good governance paradigm.

2.3 Critical Notes

While the good governance paradigm provides powerful analytical insights into system performance and institutional design, policy debate on educational reform in Pakistan suffers from a number of major blind spots. Some of these are embedded in the manner in which the simple good governance model ascribes or imputes individual behaviour. Others have to do with the specific application of this paradigm to education and to Pakistan, and the maintenance of prejudicial and unsustained analytical premises. The objections highlighted here emerge from a more nuanced political-economy perspective which is at some variance from the prevalent policy discussion. Ultimately these objections go to the very core micro-foundations of the prevalent economic approach to universal education, and the construction of agents on which these analyses are based. The purpose of this present commentary is not to get to the right answers, but only to ask some of the right questions. It is

[21] Community participation has often gone hand-in-hand with authoritarian solutions for intra-organisational governance reform. At the same time as the Army survey of schools in Punjab, there was a move to strengthen local school management committees in Punjab. The government announced the handover of some executive powers over school matters to elected representatives of parents in SMCs. This provoked a strong reaction among teachers whose associations threatened strikes, and finally succeeded in getting a high court injunction to stop the holding of elections.

hoped that some such questions have been raised, and that at least a few of them tentatively answered in the course of the empirical work.

Somewhere between Platonic angels and opportunistic devils

The good governance paradigm represents an advance in the analysis of organizational performance as it attempts to model outcomes with reference to individual behaviour. The earlier implicit characterisation of individual agents as neutral functionaries with no private objectives and whose actions were costlessly observed, gave rise to mundane and ineffectual policy conclusions. Furthermore, such a characterisation was quite patently at odds with empirical evidence and everyday experience. The entire burden of explanation for system failure rested on judgments about the moral qualities of the concerned individuals. The world was made up of angelic souls who did what they were supposed to do, as well as some dishonest individuals. The final outcome was a function of the distribution of honest and dishonest individuals.

The good governance paradigm allowed the recasting of the problem in terms other than moral uprightness. It was possible to derive explanations of system failure (or success) even if there was no moral difference between individuals. It was assumed that all agents would behave opportunistically by definition, as all are utility maximizers, and the main operational issue was the cost of information. System success or failure, therefore, were endogenous outcomes of exogenous constraints such as information costs and opportunistic behaviour. The key issue, therefore, was not that teachers and administrators were Platonic angels who had to be trained, but that they were all, by definition, opportunistic devils who had to be tamed.

There are, broadly speaking, two problems with the linear causality of explanation contained in the good governance approach which need to be recognised. Firstly, the supposed opportunistic behaviour of the individual agent which in turn derives from her analytical construction as a utility-maximizer, might be based on too narrow an interpretation of individual motivations. Individual behaviour is, undoubtedly an important starting point of the analysis, but the derivation of opportunistic behaviour from utility-maximization requires the presumption that only those aspects of the utility function matter which relate to narrowly-defined individual gain. The degree of opportunism would clearly be different if an individual attached intrinsic value to such intangibles as commitment to the community, loyalty to service, professionalism, and the perpetuation of an *esprit de corps*. Preliminary empirical work on the schooling system suggests that all of these motivations might, in fact, be important.[22] There

[22] See Gazdar (2000). Also see Hanushek and Pace (1995) for evidence of similar motivations in the United States.

is nothing unusual or surprising about these suggestions. All kinds of organizations including giant multi-national corporations routinely invest large amounts of resources for the creation and maintenance of a "corporate culture" among their employees.

More importantly, however, it has been suggested that the degree of opportunism may not be exogenous to the problem of institutional performance. Platteau (1991), for example, has argued that individuals tend to behave more opportunistically under conditions of rapidly changing social norms. Norms define the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour, and therefore play a strong role in inducing conformity on the part of individual agents. If norms are internalised by the individual they are part of the individual's construction, and therefore not subject to deliberative choice. Norms, however, can be disturbed by their unilateral violation by one party. Persistent violations would tend to accord legitimacy to the violation of existing norms by other parties, and the establishment of new social norms with a new equilibrium level of individual opportunism. Platteau's work on institutional reform with respect to property rights in land in sub-Saharan Africa suggested that new (and arguably increased) transactions costs emerged as a direct result of policies which had been designed to reduce transactions costs.

This theoretical insight in useful in the understanding of educational system (and other public sector) reform in a significant way. Preliminary work on the schooling establishment indicated that while rent-seeking and capture were persistent behavioural features of teachers and school administrators, the observed level of opportunism was not trivially linked to informational costs. The behavioural motivations of teachers, for example, were somewhat more complex than the static construction of a purely self-regarding individual.

Besides self-regard, there were remnants of the idea of teaching as a "noble profession", that learning as well as the mediation of learning were deserving of social respect and deference, as well as the perception that the teacher was a political entrepreneur and social activist of sorts.[23] There was also a sharp sense, among teachers, that they were an embattled group within a system of multiple players and interest

[23] Teachers' stated reasons for opposing the introduction of elected school management committees in Punjab was that they would be made beholden to local political leaders who were often less educated than them. This view was almost identical to an explanation of the teacher resistance to the policy of greater school-community interaction in the United States: "Although educators do not oppose increased interaction, many feel a strong need to protect their status as credentialed professionals" Brunner (1998), 245.

groups, including not only parents, but also school administrators, bureaucrats, local notables, and political representatives. Collusive and protective action on the part of teachers was always explained with reference to similar collusive and predatory actions by other interest groups.

These observations suggest a more nuanced picture of system performance than the simple "devil-to-be-tamed" view which has dominated coercive as well as apparently democratic institutional interventions. If opportunistic behaviour is sustained, in part, by some equilibrium level of opportunism across the system, interventions which problematize informational costs alone are likely to miss the point. Problems are more complex, and their solutions would require some sensitivity to these complexities. A more complex interpretation of individual behaviour (than a static opportunistic behaviour model) also, happily, suggests promising directions of system reform, as individuals value not only their private consumption, but might also attach intrinsic value to some level of social activism.

Political process

The formal political processes, particularly where these processes are electoral ones, provide the key element of public accountability in the good governance-new political economy literature. Much of the work in the new political economy, in fact, is on the question of political competition and political choice in a pluralistic liberal democracy. The formal representative political process, however, has been conspicuous by its absence from policy discussion as well as policy intervention in Pakistan. The actual or potential role of electoral representation has not received any significant attention even during periods when elected civilian governments have been in power. It is remarkable that non-elected military governments have felt able to propose elaborate plans for governance reform from which modern political institutions such as constitution, parliament, and political parties are entirely absent.[24]

Part of the reason why such a glaring omission often passes without comment is the wide acceptance of the view in the policy discourse that the electoral process has acted as an unmitigated source of corruption, rent-seeking and capture, rather than as an instrument of accountability. The extent to which this characterisation of the political process is empirically valid remains to be seen. In any case, it can be argued that macro-

[24] See, for example, the "devolution plan" of the military government in Pakistan, unveiled on 14 August 2000. What is, perhaps, even more remarkable, is the indulgence with which this absence of modern political institutions has been treated by sections of the development community within the country and outside.

level factors, such as the frequent dissolution of elected institutions by decree, contribute to the weakness of the public accountability dimension of electoral politics. If an elected representative anticipates being dismissed from office not through competitive elections but through executive order, he has little incentive to behave in a politically-competitive manner.

It is not the intention here, as such, to check the empirical validity of the above characterisation of the political process. Rather, the aim is to spell out the possible political models implied in the governance reform discourse, and to offer some comments on the logical consistency of such models. Schemes such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs), school management committees (SMCs), the encouragement of local community-based organisations (CBOs), and the proposed devolution plan, all point to the elevation of local governance as an alternative mechanism of public accountability. The local community, therefore, can be regarded as an important unit of interest.

Implied political-economy model

According to the model, ordinary community members demand the effective provision of public services such as well-functioning schools. Electoral representatives, however, are able to deflect this demand because they are involved in patron-client type of relations with sufficient members of the local community. Clients support their patrons in electoral contest, in this model, not because of the promise of getting the public service they want, but simply for the privilege of maintaining their client-status. The electoral process, therefore, rather than being a competitive contest between rival candidates for voters' support, turns out, in this model, to be an opportunity for voters to bid for coming or remaining under the protection of rival patrons. In the extreme case costs of defection can be high, including threats not only to livelihoods but to life. For this model to work, the patrons need to be individuals who enjoy some degree of monopolistic economic, social and political power vis-a-vis the clients. Under these conditions, the electoral process simply reproduces patron-client relations, and public resources are captured in their entirety by the patron.

It is clear from the outset that this extreme model requires some qualifications if it is to be realistic even as a hypothetical representation of the political process in Pakistan. Firstly, there will need to be some real transfer of public resources to the clients. Unless this is the case the "privilege" of being someone's client does not carry any advantage. Secondly, while patrons as a group might enjoy some degree of prior monopoly power vis-a-vis clients in other markets, the larger the unit of representative the less likely the existence of an individual monopolist. Political competition is likely to be more lively the larger the political unit. Thirdly, for this model to work, there needs to be a

hierarchy of patron-client relations in which an individual somewhere in the middle is both client and patron. Patrons lower down the rung are able to deliver entire blocks of votes to higher level patrons.

These qualifications lead to a number of possible empirical and policy implications, some of which are contrary to the predictions of the "pure" model. Rather than the absence of competition, there is likely to be fierce competition, especially at higher levels of representation. In fact, paradoxically, if the patron-client model holds at all, it is the local level which is the most likely site of political monopoly. Empirical observations of the electoral process, and preliminary research already reported with respect to schooling, suggests that the electoral process is quite substantially about the transfer of public resources to communities. There is a common observation that discrimination is practised against localities and communities which opposed the winning candidate in the provision of public goods.[25]

One interesting governance implication of larger electoral units in contrast with local ones is the nature of resource transfer. Larger units of representation are likely to favour one-off transfers which are relatively less intensive in the political effort needed by the representative. Tasks such as the day-to-day monitoring of the performance of public services are likely to be less easily provided.

The role of the political process in establishing public accountability demands further analytical and empirical attention. In any case, it is prejudicial to dismiss outright any positive value of the existing political institutions in the provision of public services. The extreme version of the patron-client model implicit in such outright rejection is logically flawed. The electoral process does lead to some transfer of resources, and therefore, it is not an instrument of capture in its entirety.[26] The idea that the electorate has no voice because of patron-client relations also requires substantial qualification. More generally, the extent to which hierarchies of political and economic power at local as well as

[25] This contrasts with the electoral process in other societies where the incumbent might be expected to bank on his own supporters, and discriminate in favour of opposition supporters in order to woo them. The main innovation of New Labour in Britain, for example, is thought to be its economic concessions to the traditionally anti-Labour groups sometimes at the expense of the traditional Labour vote bank. In the patron-client case, on the other hand, opponents and defectors clearly have to be punished.

[26] For a start, the existence of the process itself creates a new entitlement (the vote) which can be transacted by the clients.

higher levels of governance lead to particular outcomes in terms of public performance needs to be critically and empirically examined.

One further issue concerning agency and voice needs to be raised at this juncture. The debate about the role of demand and supply constraints in the achievement of universal education can be revisited from a different perspective. It can be argued that public provision (and the quality of supply) will respond to demand if this is voiced through the political process. To what extent does the poor condition of public schools reflect weak demand for schools and schooling by the community? The "no-voice" patron-client model of the electoral process implies that the bottleneck has to be on the supply side. The poor condition of schools cannot be ascribed to any weakness in demand since communities in any case have no voice. If it is admitted, however, that voice does exist, the problem becomes more interesting. It is quite possible that the poor quality of schools is due to indifference towards schooling by the community itself. Implications for public action would differ in this case from the situation where the bottleneck was supply alone.[27]

Community action and political entrepreneurs

The focus on "community", particularly one defined in terms of location, as the unit of interest, and on "community mobilisation" and "community participation" as instruments of public accountability raises important questions about the composition and characteristics of the community. There is, of course, a functional aspect to the focus on the local community. If accountability is to be established at the point of delivery of any particular public good, then the locality is, quite clearly, the appropriate place to start.

Although the local community has come to acquire a central position in the discussion of governance reform, there is relatively little original work on Pakistan, either in the policy discourse, or in academic literature, on how communities are to be understood, or what actually exists on the ground.[28] For the discussion to move beyond relatively banal assertions about the merits of "community participation" there will need to be a more critical understanding of social institutions in the locality which might or might not answer to the calling of

[27] This issue also poses an interesting dilemma for the analyst who would prefer to motivate all public action with reference, ultimately, in individual-welfarist terms. If demand for schools and schooling is weak, state action for universal education could be welfare-reducing. It is logically more straightforward, therefore, to presume lack of voice.

[28] There are notable exceptions, of course. See, for example, Saigol (1999).

community. This study aims to bring some primary material to the debate.

In the meantime, there are a number of conceptual issues that require attention. It is worth recalling the starting point of the discussion of universal basic education as a public good. There, it was shown that the main economic rationale for state action lay in the existence of a collective action problem at the level of the community. Since public schooling was, by intent, going to be a public good, free-riding on the part of community members was likely to render voluntary collective action relatively difficult to achieve. Why, it might be argued, would the same collective action constraints not exist in any attempt at community mobilization or community participation? The aim of "community action" of these types is, after all, the production of local public goods. In the case of school management committees, for example, the public good in question is improvement in the quality of the government school. If community action is costly in terms of time and effort on the part of community members, the classic free-rider problem re-emerges.

It is useful to turn to some of the seminal literature on collective action problems for insights into possible "community-based" solutions. Mancur Olson, who is credited with the original proposition concerning the "illogic of collective action" admitted the existence of a class of agents known as "political entrepreneurs" who might play a critical role in enabling collective action under general conditions of free-riding.[29] The political entrepreneur can be thought of as differing from other agents in the following manner: she derives utility from the very fact of being in a position of political leadership. Without going into the psychological micro-foundations of such patterns of behaviour, let us simply say that individuals differ from each other in their "egoism".[30] Other community members, on their own, will underinvest in the public good, because for them the decision turns on their share of the cost of the public good, against their utility gain from the existence of the public good. The political entrepreneur, on the other hand, derives additional benefit in the shape of the intrinsic value she attaches to being in the position of leadership.

The model of collective action through the intervention of political entrepreneurs can be used to generate a clearer conceptual understanding of constraints to collective action, and the type of solutions that are likely to emerge. Firstly,

[29] Olson (1971).

[30] It should be noted that no moral judgement is involved here. The term "egoism" is being used as short-hand for saying that there are some people who enjoy being in positions of leadership more than others.

it is useful to move away from the simple model of undifferentiated community membership, and allow for differences and inequalities. The impact of inequality on collective action is likely to vary from the type of public good which is in question. In the classic cases discussed by Olson (1971), a highly unequal distribution could aid collective action, if inequality implied that certain individual community members were to gain disproportionately from the public good. Political entrepreneurs are also more likely to emerge from such individuals.

This can be illustrated in the context of rural Pakistan with reference to surface irrigation. The maintenance and upkeep of canals presents a typical collective action problem. Canal maintenance is a public good for landowners in the command area. Owners of large landholdings, moreover, are likely to benefit disproportionately from this public good. Hence they have greater interest in engaging in some level of political enterprise. In fact the patrons of the patron-client political model discussed above might precisely be such individuals. The possibility that the patron-client setup is an endogenous institutional response to collective action constraints raises uncomfortable questions about the emphasis, in the governance paradigm, on "community action" as an antidote to political patronage.

Intra-community inequality can lead to the opposite result, however -- i.e. make collective action more difficult -- for public goods such as education. Public education differs from other public goods such as clean air or well-maintained canals in one essential way. It is non-excludable not because of the technical infeasibility of exclusion. Public education is a public good by intent and deliberation. This implies that private schooling is always an option which can be exercised by a subset of the community members. If the potential for someone to act as a political entrepreneur is positively correlated with income -- a reasonable presumption if "egoism" is like a luxury good -- then other things being equal a more unequal community is less likely to succeed in collective action for public schooling. This is because potential political entrepreneurs are precisely the ones who have an exit option in the shape of private schools. The same result will hold with respect to other services which are public goods by intent, including the monitoring of a health centre (since private health might be available), and under some conditions, even clean water supply. In fact, the processes of modernisation, economic development and citizenship are closely associated with the production of "intentional" public goods.

Thinking beyond specific public goods such as canal maintenance, the very existence of a community indicates some prior collective action, possibly around a class of endogenously determined political entrepreneurs.[31] The "community action"

[31] On the conceptualisation of the community itself, see

part of governance reform, therefore, needs to be interpreted not as the creation or instigation of community action as such, but as the initiation of new forms of community action under conditions where community action already exists. If the existing state of political entrepreneurship is to be interpreted as an endogenous response to existing collective action problems, the proper perspective on policy interventions is to see these as attempts at shifting the community from an existing equilibrium to a new one.

It is worth considering a third, more complex, source of variation in individuals, besides egoism and wealth. Consider the case where individuals attach intrinsic value to particular communitarian objectives. In other words people derive utility not only from their own consumption of a public good, but also from the very existence of the public good. Sentiments like "taking pride in one's group/locality/country" are not uncommon features of the psychological makeup of individuals. There might be fundamental issues in the formation of an individual's identity which involve communitarian aspirations. The idea that a person would want to do things for "her people" or "her community", and that this desire is part of some process of self-fulfilment, is not outlandish, but a common trait of political activists and leaders in addition to their, presumably, unusual levels of egoism.

The "communitarian" possibility is mentioned here because the policy literature on community action tends to treat the availability of communitarian political entrepreneurship as an unstated but implied given. Operationally, too, the usual methodology of development agencies who are interested in promoting the creation of community organizations is geared to identifying communitarian individuals who might eventually emerge as local leaders.[32] It is important to note, therefore, that if communitarianism is a behavioral feature of the model, then communitarian individuals are likely to be already involved in some level of political entrepreneurship. In this case too, then, the problem will be not to create community action but to find ways of changing the terms of existing community action.

Universal education and community construction

While the discussion here has attempted to deconstruct a number of set ways of thinking about the issues, one term, which forms a central theme of analysis has escaped attention thus far. "Community" has been taken as something given, around which various administrative and political interventions have to be organized. A locational community was simply presumed to exist and to have a membership. Issues in boundary demarkation, even geographical ones, not to speak of sociological ones, were

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further below.

[32] See Akbar and Andrabi (forthcoming).

not problematized. On some occasions in the present text, and perhaps more frequently in the wider literature which has been alluded to, the community has been referred to as displaying corporate animus; "the community" will do such-and-such or this-and-that. All this has been done without any serious consideration of what constitutes a community, whether it is to be seen as an organic whole, who is in it, who is outside, and how it might be constructed. It is time, now to take a critical look the concept of the local community and especially its application to problems of education, service delivery and governance in a country like Pakistan.

It is useful to start with the simplest possible definition of a location community: namely, as the aggregate collection of families and individuals who are located within reasonable coverage range of a particular public good. Families who reside within the approximate coverage area of a government school, therefore, can be classed as the community of interest. This is the operational definition which has been adopted in the empirical work carried out as part of this study. This idea is also implicit in much of the policy as well as operational discussion, even if the link between the community and the public good in question is not made explicit.

Linking the concept of the local community to the public good in question has some interesting implications. Firstly, the community is defined externally -- i.e. there is little direct self-definition involved. Secondly, there need be nothing necessarily prior or organic about the community thus defined. Purely parochial conceptions of community are ruled out. This does not mean, of course, that the geographical delineation of a community with reference to the public good is ideologically neutral. In fact, this form of community demarkation is highly ideological, being rooted, as it is, in an (aspirational) notion of modern citizenship as community. Defining the community in explicit (though admittedly not ideologically-neutral) terms has analytical value in that it is possible, in principle, to develop a dynamic understanding of community construction and decline. This is in sharp contrast with the image of the rural community, particularly in South Asia, as not only an organic whole, but also timeless, and in some cases, pristine.[33]

Some empirical implications of the locational community are also worth noting. The geographical demarkation corresponding with a public good (say school) might happen also to include a prior organic community with a web of economic and social connections. On the other hand, several parochial or other

[33] Perhaps the resilient romance with the idea of a timeless and pristine Indian or South Asian village has been at the heart of the fascination with "the local" in much of the policy discourse. This would be despite many torrents of anthropological water under the bridge of the ideal village.

organic communities might co-reside within the demarkation, or might straddle its boundaries. Since excludability is a technically feasible option with public goods such as schools, it would be perfectly possible for prior organic communities to resist the modernizational aspiration (on the part of the planner) and to reproduce themselves even with regard to the new public goods.[34] Existing empirical work suggests the presence of strong insider-outsider issues in the utilization of notionally public goods. In fact, if community construction is seen as a continuous process, involving the negotiation and renegotiation of space and boundaries, in the discursive as well as the geographic domains, the introduction of public goods can be regarded as presenting new opportunities for community construction or reproduction. The key agents or catalysts in this process might be the communitarian political entrepreneurs introduced in the discussion above.

Such entrepreneurs might be particularly active with respect to universal and public education. Schooling, after all, is not simply about the mechanical transfer of skills and accumulation of value-free human capital as in the simple economic approach. Schooling and the socialisation around schooling can and do act as powerful instruments for the production and reproduction of shared cultural symbols, values, even language -- all crucial elements in community construction. Communitarian motives, therefore, can be important sources of not only political entrepreneurship, but of demand for universal education of a particular type. An interesting question, in this case, will be whether and to what extent the definition of the community espoused by the existing political entrepreneurs matches with notions of modern citizenship. If the agent's communal universe consists of individuals belonging to a particular ethnic group, for example, the condition of "universal" basic education may extend only members of that group.

Summing up

The above critical commentary on governance and political-economy related issues in universal education has been wide ranging, taking in issues as diverse as the schooling system, the implicit political model, issues in community action, and finally problems of community definition and construction. The aim of this mostly theoretical commentary has been to widen the scope of analysis, and to provide some preliminary conceptual grounding and an interpretive framework for the type of issues

[34] In fact, the delineation of insiders and outsiders is a general feature in the production of intentional public goods. Eligibility for entrance into state schools in most developed countries is exercised quite strictly on the basis of residential qualification. Public schools are therefore conditional public goods even in places where parochial community interests may not be strong.

likely to be confronted in empirical investigations of the schooling system.

3 Survey, Sample, and Communities

3.1 The Survey

The work

The fieldwork for this study was organized around unannounced inspections of schools and schooling facilities in selected rural communities. Surveys were conducted by small teams consisting of female and male investigators in equal numbers, and with the direct involvement of the author as one of the field investigators throughout. The modality of the survey was to arrive without prior notice at government schools in the sample communities at times when the schools were supposed to be open and functioning. The first task was to conduct a school inspection, and to record first-hand the conditions observed in the school. Surprise, therefore, was a key feature of the research, and was successfully deployed without exception.

Most of the fieldwork took place between March and June 1999. Schools were officially supposed to be open in all areas of the survey at the time of the visit. This period corresponds, roughly, with the first part of the academic year. The school year starts towards the middle of March, and schools break for summer holidays between the beginning and the middle of June.

The school surveys were directed, through a questionnaire, at the head teacher or the senior most teacher present. If no teachers were present or the school was closed, an attempt was made to fill parts of the questionnaire (for example information on school infrastructure) by direct observation. For other information the help of local residents was sought. All replies were verified wherever relevant with direct observations. School documents such as attendance registers for pupils and teachers, inspection log books, and admissions registers were also checked by the investigators. Register entries, such as the number of pupils present were verified by direct observation, and the actually observed numbers were the ones finally used. The school survey also required investigators to make observations of a qualitative nature about the state of the school infrastructure, the attitude of teachers towards the school, pupils and the community, teacher effort, and school ambience. An attempt was made to summarize these observations into an index of school performance.

Besides the school survey, in-depth teacher interviews, aided by a formal questionnaire, were conducted with individual teachers in selected schools. These interviews started with straightforward queries into the career path of the teacher, and ended in informal discussions with the teacher about his or her perceptions of the school, community, the schooling administration, as well as political processes.

The school survey acted as an entry point into the

community, which then led to the collection of detailed quantitative as well as qualitative information about the community itself. The formal questionnaire proved to be a useful instrument for establishing some level of rapport with respondents, and this was followed by the recording of more qualitative information on the community's interaction with the government school and schooling in general, aspects of the community's history, evidence of collective action, social hierarchy, intra-community politics, and participation of community members in wider political processes.

The community questionnaires, administered separately to females and males, were originally intended for local resident members of the School Management Committee (SMC) or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This plan had to be abandoned early on when it became clear that the SMC/PTA were mostly paper tigers, whose members had little or no informational advantage over other local residents about the functioning of the school. Subsequently, community respondents did include SMC/PTA members, but not exclusively so. The strategy for identifying community respondents was two-fold. For females, community questionnaires and discussion about the community and the school was conducted mostly with selected women in their own homes. For males an attempt was made to find respondents among people present at relatively public spaces such as the village shop if there was one, in tree shades, or in places where people gather. Usually, the main respondent would be quickly joined by a larger group, and many questions would be answered through conference and negotiation within the gathering.

Questionnaires and interviews were also conducted with selected households, with a particular focus on the history of school participation, if any, among the household's children. Attempts were made to probe the processes of decision-making within the household which led to a child being in school or being out of school.

In four of the sample communities, a population census was administered with the help of local residents. In most instances the survey teams were able to enlist the help of individuals who had acted as census agents for the official government census a few months prior to the survey. In all cases, great care was taken to enumerate all households, and special effort was made to ensure the inclusion of households who might have faced particular disadvantage owing to their economic class or social status.

Working conditions

It is a common mistake to presume that qualitative data are "subjective" while numerical representations are "objective". In fact, both types of information gathering impose a range of subjective decisions upon the investigator. The difference, if any, between the two types of data collection is that the rules for arriving at a particular numerical representation are more

clearly spelled out from the outset. In any case, it is important to place on record the conditions under which the survey was conducted, and therefore to pass on some of the discretionary choice about the interpretation of data to the reader.

There was a core team of investigators who carried the survey for its entire length, and thus ensured some level of consistency in data collection. Other team members were either recruited locally, or were individuals who were familiar with the social terrain being traversed. The investigators were, nevertheless, all "outsiders" as far as teachers and local residents were concerned. The field investigators were mostly regarded as educated urban people who had an (understandable) interest in rural schooling. The areas in the survey were all sufficiently well-exposed to public interventions to be able to stereotype the work of survey team. This stereotyping was helpful, as it enabled people to ascribe legitimate motives to our work and allowed them to interact freely with us relatively quickly.

The drawback with stereotyping, of course, is in possible misunderstanding of the intention behind the research. Some teachers as well as community members thought that we were "checking up" on the teachers. While this was true in a general sense, we went out of our way to reassure all respondents of our independence of any government department. Many people that we met in the course of the fieldwork thought that the survey was a prelude to some physical infrastructural intervention. A common question, and an entirely logical one, which we confronted time and again was "what is in it for us?" The team saw this as an opportunity to explain the importance of independent research, and the power of ideas in high-level decision-making which influences events down at the community level. How far we were able to convince our respondent-interrogators or for that matter even ourselves about such happy linkages between research and policy is another matter. It is likely that to many of our respondent-interrogators we came across as a naive and self-deluded though hopefully well-meaning group of individuals.

The important thing from the point of view of the research was that we did not face any active resistance to our work. There was one village in Sindh where the manager of the local landlord let it be known that our interest in the affairs of his tenant farmers was unwelcome and unwarranted. We did complete the questionnaires in that village. In general, we were overwhelmed by the hospitality of our respondents all over Pakistan. We felt that a crucial factor in the generally protective attitude towards us, despite the fact that many of the questions we wanted to ask were intrusive, was the presence of women team members.

Conversations around the guest-host relationship often provided useful insights into relations within communities. In one village in central Punjab, for example, we were guests of a

relatively low-caste but economically upwardly mobile family, whose members offered crucial support in data collection. The son of the local *lambardar* took it upon himself to taunt our hosts about getting above their station in assuming the role of correspondents with outsiders -- traditionally a prerogative of the rich and the powerful.

Interestingly, school teachers were generally very cooperative, even though they were the ones who had potentially the most to hide. In the first instance when the survey teams arrived at the school, sometimes as though out of nowhere, there was some degree of apprehension that ours was an official inspection of sorts. In some schools in Punjab people asked outright if our survey was a follow-up of the Army survey of school of a few months before. Once in the course of the survey it became obvious that we were not in the business of "catching people out" the teachers tended to relax considerably. Ultimately they responded to us positively because part of the investigation genuinely was to solicit teacher opinions about constraints and problems in the school system. Many teachers also implied or outright stated that their conversation with us was an interchange between two educated and cultured parties about the unschooled multitude.

While there was no instance where the survey work was aborted due to suspicion, let alone resistance or active hostility, there were some occasions when our work was affected by conflicts to which we were mostly incidental. In central Punjab, for example, we found ourselves in a village where a fierce factional struggle was under way. Our plans of conducting a more detailed survey of this village had to be abandoned, though only after the basic data had been collected. Towards the end of the school survey one of the investigators noticed that a handgun had been concealed under some papers on the headmaster's desk where the interview was being conducted. It turned out that there had been a gunfight over canal water allocation in this village in the weeks preceding the survey, in which an executive engineer of the irrigation department had been shot dead. There had been police action, many of the young men had gone into hiding, and a number of families had temporarily moved out of the village as a security measure.

The survey team was also caught in the metaphorical crossfire of a bigger conflict in Punjab. During the course of the survey, a hostile campaign had started in a section of the tabloid press attacking the professional, moral and patriotic credentials of human rights and advocacy NGOs. This campaign received support from sections of the Punjab provincial administration, including some ministers, who ordered police raids on several NGO offices. We felt ripples of this conflict back at the district and tehsil levels, where previously cooperative officials now thought it too risky to be seen to be helping a survey team from a research NGO.

3.2 Sample Selection

It was not the intention, of course, to conduct a comprehensive national survey of schools or communities. Rather, the main aim of the survey was to draw insights about the performance of the government schooling system in the context of the local community. The selection of sites for conducting fieldwork could not, therefore, be driven by demands of national or regional statistical representation. Some level of randomness was required, nevertheless, in the selection of survey sites. The strategy adopted here was to first select geographical regions on the basis of prior criteria, and then to make a selection of survey sites within these well-defined regions on the basis of a random sample. Decisions about the identification and demarkation of the primary geographical unit, and the method for selecting actual survey sites within these units had to balance the research requirements against resource constraints. A brief description of sampling criteria and sample selection is provided here.

Survey sites

It is important first, however, to clarify the identity of the survey site. Since the survey was to be organised around an inspection of the government school, one possible strategy would have been to use some listing of government schooling facilities as the statistical universe, and to delineate the survey site with reference to the government school. The school was the focal point of the survey because it was the point of delivery of the government schooling system. The number of schools present in a particular locality, however, was also an important observation as far as the analysis of the schooling system was concerned. If the number of schools happened to be nil, that also needed to be recorded as a valid observation. The survey site, therefore, had to be defined in terms of a locational community and not the school. A listing of locational communities was the appropriate statistical universe.

Five regions

There were several criteria to determine where, precisely, the survey was to be conducted. It was decided to concentrate on relatively mainstream rural regions -- in other words regions which are relatively well integrated into the physical and institutional infrastructure of Pakistan. Mainstream, in this context meant regions of settled agrarian economies in the more accessible areas. Areas with special problems of infrastructure due to remoteness and political and administrative neglect are likely to face particularly serious constraints in the functioning of the schooling system. It was a purposive decision, however, to gain insights about regions which are better integrated into the national economy. The reasons were two-fold. Firstly, because it in these latter areas that the bulk of the rural population of the country resides, and secondly, because it was a research objective to understand the causes of public failure even in the absence of special

constraints such as remoteness. The sample was thus restricted to the plains or relatively low-lying settled areas of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP, or, in geographical terms, the Indus basin region.

Within the Indus basin region, five further sub-regions were identified: irrigated Sindh, plains NWFP, barani upper Punjab, canal-colony central Punjab, and irrigated lower Punjab. Several factors were involved in this demarkation. Firstly, it was important to have provincial contrasts, particularly because primary schooling is the area of responsibility of the provincial government. Moreover, any inter-provincial contrasts in the political culture, due to different histories of political-institutional development were important to capture.

Secondly, ethno-linguistic contrasts called for attention, especially with respect to an area like education, where language issues are important. Ethnic differences might also account for wider cultural differences, in attitudes towards schooling, and particularly attitudes towards female mobility and schooling. Within Punjab this suggested a further division between the north, the centre and the south, corresponding roughly with Potohari, central Punjabi and Seraiki regions.

Thirdly, the sub-regions were thought, *a priori*, to have relatively distinctive informal systems of governance. Sindh and Lower Punjab are regions of a high concentration of land ownership, and a relatively high incidence of landlessness. Central Punjab, in contrast is thought of as a region where the agrarian economy is dominated by small to middle peasant-proprietors. The agrarian economy of Upper Punjab is relatively poor, and reliant on rainfall, but it can be considered a region with relatively less severe land as well as social inequalities. Plains NWFP share features of the settled and irrigated plains agricultural societies of Punjab and Sindh but with contrasting social organisation.

Finally, these five regions represent differences in their levels of economic diversification and market integration. Central Punjab can be thought of as being ahead of the rest. It can also be thought of as the core political base of the Pakistani state. Upper Punjab and NWFP have less indigenous economic development, but have benefitted from the substantial outmigration of workers to other parts of Pakistan and abroad. These are also regions with high levels of representation in public sector employment, mostly in the shape of service in the armed forces. Lower Punjab and rural Sindh have rich and highly productive agricultural sectors, but relatively less economic diversification. They are also regions considered to be located on the periphery of political power in Pakistan.

Geographical units within the five regions

The next round in narrowing down the sample was to identify contiguous geographical units within each sub-region, in order

to get the statistical universe for randomised selection of survey sites. The idea at this stage of the sampling procedure, was to identify geographical units which corresponded with lower administrative units such as districts or tehsils. In Sindh the choice was Sanghar district minus the eastern parts of the district which incorporate the Thar desert. Sanghar had the most unequal distribution of land ownership according to the 1990 Agricultural Census not only in Sindh but in all of Pakistan. The district is also close to the geographical centre of the province, and has features of upper and lower Sindh. In Lower Punjab the tehsil of Alipur in Muzaffargarh district was selected. Muzaffargarh, like Sanghar, is close to the geographical centre of its "ethnic" region, namely the main Seraiki areas of Lower Punjab. Muzaffargarh, and Alipur tehsil in particular, lies in the riverine belt, which is an important feature of the Indus basin geography. District Toba Tek Singh was selected from Central Punjab. This district had the lowest concentration of land ownership in Punjab according to the 1990 Agricultural Census. The district is almost entirely made up of canal colony settlements, and is within commuting range of Pakistan's second largest industrial centre, Faisalabad. Chakwal district was selected from Upper Punjab, and the districts of Mardan from plains NWFP. Both these districts are thought to be not atypical representative of their respective regions in terms of their ethnic composition, economic characteristics, and geographical conditions.

Some further observations about the selected geographical units are due. Sanghar, in central Sindh, provides a particularly useful vantage point, *a priori*, for observing monopolistic patron-client relations. It is the base of one of the most powerful spiritual-religious orders in Sindh led by the Pir of Pagara. The followers of *pirs* such as Pagara constitute not only a spiritual or ideological association but a political and economic one. Pagara's following is thought to be amongst the most well-organised ones in this regard, and this enables Pagara to play a crucial role not only in the politics of Sanghar and Sindh, but also on occasions in national politics. Part of Pagara's following is organised in military fashion, and is a remnant of a guerilla force (Hurs) which waged a dogged military campaign against British colonial rule in the 1930s and 1940s. Large numbers of the Hur (in fact entire villages) were incarcerated in concentration camps, first by the British, and subsequently by the early post-colonial governments, before being rehabilitated in the late 1950s. The then Pir was executed by the colonial government, and his son, the present Pir, exiled to Britain for many years.[35]

The Pagara order, however, is not the only claimant of spiritual-religious and political loyalty in Sanghar. Another influential house based in the neighbouring district of

[35] For a detailed history of the Pagara order see Ansari (1992).

Hyderabad is that of the Makhdooms of Hala. This family also combines spiritual-religious affinity with economic and political power. The Makhdooms are major landowners in their own right, and also command the allegiance of other landowners. These two houses, the Pagara and the Makhdoom, maintain cordial relations in public, and discourage open expressions of hostility on the part of their respective supporters. The sense of rivalry is palpable in the region, however, and finds fairly precise expression in party-political affiliations. The main Pagara centre acts as the local base for the Muslim League, while the Makhdooms are closely associated with the Peoples' Party. The local politics of the two main electoral parties of Pakistan, therefore, are influenced to some degree by rival spiritual-religious loyalties.

Partly as a result of these factors, Sanghar has played a prominent role in the recent political history of Pakistan and Sindh. It was the home-ground of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo whose government (1985-1988) acted as a transitional civilian administration between the Martial Law regime of Zia-ul-Haq and the democratically-elected government of Benazir Bhutto in 1988. Junejo is credited with having initiated large-scale rural development programmes and investments in public infrastructure, following a period of relative stagnation under the Martial Law regime. Sanghar was also the home district of Jam Sadiq Ali, an influential Chief Minister of Sindh in the early 1990s, with whom one of the most spectacular instances of resource capture is associated. Jam Sadiq's ancestral home Jam Nawaz Ali was in close proximity to some of the sample communities in our survey. Prior to Sadiq's ministership Jam Nawaz Ali was a relatively inconsequential village. On becoming Chief Minister, Sadiq revised the local administrative boundaries and carved out a new taluka which was then headquartered at Jam Nawaz Ali. Subsequently, public resources were used to construct a housing colony, a police academy, dual carriageway roads on the approach to Jam Nawaz Ali, and a heliport. In short, Sanghar is likely to provide a good vantage point for the observation of monopolistic patron-client relations and its outcomes for public schooling.

Muzaffargarh district in Lower Punjab, and Alipur tehsil within the district, are bounded on two sides by rivers. Much of the area is flood-prone, and past floods have resulted in changes in the course of the rivers and in the location of settlements. The area is of historical and religious significance to much of Punjab and Sindh as the ancient city of Uch is located here. According to myth Uch was inhabited by Bokhari Sayyads from Persia who were amongst the early missionaries of Islam in the region. The Sayyads, who claim descent from Prophet Mohammad, are still influential in terms of land ownership and local politics in the region. Their traditional power rests on their control of shrines which are important centres of pilgrimage. Other dominant groups include Gopangs, a Baloch tribe, and various Sammat groups who are known as Jam. Sayyads, Jams and Baloch tribes tend to dominate local

politics. The main national parties are represented in the district, and there is also a strong current of Seraiki ethnic nationalism, though this does not have an overtly political form.

The district of Toba Tek Singh is part of the canal colony heartland. Initially *doab* scrub, the land was irrigated towards the end of the nineteenth century by the canal irrigation programme of the British Indian state. The canal system of the Rechna doab defines the geography and settlement pattern of the district. Canal colonies were inhabited by people from outside the area, mostly from eastern districts of Punjab such as Hoshiarpur, Jallandhar and Ludhiana, all of which are now in India. The state policy to settle "peasant" castes led to the establishment of villages by various Araeen and Jatt groups. Most of the villages in Toba Tek Singh are numbered "Chaks", but these often also bear a secondary title after the village of the original settlers. The pattern of migration and settlement continued after 1947, when more immigrants from east Punjab were accommodated in the area. The last major state-sponsored migrations and settlements took place in the 1960s and 1970s when families displaced by dam construction on the Indus at Tarbela were brought here.

There are several "insider-outsider" issues in this district which have been instigated by migration. The original inhabitants of the scrub were summarily dismissed by the state as well as the newcomers from eastern Punjab as people of the jungle, or "jaangli". The Jaanglis can be seen as forming a distinct cultural group, and speak what is now considered a non-standard dialect of Punjabi. At the time of the original canal settlements, some Jaanglis also received land, though most were marginalised into the peripheral riverbed areas which were useless for canal development. There is some tension also between the newest arrivals from Tarbela, and the dominant migrant groups from eastern Punjab.

Toba Tek Singh had an active peasant movement until the 1970s, and was the site of historic peasant rallies during that period. Its political orientation changed decisively in the 1980s towards greater conservatism. The intervention of the military dictator Zia-ul-Haq is thought to have been important in this regard. He was an eastern Punjabi Araeen himself, and became an active participant or recipient of Araeen-based lobbying from Toba Tek Singh. A significant manifestation of this politics was the conferral, in 1981, of district status on Toba Tek Singh, which had hitherto been a tehsil of Faisalabad. One of Zia-ul-Haq's sons continued to represent Toba Tek Singh in the Punjab provincial assembly until recently.

Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi are both military-dominated districts. While Chakwal is part of the heartland for military recruitment, Mardan-Swabi, besides providing recruits, have been home to major installations such as cantonments for over a hundred years. Chakwal was formerly part of Jhelum district,

and made of mainly low hills, platteau and salt mines. Mardan-Swabi has a diverse geography with canal irrigated plains, hilly areas, as well as riverine regions. Mardan-Swabi was administratively integrated into the British Indian state at an early stage, in contrast to its neighbouring areas some of which continue to maintain semi-autonomous "tribal" status. The plains regions of Mardan-Swabi are home to some of the more influential landlords in the NWFP. While these areas are recipients of migrants, the area as a whole has a high degree of outmigration. Chakwal too is an area of high outmigration. In this regard these two areas differ from the first three geographical regions which have historically been regions of immigration. The two main national parties, the PPP and the PML both have a presence in these two districts. In Mardan-Swabi sub-nationalist parties are also active, whereas in Chakwal there are growing Islamic revivalist movements, some of them consisting of former military personnel.

The final tally

Having selected the five geographical units, viz Sanghar, Muzaffargarh, Toba Tek Singh, Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi, the next task was to obtain complete listings of locational communities for these regions. The Population Census of Pakistan provides the listing of settlements at sub-district levels of administrative unit (tehsil in Punjab and NWFP, and taluka in Sindh). The lowest level of settlement listed in the census is the *deh* or *mauza*, which corresponds with the lowest level of (revenue) administration.[36] *Deh/mauza* lists include information on population, crude literacy ratios and a few other variables such as the size of land. For the purposes of this study the listings from the Population Census 1980 were used. Results of the more recent (1998) census had not been available.

The list of settlements in the respective geographical units was further filtered by size. We were interested in areas with a particular rural character -- or relatively remote settlements in relatively mainstream regions. There was reason to expect that the schooling system and other public services in general are particularly poor in the smaller settlements. All settlements in the sample regions with populations of two thousand people or less in the 1980 census were taken as the basic list. From these lists, a 7 per cent random sample was drawn in each area. This yielded a sample of 48 census settlements; 9 in Sanghar, 6 in Muzaffargarh (Alipur), 15 in Toba Tek Singh, 11 in Chakwal, and 7 in Mardan-Swabi.

3.3 Settlements and Communities

Table 1 provides a summary of sample selection and survey activities. In all, the survey covered some part of 6

[36] The terms *deh* is used in Sindh, and *mauza* in Punjab and NWFP.

districts, and 14 sub-district administrative units. The use of the Population Census, and particularly the reliance on the listing of census settlements was based on the premise that a census settlement would roughly correspond with the contours of a locational community as defined in Chapter 2 above -- that is, the collection of people residing within the catchment area of the government school.

It is immediately apparent from Table 1 that the presumed correspondence between census settlements and locational communities was far from perfect. There were 48 census settlements in the sample, and almost twice as many, or 90 survey communities. There was a strong regional pattern to this mismatch between census settlement and survey communities. While the correspondence was more or less exact in Central and Upper Punjab and NWFP, in both Sindh and Lower Punjab there were multiple communities within census settlements. In Sindh the mismatch was most acute, with 46 communities corresponding with 9 census settlements. The typical census settlement consisted of several smaller villages, hamlets or clusters of houses. While these smaller clusters were not fully recognised as villages in the administrative record, they were, for all intents and purposes, relatively self-contained locational communities. The same was true to a smaller extent in Lower Punjab. The administrative unit of settlement had little or no meaning beyond the revenue record books in these areas. This difference in the pattern of settlements would turn out have important implications not only for the conduct of fieldwork, but also to the analysis which is to follow.

Some nomenclature relating to different types of settlements in the survey regions is relevant. The main administrative settlement which corresponds with the basic census unit is the *deh* or *mauza*. In Punjab this unit might also be known as the *mahal*. In Sindh, the actual village community, of which there might be several within a *deh*, is the *goth*. The *goth* might be a cluster of a few homes belonging to one caste or kinship group, or even one large extended family. It might be a collection of several such groups living together, but in distinct sub-clusters of homes known as *para*. The *para* is, in effect a shared compound which is treated as a common home in many respects. The *goth* is often named after an individual, usually the person who is the local *vadero* or *nekmard*, in some sense the village head.[37] Names of *goths* often change through succession. Names and locations of *goths* also change frequently due to migration. There is a relatively high turnover of *goth*s. In the sample, for example, at least twelve out of the 46 *goths* had been established or revived within the previous generation.

In Muzaffargarh also there were clusters of settlements

[37] Jam Sadiq's benevolence towards his village Jam Nawaz Ali was but an extreme case of this more general phenomenon of establishing and upgrading settlements.

below the *mauza*, many of which were self-contained villages. Older central villages are often known as *khuh* or wells, since many settlements were originally established around wells. Individual clusters called *basti* are sometimes named after particular individuals, but mostly known simply by the name of the caste or kinship group. The *basti* like the *goth* has a relatively high turnover, while the *khuh* is often more established.

There is close correspondence between administrative units and actual locational communities in Toba Tek Singh, except for the *jaangli* riverine areas where the Muzaffargarh pattern (including the term *khuh*) prevailed. The canal-colony village is known as the *chak*, and generally bears a numerical code which corresponds with its position in the canal system. The typical name of a village would be something like Chak 123 Upper Branch. Most of the villages also have an alternative title which is the name of the village, usually in India, from where the original canal settlers came. The *chak* is laid out in grid fashion. There are additional extensions and "colonies" on the periphery of most *chaks* where small residential plots were allotted in different periods to poor landless families. Many farming households also have a homestead (*dera*) close to their fields, though most such households prefer to reside in the main village.

Villages in Chakwal are mostly well-established and of long standing, as are most settlements in the hilly areas of Mardan-Swabi. In the plains, canal areas of Mardan-Swabi, however, there is some degree of turnover in the formation and abandonment of settlements as a result of migration. The *killi* (village) or the *koroona* (extended family) are names for clusters of houses around a particular kinship group. The name of the kinship group usually precedes *killi* or *koroona*.

Table 1 provides a summary of the number of schools in the survey. In Toba Tek Singh, Chakwal and Mardan, there were typically two schools in each village, one each for boys and girls. In Sindh, on the other hand, most villages had only one school. In the 90 villages in the sample, there were 132 government schools with primary classes. They were mostly primary schools (i.e. from grade 1 to 5) but there were some mosque schools (usually grades 1 to 3), and some middle and high schools with primary sections. School surveys were conducted in 125 of these schools. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 49 teachers, and 106 households.

A few additional observations are in order about the definition and identification of "survey communities" in this survey. It was noted in Chapter 2 above that the definition of the locational community used in this study is non-parochial and non-organic, but is nevertheless normative since it privileges the aspiration of modern citizenship as community. The idea of defining the boundaries of the locational community in terms of the geographical catchment area of particular public services

(in this case the government school) provides a useful point of departure. It has already been noted that where the administrative village did not match with our prior definition of locational community, the latter provided a more meaningful marker. There were cases in the course of the fieldwork where our identification of the boundaries of the locational community also came into conflict with the self-defined boundaries volunteered by local residents. More often than not, the source of discrepancy was the identification of a parochial community based on common caste, kinship group, tribe, or religious affiliation, by our respondents.

This issue of parochial community, particularly one identified in terms of caste or kinship group had interesting implications for the fieldwork as well as for the subsequent analysis. The absence of significant recent work on caste and kinship communities in Pakistan, despite the acknowledged primary importance of these categories in the political process, meant that many methodological issues had to be worked out on the ground. Pre-tests had suggested that questions about caste/kinship group will be relatively easy ones to administer and get responses on. Despite these indications from pre-testing, there was apprehension on the part of the survey team about the sensitivity of such questions in the rural context. Perhaps this apprehension was rooted in the particular milieu of the investigators themselves, where open discussion of caste and kinship is banished from "educated" conversation, though it thrives in other less formal exchanges. As things turned out, the "caste question" was one of the least problematic one in queries pertaining to individuals as well as survey communities. The most common way for respondents to enumerate the total number of households in their village, for example, was to count the number of households belonging to each caste/kinship group separately before adding them up.

4 How Rural Schools Work or Not

The aim of this chapter is to provide a quantitative summary of the results of the school and community survey. The intention here is to report the basic results, identify some general patterns, and offer preliminary analysis about the correlates of school performance. The results reported here will form the empirical base on which richer analysis including insights from case studies and other qualitative material will be developed in subsequent chapters. This chapter is organized into three parts. Firstly, there are brief descriptions of the survey communities and sample schools. Secondly, a more detailed documentation of schooling facilities and school performance is provided. The operational indicators of school performances adopted by this study are also discussed. Finally, some broad patterns in school performance are identified using simple cross-tabulations.

4.1 Brief Description of Sample

Sample communities

Some of the characteristics of the sample communities are reported in Table 2. On average, there were 159 households, and applying the national average rural household size of around 7 persons per household, over a thousand people. There were 1.4 schools on average per community, nearly three-quarters of the communities had electricity, and under a half had some type of (public or private) health facility. The "average" community was located just under a kilometre away from a metalled road, and around ten kilometres from the nearest town. There was much variation in road access, with nearly half of all communities being located on a metalled road, while another quarter of them were over a kilometre away from the road. The average "normal" yield of wheat was around 21 maunds per acre, or 840 kilograms per acre. Nearly half of the households in the sample communities owned their own agricultural land, and the casual daily wage, an index of the purchasing power of the poorest, was equivalent to 8.5 kilograms of the main staple, wheatflour.

Inter-regional variation in infrastructure as well as other socio-economic characteristics of the sample communities are worth noting. Average settlement size (in terms of number of households) was the smallest in Sanghar and largest in Toba Tek Singh. The distinctive settlement patterns of Sindh (and to some extent Lower Punjab) were reflected in the average size of settlement. In Toba Tek Singh, on the other extreme, there were mainly large canal colony villages which had been laid out and settled through state intervention over a century ago.

Distribution and history of school establishment

There was, on average, one government school per sample village in Sanghar, and around two government schools per village in Toba Tek Singh, Chakwal and Mardan/Swabi. The

difference appeared to be a reflection of the differences in relative village size. Sanghar villages were also the most remote, measured in terms of distance from a metalled road, closely followed by Muzaffargarh. In terms of electricity and health service provision Sanghar villages were relatively poorly endowed compared with the other regions. Land ownership distribution in the sample villages appeared to be in line with broader regional patterns, with Sanghar and Muzaffargarh having the lowest incidence of land ownership compared to the other three regions.

The differences between regional samples in terms of productivity and poverty are interesting. Wheat yields were the highest in Sanghar and Toba Tek Singh, followed by Muzaffargarh and Mardan-Swabi, and the lowest in Chakwal. The low land productivity in Chakwal was understandable, given that this was the only region in the sample which was not irrigated. In terms of real wages, Muzaffargarh was the poorest, followed by Mardan-Swabi. Chakwal, despite low agricultural productivity, had high real wages. This was probably due to the large outmigration of workers, generating excess labour demand as well as remittance-led income growth in the local economy. Real wages were the second highest in Sanghar, a fact which appears anomalous given the low incidence of land ownership. The regional ranking fits well, however, with the results of regional poverty analyses.[38]

The number of government schools in each community is reported in Table 3. There were five communities out of the sample of 90 where there was no government school. These were all in Sanghar, and all of them were small hamlets with fewer than thirty households each. Nearly half of the sample communities were single-school villages, while just under a half had two or more government schools. There was strong regional pattern in the number of schools per village. As already mentioned, the 5 no-school communities were all in Sanghar. Over three-quarters of communities in Sanghar were one-school villages, and the proportion was only marginally less (70 per cent) in Muzaffargarh. There was only one single-school village in Chakwal, none in Mardan-Swabi, and only three out of fifteen in Toba Tek Singh. The latter three were all in the riverine (non-canal colony) belt of Toba Tek Singh.

The regional distribution of school numbers per village was a reflection of the settlement patterns. This can be seen if the distribution of school numbers is compared across village size classes. Two-thirds of the one-school villages had 60 or fewer households, while over 90 per cent of the multiple-school villages had more than 60 households each. The disparity between Sindh, Lower Punjab (as well as riverine Central Punjab) on the one hand, and NWFP, Upper Punjab, and canal-colony Central Punjab on the other, in the provisioning of schooling infrastucture cannot be ascribed, *prima facie*, to regional

[38] See Gazdar (1997).

discrimination by the state. It can be explained with reference to the specific settlement patterns of the former three regions, particularly the prevalence of small scattered villages. It is another matter, however, that the settlement pattern of canal colony Central Punjab was itself very much an outcome of state policy in the first instance. The issue of insiders and outsiders at the national level needs to remain in the debate at some level also because of the perceived ethnic hierarchy of the Pakistani state in which Sindhis, Seraikis and indigenous people of Central Punjab who were marginalised to riverine areas, are considered relative outsiders.

The history of school establishment in the sample villages is summarized in Table 4. It is striking that over a third of the schools in the sample had been established since 1985. This figure gives some indication of the relative novelty of public schooling intervention in rural Pakistan. The period since 1985 marked the return, in stages, of electoral politics in Pakistan. The first civilian government of this period, which was hand-picked by the then military dictator is popularly credited with having initiated large-scale infrastructural development in rural areas. The implications of this for schooling and for the understanding of the political economy of public services are discussed in Chapter 5 below.

The regional histories of school establishment are summarized in Table 5. A majority of the survey schools in Sanghar were established recently. Mardan-Swabi schools were also of relatively recent vintage. Toba Tek Singh and Chakwal had the largest proportion of pre-1947 schools in the sample. There was a clear gender pattern too in school establishment (Table 6). Girls-only and mixed schools dominated more recent school establishment. The sample profile, therefore, was consistent with the general perception about the recent policy focus on girls schooling. Girls schools were also mainly established in areas where boys school already existed.

Gender segregation and some evidence of mixed-gender schooling

The issue of gender-segregated schooling requires some further observations. Pakistan is one of the few countries in the world, and certainly unique in the South Asian region (unless Afghanistan is included in the region) in pursuing gender-segregated schooling even at the primary level. The rationale for this policy is that parents are reluctant to send their daughters to mixed gender schools due to cultural restrictions about female mobility in public places. Earlier investigation into this issue (Gazdar, 2000) revealed a more complex situation on the ground. It was found that many of the schools officially designated as single gender schools actually operated as mixed schools. Moreover, evidence from private schools in rural areas and in small towns that mixed gender schooling indicated that mixed gender schooling was widely practised. It was suggested that part of the pressure for single gender schooling arose from prejudice on the part of

school administrators.

It was also found that the policy signal about the potential availability of girls schools discouraged parents from actively considering other options such as mixed gender schooling and encouraged them, instead, to lobby for more girls schools. Such signalling by the state, and the consequent diversion of parental effort had a possibly deleterious effect on female schooling, since the proper functioning of girls' schools was more difficult to guarantee than boys' schools. Female teachers were required to staff girls' schools, and the type of issues in gender mobility which were thought to be faced by girl children were, in fact, more acutely applicable to adult women.[39]

In the present school survey an attempt was made to determine the precise gender status of schools. The results confirmed the results of earlier work that in practice mixed gender primary schooling might enjoy greater acceptance than is acknowledged by the school administration. It was possible to identify three levels at which a school's gender status was determined. Firstly, there was the official designation, incorporated in the name of the school and its line management. School administration is bifurcated along gender lines all the way down to the local level. Primary schools which reported to the boys' schools district education office were treated as being official designated as boys' schools. Mosque schools also report to the boys' side of the district education office, though these are specifically mandated to enrol both boys and girls. Out of the 125 sample schools 71 were officially boys' schools, 42 were girls', and 13 mixed (Table 7).

The second tier in determining school status was the view of the respondent teacher about the gender designation of the school. This varied somewhat from the official designation, as teachers in 13 of the boys' primary schools thought that their school was a mixed school (Table 7). This discrepancy arose from the semi-official provision that boys' schools in single-school communities are allowed to enrol girls. The third level of gender status was actual observed practice. In this case the picture changed further, as even in schools considered as single-sex schools co-education was observed in practice. This was the case for a third of the boys' schools and one in five of the girls school for which data were available (Table 8). While the number of girls in boys' schools, and vice versa, was relatively small, it is nevertheless significant that around two-fifths of the schools for which data were available

[39] It is interesting to note that there was one area in the survey where the teachers were not gender-segregated by school type. In Chakwal, there were many boys' primary schools in which female teachers were employed. This observation was in line with other indications of relatively greater female mobility in Chakwal compared to the other survey areas.

practised mixed gender schooling. It is also worth noting that 20 out of the 36 confirmed boys' schools reported having enrolled girls in the past, some as recently as in the previous academic year.

4.2 Schooling Facilities and School Performance

School status at time of survey

This section provides a summary report of the school inspection part of the survey. The natural starting point is to record the status of the school at the time of the visit. Out of the 125 schools in the sample, 96 or 77 per cent were open at the time of the visit (Table 9). Whether a school is open or not is, admittedly, a minimalist indicator of school performance. The fact that almost a quarter of the sample schools were closed, however, suggests that a large proportion of schools did not even fulfil this minimal procedural requirements.

Since the survey/inspection was about the performance of the government schooling system, the intention was to survey all relevant schooling installations in the sample communities. There were four instances where buildings had been constructed but the school had not been officially sanctioned. The existence of the building, however, was evidence of investment on the part of the schooling administration. Such schools were, therefore, considered valid observations. These schools were not "ghost" schools in the strict sense of the term, which refers to schools which have been sanctioned and on whose accounts current expenditures are drawn, though nothing exists on the ground. An exercise for tracking down ghosts schools would have to start with a list of sanctioned schooling establishments and then conduct surveys in order to verify their existence.

It was possible to further probe the status of the twenty five schools which were sanctioned but were closed at the time of the visit. Of these twelve were closed for the day, but did otherwise open with varying degrees of regularity. The other thirteen schools generally remained closed (Table 9). Information about the general status of these schools was obtained from local residents, and was verified by inspection of school premises for evidence of recent use, and wherever possible, by an examination of school documents such as registers and log-books.

Schooling infrastructure

Most of the sample schools (nearly 90 per cent) had some pukka structure for the school building (Table 10). Buildings usually consisted of two to three rooms and a verandah in accordance with the standard design specifications of the respective education departments. The mere existence of a pukka school building does not automatically imply that the building is in use for schooling purposes. There were four cases, as

mentioned above, of school buildings for which the education department had not sanctioned a school.

In general, the construction of schools and control over the school building are thought to be important sources of private capture. Collusion between building contractors, education department officials, and local patrons can lead to significant rents at the expense of the quality of construction. The school building represents a valuable asset in many regions where pukka structures are at a premium. The classic capture story is about the take-over of the government school building by the local patron for use as his private *autaq*.[40] None of the four buildings of the non-sanctioned schools in the sample were in use as private property. In fact these buildings were derelict and out of use. Three of the four had been built as girls' primary schools in villages where there already was a boys' school. It is possible that the school construction was initiated as a result of collusion between contractors and education department officials.

Although the non-sanctioned school buildings had not been "captured", there were other schools in the survey whose building were in private use of various types. Two of the school buildings in Sanghar were being used as stores by the local landlord. These two schools were clearly built for the purpose of private use in the first instance. One was located in the middle of cropped land, and at some distance from the nearest settlement. The second was situated beside a cluster of 3 houses, belonging to a landlord and his farm manager. There were other less extreme cases of abuse also, where the school building was used both for teaching as well as for private purposes. In a number of schools in Toba Tek Singh, for example, one of the classrooms would be used as a storeroom for freshly felled timber. Upon investigation it was discovered that the teachers had a side business in selling off trees growing in the school premises.

The existence of a school building was not a precise index of schooling infrastructure even in places where there was no capture. In a majority of schools some classes were being held in the open or under trees despite there being empty classrooms. This was mainly due to three reasons. Firstly, the quality of buildings was so poor that it was not considered safe to conducted classes indoors. Secondly, it was too hot to hold classes indoors in the absence of electric fans and proper ventilation. Thirdly, many schools practised multi-grade teaching either because there were not enough teachers appointed, or because some teachers were absent. It was easier

[40] The *autaq* is usually a male space for conducting business as well as for receiving guests in Sindh villages. The institution of the *autaq* is discussed further in Chapter 5 below with reference to the distinction between public and private spaces.

for a teacher to keep an eye on several classes at the same time if they were out in the open rather than in separate rooms.

Thirteen of the sample schools, or around 10 per cent did not have a government provided school building. Of these, four schools had semi-pukka structures, and another five had entirely kachcha structures, usually constructed with locally available thatching materials. There was only one school in the sample which had no building structure at all. These ten schools were not necessarily worse off than government schools with pukka buildings. As mentioned above, many of the latter were forced to hold classes out in the open due to various reasons. Some of the schools with kachcha structure were, in fact, in a much better condition than many pukka-building schools.[41]

Three schools were using premises lent by local residents. All three were private *autaq* buildings belonging to local landowners. It was also reported for a number of other schools in Sanghar that they used to hold classes in the *autaq* prior to getting a government building. This use of the *autaq* as the school premises inverts the conventional perception that the school building would be captured for use as the *autaq*. The nature of patron-client relations, as well as the delineation of public and private spaces within the village is, obviously, more nuanced than the received caricature. Some of these issues are explored further in Chapter 5.

School premises were generally larger in the canal-colony villages of Toba Tek Singh than in other areas and regions. A relatively large plot of land would be assigned to the school in Toba, even if the building itself was of the standard government school size and design. The reason for this difference lay in the specific history of land and village settlement in the canal colony areas. In the canal colony districts of central Punjab, the state had been the original owner of land, which it had demarcated into residential colonies for the recipients of canal irrigated land. In other areas, including canal irrigated areas such as Sindh, the state had played a relatively minor role in the emergence of residential settlements. In canal colony Punjab the government's master plans for residential colonies included generous provision of space for public services such as schools. In the other areas land for school buildings had to be acquired locally, and was usually donated for the purpose of school-building by local landlords.[42] Differences in the

[41] Two in Sanghar, for example, had exemplary thatched structures built by local residents. The premises were also clean and well-maintained in contrast with a number of government schools with good pukka buildings.

[42] The policy of soliciting "community" donation of land also, reportedly, created a new opportunity for capture. After the completion of the building, landlords would often revoke their donation on some minor technical point and take possession of a newly-built pukka structure.

history of settlement, and the implications for the interpretation of collective action will be discussed further below.[43]

The availability of other school infrastructure such as drinking water, latrines, and electricity in the sample schools is reported in Table 11. One-third of the schools had no supply of drinking water, around a half did not have a latrine, and only around a quarter of the schools had electricity. This is in spite of the fact that 85 per cent of the schools were in villages which did have electric supply. In other words, 58 per cent of the sample schools did not have electricity even though the village did. This figure is some indication of the relatively weak collective action in maintaining the school. Another indication is the absence of drinking water from one third of the schools. The quality of the water supplied is not the issue here; the issue is merely the availability in the school of water which is used as drinking water in the village generally.

Number of teachers and school size

The number of teachers can be used as an index of school size, and school size can be an important determinant of school quality. The number of teachers is crucial, obviously, if single-grade teaching is considered to be an important factor in the quality of schooling. There are other reasons too, why smaller single-teacher schools are likely to be less effective, other things being equal. If a teacher fails to turn up for some reason, the single-teacher school will simply close for the day. Also, the larger the number of teachers, the more difficult it might be for teachers to collude with each other. Single-teacher schools and smaller schools, in general, are likely to be more vulnerable to teacher behaviour.

The distribution of sample schools with respect to the number of teachers is given in Table 12. The total number of teaching positions sanctioned for the sample schools was 330. Of these, 297 positions were filled, and 197 teachers were present at the time of survey. There were, on average, 2.6 teaching positions per sample school, of which 2.4 were filled, and there were, on average, 1.6 teachers present at the time of the survey. The distribution of schools by number of teachers shows that only 16 per cent of the schools had five or more teaching positions sanctioned, and in just 7 per cent of the

[43] See Chapter 5. One bizarre result of the large plot sizes for government schools in the canal colony villages of Toba Tek Singh was the prevalence of part-finished boundary walls around school buildings. There was, it transpired, a regulation length of boundary wall allowed in the government school design. This length was not sufficient to go around the entire plot of land assigned to the government school in canal colony Toba villages.

sample schools were there five or more teachers actually present. The mode, in terms of teaching positions, was two teachers. In terms of the number actually present, however, the single-teacher school dominated all other categories. There were no teachers present at all in 19 per cent of the schools, and only one teacher was present in 35 per cent of the sample. Less than half of the sample schools, therefore, had two teachers or more. Region-wise breakdown of school size is reported in Table 13. The sample for Sanghar was dominated by single-teacher schools, while the mode in Toba Tek Singh was three teachers per school. These regional differences in school size are reflective of the inter-regional variations in community size.

The sample schools are, clearly, a world apart from the conventional image of a modern school with organized grades and classes with teachers specialised in tutoring children in specific grades or age groups. Even by design, the rural government school places extraordinary demands on the teacher's effort and inventiveness. The actual gap between some ideal standard of schooling and the rural government school is even wider, given that a large number of teachers are absent.

The distribution of schools by teacher attendance ratio is given in Table 14. Schools were divided into four categories: those where none of the teachers were present, those where teacher attendance was greater than zero but less than or equal to 50 per cent, those where this ratio was greater than 50 per cent but less than full attendance, and those where all teachers were present. Results are reported separately for all sample schools and for only those schools which were actually open. Less than half of the sample schools had all teachers present at the time of the survey/inspection. Even if the sample is restricted to open schools, just over a half had full attendance, and around a quarter had a teacher attendance ratio of 50 per cent or less.

Enrolment and attendance

The total number of children enrolled in the sample schools for which data were available was over seven thousand (Table 15). Just over three-fifths of all pupils enrolled were boys. This proportion would be a fair reflection of the gender-wise school enrolment in the sample villages in general. The sample schools covered practically all of the government primary schools in their respective localities. There were some villages where private schooling was accessible, but the male-female ratio in private schools is likely to have been tilted even more towards males. The survey also enumerated the actual number of children present in each class. The pupil attendance ratio was just over two-thirds (Table 15), and did not vary greatly between boys and girls. It did vary substantially by grade, with higher grades displaying greater attendance rates. Even in grade 5, however, around a quarter of the children enrolled were not in school.

There were several explanations for the discrepancy between enrolment and attendance. Irregular attendance was an indication of the lack of interest in schooling on the part of the child or the parent. It was also indicative, however, of the quality of the schooling service provided. The enrolment of a child in school showed some level of demand for schooling on the part of the child or the parent. The inability of schools to retain the interest of children and parents reflected poorly on the performance of the school. It is also likely that enrolments were inflated in some schools. The main reason for this would be the desire, on the part of the teachers, to secure the number of teaching positions, given that teaching positions are supposed to be sanctioned with reference to the number of children enrolled.

A proxy retention rate, taken as the number of children in class 5 expressed as a proportion of the number of children in class 1, was calculated using enrolments according to school records, as well as actually observed attendance. The number of children enrolled in class 5 was only around half that in class 1. The retention rate was actually higher for girls than for boys. The effective retention rate, or the number of children actually present in class 5 compared to those actually present in class 1 was higher than the nominal retention rate by around 8 per cent points. This was because the attendance ratio for grade 1 was lower than for grade 5.[44]

The distribution of schools by pupil attendance ratio is reported in Table 16. This distribution is limited to schools which were actually open at the time of the survey. If all sample schools had been included, a larger proportion of the schools would show zero pupil attendance. Less than half of the schools which were open had pupil attendance rates of 75 per cent or more. In around a quarter of the schools less than 50 per cent of the enrolled pupils were in attendance.

A qualitative index of school performance

School performance is an outcome of complex inter-related processes. The indicators of school performance discussed thus far have included simple procedure (the status of the school at the time of the visit -- i.e. whether it was open or not), inputs (infrastructure, number of teachers), and effectiveness (pupil attendance). It is possible, in principle, to think of the school as a "production function", and to measure and compare "output" as well as "efficiency" across schools. This route to assessing school performance will require the

[44] One explanation for the relatively low attendance rate in grade 1 is that families with even weak effective demand for schooling (due to low incomes or low motivation) might nevertheless enrol their children in the first grade as a way of keeping open the option of future schooling.

specification of outputs, inputs and the production process. If the school incorporates the production function for "education" then the output could be conceptualized in terms of the school's contribution to children's educational advance. Inputs will include teachers of varying ability, as well as other supporting infrastructure. The key empirical problem in measuring school performance would be the identification of school effects from the multitude of other things which influence children's learning ability. Special attention would have to be paid to problems of sample self-selection. The production function approach has been deployed in other studies which form part of the present research programme.

In the present case, however, the focus is on the production of the school itself as a public good. The well-functioning school, therefore, is the output, and the production requires some combination of three basic sources of input: teachers, school administration, and community. The school administration determines, *inter alia*, the level of financial resource allocation, the number of teachers, the selection of teachers, the provision of physical infrastructure, and the supply of monitoring and inspection services. Some of these resource allocations are influenced by the community directly or through the intermediation of the political process. Teachers choose between different levels of effort, and their final level of effort is determined by individual motivation, administrative oversight and support, and community interaction. Community action provides some of the physical resources for the schooling infrastructure, as well as some level of teacher monitoring, and parental motivation.

The school, as the point of delivery, represents the site at which the result of this rather complicated production function can be observed.[45] The final result, in terms of the quality of the public school, is a function of the level of resource input as well as the efficiency with which these resources have been deployed. It is the nature of the interaction between the three agencies (teachers, administrators and community) at the point of delivery which is the key issue of interest in the present study. The intention is to treat a number of resource inputs (such as budgetary allocations, commissioning of school infrastructure, and even effective parental demand for schooling) as given, in the short term. Observed differences in school performance, therefore, are seen not in absolute terms, but in relation to the given resource endowments. The key question, for example, is to find a way of comparing the performance of a single-teacher semi-pukka school, with a three-teacher pukka school, in terms of some index of relative effort on the part of the teachers, administrators and

[45] The production function is complicated partly because production decisions are not centralised within a notional manager, but are triangular, involving teachers, administrators, and the community.

the community. In this example, the single-teacher school might rank higher than the three-teacher school if one of the teachers in the latter school is a persistent absentee, whereas the teacher in the former school attends regularly.

In addition to indicators such as school status at the time of visit, and teacher and pupil attendance rates, an attempt was made in the survey to construct a composite index of school performance based on the qualitative assessment of teacher effort, administrative support and community cooperation. For teacher effort, observations about the conditions of the school at the time of the visit, including the activities of children and teachers, as well as factors such as efforts made towards the maintenance of existing schooling infrastructure, and the quality of record-keeping were taken into account. Some selected testing of children in reading and arithmetic was also done. The greatest weight was placed on the activities of teachers and pupils at the time of the visit. There were some multiple-teacher schools in the sample where most teachers were present, but none were involved in any teaching activity whatsoever, while the children ran around at will. There were yet other schools where a single teacher had organized and was supervising six different class groups from kachchi to fifth, and where children sat in orderly groups with their lessons.

The nature of what was being assessed was not easily quantifiable, but it was possible to rank schools in some order of their quality of performance. It was decided to rank schools according to whether they were functional, partly functional, or non-functional.[46] A school was regarded as being "functional" if it fulfilled the basic procedural requirements: all teachers were present or otherwise accounted for, children were organised in classes, active teaching was being conducted, proper records had been maintained, effort had been made to ensure minimal infrastructure such as usable blackboards, drinking water, and tidiness of the school premises. "Functionality", therefore, did not impose very ambitious conditions. Rather, the conditions were the minimal requirements for the conduct of any meaningful level of schooling. Part-functional schools were those which fulfilled some of the above requirements but not others, while non-functional ones failed on most counts. With non-functional schools further gradations were made according to whether the non-functionality was due, (i) to indifference on the part of teachers, (ii) indifference by teachers as well as neglect on the part of the administration and the community, or (iii) active abuse of the school for private gain by teachers, administrative officials or community members in collusion or otherwise.

There was, obviously, a subjective element in all of these judgements. Some standardization and consistency was hopefully

[46] Operationally, schools were give scores ranging from -10 to +10.

achieved due to the procedure adopted for assigning school ranks. The prime responsibility for arriving at a school score belonged to the team members who had conducted the school inspection. The final score was decided, however, after detailed discussion about the school with other team members soon after the inspection.

The basic results of the qualitative ranking of sample schools are reported in Table 17. Out of the sample of 125 schools, only 47, or 38 per cent of the total were found to have been "functional". It is worth recalling the relatively modest requirements for "functionality". Another 41 schools, or 33 per cent of the sample, were part-functional. In all, 37 schools, or nearly 30 per cent of the sample were non-functional, of which some 10 per cent were subject to abuse.

4.3 Patterns and Regularities

The statistical summary of the school inspection reported above confirms widely held perceptions concerning the functioning of the government schooling system in rural areas. These government schools fall far short of any reasonable standard of performance. The fact that almost a quarter of the schools were closed at the time of the unannounced inspection, that a third of the teachers were absent, and that only around half of the school which were open had full teacher attendance, should leave no doubt about the workings of the schooling system. The fact that over half of the schools were unable to attract the attendance of 75 per cent of even those children who had enrolled (let alone the population in the relevant age cohort), was an unsurprising outcome. Fewer than two out of every five schools were able to attain the very minimal requirements of functionality.

Besides confirming the extent of failure, however, the above results also indicate a high degree of variation in the performance of government schools. This variation implies that a comparison of school performance within the government schooling system might yield useful analytical as well as policy insights. In this section, an attempt is made to identify some broad patterns of school performance with respect to school and community characteristics. This is done through simple cross-tabulations and conditional means.

Regions

Regional patterns in school performance are summarized in Tables 18 to 23. Sample regions were chosen for specific analytical purposes (Chapter 3). It is worth recalling some of these. Firstly, the five regions straddle three provinces, which were the level of government with prime responsibility for basic education. Secondly, the regions represented different ethno-cultural zones, with particular histories of cultural and social development. Thirdly, some of the regions are known, *a priori*, for the prevalence of strong local monopolies of

economic and political power, and strong patron-client relations. Fourthly, the regions represent variations in patterns of economic activity, not only in terms of resource endowments, but also the degree of economic diversification and market integration. Fifthly, the regions have varied trajectories of political and administrative integration into the national mainstream. Part of this difference might reside in the ethnic composition of state personnel, and notional ethnic hierarchies in administrative culture.

According to the simplest test of school performance, i.e. whether or not a school was open, what its precise status was at the time of the visit, regional variation is immediately obvious (Table 18). While nearly all of the schools in Chakwal (Upper Punjab) were open at the time of the visit, in Sanghar (Sindh) the proportion was less than three-fifths. In Muzaffargarh (Lower Punjab) also a large minority of schools were closed at the time of the visit. The regional difference noted above between Sindh and Lower Punjab on the one hand, and Central Punjab, Upper Punjab and NWFP on the other, appears to come through.

In terms of teacher attendance ratios also -- Table 19 gives the distribution of schools by teacher attendance ratios for all sample schools -- the same regional pattern appears to prevail, with Sanghar and Muzaffargarh having relatively high absentee rates compared to the other three regions. The slight exception in this regard is Toba Tek Singh (Central Punjab), where 100 per cent attendance on the part of teachers was the weakest. Table 20 gives teacher attendance ratios for schools which were actually open. This is, obviously, a less stringent performance indicator, since some of the worst performing schools (i.e. closed schools) are excluded at the outset. In this case the regional distribution of schools changes dramatically. Sanghar now tops as the region with the highest full attendance by teachers. This result is something of a statistical artefact, given that the sample for Sanghar is dominated by single-teacher schools, which attain full teacher attendance almost by definition if the school is open. Toba Tek Singh's relatively poor performance in terms of teacher attendance is highlighted further in this case.

Pupil attendance rates for open schools are given in Table 21. This indicator can be seen as an index of school success in retaining pupil/parental interest in schooling. Muzaffargarh does the worst according to this indicator, followed closely by Sanghar. In this regard, Toba Tek Singh lies somewhere between Muzaffargarh and Sanghar on the one hand, and Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi on the other. The gender-wise breakdown of attendance rates also reveals some regional variation. While Sanghar attendance rates were low for both boys and girls, there was no evidence of an anti-female bias. In Chakwal and Mardan also, attendance rates were similar for boys and girls. In Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh, on the other hand, there was a clear gap between male and female attendance rates in the favour

of males. One possible interpretation of this observation is that in these two regions the schools were failing girls relatively more than they were failing boys. The distribution of schools by pupil attendance ratio (in open schools) is give in Table 22. The regional ranking of Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi as relatively good performers, and Muzaffargarh and Sanghar as the laggards, with Toba Tek Singh somewhere in between is confirmed.

Table 23 reports the distribution of schools by region for the qualitative ranking introduced in section 4.2 above. It is worth recalling that this index represents an attempt at ranking school performance after controlling for the effect of given resource endowments. In other words, it asks the question: "how well does the school do given its resource constraints?". Mardan-Swabi had the highest proportion of schools which were functional. Paradoxically, this region also had a relatively high percentage of schools which were non-functional due to abuse. These latter were mainly girls' schools which had failed due to collusion between school officials and locally influential individuals, who had managed to capture teacher positions for young women of their own families. Sanghar had the highest incidence of abuse. In terms of the distribution of functional and part-functional schools taken together, the regional rankings of Chakwal, Mardan-Swabi and Toba Tek Singh at the top, and Muzaffargarh and Sanghar at the bottom, were preserved. It is interesting to note, however, that there was relatively little difference between Toba Tek Singh on the one hand, and Muzaffargarh and Sanghar on the other, in the distribution of schools which were fully functional.

In the broad regional rankings of school performance, plains NWFP appeared to be the most successful, and Sindh the least. There were wide regional variations within Punjab, between its Upper, Central and Lower regions. School performance in Lower Punjab was similar in many ways to Sindh, while that in Upper Punjab resembled (or bettered) NWFP. It is useful to return to some of the possible sources of regional variation mentioned at the outset. Firstly, does the inter-regional variation say something about differences between the provinces in the quality of their general administration? This proposition can be entertained with reference to the difference between Sindh and plains NWFP, but is harder to argue once the three Punjab regions come into the picture.

There are also specific issues to do with school administration which differ between the province. In Sindh, for example, the appointment of local teachers seems to have been a standard policy. In Punjab, on the other hand, the norm was to appoint teachers from outside the locality. It is not clear from the regional rankings as to which system was more effective. Another factor which might have affected school performance between provinces was the Army-conducted survey of schools in Punjab. Other provinces did not go through such an exercise. The Army survey was, indeed, fairly comprehensive as

far as could be made out from the sample schools in Punjab. All sample schools had been visited by an Army team. The impact on teacher attendance a few months hence, however, did not appear to be particularly strong. While some community respondents did mention improvement in teacher effort as a result of the Army survey, there was still plenty of unaccounted-for absenteeism.

The regional patterns of school performance suggest, *prima facie*, support for the "monopolist patron capture" hypothesis. The two regions with the worst performing schools, Sindh and Lower Punjab, were also the ones with a high concentration of land ownership, and with a prior reputation of strongly monopolistic patron-client relations, especially at the local levels. This issue will be taken up for more detailed examination further below. Another interesting regional contrast to examine further will be the position of Toba Tek Singh, and especially its relatively poor performance vis-a-vis Chakwal.

If the "monopolistic patron" model is relevant to the explanation of inter-regional variations, the interesting research questions would lie in the identification of more precise mechanisms through which this system operates and influences the performance of the schooling system. For that level of analysis it will be important to deploy some of the qualitative observations and case study material from the school and community surveys. There are, after all, intra-regional variations also in school performance. Although the overall record of schools in Sanghar and Muzaffargarh was poor, the fact that around a quarter of the schools in these regions were functional points to the potential for useful insights from intra-regional comparison.

There are also likely to be sources of variation in school performance other than inter-regional contrasts. In fact, if some of these other sources of variation are themselves correlated with region, then inter-regional comparisons might well be picking up these other effects. School performance is now analyzed with respect to three school characteristics (size, type, and age), and a set of community characteristics.

School size: number of teachers appointed

School size, measured in terms of the number of teachers appointed, can be an important factor in the determination of school performance for a number of reasons. There are likely to be economies of scale in many school operations. Monitoring of teachers is likely to be less costly in larger schools. There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, if collusion between teachers is a necessary condition for dereliction of duty, then the larger the number of teachers, the more difficult would it be to collude. Secondly, larger schools are likely to have a stronger hierarchy of seniority among teachers, and therefore a stronger sense of internal line management. Thirdly, larger schools are more likely to receive attention

from school inspectors. The consequences of errant behaviour on the part of individual teachers is also likely to be less serious in larger schools where other teachers might be able to provide adequate cover.

Cross-tabulations of the various school performance indictors with respect to school size (or teacher numbers) are reported in Tables 24 to 27. In terms of school status at the time of the visit, larger schools generally performed better than smaller ones (Table 24). A single-teacher school will close down if the teacher were absent for some reason, while a multiple-teacher school could still function without one teacher. Teacher attendance ratios also vary with school size (Table 25). While the incidence of full teacher attendance declines with school size, so does the incidence of zero attendance. This results is, basically, a statistical artefact. It is more meaningful, perhaps, to group the four categories of teacher into two. While the largest schools (those with five teachers or more) had unambiguously better teacher attendance rates, the relationship between school size and teacher attendance was not monotonic.

The distribution of open schools by pupil attendance ratios also showed variation by size of school (Table 26). While two-thirds of the large schools (five teachers or more) had over 75 per cent attendance, under a fifth of the single-teacher schools had this position. The relationship did not appear to hold for interim school sizes.

The qualitative index of school performance by school size is reported in Table 27. In this case the relationship between school size and school performance was more clear-cut. Both in terms of the incidence as well as degree of school failure, larger schools performed better than smaller ones. All cases of abuse and neglect were in schools with either one or two teachers, and all schools with five teachers or more were fully functional.

School type: gender

Was there any discernible pattern in school performance according to the gender? The nature of gender segregation in the school administration was described in section 4.1 above. Differences in school performance can be expected for several possible reasons. The restricted mobility of women in public spaces might act as an impediment to the functioning of girls' schools (which all have female teachers, and are supervised by female administrators), if there are problems of access for teachers as well as administrative officials such as school inspectors. Girls' school performance might also be affected by the level of parental or community demand for female schooling. If it is lower than the demand for male schooling, this might be reflected, ultimately, in the functioning of the girls' schools.

Tables 28 to 31 summarize patterns of school performance by the gender of the school. Besides boys' and girls' schools, the category "mixed" schools is also admitted. The latter were schools which operated under the boys' school administration, but were perceived by teachers as being for both boys and girls. There was little difference between school of different gender types in terms of school status at the time of the visit (Table 28). A smaller percentage of girls' schools had full teacher attendance than both boys' as well as mixed schools (Table 29). This appears to confirm the view that female teachers are more likely to be absent than their male counterparts.[47]

In terms of pupil attendance ratios in schools which were open, the girls' schools appeared to be doing better than both boys' as well as mixed schools (Table 30). Girls' school, in other words, were able to retain the interest of more of their pupils (and their parents) than boys' and mixed schools. There might also be differences in prior commitment to schooling on the part of the fewer parents of the girls who took the effort to have their daughters enrolled compared with the more numerous boys' parents whose sons were enrolled. Further, it is possible that girls in rural Pakistan are more dedicated students compared to their male counterparts -- a view which is not at odds with girls' relative educational performance in Pakistan and elsewhere.

In terms of the overall index of school performance (Table 31), girls' schools did somewhat better than mixed schools, but somewhat worse than boys' schools. Relatively more of the girls' schools were subject to abuse and neglect than the other two categories. This latter finding was reflective of the greater vulnerability of girls' schools to capture. One reason why capture was probably easier was the general perception that due to restrictions on female mobility girls' schools cannot be expected to perform well, and female teachers cannot be expected to attend regularly. This expectation often provided a legitimizing pretext for collusion between teachers and administration officials.

School type: level

Although the school sample covered primary schooling, there were broadly four different types of government schools in which primary level schooling was taking place. There were the regular primary schools which went from class 1 till 5. Then there were special "mosque" schools which were supposed to be a semi-formal school type within the government schooling system. Mosque schools had little to do with religious education as such, but were simply single teacher class 1 to 3 schools which were supposed to be located in the local mosque. Many of the

[47] Apart from a few boys' schools in Chakwal which had women teachers, all boys' and mixed had male teachers, while all girls' schools had female teachers.

mosque schools had two teachers, as the local mosque *imam* was appointed as a religious instructor. The schools, however, followed the set government curricula. Many of the mosque schools were no longer located in mosques, but had dedicated buildings, and there was a programme, in all provinces, to eventually incorporate mosque schools as ordinary primary schools. Primary schooling was also undertaken in the primary sections of elementary schools (up to class 8) and high schools (up to class 10).

Tables 32 to 35 report school performance by school type for the sample. Primary sections of elementary and high schools appear to perform better than mosque schools and ordinary primary schools. Part of the explanation for this variation is similar to the arguments cited above in relating school performance with school size. Primary sections of elementary and high schools were usually larger than ordinary primary schools, in addition to the presence of other teachers belonging to middle and secondary sections. The extent and quality of supervision was also higher in elementary and high schools.

School age

In the profile of schools summarized in section 4.1 it was noted that the establishment of schools has been a slow and ongoing process in the sample communities. A number of schools were of a relatively recent vintage. In many cases these were the very first schools which had been established in the community. The age of the school is likely to be an important factor in school performance. Since the government school represents the first significant formal educational intervention in a village, the age of the school represents the period of time since that first intervention. The very presence of the school can be crucial in changing the informational basis of the schooling decision. The longer the history of intervention, then, the more informed the residents are likely to be about possibilities and advantages of schooling their children. Exposure to schooling intervention can also have an impact on the expectations people have of the school, and their demands of it. There might be further institutional factors internal to the school itself. A school with an established history and tradition is likely to evoke a greater sense of loyalty and identification among teachers. In many of the sample schools, for example, there were teachers who did express such identification because they had themselves been pupils of the same school.

The performance of sample schools with reference to their age is summarized in Tables 36 to 39. Older schools were generally better performers in most ways. The oldest schools (those established in 1947 or before) were particularly good in terms of pupil attendance rates (Table 38). This was consistent with some demand side effect of length of exposure to schooling services. Older schools also performed markedly well in terms of the qualitative ranking index. Over 90 per cent were

functional or part-functional compared with 73 per cent for the sample as a whole, and 69 per cent were fully functional compared with 40 per cent in the entire sample (Table 39).

Community characteristics

Although region was an important criterion in sample selection, it was not the only source of variation in the characteristics of the communities which were finally selected and surveyed. While the sampling methodology had been purposive in selecting relatively smaller settlements, the final list of surveyed communities was different from this initial list of settlements due to a mismatch between the census definition of settlements and the definition of locational communities adopted for this study. The sample communities, therefore, varied greatly in size. They also varied from one another in terms of infrastructure, agricultural productivity, poverty, and land concentration. All of these quantifiable community characteristics have possible ramifications for school performance in different ways.

The size of community is likely to matter through two routes. Firstly, because, in principle, the larger communities would attract larger schools, and larger schools might be the better ones. Secondly, other things (including the demand for education) being equal, more children are likely to enrol in larger communities and a larger number of parents are likely to make demands on school quality.

The relationship between community infrastructure such as roads, electricity and health services and the quality of schooling services would also operate in diverse ways. Proximity to the metalled road is a crucial determinant of ease of access for teachers, as well as school inspectors. It is also a measure of the connectedness of a village to the wider social and public infrastructure. The ease of access of village residents to towns and administrative centres is likely to reduce their costs of exercising accountability over public officials. Other infrastructure such as electricity and health services, and in fact any intervention which increases the frequency and regularity of modern-state interventions, would have positive externalities for each other. The greater the "connectedness" in a general sense, the lower the informational and other costs of exercising accountability. It is possible, also, that public infrastructure of all types -- schools, roads, electricity, health centres -- are positively correlated with something else altogether, say the ability to organize collective action. If so, any observed positive correlation between these public goods may not reflect a causal relationship, but rather the joint determination of several endogenous outcomes.

The association between various quantifiable community characteristics and selected indicators of school performance is provided in Table 40. The mean value for the relevant community

characteristic (with standard deviation) is reported with reference to school performance. The mean distance from a metalled road of communities with open schools was 0.67 km, while for those with closed schools it was 1.11 km. In other words, communities with open schools were, on average, closer to the metalled road than communities with closed schools. Communities with open schools were also significantly larger, and more likely to have electricity and health services, than communities whose schools were closed. Other indicators of school performance yield similar results with respect to community size and infrastructure.

Table 40 also reports the pattern of school performance by some economic and distributional measures which were available. The association between school performance and the yield of the main staple crop, wheat, was an inverse one for all indicators of school performance. Taking the casual daily wage expressed in terms of its wheatflour equivalents in kilograms, there was no clear direction in the association with school performance. The association between school performance and the incidence of land ownership shows interesting variations. The incidence of land ownership was significantly higher in open school communities compared with closed school communities. Within communities with open schools, the land ownership index was also significantly higher for communities where the pupil attendance ratio was high. In terms of the qualitative ranking of schools, however, the difference between land ownership ratios was not significant.

4.4 Conclusion

The main conclusion of the school survey is that the government schooling system falls far short of any reasonable standard of functioning. Crucially, it also falls short of its own procedural standards. Schools remain closed when they are supposed to be open, and teachers fail to attend in large numbers. Even where teachers are present, there is a wide gap between the requirements of even functional schooling and what actually transpires. All of these facts come as little surprise to many who are familiar with the performance of public organizations in Pakistan. The systematic documentation here of school performance adds to the growing empirical literature on public failures in education and elsewhere. Such documentation serves an important purpose because it leaves little room for the casual practice of explaining the undeniably poor outcomes (in education and health indicators among others) on "poverty" and "backwardness". The problem is quite clearly one of state failure.

Documentation is also important because it shows real variation in the performance of the public system, and therefore provides insights into both the causes of failure as well as the paths to change. Analysis by anecdote is an open door for prejudicial prescription. There are parts of the system that do function well, and the identification of regularities and

patterns allows grounded discussion of alternatives. Variations in school performance by region, and by school and community characteristics enable the identification of some such regularities. The fact that the schooling system does function remarkably well in some areas and under certain conditions, for both boys and girls, is an important finding. The performance of public schooling in Chakwal, and to a lesser extent in Mardan-Swabi and Toba Tek Singh indicates that there is nothing inevitable about public failure, and that there is much to be gained from analysing specific aspects of failure rather than succumbing to prior ideological positions for or against state action.

Documentation helps, moreover, to place schooling outcomes and school performance in a proper context. The fact that there is fairly comprehensive coverage of rural communities by schooling facilities is significant. It is also significant, however, that this comprehensive coverage is a relatively recent phenomenon. Similarly, it is significant that mixed gender primary schooling is and has been practised widely, despite the preference for the opposite on the part of the schooling administrations. Yet another significant point confirmed by the primary fieldwork is that the level of provisioning would fall far short of the standards that planners would set for their own children's schooling even if the system actually performed to its own procedural standards. Teachers in most of the rural schools would have to resort to multi-grade teaching even if there was no teacher absenteeism at all.

It is possible to maintain two distinct (though not mutually exclusive) perspectives on the political economy of state failure in public schooling. The inadequacy of the public schooling system on the ground even in terms of its own procedures, let alone what might be required to ensure universal basic education could be viewed as a political failure at the macro level.[48] The poor performance of the system as a whole is indicative of the low priority accorded to the universalization of basic education within the political system.[49] An appropriate response, for those interested in universal basic education, would be to identify and consolidate the constituency for universal basic education, or for better public schooling, and help to change priorities within the political processes. Chapter 7 returns to the importance of macro politics in the quest for universal basic education.

[48] The "macro" level could be the central power or, in the case of federal countries like Pakistan, the provinces. The macro level of political intervention might also involve shifting resources from the centre to the provinces, or alternatively shifting responsibility from provinces to the centre.

[49] Similarly, worse than average performance of some regions would be simply indicative of the need for greater than average effort in those regions.

A second perspective is to view state failure in terms of political failure at the local level. The discussion on governance failure and its remedies, reviewed and criticized in Chapter 2 above, was primarily focused on local communities. The political-economy models implicit in that analysis also relate to public accountability at the local level. Regional patterns of school performance suggest *prima facie* support for the view that school performance is linked to local concentration of power and the strength of patron-client relations, particularly at the point of service delivery. Sindh and Lower Punjab, the two regions of high land concentration and strong patron-client relations were also the regions with the worst performing schooling systems.

Interpreting regional patterns

The school and community survey provided an opportunity to probe the patterns of school performance further. Region was not, after all, the only source of variation in school performance. It was argued above that quantifiable school characteristics such as school size, school type, and the age of a school can have an independent impact on the quality of school performance. The data confirmed the existence of variation in school performance by these characteristics. It was also argued that community characteristics such as remoteness versus connectedness, community size and some index of distribution might be relevant, and these also appeared to have the expected association with school performance.

Moreover, the school and community characteristics which were thought to influence school performance, also displayed clear regional patterns. There were fewer schools per community in Sanghar and Muzaffargarh compared to the other regions, and these schools were on average smaller and more recent. The community profile in Sanghar and Muzaffargarh, likewise, was relatively less conducive, *a priori*, for school performance. The communities in these regions were more remote and less well endowed with public physical infrastructure.

It is possible to frame the interpretation of regional patterns at three levels. At the first level it can be argued that the poor schooling performance of Sanghar and Muzaffargarh is simply a function of disadvantaged access to schooling services and other public infrastructure, and that there is no further informational content to region than that. While this proposition is a useful first-order delineation of constraints to school performance, it does not do justice to either the analytical or the empirical insights which are available.

A second level of analysis, therefore, would be that the trajectory of schooling as well as other infrastructural interventions (which appear to affect the quality of public schooling) are endogenous policy outcomes. How far, and to what extent, are these outcomes driven by exogenous conditions at the

local or even the macro levels? Features of the local condition such as community size and the existence of local economic and political monopolies, for example, can be seen as exogenous to this level of analysis. The determination of policy outcomes such as the trajectory of public infrastructure establishment might be a relatively "technical" process. If the size of communities is exogenous, and if the rules of public investment allocation require attention to larger settlements first, it can be argued that Sanghar and Muzaffargarh will simply have to wait their turn.

The relevant exogenous variable might be the existence of local economic and political monopolies and the strength of patron-client relations (proxied roughly by the index of land concentration). The local monopolist might have captured or blocked schooling infrastructure, thus leading to a reduction in school performance. The observed empirical association between other public infrastructure and school performance might simply reflect the presence of the local political monopolist who captures and blocks all public resources. The link, therefore, may not be causal but incidental, as both types of failure are independently driven by the same source.

A third level of analysis problematizes the exogenous variables of the previous analytical level by asking whether variations in community size and the strength of local monopolists are themselves the endogenous outcomes of other constraints, such as, say, the uneven historical trajectory of modern state intervention? As suggested in Chapter 2 above, we should not be surprised to discover the existence of endogenous attempts at the solution of collective action problems and the presence of a class of local political entrepreneurs. The difference between, Toba Tek Singh or Chakwal on the one hand, and Muzaffargarh and Sanghar on the other, therefore, might yet boil down to the historical trajectory of uneven state development, and the different demands, requirements and opportunities of this development for different regions and populations.

It is possible, in principle, to attempt to disentangle alternative interpretations of the regional patterns of school performance through multivariate statistical analysis. Successful and convincing execution of such an approach would not only require large quantities of data, it would also involve a high degree of presumption, as information-rich qualitative observations are reduced to limited and predetermined quantitative indices. In this study a different approach is adopted. The survey included a large amount of qualitative material based on extensive interviews as well as direct observation. This material will be used in the next chapter (Chapter 5) in order to throw fresh light on the processes which are supposed to link outcomes such as school performance with characteristics of communities such as patron-client relations. In other words, an attempt will be made to describe and analyze the relationships between teachers, the school administration,

and different types of communities at the local level.

5 School System and the Local Community

This chapter attempts to confront existing ideas about the political economy schooling at the local level with insights from qualitative observations in the school and community survey. The first part of the chapter presents case material in order to verify, illustrate, and elaborate the various political economy models of capture and collusion at the local level. The discussion is structured around stylized versions of four main thematics in capture and collusion. Qualitative material from the survey is used to examine specific cases of capture and collusion, as well as other outcomes. The second part of the chapter reverses this method and presents case studies of selected sample schools and communities in order to identify issues in the political economy of local schools. An attempt is made to summarize and characterize the key features of this political economy in terms of the theoretical categories of Chapter 2 above. Finally, an attempt is made in the third section of this chapter to place the insights from the qualitative material in a wider context, particularly with respect to the questions raised in the conclusion of Chapter 4.

5.1 Capture and Collusion

The "good governance-new political economy" paradigm attempts to explain system performance with reference to individual agency and informational constraints. It was shown in Chapter 2 above that the discussion of system breakdown and possible institutional reform in Pakistan relies, explicitly or implicitly, on political-economy models of capture and collusive practices. Formal systems are defined in terms of bureaucratic, administrative and political (including electoral) structures of information flow and corrective action. The institutional context, therefore, is provided by pre-existing rational-legal systems. There are formal mechanisms, for example, to check whether or not a teacher goes to school, or whether a school building is constructed at the correct location and to prescribed standards. It is also presumed that there exist formal mechanisms of citizens' voice through competitive elections.[50]

A convincing account of system breakdown, therefore, needs to specify the mechanisms through which formal systems of accountability get subverted, and become instruments of capture and collusive practices. Four models of capture and collusion which are either fully stated or implicit in the discourse on system failure and institutional reform are examined here with reference to empirical evidence from field surveys. The first

[50] The fact that electoral institutions have been summarily dissolved by executive decree from time to time does not imply their irrelevance to the debate. The stated objective of executive decree is also the restoration of properly accountable electoral systems.

three deal with various aspects of the political process. The main idea here is that the electoral political process is dominated at the local as well as at higher levels by politicians who are able to distort not only the allocation of public resources but also the functioning of competitive accountability due to an informal patron-client system. The interface between the formal administrative-political system and the informal patron-client system is examined with reference to three models: (a) total patron power, (b) patron-teacher collusion, and (c) partial patron power. The fourth aspect of capture and collusion dealt with here is: (d) collusion between teachers and the school administration.

Most of the cases reported for the first three models of capture and collusion are from Sanghar, supplemented by additional material from Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh. Sanghar was the obvious place to start in examining the linkages between local political processes, particularly the presence of political and economic monopoly power, and the performance of the schooling system. It was purposively chosen in the sampling strategy (Chapter 3) to represent a region of high concentration of landed power. Observations from Sanghar (and Muzaffargarh) in the school survey (Chapter 4) further suggested the presence of an association between school performance and local power.

(a) Total patron power

Model

Patron enjoys absolute monopolistic power vis-a-vis clients in economic, political and social domains. Clients have no voice. The electoral process is simply a show of strength between rival patrons for the capture of public resources. The patron is able to prevent the establishment of the school because this may lead to the erosion of his monopolistic position. If a school does get established the patron actively subverts its functioning for the same purpose. Alternatively, the patron is not against the establishment of a school as long it results in total capture on his part.

Cases

There was only one case in the sample where a local patron had actually prevented the establishment of a school (Case 1). Two cases (Cases 2 and 3) are reported where the school building was in the private use of the local landlord. There was yet another villages where the school existed but was non-functional, but the building was not in private use. This case (Case 4) was the closest in our sample to school failure due to total patron power. There were also several instances where the school was functional or part-functional in landlord-dominated villages (Cases 5 and 6).[51]

[51] Throughout this chapter village names have been replaced with acronyms for the purposes of anonymity. Since the "caste"

Case 1: G Baloch1, Sanghar

All the residents of the village are tenants (*hari*) of a powerful local landlord. A school was sanctioned for the village by the education department, but it was later transferred to another village. The background to this episode makes clear that the motivation for blocking the school was not primarily to keep the tenants educationally backward. The tenants have been involved in a relatively successful tussle with the landlord for the transfer of property rights over homestead lands to them. They originally came and settled on the landlord's area, but gradually staked a legal claim, under an occupancy rights statute, to the village. The establishment of a government school would have been an official endorsement of the tenants' claim. It was for this reason that there was resistance from the landlord.

Case 2: AR Sammat1, Sanghar, and Case 3: Y Baloch2, Sanghar

In both these villages (in different areas of Sanghar), there were school buildings but no functioning schools. In AR Sammat1 the building was in a cluster of four homes, all belonging to a local landlord family, who had connections with a bigger landlord of the area. This building was being used as a farm shed, and for keeping goats. In Y Baloch2, the school was located in the middle of fields, and did not appear to have a connection at all with any of the surrounding settlements. Y Baloch2 was the name of a powerful large (deh level) landlord. The school was used here too as a farm shed, and one of Y Baloch2 employees was taking a nap there at the time of the visit.

Case 4: AB Sammat2, Sanghar

There are 28 families in this village, which is about half a kilometre from the metalled road, though much further from any main or link road. The village is unique in the sample in that it is organized around the landlord's manor. There are four homes belonging to one branch of an extended Sammat2 family who are the sole landlords. Their land ownership is in the hundreds of acres. They are related to, and act as junior partners of, one AK Sammat2 who owns between 8 to 10,000 acres. The Sammat2 home is a towering pukka mansion, and is equipped with modern amenities. There are cars and jeeps parked in the yard. The Sammat2 also have a stable where they keep

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name is usually part of the surname in Sindh, and since the village name is often the names of the current *vadero* it was decided to use more generic "caste" titles such as Sammat, Baloch and Brohi to identify the *goth*, its *vadero*, and in places the kinship group of the *vadero*.

thoroughbreds. The Sammat2 families are also the keepers of a nearby shrine. Other homes are clustered around 50 meters away, and are all mud and thatch structures. These are all dwellings of Junejos' tenants. They include eight families of Bheels and five of Odh, both being Hindu tribals. The other groups resident here include six Maachhi families and three families of Jafri Baloch. The conditions of the tenant homes are very poor, and the attitude of the Sammat2 towards the tenants is high-handed. There is tension between the Bheels and the *kamdar* who tries to intrude during the household interview. The tenant families, nevertheless, speak frankly about their exploitation, and state openly that they would not be exploited if they were educated. There is a government school in the village, but it does not function because the teacher remains absent. The school was established and building constructed under the Iqra scheme in 1986. According to a Bheel respondent, the only benefit they have of the school was that they could sleep in the building when it rained and their own roofs leaked. None of the tenant children go to school. The children of the Sammat2 all go to private school in a nearby town, and are driven to school and back in a jeep.

Case 5: MS Baloch3, Sanghar

The village was half a kilometre from the metalled road, and is inhabited by around a sixty families, half of them Baloch3, and the other half consisting of Bheel, Meghwar, Kohli and Sayyad families. Five of the Baloch3 families own land, while most of the rest are tenants. The school premises are very well-maintained, and the school was functioning well, at least according to the procedural standards. Although there was no electricity connection in the school, a line had been taken from MS Baloch3's home and electric fans had been installed in the classrooms. There were two teachers, and there appeared to be good relations between them and MS Baloch3. MS Baloch3 is a substantial landlord, with a few hundred acres. Other landowners in the village are his relatives. There was a conflict between MS Baloch3 and his cousin F Baloch3 over the siting and naming of the school. Both wanted the school on their own lands, and closer to their own parts of the village. In the end MS Baloch3 succeeded, and the school was built on his land, and also named after him. Prior to this, the village was commonly known as F Baloch3, but with the placing and naming of the school the balance had tilted in MS Baloch3's favour. A peculiar feature about this school was the fact that the medium of instruction was Urdu, whereas it was Sindhi in all the surrounding schools. The immediate cause for this appeared to be the fact that the two school teachers had happened to have done their qualifications in Urdu. Both lived close by, and it would have been difficult for them to get an Urdu-medium posting in the local area. These teachers,

moreover, had helped MS Baloch3 in his struggle against F Baloch3. There was some kind of *quid pro quo* between MS Baloch3 and the teachers, in which the teachers helped MS Baloch3 with getting the school where he wanted it, while MS Baloch3 helped (or allowed) the teachers to create an Urdu medium school within commuting distance of their homes. It is important to note that children from Baloch3 families, including the family of MS Baloch3 attended the government school. There were equal numbers, also, of children from other groups such as Bheel and Meghwar.

Case 6: BI, Muzaffargarh

The village is in the riverine belt of Muzaffargarh. It is 4 kilometres from the metalled road, and the track from the metalled road to the village is good only for 4-wheel drive vehicles. There is a landlord SA Shah who owns several thousand acres of land here and elsewhere, and who is also a religious figure or *pir*. Most of the residents are tenants of SA Shah, and also part of his religious following (*mureed*). SA Shah stands for elections locally, and usually secures a seat in the local government. He does not reside locally, though he does maintain a house here, and also visits regularly to hear petitions and pass judgments. At the time of survey he was holding court, and people were presenting their problems to him. The school actually "belongs" to a village called DH which was flooded a few years ago. At that point SA Shah "pulled" the DH school to this village. DH was never completely abandoned, and now its residents were demanding that their school be "returned". The school had one teacher, who was present. There was some evidence of schooling. The school building had two rooms, and neither were in use as classrooms. One of the rooms was used as a store by SA Shah's people, and the other was completely bare. Children of local Sayyad families, who are close relatives of SA Shah and include his own extended family attend the government school, as do children of some non-Sayyad families.

Discussion

There are relatively few instances of total patron power in sample communities or in relation to sample schools. In Case 1, for example, the blockage of the government school was the result not of total patron power, but a struggle for the redefinition of the terms of patron power. In the two instances where the school building had been captured (Cases 2 and 3), the capture had occurred at a prior level in the administrative procedure. The buildings were constructed in locations which were useless for schooling purposes. Patron power had been deployed not directly against the clients, but through privileged access to the administrative process. The loss to the clients was an indirect one, in that their future claims on public resources were crowded out.

The contrasts between Case 4 and Case 5, and also between Case 4 and Case 6 are interesting. The landlords in Case 4 and Case 5 were entirely different types of players, despite the fact that they had similar areas of land. The landowning Sammat2 families taken together, and the landowning Baloch3 families taken together were also monopolists in the sense that all other residents were their tenants. The size of land holding and the relative asset distribution was not, in itself, a determinant of patron power and its uses. MS Baloch3 of Case 5 was pro-active in ensuring the smooth functioning of the school. A number of tenants were also Baloch3, and children of the landowning families used the government school. The social relations between the Baloch3 landlords and their non-Baloch3 tenants were also relatively straightforward. The salient cleavage within the village was between two Baloch3 landlords, and there was an element of political competition between their respective families. In contrast, there was a large social distance between the Sammat2 landlords of Case 4 and their tenants. The Sammat2 families themselves, moreover, had exercised their exit option from the local government school in the form of private schooling.

The nature of social hierarchy and the exercise of exit appeared to be the key differences between Case 4 and Case 6 also. SA Shah of Case 6 was certainly a more powerful patron in every way when compared with the Sammat2 landlords of Case 4. He was a more substantial landlord, commanded direct religious allegiance, and was an important player in local electoral politics. SA Shah's tenants were also his *mureed* and this made the relationship a closer and more "consensual" one. SA Shah's frequent presence in the village, and his role as an arbitrator in local disputes was crucial to the maintenance of his influence and power. The fact that his own extended family resided in the village and used the government school was a factor in school performance.

While Cases 5 and 6 were instances where local monopolistic power did not lead to total capture, there are features of capture and diversion in both the cases. The effect of MS Baloch3's interest in the school and his collusion with the Urdu-medium teachers had real implications for the quality of schooling. Similarly, SA Shah's intervention to "pull" the government school from DH to his own village had implications for schooling in DH. In both cases, the diversion of resources by powerful patrons had some impact on the effectiveness of the schooling system.

(b) Patron-teacher collusion

Model

Teaching positions are at a premium. Patrons are able to influence the rationing of these positions either for cash bribes or as a form of patronage disbursement. Interventions are made not only to capture teaching positions but to prevent

the proper monitoring of teachers thus protected.

Cases

The three cases here represent difference types of connections between teachers and teacher appointments, and local patrons and politicians. The first two schools (Cases 7 and 8) were non-functional due to patron-teacher interaction, while the third (Case 9) was a well-functioning school in some ways.

Case 7: AB Baloch4, Sanghar

The village is located 3.5 km from a busy metalled road. The main settlement where the school is located is AB Baloch4 and has 12 Baloch4 families. There are, in addition several scattered clusters of homes totalling around 50 families belonging to Jatoi, Dahiri, Bareja and Bheel kin-groups. One of the Baloch4 families owns about 14 acres of land, while all the others work as tenants of various non-resident landlords. One of the more important landlords in this area is a Dahiri. There was a schoolmaster by the name of HBJ, who approached the local MNA, who in turn referred the matter to the then local PPP MPA, to get the school sanctioned. This was done in 1993. The school is currently non-functional because teachers are always absent. Of the two teachers, one is a Shar and is connected to a powerful local Shar businessman. The other teacher is a Dahiri and is connected to local PPP people and also to one of the main landlords of this area, also a Dahiri. The Baloch4 here are *mureed* (followers) of the Makhdoom of Hala, who visits from time to time. The last visit was about two months prior to the survey. The Baloch4 asked the Makhdoom to help them get a pukka road as well as electricity. There was no discussion with the Makhdoom about the school.

Case 8: S Sammat3, Sanghar

The village has 57 homes, of which 20 are Sammat3, all of whom own some land. There are 25 Rind families of whom 3 own land. The others are all tenants, and belong to Bheel, Khaskheli and Abupota kinship groups. The village was formerly known as B Sammat3. The Sammat3 of this area followed the Pir Pagara into rebellion against the British government in the 1930s and 1940s. Many were killed and others spent long years in concentration camps. The village began to be settled again gradually since the 1950s after an amnesty to the rebels. S Sammat3 is the main landowner and owns over 600 acres. He is a well-established *zamindar* and owns farm machinery as well as a jeep. The school was sanctioned in 1986 through an "approach" by S Sammat3 to the local MNA, with whom S Sammat3 had relations. The land for the school building was donated by S Sammat3, and the school was constructed adjacent to S Sammat3's *autaq*. The school is non-

functional due to teacher absence, and the building is in decrepit state. The teacher, who is in fact S Sammat3's own son-in-law, does not report for work, and also refuses to give up his position. S Sammat3 has approached the SDEO (sub-divisional education officer) on several occasions to get a new teacher but to no avail. This was confirmed by several community members independently, who also concurred with S Sammat3 that "it is not good to have a local teacher because it is more difficult to tell him off, in particular if he happens to be your son-in-law."

Case 9: K Sammat4, Sanghar

The original village was based around the shrine of an elder. The Sammat4 are the main kinship group and small landowners, with around 5 to 10 acres each. Much of the neighbouring area is owned by a Sanjrani who is a large landlord with over a thousand acres. During the 1960s the village land was badly affected by waterlogging and salinity. There were several tenant families of Khaskhelis who left at that time. The Sammat4 remained despite the problems because of the land and the shrine. The village land has been revived recently with the installation of the LBOD (left-bank outfall drain) tubewells. All current residents are descendants of two brothers, both of whom are still alive (and were interviewed). The older one is K Sammat4, after whom the village is named. The school was sanctioned in 1986 (as a Mosque school) and the building constructed in 1992. The building was not properly finished and was not in use. One of K Sammat4's sons, was appointed as the *pesh imam* of the school, and his son was appointed as the teacher. The school was functioning well, but in a private home, and not in the school building. The *pesh imam* did not take part in the teaching but his daughter, or the sister of the main schoolteacher, did take some lessons every day. There are a few Bheel families who reside close to K Sammat4 and are part of the catchment area of the government school. The Sammat4 considered these families as outsiders, and none of their children attended the school.

Discussion

Case 7 illustrates the impact of patron power on teacher performance. Since the two teachers were both well-connected to important political factions of the area, they were able to violate formal procedures with impunity. These teachers had no link with the local community. It is worth noting, however, that the very existence of the school in this village was explained by local residents with reference to intermediation by political representatives. Another interesting issue is the relationship between the residents and their own patron, the Makhdoom. The residents approach the administration not directly, but through the Makhdoom, irrespective of the fact that the latter holds no public office. Moreover, the residents

failed to mention school performance as a concern during their previous meeting with their patron. The informal system, therefore, does act as some kind of lever on the formal administrative process, not only for patrons, but also to the clients.

The failure of the school in Case 8 shows that the patron-teacher nexus might lead to the weakening not only of teacher accountability to the community, but also, in some cases, to teacher accountability to the patron himself. In Case 9, on the other hand, the close relations between patron and teacher were not a problem as such. The school functioned well despite this connection, or rather, because of it. The local patron was nothing other than a patriarch. It was difficult, in fact, to say whether the government school was a public good or a private one. The effective exclusion of the Bheels was the main adverse impact on public schooling in this case.

There were several cases in the sample, in all regions, where girls' schools had been adversely affected by attempts on the part of local patrons to have women from their own families appointed to the school. There were also cases in the sample where there was no prior connection between the local patron and the teacher, but where such connections were formed for specific purposes. One example has already been cited in Case 5 (MS Baloch3) where the teachers and the local *vadero* had arrived at a reciprocal arrangement. Another interesting case was in the village of S Baloch5 in Sanghar, where the village was being persecuted by the local politicians belonging to the then ruling party for having supported the opposition in the previous elections. There was an attempt by these political rivals to have the local teacher transferred out of S Baloch5, and to render the school in S Baloch5 dysfunctional. The *vadero* (S Baloch5 himself), however, was fighting hard to retain the teacher, who was considered to be competent and committed, in the village school.

The patron-teacher nexus has implications not only for the working of the particular site where this nexus operates. There is a negative externality due to teachers who are recruited through or protected by local politicians, through an overall negative impact on the performance of school administration. "Good" teachers, in order to survive within this system would be forced to seek out political patrons who would protect their interests. It was widely commented in Sanghar, for example, that teachers from the Hindu minority were generally more conscientious than their Muslim counterparts. The explanation offered was that Muslim teachers are usually individuals who were under the protection of "big" men, whereas Hindus normally did not enjoy this form of protection. The teacher in Sawan Rind, who was a Hindu Kohli, was in the process of acquiring a "protector" in the shape of S Baloch5.[52]

[52] The nature of the hierarchical social relations between teachers and local patrons was also revealed in the following

There were differences between the regions in the relative position of the teacher in the local community and politics. In Toba Tek Singh, for example, teachers generally preferred to be posted near home, but not in their own village itself. The reason which was frequently given was that they wanted to remove themselves from inter-factional tussles of their own villages. A number of teachers in the survey had actually moved their postings out of their home villages because of this. In Sindh, on the other hand, the norm as well as the preference was for own-village postings.

(c) Partial patron power and diversion

Model

Patron is not absolute monopolist and client does have some voice. There is competition for limited public resources, and the patron's position depends on his ability to influence the allocation of resources. Rival patrons compete for political allegiance, and for the diversion of resources to their control. There is negotiation between patrons and clients also, and public resources are used as a currency for the disbursement of patronage. Patron-client networks are like vertical, hierarchical organizations (or factions) which compete against other similar organizations.[53] Local patrons are clients of higher patrons and so on. Local patrons are able to deliver the political allegiance of their clients en bloc to higher patrons; there are local monopolists but higher level of patrons must compete.[54]

In this more complicated but also somewhat more realistic model of political patronage, the quality of public services is affected in several ways. While the electoral system does provide some channels of accountability and resource transfer, there are many layers of intermediation between the user and her political representative. The system is better suited to effect

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account of a failed training session for members of parent-teacher associations (PTA) in Sanghar district: "The PTA chairmen were all local *vadera*, leaders and elders. They refused to go for PTA training because they did not like the idea of being lectured at by some teachers in a classroom-like setting."

[53] This model is similar to the explanation of public failure in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh in Drèze and Gazdar (1997).

[54] The Devolution Plan of the military government in Pakistan, announced on 14 August 2000, appears in some respects, as an attempt at formalising this model of political patronage. It is not clear, *a priori*, how this will lead an improvement in public accountability.

one-off transfers rather than as a source of sustained day-to-day accountability. There is a danger of private appropriation of the pay-off at any of the several layers of intermediation. The system can stabilise factions and foreclose the possibility of local collective action for public goods.

Discussion

Nearly all of the cases cited thus far point to the existence of partial patron power, and resource diversion rather than total resource capture. These cases suggest that there is political competition between patrons (and not stable monopoly power), and also that there is some client voice (as opposed to complete voicelessness).

The cases cited above also raise questions about the profile of political patrons. There is a degree of diversity in the "identitikit" of agents who act as political patrons, in the sense that they are able to command or deliver blocks of political (or in the case of the model, electoral) support. While some of these political patrons do answer to the popular caricature of the tyrannical monopolistic landlord, others are merely heads of families or extended families. In general, the patron combines elements of coercion, patriarchy and even consensus in different measures. Patrons can, in general, be viewed as political entrepreneurs of various types, in the sense that they as individuals or as a class act as focal points for solving collective action problems. Minimally, the very ability to mobilise and deliver vote banks represents successful collective action. Most of the patrons in sample communities are established political entrepreneurs, moreover, regardless of the electoral process.

The admission, on the one hand, of client voice and that of diversity in patron characteristics on the other, leads to a further implication. It is no longer possible to trivially ascribe school failure (or governance failure in school delivery) to patron-induced distortion. School failure might be an outcome of weak demand for public education on the part of the community itself. In the case of K Sammat4, for example, the government school functioned relatively well for the Sammat4, but effectively excluded the Bheel children. In AB Baloch4, the school was rendered dysfunctional due to patron-teacher collusion, but the community also accorded a lower priority to school performance compared to other infrastructure such as electricity and road construction.

The cases reported here are not atypical of other instances of politically-motivated resource diversion. These cases can be interpreted quite broadly as instances of patron-induced distortion, since a political patron is an active agent at some stage in the administrative-political process. The diversity in the nature of the patron and in the relative strength of client or community voice implies, however, that models of political patronage prescribe too rigid a structure on the analysis of

local political economy. It is useful, therefore, to invert this method and to interpret the performance of the schooling system as the outcome of interaction between state intervention and diverse forms of collective action and political enterprise. This is attempted in section 5.2 with respect to selected case material. Before that, however, some observations on teacher-administration collusion are offered below.

(d) Teachers and administration

Model

The intra-organizational system of monitoring breaks down due to collusion between teachers and administrative officials. For this simple model to work there needs to be some degree of discretionary power in the hands of officials which they then deploy to capture rents. If officials have some discretionary power, for example, to select which teachers are penalized in the process of monitoring they might pardon errant teachers on the payment of a bribe. Alternatively, officials might threaten to penalize a teacher regardless of her performance in order to extract a bribe. Similar transactions might exist along the administrative hierarchy, as principals with discretionary power extract rents from their agents.

Models of collusive behaviour within public organisations are incomplete, however, without consideration of the interests of the true principals. In this case the true principals might be parents of school-going children, or even communitarian ideologues who are interested in universal education for other purposes. The types of scenario sketched in models (a), (b), and (c), above, are therefore essential for completing any account of intra-organizational collusion and capture.

It is not the existence of discretionary power in a public organization (or any organization for that matter) which is the problem. Effective organizations need to provide space for individual agents to exercise discretion and initiative. Some opportunistic abuse of these powers is likely to be a feature of any organization. Systematic abuse of discretionary powers indicates, however, that the interests of the true principals are compromised. Systematic administrative failure, therefore, collapses analytically into a problem of the political process through which the true principal pursues her interest. In other words, the relevant issues are of the type discussed under models (a), (b) and (c) above.

There are certain features of intra-organizational collusion, however, which do not trivially reduce to the political process. Teachers and administrators might collude, for example, to insulate themselves from the political process through the creation of protective coalitions. A coalition of this type would represent a distortion in the chain accountability. Whether the coalition has a negative impact on service delivery, however, is not straightforward. If the

political process is itself distorted, in that it gives disproportionate weight to the interests of local monopolists as opposed to the community, then insulation from the political process may not necessarily go against the interests of the community.

Intra-organizational collusion might also be insulated from the interests of true principals through ideological consensus between parties which allows them to interpret organizational rules in a biased manner. Teachers, administrators and political representatives may hold prior (and consistent) beliefs which are contrary to the goal of universal education. The existence of such consistent beliefs has the effect of increasing the margin of discretion at different levels in the administrative and political processes. If there is a widespread belief, for example, that schooling is not "useful" for females or for the poor, or that it is "understandable" if teachers with remote postings do not attend regularly, the standards of organizational performance will be interpreted more flexibly for the schooling of girls, or the poor, or in remote areas.[55]

Cases

The case material reported here includes one school/community case study, and further observations based on interviews and other citations.[56]

Interview with off-duty male teachers in Purano Naoabad, Sanghar

> "'Monthlies' are set, all the way up to the level of the District Education Officer. Teachers are happy to surrender as much as half their salaries in order to avoid attending school. The main reward is the lumpsum pension of around 2 to 3 lakhs which they receive at the end of their careers."

Interview with male teacher in a well-functioning school, DS, Sanghar

> "Clerks often bother us. They deliberately misplace papers that we have submitted for inspection and then demand bribes. Sometimes they would inform a teacher that they have received instructions from above that his service has been terminated, and then withdraw this charge after the

[55] Weiner (1991) argues, for example, that there is ideological consensus among politicians, administrators and social activists in India that schooling is not useful or relevant for the lives of poor people.

[56] The survey includes rich information on teachers based on detailed interviews and case histories. For a more comprehensive analysis of this material see Latif (forthcoming).

payment of a bribe."

Girls' schools CK (Muzaffargarh), BK and GB (Mardan-Swabi)

Girls' schools in all three villages were dysfunctional due to chronic teacher absenteeism or because teacher appointments were held up by political and administrative difficulties. In all three villages, however, the boys' school functioned relatively well. Community members thought that it was understandable that women teachers were not able to attend regularly, given that the villages were at some distance from any sizeable town from which the teacher might commute. They also thought it understandable that locally recruited women teachers would be less competent, and will, in any case, stop working once they got married.

Case of teacher in Chak Alpha, Toba Tek Singh

The respondent was a 46 year old male teacher employed in the primary section of a government high school. The primary section had three teachers of whom two were present at the time of the visit. Also present was a teacher from the secondary section of the school, who appeared to have taken charge of the primary section and was issuing instructions to the respondent in an authoritative even high-handed manner. The secondary teacher did not have any formal grounds for assuming the position of authority in the primary section. The latter treated the former with a degree of deference, constantly referring to him as "*chaudhri-saab*" -- a term that might be used by a tenant or labourer to address his landlord or employer. It later transpired that the secondary teacher was from a well-connected, landowning Araeen family, whereas the respondent was from a relatively poor and "low caste" background. The respondent had received the basic primary teacher training after finishing high school, and had been a primary school teacher for 18 years. Over this period he had served in four different schools including the present one, where he had been working for three years. This school was at a distance of 2 kilometres by metalled road from the respondent's home from where he commuted on a bicycle. The first posting had been in a village called Chak Uno some 35 kilometres from home, and the respondent commuted every working day by bus and bicycle. He tried to get a transfer closer to home, but found this difficult to arrange without connections in the administration. This first posting lasted for some 6 years. He was finally transferred, but to Chak Duo which was even further away from home -- a distance of some 60 kilometres. This transfer was the result of an under-the-table deal between department officials and a resident of Chak Uno who had been appointed as a teacher in Chak Duo. That Chak Uno resident managed to organize a supposedly *bahami* (mutually agreed) transfer between himself and our respondent, without the latter ever

being consulted. The respondent wrote official letters of complaint to the District Education Officer but to no avail. He took up residence in Chak Duo and worked there for two years. He was then, finally, able to establish a connection with the local MNA through a number of intermediaries, and got a transfer to his own home village. There he worked for some 7 years before his current posting. This final transfer was at the respondent's own instance, as he discovered that he was getting caught up in local village politics. Parents would file spurious complaints against the teacher simply because he was thought to belong to a rival local faction. There appeared to be some measure of caste discrimination also, as in the words of the respondent "a poor man does not get respect in his own village".

Army survey of schools in Punjab

The Department of Elementary Education of the Punjab provincial government commissioned the services of the Pakistan Army to conduct a comprehensive survey of schools in the province. Army survey teams were given complete listings of government schools in every area, and they conducted inspections of all schools. Teachers were instructed before-hand by department officials about the impending survey, and were required to keep their personal and professional documents with them for examination by the Army teams. The survey involved canvassing the opinions of local residents about the school and the teachers. Besides checking credential of teachers, the Army survey teams also made binding recommendations about the number of teaching positions in government schools. In principle, schools which were over-staffed, or where the teacher-pupil ratio exceeded the prescribed number, teaching positions were reduced. The opposite was recommended for schools with low teacher-pupil ratios. There were several ways in which the Army survey was successful. The coverage of government schools was comprehensive. All government schools in our own survey had received a visit by an Army team. The survey was also useful in that it led to increased awareness in the mass media, and in public opinion in general, about the importance of monitoring school and teacher performance. The Army surveys were not entirely unannounced, however, given that local officials of the education department had pre-warned teachers. There were complaints also that the survey method was arbitrary, and that the surveyors were unfamiliar with problems of schooling and education. Some teachers, particularly in the Army-dominated district of Chakwal, complained about the low educational level of the soldiers conducting the survey themselves. There was also concern that the survey had provided an opportunity to local interest groups to settle scores with factional rivals who happened to be school teachers.

Case 10: KM, Muzaffargarh

> The school was not functioning, and according to local residents the teacher takes no interest. He is usually absent, and when he does turn up he comes in the morning for an hour or so and then leaves. The village was about 4 kilometres away from the metalled road, and some children from the village went to school in the nearby town. The errant schoolteacher was protected by the local AEO who happened to have been his teacher and family friend. Teachers had prior notice of the Army survey of schools, and the teacher of this school made sure that he was present every day during that period. When the Army team came to the village in order to solicit local residents' opinions about the teacher, they decide not to get him into trouble because in their words he was, after all, a local resident. The school is located in the Awan Basti, and the teacher is from the Ghalu Basti. There was a sense that the complaint about the teacher might escalate into an Awan-versus-Ghalu issue, and this was why the residents decided not to raise the matter with the Army team.

Discussion

The general relationship between the school administration and primary school teachers was found to be conflictual and extractive. There was also evidence of widespread collusion between teachers and administrators at the expense of school performance. A range of functionaries within the school administration enjoy a variety of discretionary powers vis-a-vis teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, protect their interest through access to powerful patrons, and/or through unions and associations. Teachers who do not enjoy such protection are vulnerable to arbitrary punitive sanction on the part of officials. Protective action by teachers, therefore, enjoys some degree of legitimacy, given that there is a perception of abuse of power on the part of the administration.

The sense that there are specific vested interest groups in the schooling system is heightened by the hierarchical nature of school administration. Officials are drawn from secondary school teachers, who are better qualified than their primary school counterparts, and undergo a different process of recruitment. Primary schools and primary schoolteachers are relative underdogs within a system that is managed by the secondary school cadre.[57]

Third-party monitoring interventions such as the Army

[57] There were some blatant cases of discrimination against primary schools in the survey communities. Most of these revolved around the "capture" of schooling infrastructure originally belonging to a primary school by a middle or secondary school.

survey in Punjab province are useful but tend to focus too narrowly on schoolteachers as the targets of the monitoring exercise. While the school is the appropriate point of entry, since it is the point of service delivery, the performance of the schooling system also depends on actions of other interest groups such as various layers of the school administration, political representatives and local patrons, sometimes in collusion with, and at other times in conflict with teachers. A one-off exercise such as the Army survey, conducted in isolation from these other contributors to school system performance, can become counter-productive if it heightens the sense of persecution among primary school teachers -- a group which already sees itself as the bottom rung of the schooling hierarchy.

Finally, there was evidence that shared beliefs on the part of teachers, administrators and local communities which accounted for biased interpretation of organizational rules. This was most clearly manifest with regard to different boundaries of acceptance for the work performance of male and female teachers, and hence boys' and girls' schools respectively. Informal conversations with teachers also revealed differential expectations concerning the educational progress of children from various social, caste and kinship group backgrounds. Such individual attitudes were clearly at odds with the formal goal of universal education. Where such attitudes were shared by a wide range of individuals within the schooling system, they formed the basis of institutionalized biases against particular population groups.

5.2 Diverse Experiences of Local Collective Action

The previous section started with four stylized models of collusion and capture in the schooling system. These stylized models were useful because they required clear statements about prior assumptions concerning distortions in the administrative and political processes, and also because the conditions in which collusion and capture could occur, as well implications of collusion and capture had to be spelled out. Case material from the school and community survey was then used to highlight qualitative and "process" observations, and to throw light on the assumptions and implications of the stylized models. The main value of this exercise lay in gaining a clearer perspective on the mechanisms for collusion and capture, and on the linkages between collusion and capture on the one hand and the performance of the schooling system on the other.

Examination of case material, however, showed up problems with prior analytical categories on which the stylized models of collusion and capture are based. In particular, the identity of the key agents such as "patrons" and "clients", the demarkation of "public" versus "private" domains, and indeed, the very presumption of "community", are all subject to substantive variation. The present section, therefore, reverses the methodology of the previous one, and begins with a presentation

of selected case studies on schools and "communities". An attempt is then made to identify salient features in the performance of the schooling system, particularly with respect to the relationship and interaction between the schooling system and local collective action.

The material presented here includes eight case studies of sample communities within a single census unit or *deh* in Sanghar (Cases 11 to 18). These case studies taken together provide an opportunity of gaining insights into the dynamics of the politics of the local school within a relatively small and bounded administrative area. Two further cases are presented here, one each from Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh. Both these cases supplement the Sanghar case study material in developing an alternative approach to the politics of the school and the community to the one inscribed in the stylized models of the previous section.

Cases

Case study of PK (Cases 11 to 18)

PK is the census settlement or deh. There were eight separate communities which were surveyed within PK. There were DS, PS Shah1, AK Baloch6, AB Baloch6, AR Sammat1, HR Brohi1, MI Brohi1 and G Baloch1. Two of the communities, DS and PS Shah1 had two government schools, one for boys and girls, respectively. There was a school each in AR Sammat1, AB Baloch6, AK Baloch6, and HR Brohi1. There was no school in MI Brohi1 and G Baloch1.

Case 11: DS

> DS was the largest village, with 180 families. It was also the most well-established village in the deh in terms of infrastructure. There was a metalled road right up to the village, there was electricity, a health centre, a police station, and several large pukka houses. The boys' school in DS was also the oldest school in the deh. DS had been a prosperous village, and continued to act as the operational base for a large landowner of the area, MM Sammat1. MM Sammat1 does not live here but his manager (*kamdar*) does, and maintains an autaq and barn-house. Only 8 of the 180 resident families owned land, and a majority of the others worked as tenants of absentee landlords including MM Sammat1. The boys' school was established in 1955 and started as a mixed gender school. Girls were taught here until 1992 when the girls school was established. The school building consists of two pukka rooms and a verandah. The original building for the school got taken over by the police station. The present building was originally constructed as a handicrafts (*dastkari*) centre which was no longer operational. The school was functioning well, all teachers were present, and classes were in session. This was the solitary school in the deh for many years, and was

regarded as both large and important. Its size and importance both declined with the construction of new schools in the various *goths*. The girls' school was also relatively well-functioning.

Case 12: PS Shah1

This village is situated less than half a kilometre away from DS, and is also connected by metalled road. There are 42 families of whom there are 25 Sayyad homes, most of whom own some land. The Sayyads also control a shrine which gets visitors at particular times of the year. Other kinship groups include Qambar and Khaskheli. The Sayyad clearly are the dominant group. The boys' primary school was sanctioned in 1983. Before that date local children used to go to the school in DS. The school did not have a building until 1996, and used to be run in an *autaq*. The main Sayyad family, whose head is the local *vadero* was instrumental in getting the school sanctioned and also, subsequently, getting a dedicated building for it. One of family members is a teacher in the school. In 1995 a provincial minister was on tour and visited the village where he was shown the *autaq* school. He then helped move the application for a building. There is a clear sense that PS Shah1 has "separated" itself from DS. The school was a well-functioning one, all the teachers were on duty, classes were in session, and the children were attentive and motivated. Although the school was officially a boys' school, there were mixed classes, with boys and girls in roughly equal numbers. The school was well kept, with premises in good order, and generally tidy. There is also an unfinished building for a girls' middle school in this village, but the school has not been officially taken over by the education department.

Case 13: AK Baloch6

This village of over a hundred homes, all belonging to one kin-group, the Baloch6, was located one kilometre from the metalled road. Most families own some land. There was one boys' primary school, with two teachers. According to the local *vadero* a schoolteacher in a nearby village was unhappy with his posting, as according to him, he was not treated well by the local residents there. That teacher approached the *vadero* and convinced him to apply for a school in this village, so that he (the teacher) could move here. The local *vadero* then took the matter to the more influential *vadero* of the area, and got the school with his help. The school was sanctioned in 1988, and the building completed in 1991. The school building was located in the middle of fields and a short distance away from the main settlement. It was a one-room building, and was in need of considerable repair and refurbishment. At the time of the visit the two teachers (both local residents) were sitting chatting in the verandah of the school with the *vadero* of

the village. There were no pupils in the school, and it was not clear if any pupils were even registered. In short, the school was completely non-functional.

Case 14: AB Baloch6

This village of some 25 families, all Baloch6, was located around 2 km from the metalled road, and about a kilometre from AK Baloch6. Most of the families own some land, and a couple of them have around 30 acres each. The others have less, and take on additional land as tenants from landlords in the surrounding area. The school was established in 1973 with the help of a neighbouring *vadero*, RK. There was no government building for the school, but a part of the *autaq* had been partitioned to create a room and a verandah. The building was well-maintained, had facilities such as drinking water, as well as electricity and an electric fan. There was one teaching position, and the teacher, a local man, was present. Classes were in session, there was a high attendance rate, and the school was functioning well. There were a few children in the school from AK Baloch6 too. Residents were happy with the teacher but complained that the officials did not pay any attention to the school or even come on inspection tours. The residents were convinced that the success of their school was mostly attributable to the efforts of the local teacher.

Case 15 (same as Case 2): AR Sammat1

This was a small settlement of four houses located in the interior of the deh. There was a primary school building which was being used as a store and farm-shed by the local landlord, who was connected to the main Sammat1 landlord of DS. The settlement had electricity, and also a metalled road. The road, in fact, ended at this point, and went no further, although there were several other settlements beyond.

Case 16: HR Brohi1

This village of over 75 families was located over a kilometre from the metalled road. None of the residents owned any land, and all families were tenants (*hari*) of MM Sammat1, the dominant landlord with a base in DS. Two-thirds of the residents belonged to the Brohi ethnic group, and were from two clans within the Brohi. The remainder were a separate group called Qalandrani. The school was established in 1981, and the building was constructed in 1993. This was supposed to be a boys' school, but mixed gender schooling was in progress. The main person who deals with authorities is Qasim, the son of HR Brohi1, who is the *nekmard* of the village. The point of contact with the authorities is usually former MPA of the area. The school was well-functioning, the (single) teacher was present, and teaching was in progress.

Case 17: MI Brohi1

This village of around 20 families was located two kilometres from the metalled road, and did not have a school or other public infrastructure. All the families are actually part of an extended Brohi family and share many resources with each other. They are all tenants (*hari*) of MM Sammat1. Although they are part of an extended family, each unit farms separately. Some boys from this village do go to school in HR Brohi1, which is at a distance of around two kilometres. The group arrived at this location some 12 years ago to work for MM Sammat1. They knew, as well as were known, in the area, as they had worked here previously on the land of another landlord. They have virtually no direct contact with MM Sammat1, and all their dealings are done through his manager (*kamdar*). Some of the houses in the village are already *pukka*, and the residents are making efforts to get some public services. They have approached KH of PS Shah1, who "takes" the votes of the village about wanting a school.

Case 18 (same as Case 1): G Baloch1

There are 21 families of Rind Baloch, and another 5 Bheel (tribal Hindu) families in this village. The village is located at the boundary of the deh, and about 5 kilometres away from the metalled road. The only public infrastructure close to the village is an LBOD (left-bank outfall drain) boring. There is electricity on the boring, but not in the village itself. There is no school. There is a semi-pukka mosque, however, and for the past one year the residents have pooled resources to employ a *moulvi* to teach the local children Quran and prayers for an hour every morning. A total of around 30 children go to the madrassah from this village as well as from a neighbouring Baloch1 settlement across the deh boundary. Both boys and girls attend the madrassah, but they do not include any Bheel children for obvious reasons. An application was made for a primary school through the local ex-MPA, and the school was indeed sanctioned, then sited in some other village. There has been a settlement in this place for around 30 years, and the Baloch1 families claim some moral right to land as their forefathers had worked as labourers in the excavation of the Jamrao canal near here. At present the people of G Baloch1 are mostly tenants of MM Sammat1, though some families have also bought land outright from him. Their relatives across the deh boundary are all tenants of one BK Baloch7 who has not allowed the construction of any *pukka* structure in the village, as he sees it (correctly) as the first step in the process of the tenants establishing rights of residence, and some rights to resources. In this respect, people of G Baloch1 are ahead of their relatives across the deh boundary.

Discussion

The case study of PK and the stories of the various communities within PK bear close resemblance to qualitative observations about other locations and communities in this narrative. The case of PK is useful, therefore, to illustrate dynamics in local community action and the school-community interface. It also allows a more nuanced understanding of broader regularities and patterns in school performance summarized in Chapter 4 above.

Contrasts within the *deh*

The most striking feature of the *deh* taken as a whole is the contrast between communities within the *deh* over a range of issues of interest. These contrasts imply that the *deh*, which by virtue of its position as the basic territorial unit of administration is also the basic entry point for public intervention, is of very little value as a unit of observation. The *goth* or the village or cluster of families and homes below the *deh* appears as the relevant unit of observation, not only for the procedural reasons cited in Chapter 2 above, but also on more substantive grounds.

Two of the *goth* within PK have two government schools each, another four have one school each, while there is no school in another two. The contrast between the *goth* in terms of the age of the schooling intervention is also instructive. DS has had a government school since 1955, and there has been a school in AB Baloch6 since 1973. In all other *goth* the first government school was constructed in the 1980s.

The intra-*deh* contrast is conspicuous in all types of public infrastructure. While the main old settlement DS is virtually like a small town, there are other settlements within the *deh* where basic facilities like potable drinking water (let alone electricity) are not available. The extent of remoteness and connectedness is, clearly, an intra-*deh* issue. G Baloch1 which is located over 3 kilometres from the metalled road is like a remote outpost compared to DS and PS Shah1 which are connected to a busy inter-city route. It is not only the presence or the age of the public infrastructure, however, which varies between the settlements. There is a great deal of variation even in the age of the settlement itself. *Goth* MI Brohi1 was first established a mere 12 years before the survey, while DS and PS Shah1 are thought to predate British rule in Sindh.

There are sharp contrasts also in the performance of the schooling system within the *deh*. Out of the eight government primary schools in the *deh* five were functioning well, while three were dysfunctional. Both schools (boys' and girls') in DS were functional, as was the boys' school in neighbouring PS Shah1. The girls' school in the latter *goth*, however, was non-operational due to neglect on the part of the education

department. The condition of government schools in the other two neighbouring *goth* AK Baloch6 and AB Baloch6 presented the most glaring contrast. The older AB Baloch6 school functioned well despite having limited resources -- a single teacher, and no government building. On the other hand the school in AK Baloch6 was dysfunctional despite having a dedicated building and two teachers on the staff. In HR Brohi1, as in AB Baloch6, the single teacher managed to run the school relatively smoothly, and with some degree of diligence.

The performance of the schooling system was chaotic also with reference to school siting. The two (admittedly small and recent) *goth* of MI Brohi1 and G Baloch1 did not have a government school despite some evidence of demand for schooling in these villages. Older boys from MI Brohi1 walked across fields to HR Brohi1 in order to attend school, and the residents of G Baloch1 had organized to pay a *moulvi* for imparting basic religious instruction to their children. It might be argued that MI Brohi1 and G Baloch1 might not qualify for a government school on the grounds that they are small and relatively new settlements. It is worth noting, however, that the education department had seen it fit to site a non-functional school at the even smaller settlement of AR Sammat1.

Goth as a site of autonomy

The case study of PK helps to answer some questions raised in Chapter 4 above, but also raises new questions. Two related matters came to attention with respect to settlement patterns in Sanghar and elsewhere. Communities in Sanghar (and to some extent in Muzaffargarh) were generally smaller and less well connected to public infrastructure. Schools were of a more recent vintage in Sanghar (and to some extent in Muzaffargarh) compared to other regions. These community and school characteristics were, in turn, thought to influence the quality of school performance. PK is not atypical in the Sanghar sample as far as intra-*deh* contrasts mentioned above are concerned. The PK case study shows that the "smallness" and "remoteness" of communities in Sanghar is largely a question of variation within the basic administrative unit (*deh*) rather than between different *deh*. The "newness" of schools in Sanghar, moreover, is a reflection of public infrastructure moving from the level of the *deh* to the level of the *goth*.

What is the significance of the *goth* as a locational community, and how might the diffusion of public infrastructure down to the *goth* level be interpreted? These questions are important because the dynamics of settlement have serious implications for the quality of the public schooling system. The diffusion of the schooling infrastructure to the *goth* has had two opposing effects on progress towards universal education. On the one hand, this process has increased the access to schools for people residing in the interior of the *deh*. The expansion in access is not entirely straightforward, of course, given the problems in school siting noted above. On

the other hand, however, the diffusion has lowered the overall quality of the schools which exist. The new school in the interior *goth* is remote, has fewer teachers, and also had fewer potential and actual pupils. The new school has also led to the reduction in the size and scope of the old school which has been crowded out to some extent. It is not obvious, *a priori*, whether diffusion is best technical solution to the problem of access.

From an analytical point of view, however, the fact of *goth* formation and development needs to be addressed independently of prior technical views regarding optimal solutions to the problem of access. The final impact on the quality of schooling is largely incidental, in any case, to the politics of the *goth*. In order to understand the process of diffusion (and dilution), it is useful to consider two institutional aspects of the *goth*: firstly, does the *goth* represent an institutionalized form of internal organization, and secondly, to what extent does the *goth* act as a corporate entity with respect to the outside world?

A common feature in the internal organization of the *goth* in PK and elsewhere in the sample is existence of a core of households and families, usually from a single kinship group, who appear as the dominant actors. Some of the *goth* are simply a collection of households belonging to an extended family. In others, the inhabitants include other households of the same generic kinship group, as well as other kinship groups. In a *goth* such as DS where there are multiple kinship groups, however, the sub-*goth* unit of *paro* acts as the domain of the extended family. The nature of the interaction between the dominant kinship group or extended family and other residents depends on a number of factors including relations of economic dependence and social hierarchy.

The *goth* and the *paro* are, nevertheless, sites where extended family groups exercise relative autonomy from other individuals or family groups. The gradual separation of PS Shah1 from DS, and its emergence as a *goth* with a distinct identity represents some level of autonomy of the main Sayyad families of PS Shah1 from the powerful Sammat1 landlord of DS. Within PS Shah1, moreover, kinship groups not belonging to these dominant Sayyad families assert their relative autonomy from the Sayyad within their own *paro*. It is quite conceivable, that over time and with growth in numbers, some of the bigger *paro* of PS Shah1 will in turn claim the status of *goth* in their own right.

It is important to note that the institution of the *goth* or the *paro* as a unit of relative autonomy and even "self-government" on the part of extended families and kinship groups is not limited to families or kinship groups such as the Sayyad of PS Shah1 who have prior economic and social endowments. The case of MI Brohi1 illustrates the scope for relative autonomy and self-government which exists even for families of newly-

arrived landless tenants. These Brohi1 families were in the process of establishing their own *goth* on the land of their landlord, and had already named the *goth* after their own elder or *vadero*. The same was true of the Baloch6 and the Baloch1 groups of landless tenant families in PK. There were other cases in survey (outside PK) where landless groups such as the Bheel who would be at the bottom of any political, social or ritual hierarchy which might be constructed for Sindh, had established their own *goth* and enjoyed relative autonomy in the internal affairs of the *goth*.

The politics of *goth* formation and development is not only about negotiating and renegotiating domains of autonomy between families or parochial kinship groups. The modern state, particularly in its developmental form, is a key player. The final act in the establishment of a *goth* is its recognition and endorsement by the administrative structure. The proof of continuous residence on a particular piece of land leads to progressive entitlement of the occupants to private property rights in that land. The construction of pukka buildings, connection to electric supply, and most importantly for the present study, the sanctioning of a government school, all represent the creation of "facts on the ground". The relationship between the *goth* and public infrastructure is, therefore, of a dual nature. The establishment of the *goth* entitles the residents to public infrastructure, and the siting of public infrastructure helps along the process of *goth* establishment.

The apparently chaotic procedures in government school siting, and conflicts within and between villages and groups over the siting and even the "naming" of government schools are somewhat more comprehensible once the functional role of the public school is factored into the analysis. There needs, also, to be an admission of the possibility that a "community's demand for a school" might not be entirely motivated by "demand for schooling".

Organization of space within the *goth*

The *goth* or for that matter the *paro* are more than mere collections of houses which happen to clustered together. There are clear delineations of space, and also a clear hierarchy of insiders and outsiders. Physically, the *goth* or the *paro* is usually demarcated with a fence of thorny bushes known as *verh*. The enclosed area is called *lorho*. Entry into the *lorho* is usually restricted to residents and their close family relations, and the rare female visitors from the outside. Male visitors are received at the *autaq* which is usually situated at the edge of the *goth*. The *autaq* is a semi-public place, in the sense that although it is usually associated with a particular individual, it is treated as a place of meeting by other male residents. The exclusivity or otherwise of the *autaq* is a function of the social distance between the *vadero* and other residents. The *goth* or the *paro* is like a compound within which

some spaces would be shared. There is usually no *purdah* within the *goth* or the *paro*. The role of the *autaq* as an point of receiving male visitors allows the *goth* itself to be treated as a semi-private domain, if the test of public and private space is women's access to that space.

The *vadero* as political entrepreneur

In the critical commentary on the implicit political model of patron-client relations and community participation in Chapter 2 (section 2.3) it was mentioned that any pre-existing class of patrons (prior, that is, to a developmental or democratic intervention) can be expected to consist of political entrepreneurs who have emerged over time as an endogenous response to pre-existing collective action problems. It was argued that the presumption of pristine communities primed for developmental intervention, as though they were blank slates ready to be written upon, was problematic. The challenging part of the modernist developmental project was to give rise to new forms of collective action through new types of political entrepreneurship, in an environment where a class of political entrepreneurs already existed. It was mentioned that in the context of rural Pakistan, large landlords might have been the natural candidates for solving collective action problems in the organization of surface irrigation. The class of monopolist patrons of the political model, therefore, might well be political entrepreneurs who solved collective action problems in the absence of a functioning modern state.

The case studies of PK and the discussion of *goth* formation suggests other forms of political enterprise too. The establishment of a *goth*, after all, is the result of collective action on the part of groups of families and individuals. The *goth* requires the production of several public goods, and considerable investment of resources. The political entrepreneurs at the level of the *goth* are individuals (or families) which have particularly high private stakes, and also emerge as political patrons (as *vadero*) for the *goth* as a whole. The importance of networks of families and kinship groups in the establishment of the *goth* indicates that the transactions costs of collective action are likely to be lower due to a prior sense of organic solidarity. More formally, this condition can be expressed by allowing altruistic utility functions for individual members of the group with respect to other group members.

The existing class of political patrons (or the *vadero*), therefore, comprises not only monopolistic landlords, but leading and activist individuals and families within different socio-economic classes, and kinship group networks. The patron's political monopoly (for example, his ability to deliver vote blocks) might be premised as much on coercive economic and political power, as it might on consent and consensus between patron and client. The persona of the *vadero* and the nature of patron-client relations is likely to vary along a wide range of

coercion-consensus combinations. From the evidence of the present sample, instances of pure coercion and voiceless clients are relatively rare.

Consensual relations between patrons and clients (or the *vadero* and his community), and the existence of client voice do not necessarily imply "good" development outcomes. For a start, the organization of local collective action around families and kinship groups is likely to perpetuate or even strengthen patriarchy.[58] The family-like organization of local collective action can simply mean the reproduction of intra-family inequalities, notably gender inequalities, over a more extended "public" domain. Furthermore, the possibility of client voice forces on the agenda a problem which development practitioners have preferred not to confront: namely, the possibility that "communities" may not be primed recipients of the modernist development project.

Case

Case 20: Chak Beta

> The settlement is a canal-colony with nearly 300 families. It was established in 1896 when canal lands were opened up, and the first batch of settlers came from Hoshiarpur in eastern Punjab. These were mainly people from two Jatt groups, the Gill and the Bhatti. Gill and Bhatti are in roughly equal numbers, and continue to dominate the village numerically. The other major group consists of the Hindko-speaking Awan who were brought here in the 1970s as compensation for the loss of land to Tarbela Dam. The Jatt refer to themselves as "the Punjabis", and to the Awan as "the Pathan", though the Awan are clearly not Pakhtun or Pushto-speaking. There are two water tanks in the village, and two mosques, one each, respectively, in the Jatt and Awan parts of the village. Each side maintains its mosque on the basis of voluntary payments, including grain donations to their respective *imam*. The Jatts constitute around 150 families, and the Awan some 100. The remainder, or around 50 families are mostly landless people who belong to various menial and artisanal castes including cobblers, and blacksmiths. They also include several Christian families who are the poorest and most marginalised group within the village. There are two schools, one for boys and the other for girls. The boys' school was established in 1962, and admitted girls until 1970 when the girls school was established. The boys' school commands a 4 acre plot of government land, on which there are three buildings. Two of these buildings are in use by the school, while the third is totally derelict. The two usable buildings have 5 rooms in all, but only one of them is in use as a classroom. One other room is used as a

[58] The patron is quite literally the patriarch.

store, while the rest are completely bare and empty. The school has a partially completed boundary wall. The two new buildings were built in 1993 and 1995, as part of the Iqra scheme and flood relief respectively. The derelict building was initially constructed for the girls' school. After the arrival of the Awan in the village the Jatt complained that they would not allow their daughters to pass through Awan areas to get to the school. Instead they managed to have a new girls' school building constructed on their side of the village. All the school buildings, including the new building for the girls' school were constructed in the early 1990s with intermediation by the local MNA and MPA.

Discussion

The contrast between this case and the cases of *goth* formation in PK could not be more striking. The state played a crucial role in all aspects of economic and community life in this village. The village itself was designed and developed by the state, and entire groups of cultivators were brought, first from eastern Punjab, and then from northern Punjab in order to populate the village and work the land.

In some other respects, however, there were common features with the process of community formation in PK. There were, in effect, at least two villages residing within one Chak. The Jatts and the Awans, both landowning groups, saw themselves as distinct communities. They resided in separate quarters of the Chak, and had organized their own separate "public" goods such as mosques and water reservoirs. There had been an attempt, also, to divide the government schools, but this was only partly successful, and was limited to the siting of the girls' school. The story of various groups within a village trying to have a school sited close to their own residential quarters was repeated in a number of the Chak of Toba Tek Singh. This type of political mobilization involved some level of collective action and political enterprise. There was evidence of collective action, therefore, on the part of parochial communities, even in a situation where the state existed as an active agent for the production of public goods.

There were a number of non-Jatt and non-Awan families, who were mostly landless, and belonged mostly to historically disadvantaged groups such as artisans, menial workers and religious minorities. The politics of the village were mostly defined in terms of the Jatt-Awan cleavage, and these other groups remained physically as well as socially on the margins.[59]

Case

[59] This feature of the Toba Tek Singh Chak, and its implications for public schooling, receives further attention in Chapter 6 below.

Case 19: BJ, Muzaffargarh

> Located in the riverine belt of Muzaffargarh, the administrative unit known as BJ has over 130 homes, but scattered over a wide area in small clusters. The dominant group is the Sammat5 (also known as Jam), most of whom own their own land. There is also an absentee Sammat5 landlord who owns a larger proportion of BJ. There are five other kin-groups, who live in small clusters (*basti*) of 5-10 houses each. There is a government school close to the centre of BJ, but away from all individual clusters of homes. This school is partly functional.

Discussion

The various clusters of homesteads (*basti*) are self-contained units but there is little of the sense of space organization which exists in the *goth* of PK. In other words, there appears to be minimal evidence of collective action among people of a particular *basti*, apart from the fact that they have decided to locate themselves in a particular cluster. There is also virtually no public infrastructure which is shared by the residents of different clusters, and neither are there any commercial premises such as shops around which a locational community might develop. The government school, therefore, is probably the only truly shared public space for the disparate residents of BJ, and therefore, the only point of reference for BJ as a "community".

The story of social change in a remote corner of Thatta district in Sindh provided an almost metaphorical citation for the idea of community formation as an external effect of school establishment:

> "As recently as 35 to 40 years ago our folks used to lead a nomadic (*khana-badosh*) life. People had herds of goats and used to travel in the search of pasture. Then the government built a school in one place, and some of our families happened to have stopped there because the grazing was good. They stopped there for some time because the rains had been good, and some began to send their children to that school. Then they stayed put because of the school. More families joined them, and our village was established."[60]

Model

Modern developmental interventions such as public schooling take place within the context of pre-existing institutional and

[60] Head-teacher of rural boys' high school in Thatta district, cited during a discussion on social change, 16 September 2000, Karachi.

political arrangements for organizing various forms of collective action. The effectiveness and quality of the intervention depends, in part, on the nature of existing political enterprise, and the extent to which it adapts to or accommodates policy objectives such as universal basic education. The mere existence of collective action within communities cannot be taken, *a priori*, as a positive factor for development intervention or public accountability. The quality of public intervention will depend on the process of community construction and its interaction with the wider administrative and political processes of the modern state.

5.3 Political Process and Community Activism

It is possible to return to the questions raised in the conclusion of Chapter 4 about regional patterns in the performance of the schooling system. To what extent is the poor performance of regions such as Sanghar (Sindh) and Muzaffargarh (Lower Punjab) explained with reference to the nature of local economic and political power in these regions compared with other regions, notably Central and Upper Punjab, and plains NWFP? How well does the political model of capture by local monopolist patrons measure up to empirical evidence?

The examination of case studies and other qualitative observations from the school and community survey has led to partial validation of the hypotheses tendered above. Local economic and political power does matter greatly in any explanation of the performance of the schooling system. At the same time, however, specific features of the political model used to understand the linkages between local power and public performance is in need of radical revision. Firstly, the electoral-political process is far from being insulated from competition, or the functions of public accountability and resource transfer. On the contrary, it will be argued here that the electoral-political processes is highly responsive to public demands, and that perhaps it is too responsive. Secondly, communities are not passive recipients of either development interventions or patronage. Rather, if a caricature is required then it should be one of highly dynamic communities which are actively engaged in different forms of collective action for the production of public goods, and most notably for the purposes of community construction and reproduction. The proliferation of collective action rather than its absence is responsible for many distortions in the functioning of the schooling system.

The school and community survey has highlighted the impact of local political interventions on the performance of the schooling system. The case studies above have documented instances of patron capture, parton-teacher collusion, and collusion between teachers and the school administration. While the latter form of collusion is intra-organizational, it is also closely linked, as argued above, to the functioning of the political process. Resource diversion rather than outright capture was the more prevalent form of system distortion. The

impact of local political intervention was confirmed not only with reference to the specific modalities of capture and diversion which were found in the laggard regions, but also through contrasts between localities within these regions.

A more nuanced reading of the evidence suggested, however, that the class of local political patrons were not exclusively made up of coercive local monopolists. Even where local patrons did appear to enjoy monopoly power, there was evidence of client voice and resource transfer. In general, local patrons were active participants in political transactions with patrons higher up in the hierarchy. These transactions were mostly about the allocation of public resources to the locality. The political process was thus the main channel for the transfer of public resources and for the establishment of public infrastructure. Collusion and capture by political patrons occurs within a context where the political process plays a functional role as a general mechanism of resource transfer.

The dramatic increase in school establishment in Sanghar from the mid-1980s onwards, and the corresponding boom in the construction of new buildings for older schools elsewhere, was closely associated with the revival of the electoral-political process. The "Junejo model" of representative government which characterised the post-1985 system of electoral politics in Pakistan was based on converting the vote into the currency for effecting resource transfer *par excellence*.[61] Public investment tended to be demand-led, and political representatives were placed in the position of arbitrating rival claims on public resources.

The observed association of private capture with the political process, therefore, cannot be interpreted as a causal link. While private capture of public resources was indeed effected through the political process this was done under conditions where all public investment, captured or otherwise, was channelled through the political process. The withdrawal of other state mechanisms from the process of public resource allocation, and the creation of a virtual *laissez-faire* market in electoral representation implied that the performance of public investment was, at its best, only as good as the ability of any particular group or community to organize itself. In places where political patrons enjoyed monopoly power and did not rely on client consent, there were instances of total capture. In other places where the patron acted more consensually the concerns of the wider community were addressed.

Often these concerns were themselves contrary to universalist goals of the modern development project as they gave precedence to parochial conceptions of the community. In

[61] In the Junejo period members of assembly were directly allocated development funds for disbursement in their constituencies.

Sanghar, for example, there was evidence of widespread collective action on the part of extended families and kinship groups belonging to different economic and social strata for the establishment of their own physical space in the shape of the *goth*. While there is nothing particularly novel in the institution of the *goth* or in the organization of collective action for the creation of a domain of relative autonomy, the interaction with the modernist project did produce some unexpected results. The school had become an instrument of community construction not in the usual discursive sense through the production of shared values and symbols in the educational system. It was an instrument in a direct physical manner as it allowed the demarkation of geographical boundaries and the definition of insiders and outsiders. The relevant factor was the school itself and not schooling or education. Similar processes were observed in the very different environment of Toba Tek Singh -- an environment which was created by the modern state in the first instance.

Further thoughts on regional contrast

Finally, some comments of a speculative nature are offered here on the contrast between the relatively hilly and agriculturally poor Chakwal on the one hand, and the rich irrigated agrarian regions of the Indus basin, and particularly Muzaffargarh and Sanghar on the other. This contrast is reminiscent of similar contrasts in India between hilly and plains regions in the functioning of public services in general and government schools in particular.[62] Salient features in the hills-plains contrast in India included the importance of outmigration and therefore the reliance on the labour market. Also important was the observation that social stratification and economic inequality appeared to be more or less structural and endemic in the plains compared to the hills. A third factor was the clear difference between these two types of regions in the patterns of gender inequality, particularly with respect to female mobility and workforce participation.

All three of these features of the hills-plain contrast in northern India appear to carry over to the inter-regional contrast in Pakistan.[63] The above discussion of collective action and political enterprise also provides a possible framework for linking these socio-economic characteristics with political outcomes within the Pakistan context. Two related environmental differences between Chakwal and Indus basin plains might be relevant. Firstly, the traditional agrarian economy of

[62] See The Probe Team (1999) for the contrast between the hill state of Himachal Pradesh and four states in northern India. See also Dreze and Gazdar (1997) for the differences between hill and plains regions of Uttar Pradesh.

[63] For some further corroboration of these regional patterns from the present study, see Chapter 6 below.

Chakwal is *barani* or rainfed compared with the irrigation-based agronomy of the Indus basin. Secondly, settlements are of relatively old standing in Chakwal compared with the Indus basin where they are relatively newer and experience a higher rate of turnover. The latter feature is partly a function of the former.

If the existing class of political patrons can be thought of as an endogenous response to existing collective action problems, a number of differences between Chakwal and the Indus basin plains become immediately apparent. The agrarian economy of Chakwal is less reliant on collective action than the agronomy of regions where the production or management of irrigation systems involved scale economies. The existing class of political entrepreneurs in the Indus basin can, therefore, be expected to include large landlords. The "oldness" of Chakwal villages is related to the fact that Chakwal is an area of outmigrants, whereas the other areas are destinations for migrants. Other things being equal, migrant communities which are in the process of getting established are likely to require a greater degree of collective action, and thus political enterprise, than old settled communities.[64] There is likely to be more of consensual (though parochial), family and kinship group-based collective action in the recipient areas than areas of outmigration.[65]

The modern developmental or political intervention will, therefore, confront very different conditions in the two types of region. In the hilly, rainfed, outmigrant region this intervention is likely to come across a relatively individualistic society without either monopolistic patrons or parochial collective action. In the plains, irrigated, migrant-receiving region, on the other hand, political entrepreneurs of the monopolistic as well as the consensual variety are likely to be conspicuous. Furthermore, this stylized model can be juxtaposed with the historical trajectory of state intervention. Within the Indus basin, the state assumed the main responsibility for overcoming collective action constraints in some areas, notably canal-colony Central Punjab, thus reducing the need and scope for political enterprise from within

[64] The older communities might have more "social capital", of course, but successful newer communities would require greater investment for the production of their public goods.

[65] This observation might provide an insight into the relatively less severe gender segregation in Chakwal compared to the other regions. The strength of familial solidarity is likely to be associated with patriarchy and female disadvantage, as families networks are maintained through the exchange of women. In a rare survey of its type, the Demographic Health Survey found that two-thirds of the marriages in a large representative sample were between individuals who were already related (Demographic Health Survey Pakistan, 1990).

communities. In Lower Punjab to some extent, and in Sindh to a greater extent, on the other hand, the developmental state was a relative latecomer.

It can be argued that the historical trajectory of state intervention was itself determined by prior social conditions in the areas of interventions -- that is, areas with more favourable preconditions received attention earlier. The counter-argument would be that community activism (through both monopolist and consensual patrons) was in response to the absence of the state. The chronological sequence of state-versus-community activism is of historical interest, but does not have a direct bearing on present-day policy and political options. The main point here is the notional inverse relationship between state and community-level activism and the implications of this inverse relationship for social goals such as universal basic education. Also relevant is the question about the nature of the external development intervention on the part of the state or other state-like macro-agency: particularly, the extent to which this intervention needs to be supply-driven and pro-active or demand-led and responsive.

6 Who is Not in School

The main focus of this study was on the functioning of the government schooling system. The school and community survey, therefore, was the core activity around which the fieldwork was organized. The analysis of the schooling system, schools and communities presented thus far is complementary to and complemented by other research, within this project and elsewhere, on individual and household-level decision-making with respect to schooling. Secondary data, rich in statistical information about household demography, and economic and educational characteristics of individuals and households, are available from a variety of sources. These data are sources of important insights into micro-level -- particularly economic, demographic and gender-related -- determinants of school participation.[66] They are less useful, however, for answering some other questions, particularly those relating to the influence of the school and community characteristics.

One way of addressing these latter type of questions is to analyze the educational and school participation profiles of population groups for which there is prior school and community information. A major part of the fieldwork besides the school and community survey, therefore, was a census of four settlements, one each in Muzaffargarh, Toba Tek Singh, Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi. The "village" census involved the complete enumeration of all individuals and households within a particular pre-defined settlement. Besides information which forms part of the standard population census, such as the age, gender, educational history, and economic status of individuals, the census solicited information on two further household characteristics: whether or not the household owned agricultural land, and caste.

The term "caste" is used here not strictly in the sense of the hierarchical and ritualised caste categories common in anthropological literature in South Asia. The intent was to classify households in the census settlements into (mostly self-defined) social groupings. Self-definition on the part of an individual or the household was taken as the starting point in constructing the categories to be used. In practice the "caste" marker was not a difficult one to fix, since respondents generally spoke about the demography of their village or settlement with reference to such social groupings. Clarification about group boundaries, where required, was obtained by enquiring into the degree of preference, acceptability, or even possibility, of establishing family relations with other groups through marriage. If the categories of the present study have any minimal prior sociological

[66] See Burney and Irfan (1991), and Sathar and Lloyd (1994) for empirical analysis of these secondary data for determinants of school participation.

content, then it is with the respect to endogamy.[67] Having said that, a number of categories did have greater sociological content. There were groups in most of the census settlements which clearly did correspond with the conventionally-understood ritual caste hierarchy. There were others which are often thought of as "tribes". Terms such as "quom", "zaat", and "biradri" were commonly used by respondents themselves in explaining the status of the social groupings. The key point worth noting here is that the available data from socio-economic surveys in Pakistan are relatively poor in addressing the question of social group, and the present census represents a rare departure in this regard.

A final point needs to be made with respect to the focus on caste or kinship group in the study of public schooling in Pakistan. The use of the term "caste" often provokes a strong reaction among those who regard "the caste system" as a largely Hindu and Indian phenomenon, sanctified by religious ideology, and therefore, as something alien to both Islam and Pakistan. It is not the intention here to initiate a debate about the applicability of received definitions of "the Hindu caste system" in Indian sociological discourse to the Muslim or the Pakistani context. The "caste system", in fact, is not even a concern for the present study. It might come as a surprise to some critics of this term, however, that the category for which the label "caste" is use here in the shorthand, exists not only in social discourse but is endorsed and kept alive by the state in Pakistan.

The official admissions form for government-certified schools in Punjab and NWFP contains two columns which probe the child's "caste" background, and which appear to have no relevance whatsoever to her schooling prospects.[68] One question directly requires the statement the applicant's caste -- the actual wording of the form in Urdu demands "zaat ya quom", loosely translated as "caste or nation". A further column requires a statement about whether the family is agriculturalist, non-agriculturalist or landowning. This family information is additional to a statement about the precise economic activity of the father or the household head. All schools are supposed to maintain registers which record the information provided in admission forms. The significance of the latter entry (that is, the one about the family's occupation) became clearer to members of the survey team as they went through school records with the help of teachers. On enquiring about the caste background of a particular pupil the teachers would volunteer whether the child in question came from

[67] Hence, also, the use of the term "kinship group" in much of the discussion above.

[68] The current school admissions form in Punjab states that its legal basis as "Amendment in accordance with Notification dated 10 December 1940, Government of Punjab".

a "true" Jatt or Rajput family or a "fake" or self-made one. If, for example, the family occupation of a Rajput child was entered as "non-agriculturalist" the child was understood to have come from a family belonging to a menial caste which had assumed the name of a traditionally landowning Rajput caste. The "caste question" in the present census of villages, therefore, could be seen as an attempt at bringing academic discussion to the place where both social and state discourses already are.

6.1 Overview of Census Communities

Four settlements, one each in Muzaffargarh, Toba Tek Singh, Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi were selected from the sample communities for the census.[69] In this chapter the name of the region will be used to identify the census community -- "Toba Tek Singh", therefore, refers to the census community in Toba Tek Singh.

Demographic characteristics

Some basic demographic features of the four census communities are reported in Table 41. There was a clear difference in the population size of the census communities, with Toba Tek Singh accounting for four to six times the population size of the other villages. There was a difference also in the average size of the household -- with a difference of nearly 4 persons between the lowest (Chakwal) and the highest (Mardan-Swabi). Chakwal and Toba Tek Singh also had a relatively smaller proportion of children compared to the other communities. The population female-male ratio was biased in the favour of males in all the communities, though only Toba Tek Singh displayed female disadvantage for the under-10 age group. Girls exceeded boys also in the primary school-going (5-9 years) age group in all communities except Toba Tek Singh.

Literacy and school participation

Literacy rates for adults and school participation rates for children are reported in Table 42. The adult literacy rate was the highest in Toba Tek Singh, and the lowest in Muzaffargarh. The gap between male and female literacy rates was also the narrowest in Toba Tek Singh, and the widest in Muzaffargarh. Male adult literacy was almost equal in Toba Tek Singh and Chakwal, while female literacy was much lower in Chakwal. Adult literacy rates are reflective of past schooling behaviour. The current condition of schooling can be gauged from school participation rates among children. There was a great deal of variation between the census communities in this regard also. Nearly three-quarters of the children aged between the ages of 5 years and 15 years were in school in Chakwal. The

[69] The census could not be conducted in Sanghar due to logistic constraints.

proportion was a little smaller in Toba Tek Singh at just over two-thirds. In Mardan-Swabi and Muzaffargarh, at the other extreme, school participation was under a half -- in Muzaffargarh fewer than one in every three child was in school.

The contrast between census communities in their past and current schooling attainment (adult literacy versus children's school participation rates) are informative. Toba Tek Singh was ahead of all the census communities in terms of adult literacy, but had been overtaken by Chakwal in terms of current school participation. The difference was especially conspicuous with respect to girls' school participation, which was nearly as high as that of boys' in Chakwal, despite a wide gender gap in adult literacy. There had been remarkable progress in female schooling the Chakwal village in recent years. There appeared to have been progress, too, in female schooling in the other census villages, although the scale of change was less dramatic.

Public infrastructure and schooling facilities

Information about public infrastructure and schooling facilities in the census communities helps in placing the literacy and school participation rates into their proper perspective. Table 43 reports some salient features. The village in Toba Tek Singh was the one with the best infrastructure, although the Mardan-Swabi village had been connected to the metalled for longer. In both Muzaffargarh and Chakwal, work was under way to link the villages by metalled road. The accessibility of these two villages had changed significantly in the recent years and was likely to change even further in the near future.

There were two government primary schools -- one each for boys and girls -- in the four census communities. In addition, there were mosques in every village (and more than one mosque in Toba Tek Singh) where basic religious lessons were conducted. In Toba Tek Singh there was also a *madrassah* where formal Quranic instruction was offered, including training for the memorizing of the Quran (*hifz*). Toba Tek Singh was the only community where there was a formal private school. No other formal or informal schooling facilities existed in these villages.

All children registered in school in Muzaffargarh, Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi were in the government schools. Even in Toba Tek Singh, where there was both a private school and the *madrassah*, 89 per cent of the children aged 5-15 who were in school were in the government schools. The private school accounted for 9 per cent of the children in school, more boys than girls (13 per cent of the boys and 4 per cent of the girls), and the remaining one per cent were in the *madrassah*. Most of the children in the *madrassah* were also either currently registered in the government school, or had already completed the five-year primary cycle in the government school. In all of the census villages, therefore, the government schooling system

was, for all intents and purposes, the predominant source of schooling.

Summary information about government primary schools in the census communities is reported in Table 44. Toba Tek Singh had the oldest school for both boys and girls. Girls' schools were relatively recent in the other three villages, and in Muzaffargarh and Mardan-Swabi these schools were entirely dysfunctional. The marked change in female education in the Chakwal village could be traced to the establishment of a girls' primary school in 1987, and the fact that this school was well-functioning. Likewise, the relatively low female school participation rates in Muzaffargarh and Mardan-Swabi could be ascribed to the fact that the girls' schools were entirely dysfunctional.

The case of the boys' school in Muzaffargarh warrants some further comment. The school was a relatively well-functioning one. In fact, in terms of the qualitative index of school performance, it was awarded the full 10 points. School participation rates for both boys' as well as girls', however, were relatively low in the Muzaffargarh village. The school, it turned out, had been recently revived after a prolonged period of having remained effectively dysfunctional. The turnaround in the school was precipitated by the appointment of a new teacher in the year prior to the census. In contrast with previous practice, the new teacher used to attend school regularly, and had initiated contact with the local community about rejuvenating the school. Some fifty pupils were now regularly attended school, something which was verified during the school inspection. Many other children of school-going age remained out of school, however, as they were now much older than the school-starting age.

The comparison of school records and actual attendance with the data from the census allowed the possibility of carrying out some cross-checks. In all of the schools except for the boys' school in Mardan-Swabi, there was close correspondence between census data on school participation and actual observations of children present in school at the time of the inspection. In Mardan-Swabi, the number of children registered as well as those attending school far exceeded the population in the relevant age group. This was because the school attracted a large number of pupils from neighbouring villages. The school in the Mardan-Swabi village was, in fact, a high school which included a primary section. The primary section was relatively better resourced -- for example, seven teachers were appointed to the primary section -- than ordinary primary schools in the area, and thus acted as a local centre.

The discrepancy between the number of pupils registered, and those actually present has already been commented upon in Chapter 4 above. It was argued that there was some incentive for teachers and the school administration to indulge in "enrolment inflation". There was some evidence of this practice

in the Muzaffargarh and Chakwal census villages. The total number of children, including boys and girls, in the 5-9 age group in the Muzaffargarh village was 106 (see Table 41). The number of pupils registered in the boys' school, however, was 161. Although this figure included a number of girls who had enrolled at the boys' school due to the dysfunction of the girls' school, it was clear that the school register had been inflated. The same was true, though in a smaller scale, for both the schools in Chakwal, where the children registered far outnumbered those in the relevant age group in the village.[70]

Caste and land ownership

Finally, Table 45 provide a summary of some socio-economic characteristics of the census villages. The table provides a breakdown of the village population into the main "caste" groups, and the count of the number of households within these groups as well as in the village as a whole who own land. The caste-land ownership correlation also enables the rough identification of any historical patterns of hierarchy. The incidence of land ownership is the most unequal in Muzaffargarh where only 18 out of the 71 households (or around 25 per cent) own any agricultural land. The proportion is higher (around 40 per cent) in Toba Tek Singh, and the highest in Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi where over 55 per cent of the households own some land.

The main caste or kinship group in Muzaffargarh are Bhatti, Khokhar and Sayyad, which together account for around two-thirds of the population. There is no one group that dominates the village numerically, though the Sayyad families are clearly among the influential ones. They are among the main landowners, and are the most politically active both within the village as well as in establishing a liaison with higher levels of political activity. The Sayyad enjoy religious standing, and are connected with a local shrine. Another group which is influential in terms of land ownership but numerically small is the Kalro. The Khokhar of this village appear to among the poorest, are former tenants and clients of the Sayyad and the Kalro, and are thought of as belonging to a low caste.[71]

In the Toba Tek Singh village, the Araeen, who are thought of as a caste of small peasants, predominate both numerically as

[70] While some of these "extra" children might be from outside the village (as in the case of the Mardan-Swabi school), the close correspondence between the figures for actual school attendance and the population in the relevant age group indicates that "enrolment inflation" was under way.

[71] The Khokhar are supposed to be a sub-group of the Rajput, which are considered high in the ritual hierarchy. It was clear, however, that the Khokhar of this Muzaffargarh village were not accepted as Rajput by other residents.

well as in terms of land ownership. The Araeen of this village are from the eastern Punjab district of Hoshiarpur, who began to settle here from the 1890s onwards. The next major population group is the Muslim Shaikh, also known as Mussali. The social status of the Muslim Shaikh within this village, as elsewhere in Central Punjab, is very similar to that of untouchable outcastes in the traditional Indian caste hierarchy. While touch taboos do not appear to be practised the social distance between the Muslim Shaikh and other groups, particularly the dominant Araeen, is very wide. The Muslim Shaikh have been involved, traditionally, in dependent relations with landowning castes, in this case the Araeen. The next largest group in Toba Tek Singh are the Baloch, who are also sometimes referred to as *jaangli*. This group traces its ancestry to the original inhabitants of the land prior to the development of canal colonies. The language spoken by the Baloch as well as some other *jaangli* kinship groups in the village is thought of as a distinctive dialect of Punjabi. Besides these three groups (Araeen, Muslim Shaikh and Baloch), there are numerous smaller ones, consisting mostly of artisanal and menial castes such as Tarkhan (carpenters) and Nai (barber). The physical organization of this village is clearly reflective of socio-economic hierarchy. The centre of the village with relatively wide streets and large plots of land is occupied almost exclusively by Araeen families. Other groups live on the periphery in narrower streets and on smaller plots of land. These peripheral areas of the village include special residential schemes initiated by successive governments since 1971, to allot homestead plots to landless households.

In the Chakwal village, there are three relatively large caste groups -- Awan, Bhatti and Kahoot Quresh -- while nearly two-fifths of the population consists of other numerically smaller groups. Nearly all of the Bhatti households own some land, as do a large proportion of the Awan and others. The Kahoot Quresh have few landowners among them. There does not appear to be a clear social hierarchy in the village, though the Kahoot Quresh are generally poorer. There is a high incidence of outside employment among men from all caste groups.

The village in Mardan-Swabi is dominated by families belonging to the Mohmand group. The Mohmand think of themselves as a tribe (*qabila)* and trace their connections to Mohmand tribes in the formally recognized tribal areas adjacent to the NWFP. Besides the Mohmand there are number of smaller caste-tribe groups, some of whom are known by their profession (such as carpenters), while others from their supposed place of origin (for example, Swati). The social hierarchy which might be relevant here is the extent to which a group is identified as being part of the Pakhtun tribal-national community. The Mohmand, who are clearly identified as Pakhtun are the main landowners, though there are landless among the Mohmand, and landowners among the non-Mohmand too.

6.2 Determinants of School Participation

Benefits and Costs of Schooling

What are the factors which influence or even determine whether or not a child of school-going age is in school? This question forms the basis of much of the empirical work on the economics of education in Pakistan and other developing countries. The typical approach is to think of the schooling decision as being driven by the perceived benefits and costs to the family of sending a child to school. Both benefits and costs can be interpreted in a broad manner to incorporate pecuniary as well as non-pecuniary considerations.[72]

Households' schooling decisions are constrained, however, not only by household characteristics but by the supply side -- say, the absence or poor quality of the school in their locality. Conventional household survey data are often unable to capture the effect of the supply side on household decision-making. The village census data has an advantage in this regard, as it is plausible to start with the premise that at any given moment all resident households within a village face the same public infrastructure and private supply conditions. Intra-village variations in school participation, therefore, can be properly understood with reference to differences in inter-personal and inter-household characteristics. Differences between villages, on the other hand, are likely to be indicative of the effects of supply factors -- in this case, mostly the quality of the government school.

If the decision to send a child to school is one based on deliberative choice -- as opposed to legal compulsion, or social norm -- then it is possible to think about school participation as being determined by some form of cost-benefit calculus by the individual or the household. The benefits of schooling would include possible pecuniary advantage of education as well as the intrinsic value that an individual or household might attach to being educated. The benefits might also include non-educational considerations, such as the provision of child-care for the duration of the school day.

In general it would be true that being sent to school and being educated will accrue positive benefits. The extent to which any particular child will benefit, however, will depend on highly personalised attributes such as psychological predisposition to the available school and learning environment, or "scholastic aptitude". Most studies of the economics of education are unable to measure these personal attributes, though parents do often justify their decisions about a child's schooling with respect to the individual personality of the child. In a perfectly competitive world of costless information

[72] While the human capital approach tends to focus on pecuniary benefits and costs, there is no prior reason for imposing this restriction.

and smooth markets, inter-personal variation in school participation will be a function, exclusively, of inter-personal differences in "aptitude", and inter-family differences in the intrinsic value of education -- things which are not usually observed directly in socio-economic surveys.[73] One personal characteristic which may have a bearing on parental attitudes to schooling is, of course, gender. If the education of girls is valued less than that of boys then fewer girls will be in school.

In a non-competitive world of costly information and absent markets, however, other, mostly socio-economic sources of variation are possible, and it is around these variables that empirical work in the economics of school participation usually revolves. Households differ in terms of their wealth status as well as with respect to other observable characteristics which might be of consequence to the schooling decision. The future economic benefits of current investment in a child's schooling will vary between households of different wealth positions if there are imperfections in the markets for credit, insurance and labour. Some index of household wealth -- and even household liquidity, if possible -- is likely to be a correlate of variation between households in school participation.

The current opportunity cost of sending a child to school, therefore, is also likely to be an important constraint.[74] Other things being equal, the older a child, the higher the current opportunity cost of her schooling, since older children will approximate to the economic value of adult household members. Older children are more likely to be out of school because of demands on their time for remunerative market economic activities or unremunerated household economic activities.

If information about the possible benefits of education is costly, then it is fair to assume that people already educated will be better informed about the potential value of education for their children. Parental education, therefore, is likely to be a correlate of school participation.

Finally, individuals and households within a population might be socially differentiated and grouped *a priori* as they are in the census villages by kinship group. Group affiliation can be an important factor in school participation for a number of possible reasons. If groups are based on historically evolved socio-economic categories based on economic and social hierarchy, then membership of a particular group might simply be

[73] A further factor, of course, might be inter-household variation in the decision-making process. This, too, is not usually directly observed in socio-economic surveys.

[74] This will be the case even if the out-of-pocket costs of schooling are negligible.

a proxy for other variables such as wealth and the length of a family's exposure to education. In this case any observed correlation between social group and school participation would be spurious, and simply reflective of other variables such as wealth, land ownership, or parental education.

There might be other less spurious grounds also for correlation between caste or kinship group and school participation. It is possible that the group acts as a channel for the flow of information in an otherwise high information cost world. The uneducated Araeen, for example, might have a better idea about the economic value of education (and therefore greater ability to realize that economic value), through their close social interaction with other more educated Araeen. Groups might, therefore, reproduce historic inequalities in education simply through differential in information costs. Similarly, the caste or kinship group might act as the relevant peer reference population for an individual or family. If diffusion of values through social interaction plays some part in the educational transition, then it is likely to operate through previously defined groups in the first instance. Within some self-contained groups, in fact, basic education might even acquire the status of a social norm, while other groups within the same locational community remain largely illiterate.

The role of caste or kinship groups is important also with respect to the actual status of services formally designated as "public" goods. If certain groups are dominant and have acquired the status of insiders, they might be able to exclude other groups or the outsiders from intentional public goods such as schools. In reality, the exclusion may not take a blatant form, but might be pursued more subtly by claiming group ownership over public goods. This process was discussed in Chapter 5 above with respect to the politics of the school and the local community.

Patterns of School Participation

Literacy and school participation rates for the four census villages were reported in Table 42 above. For the population aged 5 and above, and under 15 years, participation rates were substantially below universal schooling levels in all four villages. Contrasts between the villages, however, appeared to be broadly in line with the quality of the local government school. In Muzaffargarh and Mardan-Swabi where the girls' schools were dysfunctional, a relatively small proportion of girls were in school. In Chakwal there was no evidence of a gender bias in schooling. In Toba Tek Singh, however, where the girls' school did function well, female school participation still considerably lower than that for males.

Age-wise school participation rates for the entire census population of school-going age are reported in Table 46). For the four villages taken as a whole, 35 per cent of the children aged 5 to 14 had never been to school; for boys the figure was

28 per cent, while for girls it was 43 per cent. Table 46 also shows that the proportion of those who had never attended school for both boys and girls first declines with age and then increases. The decline in this proportion over the early ages indicates that children start going to school much later than the prescribed aged of 5 years. The rise in the older age groups is indicative of the fact that there is a secular rise in school participation is over time.

The proportion of children in each age group who went to school but dropped out is also instructive. The drop-out ratio is relatively small for both boys and girls, and particularly for girls in the younger age groups. This implies that if a girl was sent to school she was likely to stay in school at least until the age of nine years. After that age the drop-out rate increases sharply. For boys also the drop-out rate is relatively small in the early years (though much higher than for girls), and rises in later years, but around the age of twelve years.[75]

The feature of drop-out rates -- i.e. that they increase with age -- is according to expectation for three possible reasons. Firstly, as children grow older the opportunity cost of their schooling increases. Secondly, while primary schooling facilities are available within each village, higher levels of schooling are not. The cost of schooling therefore increases simply due to more difficult access. Thirdly, older girls begin to face the same restrictions which apply to adult women in their mobility to public places. The difference in the age profile of participation rates for boys and girls are also noteworthy. The decision to send a girl to school appears to be more robust, at least in the early years of schooling, compared to the decision to send a boy to school. The initial enrolment of girls' schooling might be more sensitive to the quality of the school, and good schools tend to retain their pupils for longer. The families which send girls to school might also be the ones which value education more, while the (more common) decision to send a boy to school might be a more casual one.

School participation rates for boys and girls in the 5 to 14 age groups in the four census villages are analyzed with respect to some key household characteristics in Tables 47 to 49. The proportion of children in school by the literacy status of their parents is reported in Table 47. Literate parents (including those who could read the Quran only), were far more likely to send both their sons their daughters to school than illiterate ones. The schooling status of daughters was particularly sharply influenced by parental literacy. Even in Chakwal and Toba Tek Singh, both villages where there were well-functioning girls' schools, parental literacy appeared to make a large difference to female school participation.

[75] These age-wise patterns have also been noticed in larger statistical surveys such as the PIHS (Andrabi).

Land ownership is used here as an index of household wealth status. School participation rates by land ownership are reported in Table 48. While in Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh, there is a positive correlation between land ownership and school participation, with the contrast between the landless and land owners being particularly sharp in the Muzaffargarh village. In the Chakwal and Mardan-Swabi census villages, however, the land ownership-school participation relationship appears to be reversed -- children from landless families are more likely to be in school. The difference is particularly large for girls in the Chakwal village. There are two tentative explanations for this apparent anomaly. Firstly, the fact of land ownership (as opposed to the size of land owned) is not a good indicator of inter-household variations in wealth in villages where the incidence of land ownership is relatively high. Secondly, in the Chakwal village, a number of landowning and farming families lived at some distance from the main village and close to their fields. It is likely that children from these households faced special difficulty in getting to school.

Caste-wise patterns of school participation are reported in Table 49. In both Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh, there appeared to be a high degree of correlation between caste and school participation. For the Araeen of Toba Tek Singh, there was nearly universal school participation for both boys and girls. Only around a quarter of the children of Muslim Shaikh families, on the other hand, were in school. The contrast between the Khokhar and the others, particularly the Kalro, was similarly conspicuous in Muzaffargarh. In these villages some groups were well on the way to mass or even "universal" basic schooling, while others lagged far behind. In Chakwal the caste-wise pattern was not conspicuous, except for the case of the Bhatti, who have much lower school participation rates than other groups for both boys and girls. The Bhatti families were mostly land owners and farmers and lived close to their fields, and therefore faced some disadvantage in terms of access. In the Mardan village, the Mohmand were clearly ahead of the others, and the difference was particularly large for girls.

In general, female school participation appeared to be relatively strong among groups which were the main insiders, or in some sense, the "owners" of the village. The Araeen occupied this position in Toba Tek Singh, the Kalro and the Sayyad in Muzaffargarh, and the Mohmand in Mardan. In Muzaffargarh and Mardan the question of "ownership" might have been particularly important since girls' schools were dysfunctional, and any girls who were in school were, in fact, attending the local boys' schools.[76] The key question here is the way in which particular

[76] This observation might be viewed in the context to two prior ideas concerning female access to public goods. Firstly, it was argued in Chapter 2 that an essential feature in the production of an intentional public good such as a public school

groups within a locational community perceive and assert their claims to services which are, in principle, public goods. Did the Karlo, the Araeen or the Mohmand, for example, think of themselves as the owners of their respective villages, and was this perception successfully asserted, through acceptance or acquiescence, on the part of other residents? Caste-wise patterns of school participation might, therefore, be picking up insider-outsider effects within locational communities.

6.3 Results of Multivariate Analysis

Many of the initial hypothesis concerning the effects of age, gender, parental education, household wealth, and caste receive at least partial support in the tables presented above. A number of these proposed correlates of school participation are likely to be associated with each other. Does caste, for example, influence educational outcomes independently, or does it merely capture the effects of parental illiteracy and household poverty. Some of these questions can be resolved through multivariate analysis of village census data.

The basic idea here was to regress individual schooling outcomes on a number of independent variables such as age, gender, parental literacy, household land ownership, and caste. The population was divided into two groups -- "adults", or those aged 15 years or above, and "school-age children", or those between the ages of 5 and 15. Educational outcomes were defined as binary (zero or one) variables. For adults two educational outcomes were used: whether or not a person had ever been to school, and whether or not a person was literate. Two types of outcomes were also used for children: whether or not the child had ever been to school, and whether the child was currently in school. The method of model estimation was Binary Logistic Regressions, and the two sub-samples were regressed separately for each village.[77] In all, seven different specifications were run for each village (Models 1 to 7), three for adults and four for children.

Educational status of adults

For adults, the explanatory variables were age (in years), the gender of the individual (0 if male, 1 if female), whether or not the individual's father and mother were literate (0 if illiterate, 1 if literate), whether or not the household to which the individual belonged owned any agricultural land (0 if

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is the delineation of insiders and outsiders, or the definition of the community for which the school in question will be a public good. Secondly, Chapter 5, discussed the role of female mobility in the delineation of public and private spaces, and in the definition of insiders and outsiders.

[77] The statistical programme used for this analysis was "SPSS 9.0 for Windows".

landless, 1 if landowning), and dummy variables representing the numerically dominant caste groups. The results of three separate models are reported for adults in Table 50. The dependent variable in Models 1 and 2 is "ever in school", while in Model 3 it is "whether literate". The difference between Models 1 and 2 is that the former reports the results of the regression where caste dummy variables have been excluded, while in the latter caste dummy variables are included. The age variable in the adult models is supposed to capture the effect of secular changes in educational participation over time -- older individuals are less likely to have been educated.

Table 50 presents the results of the regressions separately for each village. The three estimated models are arranged in columns, and the row entries are parameter estimates for respective explanatory variables. An empty cell denotes that the explanatory variable in question was not included in the particular model. The statistical significance of parameter estimates is indicated using asterix; single for the 10 per cent confidence interval and double for significance at the 5 per cent level. Two alternative statistics for the goodness-of-fit of the model as a whole, generated by the regression programme, are reported at the bottom of each table.

The estimated models have a number of features in common. Educational outcomes are negatively correlated with the age of the individual in all cases, and for all villages. The parameter estimate is highly significant in all village except for Muzaffargarh. In all villages except the one in Muzaffargarh, therefore, there is evidence of improvement over time in school attendance and literacy. The dummy variable for gender has the expected (negative) sign for all regressions, and the estimate is statistically significant in each case. This merely provides strong confirmation of the disadvantaged educational position of adult females in all villages even after other relevant factors are taken into account. The impact of parental literacy is also strong in all villages, and in the expected direction. There are some differences between villages, however, in the precise influence of parental literacy. In Toba Tek Singh and Mardan, the literacy of fathers and mothers both has a positive effect, while in Muzaffargarh the effect is mainly through mother's literacy and in Chakwal through that of fathers.

The results throw interesting light on the effect of land ownership and caste on educational outcomes. In the two villages with relatively unequal land ownership distribution -- Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh -- land ownership is found to have been positively and significantly correlated with educational outcomes in Model 1. In Mardan also the correlation in positive, although the coefficient is not statistically significant. In Chakwal, on the other hand, the estimated effect is negative though statistically insignificant. The comparison between Model 1 and Model 2 for Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh reveals, however, that once caste dummy variables are

included, land ownership no longer has significant explanatory power as a determinant of educational outcomes. Moreover, caste dummy variables turn out to be significant even in the case of Chakwal and Mardan, where land ownership was not statistically significant. In each case the goodness-of-fit statistic improved when caste dummy variables were included. Land ownership, taken as an index of household wealth, therefore, did not appear to have an independent effect on educational outcomes. The correlations between caste and schooling noticed in Table 49 above, were suspected of being spurious, and simply proximating for the effect of land ownership or parental education. Caste, however, turns out to have an independent effect on the educational status of adults in all four villages, even after accounting for land ownership and parental literacy. It is land ownership, therefore, which concealed the effect of caste, and not the other way round. This result is particularly important because caste has been largely invisible from the analysis of educational outcomes in the Pakistan context.

The specific caste effects in each of the four census villages are according to expectation. The dummy variables for the Sayyad and the Bhatti are positive and significant in Muzaffargarh (with the exception of Model 2). In Toba Tek Singh the Muslim Shaikh dummy variable is negative while that for the Araeen is positive, both being highly significant in Models 2 and 3. In Chakwal the Awan were at a clear educational advantage, while the Kahoot Quresh were disadvantaged, and in Mardan, the dummy variable for the Mohmand was positive and significant.

Children's school participation

The determinants of children's school participation are estimated using four separate formulations (Models 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Table 51). Two alternative schooling outcomes are used as dependent variables: whether a child was ever in school, and whether a child is currently in school. Explanatory variables are identical to those used for the educational status of adults with one exception. Age is represented using two variables, age and the square of age. The simple age variable is supposed to capture the effect of late entry into school -- if school attendance begins later than the generally accepted schooling-going age of 5 years, this variable will have a positive coefficient. The age-square variable is included in order to capture the effect of schooling decline among older children. This variable will have different interpretations for "ever in school" and "currently in school" dependent variables respectively. In the former case a negative coefficient on the age-square variable will indicate the fact that older children were less likely to have ever gone to school in the first instance -- in other words, school participation has improved over time. In the latter, that is, the "currently in school" model, a negative coefficient on the age-square variable would also indicate the effect of older children dropping out of school.

The first two of the four reported estimated models (Models 4 and 5) differ only with respect to the dependent variable -- "ever in school" in the former, and "currently in school" in the latter. Models 6 and 7 estimate the effects on the same dependent variable ("currently in school"), but divide the sample by gender. The gender dummy variable, obviously, drop outs in these two models. The idea here was to check whether the schooling decision for boys and girls varies for different types of households. In the light of recent evidence from other data sources[78], the effect of parental literacy on boys' and girls' schooling was of particular interest.

There were interesting inter-village contrasts in the determinants of whether or not a child had ever been in school (Model 4). The coefficient for age was positive and significant in all the villages, indicating the existence of delay in school enrolment beyond the age of five. The variable age-square had the expected negative sign in all four villages. In the Chakwal village, however, the parameter estimate was not statistically significant, indicating that younger children were not significantly more likely to have ever attended school than their older counterparts.

The dummy variable for gender was negative in all the four villages, signalling the presence of persistent female disadvantage. In this case too, however, the parameter estimate was not statistically significant in Chakwal. Chakwal and Toba Tek Singh differed from the villages in Muzaffargarh and Mardan in that the former two had well-functioning girls' schools. While the persistence of female disadvantage in Muzaffargarh and Mardan could be ascribed to failure of the girls' schools in these villages, the situation in Toba Tek Singh might have been expected to be similar to that in Chakwal. The contrast between the two villages was indicative of more persistent anti-female bias in Toba Tek Singh.

Parental literacy had a positive impact on a child having ever been in school everywhere. Only fathers' literacy was significant, however, and that too in all villages with the exception of Muzaffargarh where neither parent's literacy status had a significant impact. The dummy variable for land ownership was not significant in any of the villages except for Muzaffargarh, and the caste dummy variables were significant only in Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh. In Chakwal and Mardan, neither land ownership nor caste were statistically significant determinants of a child ever having been in school.

The estimates for dependent variable "currently in school" (Model 5) are mostly in line with the results for Model 4. The two clear differences relate to mothers' literacy in Toba Tek

[78] See Sathar and Lloyd (1994), Andrabi (forthcoming) among others.

Singh and the age-square variable in Chakwal. The former indicates that mothers' literacy was a significant factor in school retention, even if it was not in school enrolment. The latter simply confirms that school participation declines with age in Chakwal as it does in other villages. The difference between Chakwal and other villages, in this respect, is that the age effect is mostly a reflection of older pupils dropping out in Chakwal, whereas in the other villages it is partly reflective of secular change in school participation over time. It might be argued that Chakwal had already reached close to universal participation, and therefore there was little scope for change.

Current school participation taken separately for boys and girls (Models 6 and 7) indicated that there were, indeed, important differences in the determinants of school participation by gender. In Muzaffargarh, while boys' school participation was a function of age, age-square, land ownership, and caste, only land ownership appeared to matter significantly in the case of girls. In Toba Tek Singh, the determinants of school participation for boys and girls were similar with one notable exception. While both fathers' and mothers' literacy were significant factors for boys' school participation, only mothers' literacy was significant in the case of girls. In both Chakwal and Mardan only age and age-square mattered as far as boys' school participation was concerned. The irrelevance of household-specific variables is, indeed, what might be expected if universal schooling were an established fact. The case of girls in the Chakwal and Mardan villages is also interesting. Fathers' literacy appeared to be the main distinguishing feature of girls who were in school and those who were not. The further exception in this regard was the negative and significant coefficient on the dummy variable for land ownership in Chakwal. This, as suggested in section 6.2 above, was possibly due to the residence of a number of landowning and farming households at a distance from the main village.

Caste, adult educational status and child schooling

Comparing the determinants of children's school participation with those of adults' educational status allows some insights into change in determinants of education over time. The educational status of adults represents the effect of past schooling infrastructure, and past decision-making behaviour at the household level. The determinants of children's school participation, on the other hand reflect current or more recent agency. One important difference in the results presented in Tables 50 and 51, respectively, is the strong presence of the caste effect in all villages in the former, and its absence from Chakwal and Mardan in the latter. In other words, caste was an independent factor in past educational outcomes in these villages, but had stopped being one more recently. The traditional dominant group in Chakwal (the Awan) no longer had a clear advantage over others, and the traditional socially disadvantaged group (the Kahoot Quresh)

were no longer the clear laggards. In Mardan too, the Mohmand versus non-Mohmand contrast was no longer significant.

The erosion, over time, of the caste difference in basic education is an important development in these villages. While it is undoubtedly part of broader trends in society and economy, the change also attests to the quality of public schooling in these villages.[79] The change in the Chakwal and Mardan census villages highlights, moreover, the fact that caste remained a significant factor in both Muzaffargarh and Toba Tek Singh. The case of the Toba Tek Singh village is particularly conspicuous in this regard, considering the fact this village had the longest history of government schooling facilities for both boys and girls, and was in nearly every other way the least remote and most "urbanized" of the census villages.

The resilience of caste inequality in the Toba Tek Singh village can be illustrated by comparing the educational exposure of different age cohorts belonging to the two numerically dominant but socially distance groups -- the Araeen and the Muslim Shaikh. Ninety-one per cent of the Araeen males aged 15 years or above, and 74 per cent of the Araeen females in this age group had attended school at some stage in their lives. The corresponding figures for the Muslim Shaikh males and females of the same age group were 40 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. In the current school-going age cohort of 5 to 15, 94 per cent of the Araeen boys and 98 per cent of the Araeen girls had been in school. Among the Muslim Shaikh, the corresponding figures were 39 per cent and 21 per cent respectively. While the Araeen males had already achieved some measure of universal school participation many years ago, and Araeen females had caught up more recently, the situation had remained more or less stagnant for the Muslim Shaikh. This comparison further suggests that the persistence of anti-female bias in the Toba Tek Singh (noted above) despite the presence of a functioning girls' school, was also a caste issue. The gender gap was wide among the Muslim Shaikh, and non-existent among the Araeen.

The resilience of illiteracy in this Toba Tek Singh village, despite the existence of two (otherwise) relatively well-functioning government schools, was not a problem for the "village community" as such. It did appear, however, as a problem related to the way in which the notional village community was constructed, how it was divided into smaller sub-communities, and how accessible its public services actually were.

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[79] The data presented here relate to basic education. Whether, and to what extent caste inequality would have persisted or even been "transferred up" to higher levels of education as basic schooling is universalized, remains to be seen.

6.4 Conclusion

Village census data provided a rare opportunity for examining the impact of schooling facilities on educational outcomes, as well as the dynamics of intra-village social groupings, broadly labelled as caste, in determining school participation. Inter-village variations in educational outcomes were consistent with inter-village variations in the quality of public schooling. This was particularly noticeable with reference to the existence and quality of girls' schools and female school participation.

There was evidence in all census villages of improvements in educational outcomes over time. Some qualitative changes had occurred in villages with good schools with respect to gender bias, as well as caste-based inequality. There was also evidence of inertia, and the reproduction of some types of inequality. In general, parental education had a strong impact on school participation, particularly that of girls. Children of illiterate people, therefore, are more likely to remain illiterate. The presence of good quality schools tended to reduce this source of inequality in some areas, particularly with regard to male schooling. Other, arguably more insidious forms of inequality also showed signs of resilience in some areas. Caste and gender inequality remained strong in spite of the presence of otherwise well-functioning government schools.

Analysis of village census data has confirmed the importance of "the community" in any understanding of the educational deficit in Pakistan. Aggregate national statistics which are not sensitive to the existence of variation along the lines of locational, parochial or other forms of community, convey the impression of a continuum of educational achievement across the population. Inter-village as well as intra-village contrasts here have shown the presence of strong community effects. Villages where government schools functioned well, and had done so for some time, were on their way to the literacy transition. Moreover, even within villages where there remained a large gap in school participation, this gap was highly correlated with caste and kinship group communities. The problem of universal basic education was not so much a question of literacy transition within one amorphous population mass, but rather, that of multitudes of literacy transitions across numerous locational and parochial communities.

7 Public Schooling and Community Construction

The thinking about reform in the education sector is nurtured on, and in turn propagates, received wisdom about the political economy of government schooling. The main purpose of the present study was to bring new evidence to bear on the argument and to contribute to a common understanding, not only of the functioning or dysfunction of the educational system, but also to wider issues in the political economy of development in Pakistan. The government schooling system provided an excellent vantage point to observe political and institutional processes more generally. Statistical summaries of the school and community survey, and the analysis of qualitative case material allowed the identification of factors associated with different outcomes in the performance of public organizations. Diverse experiences of community action and political enterprise were documented and analyzed. The statistical analysis of village census data offered insights into the impact of school and community characteristics on household and individual decision-making.

Detailed empirical accounts, analyses and summaries of specific issues of concern and interest to the goal of universal basic education have been provided in the three preceding chapters. It is not the intention here, therefore, to repeat the conclusions already recorded above. The aim of this chapter is to attempt a closure on the subject by returning to the original formulation of the problem of literacy transition in societies with mass illiteracy.

It is argued here that the conventional economics of education as applied to developing countries does not pay sufficient attention to communitarian motivations for universal education. The social demand for universal education, or for universalism of any other type, cannot be seen as arising exclusively from concern about the aggregate condition of otherwise independent individuals. Schooling is also an important instrument for the construction of a community through the production, dissemination, and internalization of shared cultures, values and symbols. Universal education within a community is, therefore, both a goal and an outcome of successful community construction. Historically, universal education and public schooling have been closely associated with the "high communitarianism" of nation-building or with the project of constructing a national community. Political resources for high communitarianism have, in turn, been associated with ideological nationalism and the establishment of the modern nation-state.

It is proposed here that a useful starting point for a political economy model for Pakistan is the recognition of the existence, or rather, the proliferation of "atomized collective actions" in social and political life. These atomized collective actions are closely associated with the existing class of political entrepreneurs in the country. Atomized

collective actions, however, can be antithetical to any project of high communitarianism, might be subversive, in effect, of universalist objectives.

Laissez-faire political process

Existing political processes ought to be viewed not as distortions of a pristine rarefied ideal, but rather, as endogenous responses to existing conditions. In particular, it is useful to think of the genesis of the current class of political entrepreneurs in terms of the solution of past and current collective action problems. The relationship between a particular political representative and his constituents might be based on coercive monopolistic power, it might be based on a degree of consultation and consensus, or it might be based on some combination of coercion and consent. Empirical evidence cited in this study suggests that the political patron of the stylized patron-client political economy model does act as a channel of real resource transfers, and the client is not without political voice. In general, the existing systems of political representation have resulted in demand-led responses.

Evidence of real resource transfer (as opposed to total capture) and the existence political voice does not imply, however, that the political system is identical to the idealized voter-representative system of competitive democracy. The idealized system presumes the existence of individualized voters who choose between candidates and policies on the basis of individual self-interest -- self-interest may include the individual's private preference for what the society as a whole should look like. The exercise of voter choice, moreover, is conducted within a framework which is bound by prior rules of resource allocation, and most importantly, by prior economic and political endowments of the players.

Whether, and to what extent, this idealized model is a good representation of the political process anywhere in the world, is a point of debate. The present study indicates two important departures from the idealized model within the context of Pakistan. Firstly, even when voice does exist, corporate group interests rather than individual self-interest might dominate electoral choice. The existence of prior communities and political entrepreneurs forms the basis of such choices. Secondly, the political process is routinely used to effect the transfer or even diversion of public resources, often in contradiction with existing rules, procedures and formal political and economic endowments. In this regard the problem with the political process in Pakistan is not that it is unresponsive, but that it is far too responsive to collective action and political enterprise. It is only in those special cases where a prior class of political entrepreneurs happens not to exist, that anything approximating to the rules-based competitive democracy can be observed. In general, the political process can be characterized as a domain of numerous, often competing, collective actions.

Community construction and collective action for community construction remains an active source of political enterprise. The production of public goods and boundary demarkation between insiders and outsiders are continuous processes. The need, potential, and reward of such collective action and political entrepreneurship are inversely related to the extent and activism of state (or external) intervention. There is a proliferation of collective actions of various types, and within communities with different types of boundaries. At a given moment in time these atomized collective actions can be seen as both responses to the absence of a pro-active developmental state, and as obstacles to more effective state action. Even in instances where communal collective action advances developmental goals through the production of development-related public goods for a predefined group, it effectively subverts the overarching developmental goal of citizenship and universalism. As seen in the fieldwork reported above, very often the public schooling system and other state interventions were instruments in the construction and maintenance of parochial communities.

It is important to note, however, that atomized collective actions are not confined to parochial communities alone. The existence of a multi-layered schooling system can be interpreted as a sign of collective actions by different classes and interest groups defined not in prior organic terms, but in terms of aspiration. Interestingly, constituent units of the modern state are themselves involved in such atomized collective actions. The system of military "public" schools is a good example. An example from the fieldwork was that of the Quaid School in Toba Tek Singh which was a fee-charging school for children of administrative officers posted in the district. Although this was a private school, it was based on a high degree of collective action within the "officer community". Officials responsible for running line departments including education were active participants in managing this collective effort, and did not see anything amiss in diverting some resources from their respective departments for this purpose.

Atomized collective actions, therefore, are a central feature of the model proposed here for understanding Pakistan's political economy. The electoral-political process, largely unfettered by rules and regulation can be viewed as a *laissez-faire* political market, somewhat similar to the unregulated marketplace of the neoliberal paradise. The state responds to successful collective actions but is an otherwise passive player in the developmental domain. Political-economy outcomes which appear to violate idealized norms of competitive democracy are viewed here not so much as "distortions" or "corruption" but as equilibrium outcomes which are consistent with the existing distribution of collective actions.[80] The political system,

[80] The "corruption" of democracy is often used in Pakistan as an alibi for dispensing with electoral representation

therefore, even while being responsive to specific demands for schools and schooling, has not been a pro-active agent of citizenship-oriented developmental goals such as universal basic education.

Private initiatives for schooling

Private initiatives for schooling are not concerned, typically, with universalist goals. While for-profit private schools explicitly restrict entry by the ability to pay, non-profit ones usually do so by location and other targeting criteria. In the absence of an activist public agency such as the state, however, the role of private initiative is likely to be increasingly conspicuous in future trends in basic education. The rapid expansion in the number of for-profit private schools underlines the importance of private initiative. What are the implications of private schooling initiatives for the political-economy perspective developed here?

It is worth noting at the outset that collective action constraints are not limited to the production of good quality government schools or non-profit schools. The successful establishment of even a for-profit school requires collective action, albeit of a different type. The school is unlikely to take off if a sufficient number of parents do not entrust their children to it. The parents would prefer to wait until the school is well-established before they send their children to it. This can be seen as a form of free-riding which will result in the non-establishment of an otherwise viable school.[81]

Existing private schools, therefore, represent successful attempts at overcoming collective action problems. Some cases from the fieldwork are cited here as examples of the way in which collective action constraints had been overcome.

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altogether. Another prominent view in this regard is that Pakistani society is not suited/ready for democracy. It needs to be pointed out that the interpretation, here, of deviations from idealized models of competitive democracy as equilibrium outcomes, does not fall into the same category of argument. What is being stated here is that the electoral system does, indeed, lead to real transfers of resources and that in the absence of state activism the observed outcomes are not entirely unexpected. The absence of the electoral process does not put an end to collective action-based resource transfers. It simply restricts the opportunity of some groups for example the residents of the *goth* of PK (Cases 11 to 18 in Chapter 5) in Sanghar while privileging others, for example, the beneficiaries of Army public schools.

[81] I am greatly indebted to Tahir Andrabi for this insight, and for his perseverance in the face of resistance. For a fuller account (of the argument, not the resistance), see Andrabi (forthcoming).

Case: City Grammar School, Shahdadpur, Sanghar

This school was started at the initiative of a successful local doctor, who also owned the main private hospital and medical laboratory in town. The school was aimed at providing English-medium instruction to the children of an emergent Sindhi professional and business class in Shahdadpur. This was an important identity marker in a city where commerce was dominated by the ethnic Urdu-speaking community, and ethnic divisions had overt political dimensions. The school entrepreneur had been involved in student politics in his youth and had used his influence to invite a well-known and widely regarded former university Vice-Chancellor to preside over the opening ceremony of the school. The significance of this invitation lay in the fact that the chief guest was a world-renowned authority on the Sindhi language, who conferred his (qualified) blessings on a school dedicated to the promotion of English-language learning. The sub-text of a number of speeches delivered at the ceremony, before a gathering of the Sindhi professional and business elite of Shahdadpur, was that the adoption of high-quality English-medium education was a (regrettable) necessity for the advance of "our" (read ethnic Sindhi) community.

Case: Alfalah Academy, Alipur, Muzaffargarh

This is a large and successful for-profit co-educational school which also has a boarding section for boys. The school has good infrastructure, and appears to be generally well-organized. There is evidence of meticulous attention to teacher training and other pedagogical issues on the part of the school management. The owner-principal of the school is a 45-year old man who claims to be an active supporter of local charitable causes. He also happens to be the tehsil vice-president of a nationwide sectarian religious organization known as the Jamiat-e-Ahle-Sunnat. The school is open to all denominations, however, and according to the owner-principal there are children from non-Ahle-Sunnat denominations who do, indeed, attend this school. The ethos of the school is disciplinarian and attention is paid to Islamic religious instruction, though the pupils are prepared for public examinations in accordance with the mainstream government curriculum. Boarders are required to undergo training for *hifz* (the memorization of the Quran). The school advertises itself as being a *kadet-saaz idara*, or an institution which produces cadets. This refers to the claim that many of the boys from this school have been accepted in cadet colleges which are entry points for a career in the armed services. According to the owner-principal, this an important aspiration for local parents.

There are several common features in these two cases of

(new and emerging) for-profit private schools. The schools are both products of private initiative on the part of entrepreneurial individuals. They both represent responses to aspirational groups which see a particular type of schooling as opening new social and economic opportunities to their children. Besides their appeal to aspirational communities, however, the two schools also rely on subtle though critical appeals to prior communal identities -- Sindhi nationalism in Shahdadpur, and sectarian Ahle-Sunnat affiliation and Islamism in Alipur. Interestingly, however, the explicit promise of both schools is to steer their constituents towards mainstream economic opportunities and a mainstream modern community -- though the aspirational communities thus created are likely to carry strong Sindhi nationalist and militaristic-Islamist ethos, respectively.[82]

The two schools were also, respectively, individual cases of more general phenomena. Members of several religious-political Islamist organizations have established networks of fee-paying private school where children are taught the mainstream government curriculum -- which is Islamist-nationalist in content and tone, but does not explicitly endorse any one of the many brands of nationalist Islamism let alone sectarian Islamism professed by the religious-political parties.[83] These schools are not directly subsidized by their respective parties, and are run on cost-recovery or even profit-making grounds.[84] It is important to note that the schools are not religious seminaries. From the point of view of parents these schools provide good quality mainstream education. The religious-political identity of school entrepreneurs provides a degree of quality assurance through "brand-name" recognition in an otherwise saturated market. Similarly, the Shahdadpur

[82] It might be argued that the latter is close to the officially-sponsored nationalism of the Pakistani state. The Alfalah Academy, however, represents a particularly creative and effective attempt in this direction, compared with the local government schools.

[83] The Minhaj-ul-Quran schools, run by members of the Pakistan Awami Tehreek of Maulana Tahir-ul-Qadri, for example, offer English medium instruction in many of their branches. Other networks include Hira Schools, which are loosely associated with members of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

[84] There might, of course, be an element of subsidy if those running the school are willing to work for below-market wages, or work harder and more conscientiously for any given remuneration, because they believe they are advancing "their" cause. But there is nothing particularly mystical about this form of indirect subsidy. It is very similar, in fact, to the efficiency benefits which might be available to government schools if teachers felt "professional pride" or a "sense of fulfilment" in their work.

private school forms part of a broader tendency towards the consolidation of a self-conscious and aspirational middle-class in ethnic Sindhi communities.[85]

Besides for-profit schools, several non-profit educational interventions were encountered in the survey areas in the course of the fieldwork. Nearly all of these interventions were organized explicitly around pre-defined identity-based communities. There were Islamic religious schools, or *madrassah* in a large number of the survey sites in Punjab. Most of these *madrassah* were denominational. There were also schools run by Church organisations targeted at the local Christian residents. While this survey was not directly concerned with non-government schools, some observations about the organization of such schools and motivations of parents sending their children to these are offered here.

The *madrassah* or Quranic school differed from other schools associated with religious-political organizations in that the former followed explicitly theological curricula, usually corresponding with that of a particular Islamic scholastic tradition.[86] The core activity of the Sunni *madrassah* was Quranic training leading up to the memorization of the Holy Book (*hifz*). Contrary to popular perception the student body of the *madrassah* was not made up of children who had no access to government schools. A majority of the pupils had, in fact, completed the five-year primary cycle in the local government primary school, and were on temporary leave from their mainstream school career in order to prepare for *hifz*.[87] These children had every intention of returning to the government school after completing the *hifz*, as a number of people had done before them. There were six certified *hafiz*, all young men, in the census village with a population of around two thousand. These individuals were pursuing non-theological careers in government service or other professions.[88] A disproportionately high number of the *hafiz* and students of *hifz* in this village

[85] Other private educational interventions which are aimed at this aspirational community include networks of fee-paying schools connected with organizations such as the Sindh Graduates Association.

[86] The observations about the *madrassah* offered here related mostly to the census village in Toba Tek Singh. See Chapter 6 above for details about the village and its government schooling facilities.

[87] Candidates are tested by accredited examiners, and receive an official certificate. A successful candidate is known as a *hafiz*, literally custodian.

[88] Individuals with officially recognized *hifz* qualifications were entitled to special quotas to certain public sector jobs.

were from relatively "low-caste" families which were upwardly mobile in economic terms. The attainment of *hafiz* status accorded social prestige and respectability, and in some ways placed these individuals beyond the reach of caste-based derision in the village conversation. The *madrassah* in this case was a complement and not a substitute to mainstream formal education.

There was, moreover, one identifiable group of children for which it could be argued that the *madrassah* provided an opportunity where the government school had failed. There were children, mostly girls, from Muslim Shaikh families who were registered in the *madrassah* but remained outside the formal schooling system. These Muslim Shaikh families were clearly more comfortable sending their children to the *madrassah* rather than the otherwise well-functioning government schools in the village. The issue of caste-based derision and the discomfort of "low-caste" parents with government schools came up again in another village of Toba Tek Singh where a commercially successful musician had placed his children in a newly-opened for-profit private school. The musician, whose traditional caste calling of "Meerasi" was looked-down upon by the landowning peasant castes complained about the attitudes of teachers in the local government school: "Government school-teachers ask about your caste when they admit your child. Then, instead of calling children by their given names they would address them as *mussaliaan da munda* (the Mussali boy) or *meerasiaan da munda* (the Meerasi boy).[89] The first question that I asked the owner of the new private school was whether he will allow the calling of derogatory caste names in his school."

It is paradoxical that families facing caste-based social discrimination had chosen, in these instances, to place their children in different types of private schools in preference to the otherwise well-functioning government schools in their villages. The aspirational religious community offered by the *madrassah* and the market response represented by the fee-paying private school were both perceived by these groups as being less discriminatory compared with what was offered by the state schooling system. The government school which was an intervention of the modern state and therefore might have been associated with the construction of a citizenship-based community, was in these cases, seen as an instrument for the perpetuation of parochial communal hierarchies.

The missing politics

All the evidence points to there being a proliferation of diverse political and economic enterprise for education and schooling in Pakistan. Political enterprise is closely

[89] The terms *mussali* and *meerasi* are used derogatorily in Central Punjab to refer to the Muslim Shaikh and musicians respectively.

connected to communitarian motivation -- particularly the consolidation of parochial communities, or the construction of aspirational ones. Successful economic enterprise for schooling also faces collective-action type problems, and is often associated with some level of communitarianism. In this regard, the exclusive focus on narrowly-defined human capital motivations in the standard economics of education literature can act as a blind spot. Constraints as well as possibilities for advancement need to be viewed from a broader perspective which includes the recognition of communitarian motivations. Such a discourse shift will, in fact, bring the discussion on educational reform in developing countries such as Pakistan closer to the debate in developed countries.

A key question, therefore, for Pakistan and other societies with a similarly poor record with respect to public schooling, concerns the weakness of the state's role in the construction of a citizenship-based community. The evidence from Pakistan clearly attests to the importance ascribed to schools and schooling in the construction of numerous fragmented communities. The conspicuous difference between countries with successful public schooling systems and others might be seen in terms of the relative strengths of citizenship-oriented communitarianism vis-a-vis its more fragmented *laissez-faire* variety.

Nationalism and the project of nation-building are closely associated with the modern state's high communitarian zeal in facing up to parochial and other fragmented aspirational communities. The role of schooling in constructing a national community vested education and the universalization of education with a special political status across a range of societies.[90] This close connection between education and nation-building was succinctly stated by Ziya Gokalp, an influential authority on the development of Turkish nationalism under Kemal Ataturk, and himself a leading Turkish nationalist: "Nation is not a racial, ethnic, geographical, political or voluntary group or association. Nation is a group composed of men and women who have gone through the same education, who have received the same acquisitions in language, religion, morality, and aesthetics".[91] High communitarian and nation-building motivations were not limited to developing countries like Turkey. The work of "educational crusaders" driven by communitarian religious and political objectives was, indeed, prominent in the establishment of the public school system in the United States.[92]

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[90] See for example, Andersen (1991), Gellner (1983), and Hobsbawm (1990) for perspectives on the nation-building project in diverse societies.

[91] Cited in Kirisci (1998), 234.

[92] See Brunner (1998).

The role of education as an instrument of community construction has not been missing from the discourse of Pakistani nationalism. A national conference on education was convened in Karachi within three months of the formation of the state.[93] While this document is remarkably pedestrian in its approach to and understanding of the problems of public education, it does provide an interesting insight into the type of structural constraints facing the nascent Pakistani state-nation. The conference adopted a resolution declaring Urdu as the *lingua franca* of Pakistan. This was a compromise over the original proposal for adopting Urdu as a "national language". Another proposal to declare Urdu as the compulsory medium of instruction was also successfully resisted, reportedly, by delegates from the then province of East Bengal. This early episode was to portend continuing conflict over the definition of Pakistani nationhood and identity and the inability of the political and state leadership to arrive at an acceptable cultural basis for the "national" community.

The compromise which was struck on this issue was, in effect, to continue with the language and educational policy that the British colonial state in India had formulated for the regions which became parts of Pakistan. Urdu which had been introduced in Punjab as a language of mass education by the colonial government was to maintain this status in Punjab, NWFP, and Balochistan.[94] East Bengal would retain Bengali, and schools in Sindh would provide the option of Sindhi as well as Urdu-medium instruction. The status of English as the language of higher education and official business was also retained. Far from providing a heady opportunity for establishing the basis of a new high communitarianism, the pioneers of the post-colonial state acquiesced with the disparate projects of social engineering initiated by the colonial state of a century ago. The reluctant acceptance by the state of Bengali and Sindhi in East Bengal and Sindh, respectively, was not done in terms of any explicit recognition of the political status of these languages, but by bureaucratic sleight of hand.[95]

Post-nationalist high communitarianism?

The literacy transition was an outcome -- perhaps even an externality -- of investment in the communitarian goal of nation-building across post-colonial societies. Peculiar

[93] First National Conference on Education, November 1947, Ministry of Interior (Education Division).

[94] The absurd denial of the pedagogical potential of local languages in Punjab continues to this day.

[95] The first national conference on education avoided taking a definitive political view on the language question by simply referring the matter to provincial education departments.

historical features of Pakistani nationalism[96] -- for example, the fact that its cultural and political homeland lay outside the eventual geographical boundaries of the Pakistani state -- might go some way in explaining the absence of such investment.[97] The relatively tepid enthusiasm of the Pakistani state for any sustained project of social engineering might also have spared some of its peoples from some of the worst excesses of cultural annihilation characteristic of more powerful modernizing states.[98]

With the passing of the post-colonial period of dirigisme and the emergence of the dual challenge of the market and global capital to the power of the state, what are the prospects for universalist projects such as basic education in countries which failed to make the transition? The absence of the state's agency and the existence of a *laissez-faire* economy and political process might represent the erosion of universalist high communitarianism. As the evidence from Pakistan shows, it certainly does not indicate the end of communitarianism as such. In fact, the scope for atomized collective actions becomes wider, and rewards for political enterprise larger. Unlike the anarchist idyll, however, life can take a distinctly Hobbesian flavour in a society with atomized collective actions. Within this situation the emergence of new ideological or aspirational communities cannot be ruled out by assumption or *fiat*. The interesting political question is whether or not there will be space for a constituency which aspires to a universalist citizenship-oriented community.

[96] See Hussain (2000).

[97] A comparison, in this respect, with Hindi-speaking northern India will be an interesting project of comparative historical research.

[98] The Pakistani state was not tepid, of course, in its enthusiasm for other forms of brutality against its citizens. Also, paradoxically, the region which does face serious problems of cultural identity is the demographically major and political important province of Punjab, where the vernacular literate tradition is all but extinguished.

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