

# **FATA as an Observer and Recipient of Aid: Contextualising Complex Relationships among State Institutions**

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## **Abstract**

In order to curtail militancy in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), the region received unprecedented local and international assistance with a focus on development. Through my fieldwork on FATA between 2012 and 2014, I continually came across stories and narratives of prevalent corruption and lack of accountability within civilian state institutions as a major reason behind the region's socio-economic deprivation and underdevelopment. However, when contextualised further, the narratives and stories demonstrated much more complexity which was difficult to grasp without further analysis. In order to deconstruct these narratives, I have looked at the policy changes and state interventions in FATA since the events of 2001. I have further used participant observations, conversations and document analysis to elaborate and examine different perspectives that give subjective meaning to the FATA region. Through analysing this data, I show how the processes adopted by the state to continuously assimilate, integrate and incorporate FATA into larger state structures through its development interventions also shapes the state structures. This additionally highlights how the fluid and complex nature of state structures follow a shared political and social pattern, rather than divergent patterns as perceived in the discourse on development.

**Keywords:** Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, Under development, Corruption, Development Interventions, International and National Assistance

## **1. Introduction**

The changes that took place and shaped my respondents' narratives<sup>1</sup> were of three major types. The first encompasses the events of 2001 that resulted in the US invasion of Afghanistan, which borders FATA. The second was the liquidation of the FATA DC and the establishment of the Governor's Secretariat (currently known as the FATA Secretariat). This change was an attempt to extend the devolution reforms in FATA implemented by the then President General Pervez Musharraf's government into the rest of the country. The third was the reconstruction and development process that was started, along with military operations, in an attempt to control the increasing instability in FATA. This process – through Pakistan's stabilisation operations – brought to the scene development agencies, private sector organisations and other actors, most of them for the first time. Through these agencies came new ideas and practices about how to eradicate poverty by using better developmental strategies. On the other hand, the development assistance also brought with it narratives that simplified FATA's problems to poverty, weak institutions and corruption.

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<sup>1</sup> The detailed analysis in this paper is built upon empirically established findings collected through fieldwork in FATA, Peshawar and Islamabad between May 2012 and February 2014. The fieldwork consisted of two fundamental aspects: in-depth unstructured interviews and participant observation. This study has further consulted other primary and secondary evidence, such as government correspondence, data and reports dating from 1947 until 2016 where required.

In this paper, I examine how the events after 2001 were used by my respondents to discuss and engage with the social, political and economic changes that took place. These events also created discourses of rampant corruption prevalent within state institutions, the curtailing of which would be a prerequisite for resolving FATA's problems. I start the paper by looking at the narratives on corruption from different segments of respondents. I follow this description by examining how people used these narratives to make sense of the current instability experienced in FATA, and I elucidate the discourse on development that post-2001 events created. After this, I discuss in detail the arrival of the development agencies and local NGOs on the scene and how the discourse on development oriented the need for these organisations in the region. I describe how these agencies appeared and how they provided assistance, and analyse the reasons for their successes and failures. Next, I look at the separate discourse that the international aid organisations created. In the last section, I sum up the complexity and fluidity these different events created, which was captured in the narratives collected in my study.

I conclude that the state's efforts to develop the region not only reinforce the existing complex dynamics at the local level, but in turn also permeate the boundaries of state institutions. The inability of the contemporary reforms to eradicate poverty, curtail increased levels of corruption or strengthen weak institutions can also be explained further through the fluidity and complexity present within the state structures.

## **2. Understanding Events through Narratives on Corruption**

The narratives on corruption within the state institutions are mostly centred on the question of the state's inability to eradicate poverty from the region. Even though there is a general consensus among the respondents that corruption is a serious issue within state institutions, there is great variation in these narratives. Therefore, the debates about the existence of corruption in state institutions must be localised and contextualised. The four quotes below give us a broad view of how people from different segments spoke about the prevalent corruption in state institutions and its evolution. I have chosen these four narratives for two main reasons: first, to show that despite what many respondents said about the prevalent levels of corruption, corruption has also been continually contextualised to emphasise the change needed or lacking. Second, they emphasise the political, economic and social changes that are taking place, and the similar discourse on corruption in the four quotes highlights this complexity of the changes taking place, which is shaping not only the narratives but also how people engage with these changes through these narratives.

'FATA Development Corporation (FATA DC) was a white elephant. It was therefore disbanded and FATA Secretariat [Governor's Secretariat] was raised instead without any additional funding for FATA's development. The FATA DC was wasting resources, with nothing productive on the ground. Hence it was decided instead to have one FATA Secretary (grade-21) and five Additional Secretaries (grade-19). But with a change in Government [2006], they created the post of Additional Chief Secretary, which means another grade 21 appointment and all the Additional Secretaries working under me were also converted in to full fully-fledged Secretaries. And besides this, they also established FATA Development Authority (FATA DA). This is how the money is being wasted, with nothing substantial on the ground. The initial idea of a separate Governor's Secretariat was temporary until we carry out reforms and a referendum in FATA. So it was conceived this way. Unfortunately, bureaucracy has taken over and all the funds earmarked for economic development in FATA are being spent there [FATA Secretariat]. There is immense corruption going on, because visiting sites is complicated and people cannot go there, so they pocket that money'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Brigadier (Retired) Mahmood Shah, Security and Defence Analyst, hails from the Hoti village in Mardan district. He served as First Secretary to the new Secretariat for FATA, established when the situation in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) deteriorated around early 2001. His interview was conducted in Peshawar on 5th September 2012.

The above narrative is by a former First Secretary of the Governor's Secretariat (Currently the FATA Secretariat), established in 2002, expressed when his opinion was sought about current development interventions under the newly established FATA Secretariat. The year 2002 saw the liquidation of the FATA DC and the formation of the Governor's Secretariat. This liquidation also resulted in the shifting of responsibility for development from the Provincial secretariat of KP (formerly known as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)) to the Governor's secretariat. It is widely believed that dissatisfaction about the organisation is what resulted in the liquidation of the FATA DC on 30 June 2002 (Sahibzada, 2006: 97).<sup>3</sup> The performance of the organisation was measured by comparing development expenditure and recurring costs with overall outcomes over past years (Mohammad, 2012:34). The significant difference between the costs incurred and the outcomes of these interventions was further simplified, with corruption being found in the civilian state institutions. The solution for this was to establish a Governor's secretariat under the new government of General Pervez Musharraf. However, poor performance due to prevalent corruption was not the main reason for these new measures being introduced. They were also largely influenced by the political and economic changes that took place in the region. First, the creation of the Governor's Secretariat was part of the political and institutional reforms introduced by General Pervez Musharraf, who overthrew the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a military coup d'état in October 1999. Second, the need to introduce reforms in FATA was also felt in the wake of developments that took place in neighbouring Afghanistan in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (US) and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan by the US-led coalition against terrorism. Third, taking these measures was an attempt by Pakistan to ward off any spill-over of militant violence in the neighbouring Afghanistan into the mountainous area of FATA. These measures were in turn endorsed by the international community, based on their understanding of the current dynamics and instability in the region.

The second narrative is by Qazi Hussain Ahmed. Qazi Hussain Ahmed highlighted prevalent corruption within the civilian state institutions, demonstrated by their lack of will to extend decentralisation measures in FATA as planned by the military government of General Pervez Musharraf: *'General Pervez Musharraf wanted to extend the Baldiati Nizam [the local government system] into FATA and install tribal councils and local councils for different FATA Agencies. There would have been self-rule, but no one trusted that model and they moved away from it. Political Agents (PAs) and other administrative machinery did not agree with it and hence it could not be implemented. The biggest problem is of prevalent corruption in the establishment that is providing for the needs of the PAs, and the money goes up to the highest ranks in the administration. Twenty-five years ago, a tribesman from Landi Kotal [in the Khyber Agency] told me that he pays around Rs. 800,000 per day to the PA so that his smuggling runs smoothly and a PA earns in crores (millions of Rupees). In the current period, the amount a PA earns through issuing various types of permits is estimated at around Rs. 2,500,000 per day. This money goes to the establishment and even to the President of Pakistan'*.<sup>4</sup>

However, the decentralisation efforts were not merely a decision made by the new President: rather, the pressure on Pakistan to implement decentralisation measures had been there since the 1990s. After the international community's failed liberalisation measures of the 1990s, it was largely believed

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<sup>3</sup> The reasons illustrated in Sahibzada Imtiaz's Report are the following: (a) Manpower had become excessive due to political appointments and most of the budgetary grants were being consumed for salaries; (b) Almost all development schemes, on completion, were being maintained by the Corporation, but no adequate budgetary grant was available, resulting in their deterioration; (c) Appointment of officers was politically motivated, adversely affecting the merit; (d) Appropriate linkages with the Provincial Government were not established, resulting in the absence of support at the Agency level (e) Developmental allocations were very low compared to the available work force. Shahibzada Imtiaz Report (2006:97)

<sup>4</sup> Qazi Hussain Ahmed, originally from Ziarat Kaka Sahib, Nowshera District of KP. He was the former Emir of Jamaat-e-Islami, the socially conservative Islamist political party in Pakistan. He was a strong critic of the counter-terrorism policy of the United States, and was widely known for his opposition to the United States' participation in the war against the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan. Interview conducted at his residence in Peshawar on 13th June 2012.

that Pakistan's only solution to bring its poorest segment of society above the poverty line was by adopting governance reforms. Decentralisation was thus justified on the premise that it would provide a means to control corruption within state institutions. The governance reforms promised delivery of service and justice to the doorsteps of previously neglected and marginalised segments of society. The importance of the governance reforms for multilateral donors can be deduced from the fact that they invested tremendous resources into the international effort to eradicate poverty. For example, the IMF increased its financial assistance to Pakistan by 237 per cent between 1998 and 1999 in return for a promise to introduce reforms by the then Chief Executive Officer, General Pervez Musharraf (Craig et al, 2007:199). Similarly, the Economic Stabilization Adjustment Facility was renamed as the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility and allotted a sum of \$1.3 billion (Craig et al, 2007:199). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) alone spent over \$200 million to support the devolution scheme in Pakistan (ADB, 2010).<sup>5</sup>

A similar shift could also be observed in US foreign policy after the events of September 2001. US national security interests emphasised that prevalent poverty, weak institutions and rampant corruption in weak states makes them vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist networks.<sup>6</sup> They further illustrated how this results in a congenial environment for drug economies to develop within their borders. Therefore, it was recommended that in order to stabilise the situation in weak states, they should adopt *stabilisation operations* – a combined effort involving development interventions aimed at alleviating poverty along with a coercive military strategy to eliminate any further possibilities for weak states to become sanctuaries for terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.<sup>7</sup> Poverty eradication thus became the new buzz-phrase of all the policies designed by both national and international policy makers. In order to alleviate poverty, major emphasis was placed on curtailing corruption and extending effective service delivery to the marginalised segments of society. Thus, the international donor community and influential sections of civil society such as the media and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) believed that local government reforms – the Nazim (Mayor) system reforms – would serve as a panacea for all ills. They would not only eradicate poverty by curtailing corruption among the state institutions, but would also bring stability to the region. Moreover, introducing these reforms paved the way for President General Pervez Musharraf to legitimise his regime within the international community. Since 2003, FATA has emerged as a safe haven for terrorist groups – both local and foreign – and poses a serious security challenge to both Pakistan and the international community. Following the stabilisation operations, the Pakistani Army was deployed in FATA for the first time since 1947. In parallel with this, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other international donor agencies launched a comprehensive development programme in partnership with the GOP to support the 'four pillars of stability' operations.<sup>8</sup> The cross-border incursions from FATA into Afghanistan are considered a major reason for the failure of the US stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan. It is generally believed that the right combination of diplomatic, development and military policies could serve as a catalyst for stability, peace and progress in FATA, and hence the region.

The new policy brought new actors into play, such as the Pakistani Army and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These new actors tried to create some form of direct interaction

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Carver, F. (2012) When Tiers Clash: Devolution vs. Democracy in Pakistan, *E-International Relations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Available: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/08/02/when-tiers-clash-devolution-vs-democracy-in-pakistan/>. [14-07-2013].

<sup>6</sup> See US 2002 National Security Strategy: 'we will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world. The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak state, like Afghanistan can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty doesn't make poor people in to terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist's networks and drug cartels within their borders'.

<sup>7</sup> See U.S. National Security Strategy (2002).

<sup>8</sup> The new policy was based on four main pillars: governance and participation; economic and social wellbeing; justice and reconciliation; and security.

between people from FATA and the outside, which was mostly unidirectional: men went from FATA to the urban centres and other places in Pakistan, the Gulf and the rest of the world mainly for employment. The sudden, large and unprecedented presence of NGOs and donors working specifically in FATA gave rise to a discourse that focused on people's relationships with the state. This fact can be further found in the third narrative below by Zar Ali Afridi. Zar Ali Afridi, originally from Jankor Hassan khel in FR Peshawar, is a founding chairman of the Tribal NGOs Consortium.<sup>9</sup> He is also the Executive Director of the Society for Rights and Development, and Coordinator of the FRs Civil Society Network of FATA. He stated: *'The reluctance to extend baldiati nizam into FATA is because of corruption. FATA is full of ghost projects. The figures for different projects are presented under the Annual Development Plan (ADP) in papers only, and nothing is visible on the ground and no one knows where the money goes. Now the USAID has initiated a programme with Transparency International to expose corruption in FATA Secretariat'*.<sup>10</sup>

From his narrative, one can grasp that these organisations are perceived as more efficient and rich than state institutions. This discourse allowed a neo-liberal narrative on development to develop, whereby my informants envisioned a FATA where the state would be rolled back. On the other hand, the fourth narrative by Riffatullah Orakzai,<sup>11</sup> a BBC journalist based in Peshawar, illustrates the discourse on how the Pakistani state's writ in FATA itself is questionable and how the arrival of new actors is only promoting corruption. The writ of state can be further defined in terms of state's ability to exercise authority by issuing decrees that are binding over the population and the territories present within that state (Mohamed, 2011:162).

*'Development can only occur when there is government writ in those areas. But if they cannot visit the areas then how they will make it happen? So it requires 100 per cent government writ to be able to access those areas. To the contrary, they prefer to put the money into their pockets. The Army is also there now with big stomachs'*.<sup>12</sup>

While discussing corruption, the selected four narratives separately attest to a mixture of economic and political changes taking place. They further show how these narratives try to make sense of the broader changes taking shape. The next sections of this chapter will break down these narratives to understand the complex phenomena underlying them.

### 3. International Aid and the New Actors

The events of 2001 created a response that is visible through the different actors that came onto the scene. The most significant of these was the Pakistani Army, followed by local NGOs and finally the international community in the form of international NGOs (INGOs) and donors. The development allocation for FATA at the national level also saw an increase of 168 per cent in 2002 compared to previous years, when FATA received less than Rs. 1 billion (US \$100 million) per annum (Table 1). The development allocation has been rising by 10 per cent annually since 2002. Currently the development allocation for FATA stands at Rs. 19 billion. Apart from an increase in the federal government's budget, the flow of foreign aid also increased. The US programme of assisted development aid for FATA was launched in 2003. The aid was meant to improve the quality of education, develop healthcare services and provide economic opportunities for the people of FATA. However, between 2001 and 2009, only 6 per cent of the total aid was allocated for economic purposes in FATA. Most of the financial aid received was earmarked for security assistance, mostly in the form

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<sup>9</sup> The Tribal NGOs Consortium is a network of FATA-based local NGOs/CSOs. This was initiated by the Society for Rights and Development in 2010. Today it is the biggest and largest network of FATA-based NGOs/CSOs. There are over 200 organizations registered in this network.

<sup>10</sup> Zar Ali Afridi, a member of FATA Tribal Consortium in Peshawar. Interview conducted in Peshawar on 20th June 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Riffatullah Orakzai has worked extensively on terrorism and militancy in FATA and Afghanistan. Interview conducted in Peshawar on 14th June 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Riffatullah Orakzai, BBC Correspondent on FATA. Interview conducted in Peshawar on 14th June 2012.

of military operations. The year 2006 saw a shift in strategy by both the international community and the GOP. This shift saw the GOP's launch of the FATA Sustainable Development Plan (FATA SDP) (2006–2015). The Civil Secretariat FATA went into partnership with the international community to put together the FATA SDP. This section seeks to understand the rationale, diagnosis, calculations and strategies of the SDP. Understanding the SDP will further help to understand the 'scripts' that are shaped by the arrivals of new actors, and the impact they had on the narratives communicated by my interviewees.

**Table 1:** FATA Annual Development Programme and SDP Budget

Sectors	FATA ADP (2001–2002) (millions of Rupee)	FATA ADP (2005–2006) (millions of Rupee)	FATA SDP (2007–2015) (millions of Rupee)	FATA SDP (2007–2015) (millions of USD)
Education	-	1,103	27,645	461
Health	456.029	993	13,700	228
Water Supply and Sanitation	118.782	353.876	4,040	67
Rural Development	19.829	36.05	1,850	31
Agriculture	9.665	132.974	10,115	169
Livestock and Poultry	56.3	172.13	1,985	33
Forestry	126.908	287.973	7,550	126
Fisheries	1.33	5.77	685	11
Irrigation, water and Power	29.95	564.97	9,068	151
Roads and Bridges	303	686.084	34,780	580
Physical Planning and Housing	53	180.414	1,405	23
Industry	1.86	2.75	3,420	57
Mining	3	87.959	5,350	89
Commerce and Trade	-	-	46	1
Tourism	-	-	425	7
Skills Development	-	-	629	10
Cross-cutting initiatives	-	-	1,420	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1179.653</b>	<b>4,607</b>	<b>124,113</b>	<b>USD 2.1 billion</b>

\*Note that the SDP was published in 2006 when the exchange rate was approximately 60 Pakistani rupee to 1 USD, which makes the whole budget equal to USD 2 billion. The figures would be different with the current exchange rate of approximately 102 Pakistani rupee to 1 USD.

**Table 2:** USAID Programs in FATA under EPPF (in million U.S. Dollars)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>ESF</b>	\$1,292.0	\$918.9	\$904	\$928	\$765.7
<b>GHCS-USAID</b>	\$29.7	\$28.4	-	-	-
<b>INCLE</b>	\$170.0	\$114.3	\$75.0	\$124.0	\$74.0
<b>NADR</b>	\$23.9	\$24.8	\$20.8	\$19.0	\$17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,515.6</b>	<b>\$1,086.4</b>	<b>\$1,000.5</b>	<b>\$1,071.3</b>	<b>\$857.6</b>

Source: Department of State, Federal Bureau

**ESF:** Economic Support Fund; **GHCS:** Global Health & Child Survival, **INCLE:** International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; **NADR:** Non-proliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining & Related Programs.

### 3.1 FATA Sustainable Development Plan (FATA SDP)

*'An ambitious plan, the SDP was too great a task to undertake single-handedly. To do justice to its scope, the input and capacities of multi-faceted development actors were required. The civil secretariat FATA entered into a strategic partnership with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and a host of other partners, most notably the United States Agency of International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID) and the International Medical Corps (IMC) as well as the Government of Pakistan's Small and Medium Enterprise Development*

*Authority (SMEDA). Without their valuable advice and active participation in shaping the SDP, a comprehensive document addressing the key challenges of the region would not have been possible. The core team from the Civil Secretariat FATA, which was instrumental in compiling strategy, also deserves special mention'* (FATA SDP, 2006).

The FATA SDP (2006–2015) was phrased in very different language from any of the previously prepared five-year plans or Annual Development plans. The prologue of the FATA SDP clearly distinguishes it as the largest project ever developed by the GOP in collaboration with the international donor community. The plan was unique in that it sought to establish the community-state relationship through the community rather than through the institutions previously employed, namely engineers, planners and economists. Hence, it not only focused on providing roads, bridges and other infrastructure, but carefully designed projects by placing them in the hands of the community.

'The SDP marks a departure from the usual development plans hatched at a safe distance and imposed as ready solution to deep-rooted problems. It recognises the significance and importance of local wisdom and a participatory orientation for any development strategy to work in the region. The SDP's people centred approach is its greatest strength. Through an exhaustive process of interactive workshops, the problems of the tribal areas and the solutions sought by tribesmen were discussed and incorporated into the plan. This effort is not only the nod to the oft-neglected matter of local participation in development activity but also ensures greater buy-in from tribesmen who now own the SDP as something to which they have contributed' (FATA SDP, 2006: pg.10).

The FATA SDP thus revolved around the idea that community buy-in would add teeth to the governance reforms, hence turning a broad principle into a programme of action. The FATA SDP designed programmes to empower communities, entailing higher returns, greater benefits for the poor and more sustainable outcomes, while the donors demonstrated how to do the development better. However, as astutely pointed out by Tania Murray Li (2007), according to this approach, community is considered to be self-sufficient, and naturally containing the ingredients of a good life (equitable, sustainable, authentic and democratic). But still experts must intervene to secure that goodness and enhance it. Hence the SDP is unclear as to whether 'community' refers to the present or future form of it. And in order to accomplish this goal, the SDP encouraged other media of intervention, which are more community-inclusive. It appears that the major reason why the GOP failed to deliver results under the previous approach of planning, design and implementation was due to the fact that the development work was undertaken only by public sector institutions, with almost no involvement of civil society organisations or local communities. Hence Rural Support programmes – a distinct group of non-profit non-government organisations – have been endorsed as a better strategy for poverty alleviation, with a livelihood-centred approach to rural development. This is based on the assumption that the communities carry within themselves the capacity for self-help (FATA SDP, 2006:101), and that this strength can be brought forward by catalyst organisations assisting communities with technical and material support.

The focus under the SDP shifted from infrastructure to good governance and from economic and industrial development to sustainable rural livelihood development. The programmes were designed with the perspective that it supported development plans made and approved by the communities (Li, 2007: 231). However, the plan still remained deficient in terms of studying the relationships between different forms of government interventions and interpreting their social effects. The plan was entirely focused on problems and capabilities in technical interventions that were lacking within the GOP institutions, gaps that the donors and international experts could fill. In order to successfully implement the FATA SDP, the plan only emphasised the importance of allocating resources to previously neglected sectors and capacity building among the government institutions (FATA SDP, 2006:10). But in the process of doing this, the plan also set the parameters of its success from the start. The plan thus clarified that *'without the availability of resources, and without building the capacity of the government and private sector to implement SDP on a firm footing, it will be difficult to achieve all that the SDP sets out to do'* (FATA SDP, 2006:10).

There were issues that had been ignored by donors in the previous decades, when Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and improved health and education indicators were much admired, but little emphasis was put on vital issues such as corruption. The SDP, on the other hand, admitted the problem of corruption. However, while the plan emphasised the current system of governance in FATA as the major reason behind FATA's underdevelopment (FATA SDP, 2006:25), it also simplified its lack of effectiveness, attributing it to prevalent corruption and lack of accountability within state institutions. Deducing from Li's (2007:240) interpretation, governance is being rendered as a technical issue and hence resolvable by design, as illustrated by a USAID official when asked if they were facilitating any reforms for governance: *'We are providing technical assistance to the government agencies for that purpose but it is based on their own request and assessment of the situation. We by no means try to dictate what kind of reforms are needed to be introduced to mainstream FATA'*.<sup>13</sup>

The statement above illustrates that the international donor community has distanced itself from being the main force behind the change. However, the donors, by involving development partners such as civil society organisations, do in fact shape development, but naturally rather than as an imposed agenda. This was further explained by Iftikhar Ahmed Afridi, a member of FATA-based Tribal NGO consortium (TNC), who said: *'TNC is a group of different NGOs working for the FATA democratic movement. Our demands include the allocation of seats in the provincial assembly [of KPK] for FATA and also for women; complete abolition of the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR); and extending FATA reforms'*.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, the donor community has constructed a viable environment through civil society organisations. But rather than dictate the utilisation of funds and the way the people should lead their lives, it served as a support mechanism to provide expertise in assisting the local community with their own agenda. In turn, community welfare is linked to its ability to influence investment decisions and set community priorities through deliberative institutions such as public discussion and exchange, which enable people to evaluate alternatives and make choices. This was based on the premise that the local community was relatively effective in resolving problems of a social nature within their local arena, as illustrated in one of the World Bank's ethnographical reports (2004): *'The state functionaries are mostly aloof, arrogant, inaccessible, coercive, corrupt and indifferent to the needs and aspirations of common people; therefore, people prefer to resolve their issues among themselves'* (World Bank, 2004:9).

This limits FATA's problems largely to economic factors, which are considered to be beyond the community's control. While reaffirming the link between poverty and governance, the SDP further stated that FATA society, being increasingly impoverished and marginalised, remains vulnerable to extremism. It added that compartmentalised development has concentrated around some sectors only, which has benefitted the elite of the area while depriving the majority of the population of economic empowerment and social uplift (FATA SDP, 2006:5). Hence, taking the lead, the SDP set unsolvable economic problems aside and focused on planning. Poor planning and skewed development priorities, coupled with administrative arrangements of the area, were partly blamed for the economic problems (FATA SDP, 2006:5).

Furthermore, the FATA SDP held the lack of accountability and prevalent corruption among the state institutions largely to blame for inadequate service delivery to the poor. It aimed to curtail these issues by keeping government performance under on-going supervision, by project preparation and by sub-national dialogue. Further, deeper engagement was initiated through consultation with civil society and provincial expenditure reviews.

The FATA SDP was totally dependent on funding from the Federal Government and donors; hence, selection criteria and shortlists of target areas had to be reviewed and agreed upon by central

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<sup>13</sup>Mujahid Saleem, Economist USAID – Capacity Building Programme (U.S Aid). Interview conducted at his office in Peshawar on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

<sup>14</sup>Iftikhar Ahmed Afridi, a member of the FATA Tribal Consortium. His interview was conducted at his office in Peshawar on 20th June 2012.

government and major international donors such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), WB and USAID. However, multi-sector planning and community involvement were highlighted as key elements of the plan for establishing accountability. Hence, combined with underdevelopment and economic problems, it is reasonable to suggest that a combination of inadequate planning and absence of governance were considered as the major sources of poverty in FATA.

Added to that, working to improve the lot of the poor was established as the main criterion illustrating authentic leadership (Li, 2007). This criterion, set under the FATA SDP, led senior government officials and other development organisations to factor it into that calculation in order to get access to money. Although the whole approach emphasised assisting the responsible, autonomous, self-governing communities, it was largely driven by the persuasive power of cash. This therefore indirectly shaped a pro-poor narrative, and the importance of participation and empowerment has become the norm of the new debate in the case of FATA.

Furthermore, in order to accomplish this goal, the donors bypassed the bureaucratic system for project planning and delivery under the foreign aid component of the SDP. They also bypassed the government officials, with the exception of the senior federal government officials belonging to the Federal Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), which was the official sponsor of the FATA SDP. The projects employed contractors from the private sector. While discussing donor-sponsored rural development initiatives, a government official illustrated the effectiveness of the new projects: *'the Bureaucracy is also on its back foot because their independent consultants are of international repute and there is also no political interference'*.<sup>15</sup>

These consultants were instead set up to operate as a loyal, parallel bureaucracy answerable to the main donor agency. While I collected the data, none of the donors directly illustrated any issues in working with the FATA Secretariat, but a statement made by a donor did emphasise their dependency on state institutions due to the nature of the region: *'without the GOP, we are unable to access FATA for development purposes'*.<sup>16</sup> But it is justifiable to state that a large chunk of donors' money, although channelled through the state structures, also brought with it the power to set agendas, create new practices and decide whose causes would be supported. This was achieved by obliging government officials to follow training modules and restrictions from a long string of donors, as highlighted by a senior government official: *'At the moment the aid coming is very restrictive and conditional and we are told all the time where we are allowed to spend it and where not – so it is not soft aid. Being a project director, I should have some leverage to change the modalities. I agree that one should not go out of the larger frame but the conditionality restricts one immensely. For example, we wanted to construct a road in Mohmand Agency when working with the FRDP (FATA Rural Development Programme); the donors repudiated the idea because its bids have an administration cost of 6 per cent and there are shortcomings in its tendering documents. The tribesmen of Mohmand met us for nearly one year to request us to build the roads in order to get access. But because of these conditions attached to our work, things become complicated for FATA Secretariat'*.<sup>17</sup>

The donors' focus on accountable means of investment was important, but meanwhile it also limited its ability to understand FATA beyond its economic problems. In summary, empowered communities, they proposed, would be able to plan their own projects, manage conflicts and reform the state apparatus from below (Li, 2007:230). The donors' interventions therefore lacked any insight into how these interventions shaped the local complex dynamics of FATA.

The next section will also illustrate the complex social, political and economic relationships that are embedded in both the state's and FATA's structures, understanding of which the success of

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<sup>15</sup> Junaid Khan, Deputy Director of FATA Rural Development Program. His Interview was conducted in Peshawar on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Mujahid Saleem, Economist USAID – Capacity Building Programme (U.S aid). His Interview was conducted in Peshawar on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Junaid Khan, Deputy Director at FATA Rural Development Program. His Interview was conducted in Peshawar on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

any development intervention in the region is reliant. In the following section I describe the arrival of these actors and how they provided assistance.

#### **4. The Interface between Interpretation, Planning and Implementation**

The government-approved donors and INGOs therefore went into partnership with local NGOs for their operational flexibility, in turn supporting capacity-building for the latter. During my fieldwork, there were 181 local NGOs registered with the Directorate of Projects Department of the FATA Secretariat. This number excludes those NGOs registered with the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) for relief and rehabilitation activities. Most of these NGOs were extending support to the donors for governance reforms and capacity-building. Although operating in the region, the NGOs were mostly located in Peshawar, other settled districts of KP and also in Islamabad. Different development agencies operationalised their work differently according to a multitude of factors, such as expertise, capacity, size and networks. While some agencies – notably the state – focused on increasing their writ in the region as much as possible, others, such as local NGOs, were aiming to reach the closest to individuals and communities. By making use of their networks in the field, bilateral and multilateral donors also outsourced their projects to the armed forces. To fully understand the approaches that different development agencies took and their operationalisation, in other words their actions, these must be situated within a political and historical context. As astutely pointed out by Mosse (2005), development interventions are often politically shaped by the interests and priorities of development agencies and driven not by policy, but by the exigencies of these organisations.

Despite sharing similar discourses, there were differences in the approach and operationalisation of these agencies. Added to this, development efforts in FATA are mainly determined by physical and social access. The development assistance not only used existing social networks but also created new networks to assist the local communities in FATA. Using existing structures reinforced fluidity, and creating new networks only added to the complex nature of affairs in the region. The main actors providing assistance were the state (through the FATA SDP and the Army) and local NGOs (through international donors and international NGOs). Hence, those people who were connected with or had the ability to connect with these actors benefited more than others who were unable to make use of these networks. The literature states that regardless of adopting a community-driven approach to development, projects have largely missed the most vulnerable people worldwide: the very people for whom such projects are actually initiated (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). The literature maintains that even a well-resourced stabilisation programme failed because of lack of awareness of the social organisation of rural communities. The literature further emphasises that social differentiation and patronage, which are prevalent in rural settings, enable the rich and powerful to strengthen their control over the poor and powerless through the avenues provided by community-based development projects (Platteau, 2007). As I mentioned in the previous section, communities are seen to be ‘good vehicles of development intervention because, on the one hand, they demonstrate society as ‘naturally’ self-regulating – an important premise of neoliberal political economy – and, on the other hand, they offer opportunities for improvement’ (Mosse, 2006:696; Li, 2002). However, the notion of self-regulatory communities leads us to ignore the underlying fluid and complex nature of affairs that prevail in FATA. The understanding of development agencies excludes the historical, political and social environment of the region, therefore maintaining an idealised version of ‘community’.

The US employed a community-based development approach to improve the quality of education, health services and prospects of economic opportunities in FATA. USAID intervened mainly through its livelihood development and capacity-building programmes between 2007 and 2008. One of the initial US projects was the FATA Livelihood Development Programme (FLDP). The main purpose of FLDP was to create jobs and income opportunities for young people and to promote enterprise and value chain development. FLDP was a \$300 million project intended to be completed in

a five-year time period. The project involved two US-based NGOs allocating \$150 million each, working in FATA's northern (Mohmand, Bajaur, Khyber and FR Peshawar) and southern Agencies (Kurram, Orakzai, South Waziristan, North Waziristan and FRs of Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Tank and D.I.Khan). However, for both northern and southern Agencies, FLDP closed down prematurely – after less than two years – in June 2010. The closure of the programme was attributed to it achieving a weak outcome, completing only 53 per cent of its planned activities during this period (OIG Report, 2010: 5). While speaking to the officials belonging to different agencies providing aid to FATA, the narratives on failed projects were mostly simplified. The narratives did not mention the local social complexity of working in FATA but cited the absence of set parameters on which development aid success hinges, as I already discussed in the previous section. Hence, a government official cites inconsistency, delays and the lack of a long-term strategy as the main reasons for the failure of programme: *'Inconsistency was one of the major reasons for the failure of the two USAID livelihood projects. The projects lacked any long-term strategy and the plan had to be revised three times before getting approval from Washington'*.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, OIG underlined the programme's failure to achieve its main objective due to the unavailability of baseline data (OIG Report, 2010: 5).

But analysing the situation in more depth, a key point becomes apparent: the same time period saw a shift in donors' initial strategy of working directly through civil society organisations (local NGOs) in FATA. In 2009, the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (EPPA), also known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill (KLB), was agreed between Pakistan and the US. With the EPPA agreement, the US became the major donor, contributing 82 per cent of the total aid towards economic development in FATA. Under the new strategy, it was considered mandatory for local NGOs aiming to work in FATA to obtain a NOC (No Objection Certificate) from state departments such as the FATA Secretariat and FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA). But there was also scepticism regarding the US aid coming in for development purposes. This scepticism about the unreliability of aid from the US given the changing political environment was also visible in those narratives. In a discussion with an official of a rural-based programme in FATA, this aspect was pointed out: *'Things can be done at this time because this is the time. It shouldn't be like the case of the 80s when the war was on, Americans were around, aid was there as well as funds being available, but at their withdrawal, the area will remain stagnant and underdeveloped again. The people and the land will be there but we will be looking for funds. Therefore such a situation shouldn't occur that we turn our backs on our own people. So I think this is the time that we should give it a real hard push, as our objective of development can only be achieved now'*.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, this new approach of incorporating state structures was a necessary evil because of its physical and social access to the area, which the international community largely lacks. In a discussion with a USAID official, this aspect of the nature of the relationship between the international community and the state of Pakistan was highlighted as follows: *'FATA Secretariat has its own strengths and weaknesses and one cannot bypass a government agency to reach such a volatile area. In an area like FATA, it is not possible to work without government organisation in order to reach the communities and central organisation for planning and development of a particular area. That role of government can't replace one or two programmes; one can't work in a vacuum. There has to be some central understanding and contribution. One can argue about the effectiveness of FATA Secretariat and how they take on board the communities in the private sector. And how much the development planning is inclusive and comprehensive: that is debatable, but there is no way of bypassing the government that is a sole entity for access in FATA. There is no one else to coordinate development in FATA'*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Yousaf Rahim, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat, in an interview conducted in Peshawar on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Junaid Khan, Deputy Director, FATA Rural Development Program. His Interview was conducted in Peshawar on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Mujahid Saleem, Economist USAID – Capacity Building Programme (U.S aid). His Interview was conducted in Peshawar on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The period also saw US aid shifting towards humanitarian and disaster assistance (OIG Report, 2010: 5) and infrastructure projects, rather than social sector projects as planned under the FATA SDP and KLB. During my fieldwork, I found that 70 per cent<sup>21</sup> of US projects involved facilitating, renovating, repairing or funding the poor infrastructure of FATA. This included a broad range of projects, including improving the communication sector by building roads and bridges, irrigation, water supply, reconstruction of damaged electricity infrastructure and upgrading grid stations. By 2012, the US had contributed over \$260 million for roads and key infrastructure projects in FATA and funded over 650 kilometres of roads in FATA and the KP.<sup>22</sup> On a smaller scale, the USAID is running the FATA Development Program – Government to Community (FDP-GC) as its major soft project. Originally launched in November 2007, the FDP-GC is a multi-sector project implemented through different partners. It covers three broad areas: human development, communication and infrastructure development, and natural resource-based development. However, the total amount earmarked under KLB (\$1.5 billion per year) only saw optimum utilisation during the first financial year (2010). The subsequent years of 2011, 2012 and 2013 saw disbursement and utilisation of approximately 60 per cent of the total aid committed. In 2014, the amount of aid disbursed saw a decline to 50 per cent. The decline in US aid brought new international partners such as UAE and KSA onto the scene. The development aid from both UAE and KSA was approved in 2011 after experiencing prolonged delays and threats of cuts in assistance from the US. This placed UAE and KSA as the second and third biggest donors contributing to development in FATA. But the projects funded by UAE and KSA were mostly implemented under the supervision of the Pakistani Army rather than the civilian state institutions. The main focus of these projects was reconstructing educational institutions, health, water supply schemes and other infrastructure such as bridges and roads.

Under the donor-funded programmes, most of the aid has been allocated to infrastructure projects, where soft, social sector projects make a small portfolio. All of the infrastructure programmes were implemented through state development agencies – either the FATA Secretariat or the Pakistani Army. The donors selected their approach depending on their historical and political relationships. The FATA Secretariat's priorities also saw a shift from infrastructure to the social sectors, such as education, health, agriculture and livelihood programmes. This shift was influenced by a desire to keep priorities aligned with the FATA SDP and other strategic documents such as PCNA (Post Conflict Need Assessment). This element came up in a discussion with Yousaf Rahim, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat, while describing the theme of the Annual Development Plan (ADP) for 2012: *'The ADP's theme for 2012 is 'wealth creation', i.e., to help the community to increase their income by production and provide opportunities for unemployed people with jobs. According to this theme, more funds are allocated to agriculture, livestock, sericulture and horticulture compared to before now, when funds were allocated to infrastructure projects.'*<sup>23</sup> Under the state-funded programmes, allocation to infrastructure projects such as roads (which were previously heavily state-subsidised) saw a decline of 4 per cent, whereas allocation to agriculture and education saw an increase of 4 and 7 per cent in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Despite this shift, there was constant disappointment about the state's role in attaining the objectives as planned under the FATA SDP (DAWN, 2012). The main reason continually being underlined is the lack of sufficient resources: the limited resources allocated for social sectors in FATA are only sufficient to reopen, rehabilitate, reconstruct and upgrade the schools in the region (DAWN, 2012). On being asked about the limited resources, Yousaf Rahim, a Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat explained how the fund allocations defined in the annual plan are sufficient, but in practice are not allocated as agreed: *'Last year [2011] we had an ADP of Rs. 15 billion but we only received Rs. 10 billion. The cut [of Rs. 5 billion] was made to total allocations in September [2011], which disrupted our planning. Where the provinces are concerned, they have their own resources either through NFC [National Finance Commission award] or the budget allocated by*

<sup>21</sup> Figure calculated according to 2012–2013 USAID projects. Source, FATA Secretariat.

<sup>22</sup> Data collected from Embassy Press release of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Yousaf Rahim, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat, in an interview conducted in Peshawar on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

*the Federal Government. In such instances, it can create a political shape if their funds experience cuts later on in the year. On the other hand, FATA is running on grants and hence such problems are evident and we are instead asked to adjust in the available resources’.*<sup>24</sup>

The money is also granted in the knowledge that it is subject to mishandling. Therefore, the anti-corruption strategy of the FATA SDP is not an add-on, but has been made an integral part of the whole process. Every step in the project process has been designed to prevent corruption within the project and to establish new habits that would carry over into other arenas. But the anti-corruption strategy has only served to maintain fluid structures at the state level. It presumes that state institutions are autonomous. This assumption has helped to conceal the blurred, permeable and fluid boundaries of state structures. Under the anti-corruption strategy, the Federal government maintains its power over funds by disbursing them with a lot of cuts and delays. *‘The Federal government also releases its funds in block provisions, and only with those projects which stand at or below the ceiling of Rs. 200 million’*,<sup>25</sup> according to Khalid Ilyas, Additional Secretary of Planning and Development for the FATA Secretariat, speaking at an event entitled ‘Predevelopment budget 2014–15 Consultation’, organised by the FATA Secretariat in collaboration with the Post Crises Needs Assessments (PCNA). This is mainly because *‘parliamentarians from FATA are more interested in development schemes and projects rather than legislation’*.<sup>26</sup> The FATA Secretariat, on the other hand, maintains its power over planning and executing schemes at ground level. The government officials therefore believe that *‘parliamentarians bring in schemes which do not fit into our plan; hence their role should be limited to legislation only’*.<sup>27</sup> The budget of Rs. 200 million is not considered sufficient for any useful intervention in FATA, explained Junaid Khan, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat: *‘No mega projects can be initiated under this budget and seeking approval from the Federal Government/ SAFRON for any projects above this ceiling causes severe delays.’*<sup>28</sup> This permeable and complex nature of relationships driven by the power of money between the Federal and Civilian state institutions further leads to the initiating of a large number of small-scale projects and schemes. Although they fit into the set criteria of the FATA SDP, they are influenced and driven by the power of money, as already discussed in the previous section. There are over 1,000 on-going schemes or projects in FATA. The time period for the completion of these schemes ranges from five to ten years. The FATA Secretariat, on the other hand, keeps on initiating new schemes and introducing new sectors for interventions every year. For instance, the ADP for 2013–2014 has an additional two new sectors: Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs; and Population Welfare.

Thus, trying to improve the development process only in a technical way at state level – by adding various strategies to enhance accountability – did not change the relationships between state institutions themselves. Therefore, the impact of these projects shaped out of this complex relationship between different institutions is largely questionable. The allocation of money made on technical grounds, with fixed allocations for each geographical entity based on its size and population, has further ignored the multifaceted nature of local dynamics. For example, some areas even being relatively more underdeveloped have a smaller share due to their size, such as the Frontier Regions of FATA. Junaid Khan, when elaborating the lack of sufficient resources, added: *‘The FR Lakki Marwat makes a share of seven to nine million only. And development schemes are proposed for 13 sectors of the ADP. Hence, 20 million is required to construct 1 km of road in the FR Lakki Marwat. But when we include it in our communication sector, it takes 10 years to complete it along with other projects’*.<sup>29</sup>

By making FATA’s under-development a technical issue – one which resolves around insufficient resources and inappropriate use of these resources – these institutions have overlooked the

<sup>24</sup> Yousaf Rahim, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat, in an interview conducted in Peshawar on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Khalid Ilyas. I conducted his interview twice as Director General FDMA on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and Additional Secretary Planning and Development at FATA Secretariat on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Junaid Khan, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat. His interview was conducted in Peshawar on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Junaid Khan, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat. His interview was conducted in Peshawar on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Junaid Khan, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat. His interview was conducted in Peshawar on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Junaid Khan, Chief Economist at FATA Secretariat. His interview was conducted in Peshawar on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

complex social and political structures prevalent in the region by elevating the FATA society to the status of a true community. This aspect allows development agencies to aggravate exclusion, by misinterpreting local representation. Decision-making based on technical grounds can be biased toward dominant groups who claim to be the voice of the community. This situation involves individuals with greater access to social, political and economic power dominating and manipulating interactions between the community and development agencies to suit their own needs (Conning and Kevane, 2002; Platteau, 2007). This greater access of individuals to social, political and economic power also reduces the power of development agencies by becoming part of this prevalent fluidity in the system rather than working against it. The development agencies therefore help to reinforce the local fluid structures of the region. The following section discusses the fluid nature of the relationships between the different development agencies involved in this process.

## 5. Contextualising Complex Relationships among State Institutions

The state, therefore, should not be seen as a bounded and autonomous unit, as its institutions are highly permeable and fluid. I infer that this permeability of state structures is more visible when we analyse the layer between the different development agencies involved in the process of developing FATA. In this section, I analyse how, despite perceived notions of state institutions as autonomous, the ‘governance through community’ approach did not change but actually reinforced the complex power relationships that already existed. Meanwhile, new development agencies on the scene only added to the complexity of existing relationships. In an attempt to develop FATA, the measures adopted by different agencies not only reinforced the socially and politically complex local dynamics of the region, but allowed them to permeate the boundaries of its own institutions.

Ignoring the underlining dynamics, the newly established FATA Secretariat is considered a remedy to resolve the issue of corruption and strengthen state institutions by involving the community. Rahimullah Yousafzai, considered to be an authority on FATA and Afghan affairs, when asked about his opinion on the newly established Secretariat for FATA, replied: *‘It is the right thing to do for FATA in order to have a much more focused approach to development in the region. If there is a separate secretariat looking after FATA exclusively, then I do not think it is a bad idea. It is more focused, giving absolute attention to FATA. The province of KP is already quite big with 25 districts. The KP secretariat is not able to manage its own districts, with complaints about shares in resources. On the other hand, FATA is not yet a separate province but it is a separate region and administered by the Governor and Federal Government [SAFRON]. Hence it has always been a contradiction to have a civil bureaucracy running both the FATA and KP. The FATA secretariat needs to be given authority in order to strengthen it further. It is in the interests of FATA even in the long term, when FATA either becomes a separate province or decides to integrate with KP. FATA people need a separate structure because their problems are different: they are underdeveloped, they need more resources and militancy is a big problem in FATA compared to the KP. I believe they need special attention, and for that they need a dedicated bureaucracy and bureaucratic set up, and I believe the FATA secretariat can serve the purpose’*.<sup>30</sup>

Most respondents during my fieldwork limited FATA’s problems to resources. The ineffectiveness of any interventions, or their failure to produce any outcome, was simply defined as a case of prevalent corruption within state institutions, whether pertaining to the meagre resources obtained from the Federal Government for development purposes in FATA, or the resources not being used for the purposes they were meant for by the civilian institutions working in FATA, or the money earned by the Political Administration through the Agency Development fund. Implying that state

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<sup>30</sup> Rahim ullah Yousafzai is a well known senior journalist of Pakistan. He is the current editor of ‘The News International at the Peshawar Bureau’. Acknowledging his achievements in journalism, the government of Pakistan awarded him with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and August and Sitara-e-Imtiaz. His interview was conducted at his residence in Peshawar on 12th September 2012.

institutions can be made effective by introducing accountability only blurs and hides the continual power struggle between the institutions involved in the process to develop FATA. It further ignores how this relationship not only reinforces but is also driven by the multidimensional reality of the region. Despite the concerted effort to have a more focused approach to dealing with FATA, the FATA Secretariat is not dissimilar to previous institutions such as the FATA DC in its effectiveness and ability to produce outcomes. Instead, it can be called a product of the fluid relationships that existed between different state institutions, shaped by the narratives produced and dictated by the international community after the events of 2001.

As previously discussed, the narratives not only projected FATA as the irrational and primordial part of Pakistan, but also established Pakistani state institutions as being rational and autonomous. The establishment of a separate secretariat for FATA in 2002, by the then governor, Lt. Gen (Retd.) Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, was an attempt to weaken the power and authority that initially lay with the Federal Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and the government of KP. Rahim Ullah Yousafzai rightly pointed out this complex power paradox when asked for more information about the difference between the FATA Secretariat and its predecessor, the FATA DC, in terms of producing meaningful outcomes: *'Everyone wants to keep power in their hands. It is mostly about whose men are running the show. There is no doubt that the FATA Secretariat has encroached on the power of Provincial Government and SAFRON, but this issue needs to be resolved'*.<sup>31</sup>

While SAFRON was responsible for political and administrative control, the Governor of KP exercised executive authority over FATA in his capacity of agent to the President of Pakistan. Compared to the FATA DC, the FATA Secretariat is functionally independent from the provincial government and SAFRON; however, on important policy matters the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of FATA reports to the Chief Secretary KP. Despite being independent of the provincial government of KP in running the functions, the FATA Secretariat is totally dependent on the Government of KP for the postings, transfers and promotions of all the officers working in the FATA Secretariat. Khalid Aziz, a retired bureaucrat, explained this aspect while questioning the need for a separate civilian secretariat for FATA in the following words: *'when they need an officer for FATA, they come to the provincial government. The top and middle layers of the FATA Secretariat are provincial government officials as they are borrowed from the province. And when it was a single secretariat looking after the affairs of FATA, the provincial government used to provide its best officer for FATA. This has been the tradition – the best of the officer in any of the department [such as Education and Health] used to go to FATA'*.<sup>32</sup>

At the federal level, apart from holding formal responsibility, the Ministry of SAFRON still serves as a main channel for federal resources allocated to FATA, under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). In addition, SAFRON also plays an important role in negotiating with the Development Finance Institutions and other donors for all foreign assistance for development projects and programmes in FATA.<sup>33</sup> Hence, both the Provincial Government of the KP and the Federal Government/SAFRON use their ultimate authority to set the parameters within which the FATA Secretariat may function. In order to understand how the state's policies adopted for FATA permeate its own institutions, I would like to start my discussion by analysing the narrative of Rahimullah Yousufzai: *'In 1997, the concept of 'one man one vote' was given to tribal people by a caretaker government – by President Farooq Leghari – despite opposition by the bureaucracy and the maliks, as they are all for the status quo. Nobody wanted a change but we must give him credit and we think he should have been backed by powerful elements in the establishment. The right to vote has been given to men and women in the tribal areas but nothing happened as perceived. People were saying it*

<sup>31</sup> Rahim ullah Yousafzai. Interview conducted at his residence in Peshawar on 12th September 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Khalid Aziz, Chairman Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training (RIPORT). He is originally from Peshawar and a retired civil servant of 33 years service, ending as Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His interview was conducted at his office in Peshawar on 10 January 2014.

<sup>33</sup> See Sahibzada Imtiaz Report, pg18.

*was a dangerous step and it would lead to chaos. For the first time the MNAs [Members of the National Assembly] were elected by the tribal people and not the maliks. In the past there used to be only a few thousand votes as only the maliks could vote and contest an election. But votes are also sold in the tribal areas and it is easy to buy votes. Hence, one can buy few thousand votes to become an MNA and that's why Ayub Afridi – a drug baron – was elected an MNA from the Khyber Agency, because he bought all the votes and then also other rich people were able to buy votes. So whenever reforms have been introduced like this 'one man one vote' – the people of FATA welcomed it and it did not lead to anarchy as the bureaucracy and other people had been warning. I believe reforms are welcomed; they can take root and they can work. But you have to reform, and oppose any excuses based on the premise that it is not the appropriate time or that the tribal people do not want reforms'.<sup>34</sup>*

The above excerpt is an optimistic understanding of the state's efforts in assimilating and engaging FATA by providing opportunities for greater political enfranchisement. But, on the other hand, these efforts ignore how the new avenues and opportunities opened up for the local people can shape up when combined with ways of life in FATA. Therefore, the practices shaped by these policies produce a complex and multi-layered reality. In the contemporary context, buying votes to become an MNA or Senator has become a common practice in FATA. Even the most genuine people would require money to compete with their rivals. The more important aspect is that votes are also openly bought and sold in local *Jirgas* (meetings) in FATA (AWAZ, 2011). The value of one vote runs to millions of Rupees (AWAZ, 2011). To become a senator, it costs around Rs. 150 million to buy one MNA. There are 20 seats allocated for FATA representatives in the Pakistan Parliament – 12 in the National Assembly and 8 in the Senate. Although the MNAs and Senators have federal representation, they cannot legislate for their own area or advocate for the rights of their own people like parliamentarians from other provinces. However, these seats allow them access to money allocated for development in FATA. Furthermore, serving from these positions at federal level helps them to largely influence the development projects and programmes, which in turn strengthens their hold in their respective areas. These local intricacies work against those who lack any social, political and economic connections with state structures. These complex dynamics can be simply illustrated: the same MNAs who represent the state at a national level also run small manufacturing units in the FATA with stolen electricity (Mohmand, 2013), hence violating the laws of the very state they actually represent at the federal level. However, I encountered young tribal students raising questions about the absolute power the Political Agent enjoys in an Agency under FCR (the Frontier Crimes Regulation), hence questioning why MNAs are virtually subject to the will of their respective political agents, who can place them under house arrest, banish them, or even have their properties seized or demolished. This is a classic example of the fluidity prevalent among state institutions, representing the conflicting nature and role of the state at different levels. The arrival of the international community through local NGOs fed into this complicated fluid relationship.

## 6. The Rise of Local NGOs

The development agencies further appeared to have overlooked the networks of patronage as previously discussed above in this chapter. The local NGOs emphasised their effectiveness mainly by pointing towards the corruption prevalent within state institutions. Hadayatullah Wazir emphasised: *'FATA Secretariat is not doing anything peculiar to be precise. Corruption is really high. When the funds come, only 10 per cent of the total amount is invested. Why is it that the government installs 6 tube wells in a place where only one tube well is required?'*<sup>35</sup> He emphasised this further by saying that NGOs are comparatively more effective in conducting their work because their development strategy involves the community. Further, he added that the GOP intervenes without consulting the community representatives and the *'representatives are there such as from Kuki Khel, Bora Khel and Mada Khel,*

<sup>34</sup> Rahimullah Yousafzai. Interview was conducted at his residence in Peshawar on 12th September 2012.

<sup>35</sup> In an interview with Hadayatullah Wazir, CEO of an NGO working in North Waziristan in Peshawar on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

*but they are not consulted'. He said that donor interventions through NGOs were more efficient because the donors consulted people, and their interventions were based on the need of the community: 'We involve people and take advice from people and intervene openly. We discuss with religious clerics, with the Taliban or the main actors operating in the area. We are from the Mada Khel tribe, which is the chief tribe. People know my family and trust them; we have held a dialogue, and then with foreigners as well'.<sup>36</sup>*

By using a neutral community, the development discourse ignores the characteristics of the community it is referring to. This further overlooks the ground realities of a specific community it is aiming to target. On the other hand, the statement above shows a complex social organisation of FATA communities, which operate through lineage or a patronage based network. This failure to recognise, acknowledge and internalise the local organisation and complex dynamics results in working through the same local geographies of power these agencies are aiming to change. These governance reforms and capacity-building programmes are the main projects in which donors are intervening through local NGOs in FATA. But an in-depth analysis of how these programmes are perceived by the local NGOs contradicted the main agenda of these development agencies. The local NGOs instead showed concern towards the effectiveness of capacity-building projects implemented by the donors: *'There has been plenty of discussion about reforms, good governance, civil rights – and plenty of such projects are coming in, but locals do not understand them as they believe that the NGOs come and they even allocate money but they also distribute it among themselves. Because most donors who come spend money on seminars and workshops to raise awareness about, maybe, reforms, governance and drones – which are mostly limited to discussions. It is not affecting the normal people as they need to make their living and survive and such debates are not helpful. They do not find human rights discussion helpful – people are more practical and they ask for schools and hospitals – things which are more material and which can benefit them directly'.<sup>37</sup>*

Often communities are perceived as static, simple and identical where measures can be implemented as planned and perceived by the main agencies. This phenomenon is also visible in FATA, a region that was vastly unknown to most development agencies and vice versa. In such a scenario, even *'a well meaning outsider's best intentions to provide aid will be futile if none of his or her priorities corresponds with those of the person being helped nor engage with his or her culture and political and economic institutions'* (Harragin, 2004:325). Therefore, by overlooking local socially complex organisation and elevating FATA society as the 'true community', development agencies exacerbated exclusion, allowing elite capture and misreading representation. Local NGOs were therefore incorporated to create awareness about governance reforms and building a civil society in FATA, and facilitated by the GOP by issuing a non-objection certificate (NOC). The right to grant access, however, lies with the FATA Secretariat, the FATA DA and the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA). Due to lack of accessibility by development agencies and limited accessibility by the GOP in the region, only those locals from FATA who were mainly settled in the KP districts and other cities participated as the voice of 'community' in FATA in conducting the development work. This situation, known as 'elite capture', involves individuals with higher access to social, political and economic power dominating and manipulating interactions between the community and development organisations to suit their own needs. This was also the case for the privileged class from FATA present in the administered districts of KP, which occupies all the major platforms for discussion, implementation or even governance, according to which the policies are designed and implemented. The statement below not only highlights this phenomenon of elite capture but also points towards the complexity these new actors have brought on to the scene, further complicating ground realities in FATA: *'It is not a problem from the Taliban. Because when local people want something, then Taliban*

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<sup>36</sup> In an interview with Hadayatullah Wazir, CEO of an NGO working on North Waziristan in Peshawar on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Humayun, a local Pukhtun from South Waziristan, met him while attending an event, 'Pre-development budget 2014–15 Consultation', organised by the Post Crises Needs Assessments (PCNA) on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013, Pearl Continental (PC) Hotel in Peshawar.

*cannot go against it. Much as they seem strong from outside, they are not as strong for the local people. They are strong for individual people but not for a quam [tribe]. In our area, the Taliban came for a piece of land so people refused, but in fact they picked up their weapons and aimed at them. The little problem we experience is from the FATA Secretariat, because they want funds to be generated/ channelled through them. They say 'everything that will happen in FATA should be channelled through us', whether it is the FATA Secretariat or whether it is the Pakistani Army. The Army comes and also inquires at home, what kind of problems we are addressing through our organisation. So for us, the problem is not local people or Taliban either but the FATA Secretariat and Army'.<sup>38</sup>*

The above statement was made by a CEO of an NGO when asked about the problems, if any, they experience from the Taliban in carrying out development work. The statement presents the local perspective that sees the FATA Secretariat as more problematic than the Taliban, as the Taliban provides locals with more autonomy. Therefore, the use of alternative avenues of funding by the donor community, with the aim of developing a civil society in FATA, has further excluded and segregated those with no access to social, political and economic power structures. The extension of adult franchise and the Political Parties Act further restricted access only to those who enjoyed a monopoly over both legal and illegal matters in FATA. The tenuous link between the state and local people has been further affected, with coercive measures with no detailed plan or understanding of the problem. Hence, it is extremely precarious to assume that more resources and reforms in such a context will regulate services and also provide for security. Such illusions have instead placed the poor, for whom the reforms have been introduced, more at risk than anyone else of both the service capture and security provision, with obfuscating and eliminating range of even their immediate sources.

## 7. Conclusion

The FATA SDP was not a plan without a logic, which requires praise. However, the goodwill of the programme could not eliminate the component of power. The international community as experts, along with the national government and provincial governments, attempted to introduce a practice whereby empowerment could be achieved to an optimal level. The banks were not able to interpret socially complex processes, despite adopting an ethnographic approach to understanding the community in FATA. The limitations are set on complications of implementation experienced by the GOP previously, the SDP largely focused on the aspect of corruption prevalent among the government officials, hence placing the conduct of government officials under examination; however, it left the conduct of the community (i.e., stakeholders), senior officials, military officials and local NGOs unexamined and unimproved.

The emphasis of these 'comprehensive development programs' for FATA is to 'transform society', significantly similar to programmes adopted by the British government in British India for village reconstruction (Li, 2007:232). The plan focused on economic uplift only, assuming that this would mitigate and manage the fall out. The socially complex processes at the local level are rendered technical. Institutions of justice became a matter of differentiating between legal (state) and illegal (tribal); the accountable (tribal) and the corrupt (government official); the plan that would benefit the poor (a local Pukhtun) from the plan that benefit the rich (a *malik*).

And in the whole process, the complexity and fluidity prevalent among state institutions was completely ignored. The narratives instead presented the Pakistani state as an agent of change, transformation and liberation in FATA, ignoring the way its different entities presented a complex and fluid relationship not only among themselves, but also in relation to the local dynamics, producing a multi-layered reality. The arrival of the international community through local NGOs further fed into this complicated fluid relationship.

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<sup>38</sup> In an interview with the CEO of a local NGO working in North Waziristan, based in Peshawar, on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

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