

Cultivating Development: The State and FATA Pukhtuns Encounter through the Discourse of Development

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Abstract

The events following the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers in the USA dramatically brought Afghanistan and its neighbouring region FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) to world attention. In an attempt to curtail militancy, FATA received unprecedented local and international assistance with a focus on development. The local complex dynamics in FATA are considered a result of scarce resources, resolvable by providing opportunities to people in FATA. But this approach, despite recognising the economic need of the region, fails to take into account how the state and its interventions interact with the local ways of life in FATA and what kind of outcomes political economy of such structures produce from these interactions. This study seeks to establish that viewing FATA's underdevelopment as a result of neglect and lack of development initiatives by the Government of Pakistan (GoP) presents a partial reality. Through analysing the data and reports, the study outlines that GoP has carried out development initiatives. However these interventions failed to produce the outcomes as perceived from these interventions. By analysing the interventions in the livelihood sector by the GoP, this paper argues that the state's perception of change through 'development' requires a more nuanced understanding of local realities in FATA.

Keywords: Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan, Pukhtuns, Underdevelopment, Political Economy of Development, Livelihood Development, Agriculture interventions, Government of Pakistan, Political Culture, International Assistance, Trade, Illegal economy

1. Introduction

When I started my fieldwork on FATA¹, lack of livelihood opportunities continually emerged as one of the major themes with the most respondents. Ayaz Wazir, a renowned FATA expert who has formerly served as the Ambassador of Pakistan in numerous countries, expressed his views on FATA's current situation and how it requires more consideration and special treatment, in view of the amount of neglect it has experienced historically:

'FATA should be treated like Europe after the second world war when Europe was destroyed and a Marshall plan was devised for Europe, and within no time a lot of money pumped in and used properly to construct buildings and industries – so the damaged face of Europe was repaired and Europe started going onward. In FATA you need to do the development phase of FATA. You have done absolutely nothing for the

¹ 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 where required.

last 65 years. We don't see any industrial units or people employed in any of the tribal agencies. There are no respectable livelihood and earning opportunities for people of FATA. They go for even small manual jobs to Karachi, such as shoe shining, or even come to Peshawar. This is the worst a human being can do: to travel all this distance and live away from his family just to shine other people's shoes'.²

Based on the different narratives collected, neglect is used to emphasise the lack of livelihood opportunities for the local people in FATA. Providing livelihood opportunities to the local Pukhtuns of FATA is also one of the major themes of the FATA Sustainable Development Plan (FATA SDP):

'Agriculture and livestock rearing are the main source of subsistence for about two-thirds of the population. There is high dependency of the local population on agriculture and its allied subsectors including livestock, irrigation, forest, and fisheries. However, base line data indicates that the growth of the agriculture sector and the economic returns for the farmers have remained unsatisfactory over time. This has resulted in the highest levels of poverty, food insecurity and malnourishment in FATA when compared with the national statistics. The FATA Secretariat was established in 2006 with the objective to make focused efforts on the development agenda for FATA' (Agriculture Policy FATA, 2014: 3).³

Therefore, when livelihood opportunities are discussed, the agriculture and livestock sector takes the lead as the major source of sustainability and economic returns for the local people. This narrative is also evidenced by the projects initiated by international aid organisations currently working in the region. The FATA Rural Development Program (FRDP) is one such example. FRDP (2007–2012), a \$60 million project, was initiated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) along with the GOP [Government of Pakistan]. FRDP's aim was to focus on three major sectors: agriculture, natural resources and rural development. The project's aims were set according to the understanding presented in a report presented by ADB (2013:9):

*'The Federally Administered FATA (FATA) in Pakistan is one of the **country's most under-developed regions**. The majority of the population **lives off agriculture and livestock** and cannot move out of below-subsistence livelihoods because of low farm and livestock productivity, weak and inefficient management of natural resources, and poor access to productive and physical infrastructure. Moreover, the degradation of the physical environment is contributing to the pervasive poverty'.*

As a consequence, it is believed that below-subsistence livelihoods impel the locals to rely heavily on across-border trading activities, also known as an illegal economy. Mahmood Shah, on the issue of monitoring across-border trading activities, states:

'If you look at this all together, it is not possible [to monitor or restrict such activities] as people will die of poverty. One day I took the governor [of KP] there – showed him that behind this mountain there is no route and ahead no route, there is just a single route coming down from Afghanistan – if you stop the smuggling of goods on which the whole tribal economy is dependent than unless you have an alternative economy, it will be a bad solution to stop it'.⁴

A similar link between the poor state of subsistent agricultural prospects and the flourishing of an illegal economy can also be found in contemporary academic writings:

'Because of the lack of new irrigation schemes, agriculture is not capable of employing a large number of people. In fact, families sometimes sell their land to

² Ayaz Wazir hails from North Waziristan. He regularly writes on FATA in Pakistani and International newspapers.

³ See Agriculture policy for FATA (2014–2024), FATA Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

⁴ Interview with Brigadier (Retired) Mahmood Shah in Peshawar, 5th September 2012. Brigadier (Retired) Mahmood Shah is a Security and Defence Analyst. He hails from the Hoti village in the 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.

members of other tribes or clans and give up on agriculture. Petty trade and transport along with illegal economic activities like smuggling are the main economic assets' (Verkaaik, Khan and Rehman, 2014:68).

Most importantly, the poor state of livelihood opportunities in the region is seen as a prime factor in retaining the tribal system among the local Pukhtuns of the region. Brig. (Rt) Mahmood Shah⁵ observed that *'if people were given economic opportunities, the people would automatically jump out of the tribal system where poverty and insecurity binds them as a tribe'*. He further explained, using his own case as an example, that *'[b]eing a Yusufzai Pukhtun, my tribe has integrated with the wider system and I do not act on behalf of the tribe but I am only responsible for my own family'*. Hence poor socio-economic indicators in the region are considered as paramount in helping the tribal system to survive, further added Omar Khan Afridi⁶, a retired government official, while discussing the lack of opportunities in FATA. In discussing the spill-over effect of the interventions by USAID in water, land and dams, Mujahid Saleem, an Economist at USAID, highlighted *'how interventions in agriculture are not only needed but they also change the mindset of people living in those areas'*.⁷

This paper analyses the disappointment that exists in the above narratives about the lack of initiative on the part of the government in providing livelihood opportunities for the people in the region. These narratives further illustrate that this government's failure to improve the agriculture prospects of the region (which are considered a major source of potential livelihood opportunities) explains people's reliance on smuggling and other illegal livelihood means. However upon further inquiry, it became apparent that providing livelihood opportunities is also seen as a trigger in changing people's perceptions and mind-set. More opportunities and better prospects are believed to allow people to escape the tribal system, which is considered a major hindrance to extending state institutions and national laws in the region. In this paper I use data from government reports and studies of the 1970s and 80s, and the narratives of retired government officials who were involved in the initial processes of the development initiatives in the region. Through the empirical data, this paper shows that there have been state interventions in FATA's agriculture sector. However, these interventions failed to achieve the desired outcomes as perceived by the Government of Pakistan (GOP). This raises the important question of the extent to which the scarce resources of the region contribute towards the local complex dynamics in FATA. In order to answer this question, I consider agricultural interventions initiated by the GOP to improve agriculture prospects in the region. Furthermore, through analysing the irrigation schemes and their outcome, I show that the above narratives fail to take into account how these interventions are received and perceived by the local Pukhtuns and how the local dynamics in turn shape these interventions.

In the following sections I analyse the agricultural interventions by the GOP in FATA, and the real and perceived impacts of these interventions. In section two, I explain the reasons why state interventions failed to achieve the desired impact. I show this by analysing the GOP's development interventions in agriculture and the interactions between these interventions and the local dynamics of Pukhtun society in FATA. In sections three and four, I focus on the analysis of a specific scheme in a specific location, in order to understand its impact and outcome as shaped by local Pukhtuns. Through the example of the Bara Irrigation Scheme and Bara Market – a market of illegal goods – I show that the development interventions combine with local ways of life and produce a complex and multi-layered reality. In the last section, I conclude by stating that FATA is not an instance of complete neglect by the GOP, but instead presents a good example of how development interventions are simplified by focusing only on improving the socio-economic indicators of the region. By failing to

⁵ In an interview with Brigadier (Retired) Mahmood Shah in Peshawar, 5th September 2012.

⁶ Omar Khan Afridi is a retired government official and has served on several senior positions. He originally hails from FR Kohat. Some of the senior positions he served on includes: Political Agent in South Waziristan, Home and Tribal Secretary, Chief Secretary Governor, Chief Secretary Planning and Development Baluchistan and Secretary to the President of Pakistan (Farooq Laghari). His interview was conducted on 20th July 2012.

⁷ In an interview with Mujahid Saleem, an economist at USAID. The interview was conducted in Peshawar at his office on 28th July 2012.

take into account how these interventions will be perceived and received by the local people, the intervention not only fails to provide the results expected from the intervention, but produces a much more complex and multi-layered reality.

2. Improving Livelihoods in FATA: Planned and Unplanned Results

'FATA is such a terrain that it experiences shortage of water... Building dams in some areas has been found valuable. For instance, in Mohmand we have constructed a dam called the Khursheed dam. The area it irrigates is rich in tomatoes and the interesting thing is that when that area has tomatoes, they are not available anywhere else, which makes the price of tomatoes as much as Rs. 150 per kilo. It is an excellent poverty reduction strategy, and that dam was only constructed for this one objective while evaluating the comparative advantage of the area. Similar extensive water channels have also been constructed in Khyber, Bajaur and Mohmand agencies and we are in the process of making the whole thing sustainable by improving the water channels and also by resolving the electricity issues, either through solar means or others'.⁸

These views were expressed by the Deputy Director of the FATA Rural Development Program (FRDP)⁹ in one of my conversations with him while discussing the effect that interventions in agriculture and livestock can have on poverty, where the outcome and results can be visible in as little as just over 6 months – very rapidly compared to interventions in sectors such as infrastructure, as he pointed out. Mohmand Agency can be divided into two different geographical zones with respect to agriculture. One part of the Agency is in a low production zone, located in a low rainfall zone in a mountainous region with a few sources of water. The second part is in an area located on the administrative border of the Peshawar District, which is highly productive due to its proximity to the left bank canal system of the Warsak Dam¹⁰ constructed on the Kabul River. Apart from the contemporary efforts as illustrated by Junaid Khan above, 1989 statistics show that seven water schemes were completed in the Mohmand Agency between 1982 and 1989, at a cost of Rs.18.44 million, which provided water for 813 hectares through irrigation¹¹ (Table 1).

Table 1: FATA DC Ground Water Schemes in the Mohmand Agency 1982–1989

	Scheme	Year/s of Completion	Cost of Completion (million)	Irrigated Areas (Acres)
1	Sinking and Installation of 4 tube wells in the Shati Khel Area	1982–1983	1.937	450
2	Ground Water investigation for the development of lands, Phase (1): 5 tube wells	1982–1983	2.103	
3	Conversion of 2 existing tube wells into tube wells	1983–1984	0.469	210
4	Ground Water investigation for the development of land, Phase (2): 6 tube wells and 2 conversions	1983–1984	3.092	
5	Ground water investigation for the development of lands in the uncovered part of the Agency, Phase (3): 16 tube wells	1986–1987	7.858	
6	Conversion of 8 existing tube wells into tube wells	1987–1988	2.166	1125
7	Conversion of 3 existing tube wells into tube wells	1988–1989	0.821	225

Source: FATA Development Corporation, NWFP Peshawar

⁸ In an interview with Junaid Khan, Deputy Director of FATA Rural Development Plan. The interview was held at his office at Warsak Road Peshawar on 14th June 2012.

⁹ The FATA Rural Development Plan (FRDP), a project completed by ADB in collaboration with the GOP.

¹⁰ Warsak Dam is a mass concrete gravity dam located on the Kabul River, approximately 20 km northwest of the city of Peshawar. It was completed in two separate phases. The first phase was completed in 1960, which consisted of the construction of the dam and irrigation tunnels and the installation of four power-generating units. The second phase included adding two additional power-generating units. Currently, WAPDA is working on it to further increase its capacity through a hydropower project.

¹¹ FATA DC Report No. F.B/101/88-89/2526 14th September 1989 to the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions Islamabad, Annexure B.

On the other hand, when a local Pukhtun, an engineer by profession and resident of both the Mohmand Agency and Peshawar, was asked about development interventions in the agriculture sector by the GOP, he said: 'I don't know any [irrigation] schemes in the Mohmand [Agency] initiated by the government which you are referring to. Mohmand is the top most deficient Agency in terms of water resources'¹².

The above two quotes contradict each other in terms of any previous or new development initiatives by the GOP in the region. This refusal to acknowledge development initiatives by the GOP and such contradictory statements came up quite consistently during my fieldwork. These inconsistencies in the data collection encouraged me to look into these initiatives further. The disagreement in the two statements above questions the real and perceived outcomes of such interventions. In order to analyse the discrepancy, it is important to first analyse the actual and locally recognised levels of interventions by the GOP. In order to do this I analysed interventions in the agriculture sector (which is considered a key sector for providing livelihood opportunities in FATA) during the 1970s and 1980s in order to explain the perceived and real impacts of these interventions in the next section.

Table 2: Budget Allocation per Sector under the Annual Development Plans in Rs. (Million)¹³

Sector	1977–1978	1978–1979	1979–1980	1980–1981	1981–1982	1982–1983	1983–1984	1984–1985
Agriculture	12.45	21.10	24.57	20.00	14.88	22.40	33.10	41.31
Power	23.47	24.87	23.77	27.25	37.17	49.85	57.67	65.01
Communication	66.73	21.16	75.02	80.84	92.58	110.23	119.43	151.51
Physical Planning and Housing	19.34	21.04	25.90	23.92	35.80	57.38	50.12	54.17
Education	35.54	46.95	42.55	41.95	61.52	81.50	60.58	101.46
Health	9.80	20.82	18.31	19.17	28.48	27.76	19.40	33.29
Rural Development	5.70	5.77	5.81	9.96	13.38	12.16	16.26	17.61
Planning and Development	0.16	0.10	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.19	0.27	1.024
Urban Development				0.40	0.09			
Total	171.22	217.72	209.67	222.70	290.23	352.03	340.51	442.18

The agriculture sector of FATA received due consideration, receiving the fourth highest allocation after the education, power and communication (roads) sectors (Table 2). FATA consists of mostly barren or snow-covered mountains with varying degrees of rainfall, ranging between 300 and 400mm annually (Ditcher, 1967). Cultivation is carried out in a very small proportion of the total area. Lower parts of the valley are best suited for cultivation in this hilly region (Ditcher, 1967). Of the total reported area of 2.7 million hectares, barely 200,000 hectares (a little over 7 per cent) is cultivated (GoNWFP, 2005a). A little over 44 per cent of the cultivated area in FATA is irrigated, while the remaining farmland relies exclusively on rainfall (GoNWFP, 2005a). To start with, the GOP adopted supplementary methods of improving agricultural productivity. These included awarding students in FATA scholarships to study subjects related to agriculture as well as for agriculture training programmes in State universities in Pakistan. For instance, 346 scholarships were awarded to students

¹² In an interview with Akbar, an Engineer and a resident of both the Mohmand Agency and Peshawar. His interview was conducted on 8th January 2014.

¹³ **Table compiled from the following sources:**

Data collected from five year plans and economic surveys of Pakistan at Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

FATA DC year-wise annual Development Programmes Allocation, 1971–1988.

Planning and Development Department, Government of KP, Peshawar.

Ministry of Finance, Islamabad Division.

Government of NWFP, Economic Review of FATA, 1970–1980, Peshawar, KP.

from FATA between 1976 and 1988 in order to strengthen the agriculture sector.¹⁴ The number of scholarships was further increased to 100 per annum in 1984.¹⁵

A second productivity improvement strategy addressed the terrain; being uneven, barren and rocky, FATA could not be made functional without employing heavy machinery. In order to facilitate the whole process, the government provided the local Pukhtuns with machinery that could be rented from the government at subsidised prices (55 per cent less than normal prices), in order to help them level their land.¹⁶ A significant increase in the number of tractors and small bulldozers in FATA is visible when we compare the 1974–1975 statistics to the 1987–1988 statistics (Table 3).

Table 3: Tractor / Bulldozer population in FATA, 1974–1975 and 1987–1988¹⁷

Agency/ Frontier Regions (FR)	1974–1975				1987–1988			
	Tractor		Bulldozer		Tractor		Bulldozer	
	Gov.	Private	Gov.	Private	Gov.	Private	Gov.	Private
Bajaur	2	4				60	11	
Mohmand		7				170	6	
Khyber		25				60	11	
Orakzai						27		
Kurram		198			4	380	10	
North Waziristan	4	7			3	136	8	
South Waziristan	1	9			1	90	9	
Frontier Regions							20	
Total	7	250	31		8	912	75	

Table 4: Provision of Seed and Fertilizer in FATA, 1970–1988¹⁸

Agency/ FR	1970–1982	1982–1983	1983–1984	1984–1985	1985–1986	1986–1987	1987–1988
Bajuar	Seed	7,924	4,284	3,738	6,744	6,744	7,343
	Fertilizer	15,400	13,916	10,836	9,762	9,762	15,000
Mohmand	Seed	7,924	4,284	3,738	6,744	6,744	7,246
	Fertilizer	15,400	13,916	10,836	9,762	9,762	15,000
Khyber	Seed	7,924	4,284	3,738	6,744	6,744	2,344
	Fertilizer	15,400	13,916	10,836	9,782	9,782	8,000
Kurram	Seed	9,100	17,276	9,534	9,600	9,600	8,046
	Fertilizer	15,400	30,044	20,234	15,750	15,750	16,446
Orakzai	Seed	9,100	17,276	9,534	9,600	9,600	4,050
	Fertilizer	15,400	30,044	20,254	15,750	15,750	10,000
North Waziristan	Seed				2,100	2,100	7,000
	Fertilizer				4,396	4,396	13,775
South Waziristan	Seed				2,100	2,100	7,000
	Fertilizer				4,396	4,396	13,775

¹⁴ Pakistan: An Official Hand Book, 1978–1981, Islamabad (pg.580).

¹⁵ Planning Commission, the 6th five-year plan, Islamabad 1983 (pg.212).

¹⁶ Agriculture Engineering FATA's Development Report to the Ministry of SAFRON, Islamabad, vide letter no. 1507/AE/TAP Peshawar dated 27.3.1985, pg.5.

¹⁷ Table compiled from the following sources:

Department of Agricultural Engineering FATA, KP Peshawar.

FATA Development Statistics 1988–1989.

Socio-Economic indicators of FATA 1990.

¹⁸ Table compiled from the following sources:

Director Agriculture FATA: Report to the Ministry of SAFRON, Islamabad on Agricultural Development vide letter no. 2248/DA/FATA, Peshawar, dated 29.3.1989.

FATA Development Statistics, 1988–1989.

Socio-Economic Indicators of FATA 1990.

Third, the tribesmen were also provided with improved quality seeds at subsidised rates through the Agriculture Department of FATA, based at Peshawar (Table 4). In addition, demonstration and seed multiplication plots were also established; these increased from 10 in 1970 to 135 between 1987 and 1988.¹⁹ Furthermore, to protect the crops from insects, pests and diseases, hand sprays were distributed and provided to the farmers at subsidised rates.²⁰ From 3 fruit nursery farms providing 40,000 fruit plants to the farmers, the number increased to 7 in 1975 and 20 between 1986 and 1987, providing 180,000 fruit plants annually.²¹ This is further proof that, contrary to the established narrative, agriculture in the FATA region was not ignored or neglected by the Pakistani state.

Finally, apart from these measures, one of the major steps taken by the GOP towards improving and increasing the amount of cultivated land was to overcome the shortage of water through various irrigation schemes. Agricultural statistics for FATA are not available prior to the years 1973–1974. However, after 1974, a number of schemes and projects initiated to develop FATA’s agricultural sector can be found.²² During the 1970s and 1980s, the GOP undertook initiatives to develop new sources of water supply and to improve existing water distribution systems. Among others, two of the main areas of irrigation in which the Government worked were surface area development and ground water development. The FATA Development Corporation (FATA DC) based in Peshawar completed 267 schemes between 1970 and 1989 at a cost of Rs.537,944 million.²³ The highest surface water schemes were built in South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Kurram agencies (Table 5). However, no surface water scheme can be initiated in Mohmand due to already limited water supplies.²⁴

Table 5: Surface Water Development in FATA 1975–1989

Agency/ FR	Schemes Completed (no.)	Period of Completion	Completion cost (Million)	Area Irrigated (Acres)
Bajaur	9	1978–1989	9.92	2,399
Mohmand	-	-	-	-
Khyber	2	1979–1986	62.77	47,394
Orakzai	19	1980–1989	23.47	5,761
Kurram	59	1976–1989	115.29	62,544
North Waziristan	61	1979–1989	98.07	27,732
South Waziristan	73	1978–1989	103.48	24,567
FR Peshawar	-	-	-	-
FR Kohat	-	-	-	-
FR Bannu	6	1979–1989	7.26	2,592
FR D.I.Khan	31	1977–1989	34.06	5,839
Survey Investigation	7	1976–1989	83.63	
FATA Total	267	1976–1989	537.94	178,828

Source: FATA Development Corporation, NWFP Peshawar

¹⁹ Agriculture development report of agriculture director FATA, Peshawar to the Ministry of SAFRON, Islamabad, vide letter no. 2248/da (FATA) dated 29.3.1989.

²⁰ Agriculture development report of agriculture director FATA, Peshawar to the Ministry of SAFRON, Islamabad, vide letter no. 2248/da (FATA) dated 29.3.1989.

²¹ FATA Development Statistics, 1988–1989, pg.236.

²² Schemes for land development, afforestation and road-side plantation, the control of insects, pests and fungal diseases, the establishment of vegetable farms and fruit nursery farms, the extension of cattle breeding and mass multiplication of sheep breeding, the awarding of scholarships to tribal students for DVM degree courses and the opening up of Veterinary dispensaries are some of the important projects initiated for the development of the agriculture sector in FATA.

²³ Summary submitted to the standing committee of the Senate on the development of FATA, Vide FATA-DC Letter No. F.B/ 101/ 88-89/ 2526 dated 14th September 1989.

²⁴ Summary submitted to the standing committee of the Senate on the development of FATA, Vide FATA-DC Letter No. F.B/ 101/ 88-89/ 2526 dated 14th September 1989.

Therefore, for areas such as the Mohmand Agency, the FATA DC launched an extensive programme of ground water exploitation in order to bring cultivable land under irrigation. The use of ground water for both irrigation and drinking purposes increased rapidly in FATA after 1970. Between 1975 and 1988, the FATA DC completed 87 schemes to exploit potential ground water resources at a cost of Rs. 312,428 million.²⁵ These schemes were conducted in areas where surface water schemes could not be built. The programme for ground water development established 500 tubewells in Bajaur, Mohmand and Frontier regions of Peshawar, Kohat and D.I.Khan. Under the programmes for developing ground water, seven schemes were completed in the Mohmand Agency between 1982 and 1989, providing irrigation water to an area of 2,010 acres of that Agency (Table 1).

When I spoke to a retired irrigation Engineer from FATA (2012) at his residence in Peshawar about the GOP's role in neglecting the region, he emphasised the scarcity of resources available to the FATA DC, stating that *'the cost incurred by installing these schemes [irrigation] was much beyond the level of our economic capacity'*.²⁶ This suggests that the GOP was willing to sacrifice scarce national resources for FATA, but hindsight also tells us that these resources were not effectively deployed. To start with, a lack of planning and the realisation of shortcomings were major factors at the government level when implementing or initiating such schemes. These shortcomings rendered these schemes useless and unappreciated by tribesmen. For instance, *'the tube well drills indicated that in most areas the water bearing strata were at extreme depths, causing inadequate water discharge'*.²⁷ In such areas, ground water could not be economically exploited for agricultural purposes because of the high cost of pumping and the inadequacy of the flow. In areas where the conditions are favourable, ground water is still being utilised. Lastly, the adoption of tube wells in FATA was closely related to the electrification of villages; lack of electricity was found to be a major constraint on tube well development in FATA. According to statistics published in 1988–1989, a total of 609 trial tube wells were attempted across the entire FATA, out of which 472 were successful, but by 1989 it had only been possible to energise 282.²⁸

Electricity was not only a prerequisite for tube well development, but also crucial for the general economic development and social progress of FATA. In order to execute development schemes in FATA, the extension of electric power was vital. The generation and transmission of electricity in FATA is the responsibility of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). The power sector received the third highest budget allocation, in accordance with its relative importance after the communication (roads) and education sectors (Table 2). Electric power is currently present in nearly every Agency of FATA and Table 6 shows a continuous annual increase in generating and transmitting electricity in FATA. From Rs.0.41 million in 1971, the amount allocated for the development of power sector increased to Rs.13.47 million in 1974, Rs.66.70 million in 1985 and Rs. 102.99 in 1988.

²⁵ FATA DC Development report no. F.B/101/88-89/2526 14th September, 1989 to the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions Islamabad, Annexure -B

²⁶ Interview with a retired Engineer with extensive experience of working on project in FATA. The interview was on 15th August 2012.

²⁷ Interview with a retired senior government official in Peshawar. The interview was conducted in Peshawar on 2nd September 2012.

²⁸ FATA DC Report on Physical Achievements in the water sector, submitted to the States and Frontier Regions Division, Islamabad on 27th September 1989.

Table 6: Power Connections and Village Electrification²⁹

Agency/ FR	1975-1976	1989-1990	1898-1990			Total
		Village(s) Electrified	Domestic/ Commercial Connections	Industrial Connection	Tube-wells Connection	
Bajaur	12	273	6782	69	85	6936
Mohmand	20	488	7234	259	449	7942
Khyber	18	497	14686	463	113	15262
Orakzai	13	310	1203	6	6	1216
Kurram	27	289	16419	84	2	16606
North Waziristan	43	170	6862	171	56	7091
South Waziristan	3	287	7672	73	83	7828
FR Peshawar	*	204	1930	8	2	1940
FR Kohat	*	183	6696	160	104	6649
FR Bannu	*	126	1722	98	6	1823
FR D.I.Khan	*	48	*	*	*	*
FATA Total	136	2885	69093	1358	918	71380

Table 7: Respective Financial Allocation to Agriculture and Power Sectors in Rs. Million

Sector	Agriculture	Power/ Electricity
1971-1972	-	0.412
1974-1975	6.26	13.473
1975-1976	18.306	11.785
1976-1977	17.013	15.884
1977-1978	12.451	23.47
1978-1979	21.104	24.87
1979-1980	24.574	23.77
1980-1981	20	27.25
1981-1982	14.877	37.17
1982-1983	22.4	49.85
1983-1984	33.1	57.67
1984-1985	41.306	65.007
1985-1986	41.7	66.7
1986-1987	46.053	75.596
1987-1988	44.534	92.409
1988-1989	23.841	102.997

Sources: Data collected from five-year plans and economic surveys of Pakistan at the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad

Only 42 villages were found to be electrified between 1947 and 1970 and most of them were in the Frontier Regions of FATA.³⁰ However, the number increased to 136 in 1975 and further to 1,629 in 1985 and 2,885 in 1989³¹ (Table 6 and Table 7). In 1988-1989, with 2,885 villages electrified, there were a total of 71,380 connections installed in FATA, comprising 69,093 domestic/commercial connections, 1,358 industrial connections and 918 tube well connections (Table 6). It was further revealed in the data that during the 1970s and 80s, FATA only experienced load shedding for about 2-

²⁹Table compiled from the following sources:

Economic Review of FATA 1970, P&D Department, Government of Pakistan.

FATA Development Statistics 1989-1990.

Socio-Economic indicators of FATA, 1990.

³⁰ The information collected in an Interview with a retired government official. The interview was conducted in Peshawar on 2nd September 2012.

³¹ Government of NWFP, Agency wise socio-economic indicators of FATA Peshawar, 1990, pg. 21.

3 hours a day throughout the year.³² But again, as with the question of irrigation, in the process of data collection I found that there was a pervasive belief that the power situation in FATA was dire: *'People [of FATA] are living in darkness even today [2012]; here still we [Pakistanis] experience a couple of hours of load shedding only but this is the 21st century and those people [in FATA] have no electricity at all. What would one expect from them – that they [local Pukhtuns] will shower you [Pakistanis] with flowers?'*³³

However on further inquiring the issue, it was learnt that 'during the 1970s and 80s, households in the agencies were charged a flat rate of Rs.50 per month. Despite this, households were reluctant to pay their electricity bills'.³⁴ This is verified by the fact that in 1989 the total arrears from non-payment of electricity bills in the South Waziristan Agency alone stood at Rs.17 million.³⁵ This figure only shows a fraction of the total loss that the GOP incurred in the case of electricity. Limited data or inaccessibility of data makes it difficult to evaluate the overall arrears incurred by the GOP due to non-payment by the locals. Additionally, there was a larger number of illegal connections than legal connections.³⁶ Added to that, the WAPDA was incurring continuous losses on a daily basis, subject to internal dynamics: 'In all the agencies [of FATA], stray bullets often hit transformers and damaged them'.³⁷ This made the whole process very costly for the WAPDA and therefore the government also struggled to manage the provision of electricity with no or minimal losses. This not only affected the irrigation initiatives undertaken by the government, rendering them useless, but also other development schemes. The perceptions prevalent among most respondents were not incorrect, yet they were in contradiction with the data on the state interventions in the region that was collected during my fieldwork.

Despite this series of interventions in the agriculture sector—namely, agricultural training programmes for local students; measures to improve the local terrain for agriculture; the provision of improved quality seeds and sprays to save crops from pests, insects and other diseases; the installation of surface water schemes as well as the exploitation of ground water initiatives; and the provision of electricity for the smooth operation of water schemes—people feel neglected by the GOP in terms of its investment in the region. Much of the time, it was not the actual provision of interventions such as irrigation schemes and electricity that were to blame, but the non-regularised connections, the non-payment of dues and arrears and local circumstances that contributed to the poor power situation and hence the failures of other interventions. This discrepancy between the perception of such interventions and those interventions and their outcomes themselves will be further examined in more detail in the following section.

3. Encountering Failure: Agriculture Development Plans and Local Dynamics

As seen in the previous section, contrary to prevalent perception, the GOP did make significant intervention efforts. However, the question of whether there were interventions or not is moot; instead, the aim of this analysis is to look at the *impact* of these interventions, to understand if they failed and why. This section will analyse why these interventions failed to produce the GOP's predicted outcome. Hence rather than focussing on lack of investment, for this section, I considered to analyse the

³² In an interview with a retired government official who served with the KP Government. The interview was held in Peshawar on 24th July 2012; similar information is also collected and confirmed by USAID FATA Agency profiles of 1990s.

³³ In an interview with Habib Malik Orakzai on 29th May 2012. The interview was conducted at his office in Islamabad. He works as President Mutahidda Qabail Party and President International Human Rights Organisation.

³⁴ In an interview with a retired senior government official at his residence in Peshawar on 16th July 2012.

³⁵ FATA DC Report on Physical Achievements in the water sector, submitted to the States and Frontier Regions Division, Islamabad on 27th September 1989.

³⁶ FATA DC Report on Physical Achievements in the water sector, submitted to the States and Frontier Regions Division, Islamabad on 27th September 1989.

³⁷ Interview with a retired government official at his residence in Peshawar on 16th July 2012.

interaction of the prevalent local realities with these interventions. Through this, I established that these interventions failed because instead of achieving perceptible changes in local structures by creating livelihood opportunities, they only led to a continuation of pre-existing patterns. To a large extent, what these interventions actually do is reinforce existing patterns rather than change them.

The unavailability of complete compiled statistics on FATA makes it difficult to analyse the total impact of these interventions. However, from the available data compiled and illustrated in previous reports, it is clear that the development budget increased the cultivated area from 167,000 acres to 723,470 acres in 1978.³⁸ This steady increase in the area under cultivation and production for both food crops and cash crops between 1979 and 1987 show an upward trend in the development budget allocated for agriculture (Table 8 and Table 9). During 1984–1985, the allocation was increased twice compared with the previous year in order to bring additional land under cultivation and irrigate arid areas by installing more tube wells, constructing more small dams and establishing other irrigation schemes to improve existing and construct new irrigation channels.³⁹ The FATA DC undertook various multi-sector schemes worth Rs. 537.944 million between 1976 and 1987 (Table 8).

Table 8: Trends in Principal crops between 1979 and 1987⁴⁰

Years	Area (hectares)	Food Crops		Cash Crops
		Annual Average Production (tonnes)	Area (hectares)	Annual Average Production (tonnes)
1979–1980	119,604	133,182	4,583	78,703
1980–1981	120,768	129,603	4,691	80,337
1981–1982	121,368	130,386	9,348	88,135
1982–1983	124,162	133,967	9,736	89,937
1983–1984	145,506	147,385	10,192	95,594
1984–1985	155,653	155,653	11,159	288,949
1985–1986	155,900	155,900	12,585	121,046
1986–1987	173,383	173,383	12,426	146,481

Table 9: Yield per hectare (1979–1980 and 1986–1987)⁴¹

Crops	Year	Production (tonnes)
Sugarcane	1979–1980	69,203
	1986–1987	87,051
Rice	1979–1980	8,071
	1986–1987	8,678
Maize	1979–1980	40,776
	1986–1987	35,645
Tomatoes	1979–1980	2,917
	1986–1987	3,570

³⁸ Economic Review of FATA 1970–1980, Peshawar, pp. 62–93.

³⁹ Planning Commission, the 6th five-year plan, Islamabad 1983. Pg.212.

⁴⁰ Table compiled from the following sources:

Government of NWFP, FATA Development Statistics 1988–1989.

Bureau of Statistics Planning and Development Department, NWFP

⁴¹ Table compiled from the following sources:

a) Government of NWFP, FATA Development Statistics 1988–1989;

b) Bureau of Statistics Planning and Development Department, NWFP

Table 10: Surface Water Development in FATA 1975–1989

Agency/ FR	Schemes Completed (No.)	Period of Completion	Completion cost (Million)	Area Irrigated (Acres)
Bajaur	9	1978–1989	9.92	2399
Mohmand	-	-	-	-
Khyber	2	1979–1986	62.768	47394
Orakzai	19	1980–1989	23.469	5761
Kurram	59	1976–1989	115.287	62544
North Waziristan	61	1979–1989	98.07	27732
South Waziristan	73	1978–1989	103.482	24567
FR Peshawar	-	-	-	-
FR Kohat	-	-	-	-
FR Bannu	6	1979–1989	7.264	2592
FR DIKhan	31	1977–1989	34.057	5839
Survey Investigation	7	1977–1989	83.627	-
FATA Total	267	1976–1989	537.944	178828

Source: Compiled from FATA DC reports between 1975 and 1989.

During the same time period, 178,828 acres of land were brought under irrigation and work was initiated on some very important schemes, such as the Bara River Canal System (Rs 58.4 million), the Zeiran Irrigation scheme (Rs 4.2 million) and ground water investigation in the Bajaur Agency were also completed, through the installation of 100 tube wells (Table 10). This was in addition to the ground water schemes in the Mohmand Agency discussed in previous sections. Various measures were also taken by the government to bring additional land under cultivation in order to increase the production of wheat, maize, fruits and vegetables (Tables 8 and 9).

Hence we can see that surface and ground water resources were developed, tube wells were constructed and there were programmes to introduce and popularise modern techniques, such as the use of fertilisers, improved seeds, pesticides and agricultural machinery. The expansion of investment can be seen in the increase of the allocation from an initial Rs1.653 million in 1971 to Rs12.8 million in 1977.⁴² Based on the evidence above, it would be reasonable to conclude that income and expenditure for the majority of income groups in FATA increased during the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, the land use intensity in FATA after being constant at 7.3 between 1973 to 1974 increased to 48.3 and 42.9 in 1986 and 1987, whereas in the rest of the country the ratio stood at 63.4 and 66.6 in those years.⁴³ Similarly, the cultivatable cropping intensity of FATA also increased from 99.4 in 1979–1971 to 127.3 by 1986–1987, which was higher than in the rest of Pakistan, where the intensities were 86.5 and 96.6 respectively.⁴⁴ The yield in food crops such as wheat saw a continuous rising pattern (Table 8). However, Table 8 also illustrates a 49 per cent decrease in the production of cash crops after reaching a peak in 1984–1985. On inquiring about the reasons for a decline in cash crops, I was told by a retired government official:

‘Shortage of water at sowing time and continuous border attacks [from Afghanistan] meant sugar cane yield came near to stagnation during the 1980s, mainly because of most irrigation channels remaining unused, poor water course construction and inefficient cropping patterns [in FATA].’⁴⁵

When asked about the issues during these interventions, another retired government official of the FATA DC added:

⁴² Economic Review of FATA, 1970–1980, Peshawar, pp. 117–144.

⁴³ These statistics were compiled from the Bureau of Statistics, Government of NWFP.

⁴⁴ These statistics were compiled from the Bureau of Statistics, Government of NWFP.

⁴⁵ Interview with a retired government official in Peshawar on 30th December 2013.

*‘New techniques and methods met with great resistance by farmers [of FATA] to adopting them: for instance there was a general fear [among the tribesmen] that fertilisers and pesticides are harmful to human beings and animals’.*⁴⁶

These quotes about under-utilisation despite the provision of fertilisers and seeds are further verified by the data collected and compiled from different sources in Tables 2 and 3. Therefore, introducing new measures in the agricultural sector – as well as others – was not free of complications: *‘Tribesmen still employed traditional methods and techniques for agriculture in FATA despite the government’s introduction of new forms of seeds, pesticides, tube well technology, artificial fertilisers and machinery and others’.*⁴⁷

However, while cash crops can be seen to be declining, the same could not be said for food crops, which are consistently rising during the same time period, with increased land utilisation and productivity levels due to irrigation schemes (Table 9). On further analysis of recent statistics, I also noted that most farmland in FATA produces a single crop each year, and barely 16 per cent of cultivated land is put to use in two seasons.⁴⁸ The cropping intensity for 1999–2000 stood at 126.4 and has fallen since, to 115.95 per cent in 2003–04 (GoNWFP, 2005a). Overall, production and per-hectare yields in FATA compare poorly to figures for the NWFP and the country as a whole (Table 8). Yields per hectare for rice and maize are slightly lower than both NWFP and national figures, but the per-hectare yield for wheat in FATA is just 38.47 per cent of the national average (GoNWFP, 2005a; GOP, 2006). Opium Poppy is still cultivated in some parts of FATA and remains a major source of income for farmers in inaccessible areas.

The increase in the initial production of food crops can also be attributed to how land is held in FATA compared to the rest of Pakistan. In Pakistan, uneven distribution of land holdings and land tenancy affects the expansion of agriculture; this is quite the opposite in the case of FATA, where tenant-operated farms constitute only 5 per cent of the total land holding, and 95 per cent of land holdings are farmed by the owners themselves (Table 11).

Table 11: Tenure Classification of farms in Agencies/ Frontier Regions 1980

Type of Farm	Number of Farms	Percentage of Total
Owner operated	112,338	84.50
Owner cum tenant	13,832	10.40
Tenant-operated	6,772	5.09

Source: FATA Development Statistics 1988–1889 (Agriculture census 1980, Malakand Division and Tribal Areas)

However, because the land belongs to many sections and sub-sections of tribes, there are increased difficulties in land development. The tribes have assigned sections of land to their respective members for use both as private property, known as *barkha*, and shared property, called *shamilat* (Mohammad, 2012:75–120).⁴⁹ This is the case despite there being no formal land records on the lands in FATA. The principle of distribution has been applied using *nikat*, which distinguishes and illustrates the lineage connection within and between different FATA tribes and hence the land they own. This has been further illustrated by Ahmed (1980): ‘land is treated as a political factor in laying claim to their tribal rights rather than a source of income’ (273). Therefore, when development schemes are initiated, the political element of land overshadows its economic benefits. This can be explained through the description provided in the anthropological accounts of André Singer (1991) of his fieldwork at Kado, a village in the Mohmand Agency:

⁴⁶ In an interview with a retired government official, who previously served at FATA DC. The interview was conducted in Peshawar on 15th August 2012.

⁴⁷ In an interview with a retired government official conducted at his residence in Peshawar on 16th July 2012.

⁴⁸ FATA Sustainable Development Programme (2006:53), Civil Secretariat FATA Peshawar.

⁴⁹ The entitlements to different resources in FATA including land are governed by ‘*rewaj*’ and any dispute arising on these shares is also resolved through employing ‘*Jirga*’ (Mohammad, 2012:75).

'All landlords helped to maintain the twothree-foot wide channels bringing water to their fields from the main canal that bordered the western edge of the village. All benefited equally from the irrigation. The supply of water from the Warsak dam was spread among many Pathan villages and for each the quantity available was limited. But in Kado as elsewhere, a quota system ensured that each family got its fair share. Nevertheless, the Pathans in Kado didn't see farming as a truly communal operation in which all assets and all profits were shared. Each family jealously guarded the few acres that represented its independence and shared resources or manpower only with those who could hope to reciprocate.' (112)

Where *nikatis* believed to dictate equality in distribution, it also restricts this distribution, identifying those who are shared with and those who are not. This also illustrates how the cropping patterns in FATA are different from those in the settled districts of Pakistan. The shares under *nikat* were evaluated based on the numerical strength of each tribe and its sections and sub-sections. However, with time, the value of these shares has evolved and is determined by many more factors than numerical strength alone. The location of land; its other advantages when compared to its tribal boundary as well as its porous border with Afghanistan; and the nature of the political relationship between government and the sections and subsections of tribes all play an important role among tribes in justifying or even contesting their share within that particular territory. This prevents land from being employed as a marketable commodity in FATA. Even with reference to inheritance, *nikat* is used by local Pukhtuns to restrict other members of the same section of tribe from taking any independent decisions.

Despite increasing land intensity in FATA, therefore, developmental interventions could not improve the utilisation and productivity of the land beyond a certain level. This time period did, however, see an increased ownership of such vehicles as trucks and buses among the local Pukhtuns, but how such items were afforded from cash crop activity is not sufficiently explained (Ahmed, 1980:271). This further contradicts the assumption that FATA Pukhtuns are only involved in illegal activities because of their poor socio-economic conditions and barren lands. When provided with the opportunity, they chose not to utilise to their optimum level the available resources provided by the GOP. This is further illustrated through case studies of the Bara Irrigation Scheme and Bara Market in the following section. By comparing and contrasting the two, the decision making process, the impetus behind it and its impact on development in FATA will become clearer.

4. Development Schemes and their Diverse Effects: A Case of the Bara Irrigation Scheme

In the previous section, through analysing the impact of agricultural interventions, I have shown that despite the interventions having increased land use intensity and the cultivation productivity of the area, they failed to gain a positive public perception of their impact. In this section, I infer that these processes are most visible when we analyse the layers between a development scheme and the dynamics of local Pukhtun society at a micro level, and the wider impact of these interactions. In this section I analyse how, despite the perceived notion of economic opportunities changing the internal dynamics of FATA's Pukhtun society, the development scheme did not change the fact that the local Pukhtuns continued to play a major role in shaping the outcome of the scheme. To reach this conclusion, I take the Bara Irrigation scheme as a case study, analysing the pragmatic interaction of local Pukhtuns with the intervention, and its outcome in the form of illegal markets of smuggled goods.

In order to analyse this interaction, I have selected an irrigation scheme successfully completed by the GOP in Bara Tehsil, Khyber Agency. The Khyber Agency is primarily known for the Khyber Pass, which has served as the gateway to India for most invaders and people from Central Asia. The Khyber Agency is inhabited by the major tribe of Afridis, along with other smaller clans of Shilmanis, also known as Landi Kotal Shinwaris and Mullagori Pukhtuns. The Landi Kotal Shinwaris belong to the Ali Sherkhel section of the Nangarhar Shinwaris in Afghanistan. They own the portion of the

Khyber road that commences at the Kanda ravine and terminates at Torkham, approximately 2,000 yards left of LandiKhanna. The Mullagoris are a small clan whose lands lie to the north of the Khyber and extend from Dabbar Pass on the west to the border of the Peshawar District in the east. The Afridi tribes (namely, Adam Khel, Aka Khel, MalakdeenKhel, Sipah, KarnarKhel, QambarKhel, Kuki Khel and Zaka Khel)reside in the Tirah valley. Tirah is a huge mountain split up by several more or less open valleys, generally running from west to east (Barton, 1939: 46–47). The most important of these valleys are the Bazar, the Bara, the Mastura and the Khanki. Khurmana and Kirman open up into the Kurram valley on its west side. The population of the southern valley of Tirah is composed of heterogeneous tribes, collectively known as the Orakzais. Many clans of foreign extraction such as Yousafzai, Waziris and Ghilzais are to be found amongst the Orakzai Pukhtuns. Most of the Tirah is snow-bound in winter. The harsh weather compels the inhabitants to descend in large numbers to lower valleys and the plains for grazing purposes and to find work. All these Afridi clans share Tirah based on their allocated share, as per *nikat*. The movement of Tirah Afridis into the Khajuri plains during cold weather is a historical practice. Before the 1970s, the Khajuri plains used to be a barren piece of land, with only grass, bushes and someKikar trees, and used to serve as the Afridis’ winter abode as *Shamilat*.⁵⁰ Both the Sikhs and the British only managed to establish limited control over the Afridi Pukhtuns as far as this plain.

The Bara Irrigation Scheme was constructed in Bara by the FATA DC and completed in 1980. The aim of the project was to achieve cropping intensity across 65,000 acres. The irrigation system is located on the Bara River, just downstream of the confluence with the MasturaRiverin Khyber Agency, approximately 15 miles outside Peshawar. The scheme has provided an extension system to the level of farms and watercourses byusing various diversion structures of tunnels and canals. The scheme has been successfully providing for the water needs of the area since its construction. However, despite improving the cropping intensity of the area, the Bara Irrigation Scheme could not promote cash crops such as sugar cane or onion during the Kharif(monsoon) and Rabi (spring harvest) seasons. Hence, food cropsremained the major crop cultivated by the local Pukhtunsin both seasons. Table 12 shows the Bara Irrigation scheme cropping patterns, where wheat and maize, which are consumed domestically,remain the dominant crops. Scarcity of water cannot be cited as a problem in this case; on the contrary, the abundance of water has been highlighted as a serious issue. There was too much water for the irrigated,cultivated area. The water loss between the irrigation outlets and the farms is considered ‘a failure on part of the government for not taking measures on farm levels and educating farmers in effective use of increased water supply at farm level’.⁵¹

Table 12: Bara Irrigation Scheme Cropping Pattern (1980–1981)

Season	Crop	Acres	Percentage
Kharif (April–October)	Maize	6,936	27.3
	Sugarcane	269	1.1
	Other	166	0.6
	Total1	7,371	29
Rabi (October–April)	Wheat	14,624	57.6
	Onion	1,510	6.0
	Other	1,874	7.4
	Total	18,008	71.0
Total		25,379	100

Source: Director of Agriculture, KP Government, Peshawar

⁵⁰Private as well as common ownership forms coexist in FATA and both the categories can be found within a subsection. Parcels of land that are demarcated are assigned to individuals as private property, whereas land that is not demarcated as such is held as common property. The latter is referred to as *shamilat*. *Shamilat* lands can be appropriated to cater for the demands of an expanding population but only with the consent of the community. *Shamilat* holdings of a community also allow necessary space for accommodating the newly emerging segments within the tribe (Mohammad, 2014:118; Spain, 1963:81; 1972:74–75).

⁵¹ Information collected in an interview with a retired government official. The interview was conducted in Peshawar on 16th July 2012.

On further analysing the matter I also learnt from a local Pukhtun that the local people prefer the distribution of water, as well as the maintenance and cleaning of the system, to be allotted to individual households and farms, according to local *rewaj*. However, our previous discussion explained how local Pukhtuns try to keep to a minimum any interference by the GOP in internal matters among the tribes, or in their local dynamics. This also shows how employing *rewaj* allows the local Pukhtun sections or sub-sections of tribes to maintain their hold on resources, sharing assets or manpower only with those who could hope to reciprocate. Hence, internal dynamics between different sections and sub-sections of tribes restrict land from being employed to its maximum capacity and let it serve only as a mean of subsistence.

However, the scheme has other effects that were not perceived by the state, which were shaped by local Pukhtuns and their interactions with the scheme. One of the impacts of the scheme was the movement of Afridi clans, such as Qambardin Khel, Kuki Kehl, Malakdin Khel, Aka Khel and Sepah, into the Khajuri plains, which became relatively fertile due to the scheme. After every Afridi tribe came to bid for settlement based on their share according to *nikat*, the Khajuri plains became the permanent abode of various clans of Afridis. Currently, the Khajuri plains have irrigation channels, agriculture fields, trees and roads. Along with many other factors, this movement facilitated the prospering of markets at Bara and Karkhano. Bara Market, established in 1975, and Karkhano Market, established in 1985, became the primary sources of income for most tribes inhabiting the area from the 1970s. Bara Market has been known for selling products through the Afghan transit trade (ATT) route and smuggled back in to Bara Market via Afghanistan using many different routes. Smuggling, both international and national, euphemistically referred to as ‘trading’ (*tijarat*) by Pukhtun tribesmen (Ahmed; 1980: 273), appears to be one of the major sources of income for the local Pukhtuns of Khyber. However this source of income is either understated or not accounted for, which contributes to a major distortion of income and poverty evaluation in FATA. Although Ahmed (1980) slightly touched on such sources of income and issues in his anthropological work, he preferred to leave them out of his analysis in order to avoid embarrassing his respondents (1980:273). However excluding this analysis does create distortion when understanding the prevalent reality of FATA society.

The discourse on FATA also ignores these decision-making processes in two main ways. First, the development discourse tends to see rural societies – such as those in FATA – as traditional and underdeveloped, the antithesis of developed and modern. This discourse tends to simplify the field by presenting FATA society as a traditional agrarian economy, which shows a rural society is generally conceived. It is not incorrect to state that some parts of FATA carry fertile lands, such as those inhabited by certain tribes or sections of tribes (notably the Shia Turi tribes in the Kurram Agency; Shia sections in the Orakzai Agency; certain sections of Mohmands in the Mohmand Agency; and Tarklanris in the Bajuar Agency), which can be beneficial for agricultural purposes. But FATA doesn't constitute a homogenous physiographic unit. Some Pukhtuns in the Khyber Agency and South Waziristan Agency specialise in local or regional trade routes. Some Pukhtuns are found to have engaged in forestry: for example, the Orakzai tribes of Bar Ahmed Khel, Mani khel, Andikhel, Uri Khel, Mala Khel, Ali Khel, Mishti and Sheikhan. Other Pukhtuns have engaged in mineral extraction: for example, the tribes residing in the Yakka Ghund, Dhand Pindiali and Prang Ghar areas of the Mohmand Agency. And some Pukhtuns engage in small scale manufacturing (notably of firearms), such as Dara Adam Khel of the Frontier Region (FR) Kohat and Kaniguram of South Waziristan Agency, where a number of gun-producing armouries were set up by the tribesmen in the 1930s (Caroe, 1986:405–406). The development discourse, by focusing on the stereotype of FATA as an idle, static, traditional society, fails to capture how local Pukhtuns have adapted themselves to the scarce resource conditions of the region by employing alternative means of livelihood.

Second, the prevalence of smuggling and illegal means of earning, in the form of Bara Market and Karkhano Market, is only considered to be a consequence of the lack of other livelihood opportunities – mainly agricultural prospects – rather than of the many other factors that shape it. The development discourse fails to understand the decision-making processes of local Pukhtuns, which

largely shape the outcome of these interventions. Although interventions such as the Bara Irrigation Scheme could not encourage the optimal use of land as perceived by the GOP, instead restricted due to the internal dynamics of the local people, these interventions did open livelihood opportunities in the form of Bara Market, allowing the locals to take advantage of their new economic niching in close proximity to Peshawar. The presence of an illegal economy in FATA is a known fact, but the size of that illegal economy is an open debate. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the illegal economy has been on a continuous rise since the 1970s. Thus, while the illegal economy thwarts more standard models of development, the income generated from it is invested elsewhere. This is further proof that the GOP's model of development as deployed in FATA suffers not from negligence, but from naivety and an unwillingness to take local attitudes on board. The size of the economy can hence be estimated by analysing the monetary value of investments made by the Pukhtuns of FATA outside their local territories, as discussed in the next section of this paper.

The Case of the Bara Market: 'A Market of Illegal Goods'

Analysing these investments further in this paper will therefore help to understand the parallel economy that exists in FATA and which allows the tribesmen to make substantial investments in the administered districts and major cities in Pakistan. As a further illustration of the manner in which the money from this illegal economy is invested, I observed while conducting my fieldwork in Peshawar that on the Jamrud Road up to Tehkal Payan area in Peshawar there are six of the largest shopping plazas of Peshawar,⁵² which are owned by Pukhtuns originally from FATA, mostly from the Khyber Agency. While speaking to a few shopkeepers, I was told that these plazas were established as early as the 1980s. On further inquiry, I also noted that, apart from these commercial investments, which they own and run, local Pukhtuns have a considerable portfolio of residential properties in the city too. It is widely believed that they have gained access to state bureaucratic structures and political influence.⁵³ FATA Pukhtuns are also major investors in Islamabad and other cities of Pakistan. However, I was repeatedly informed during the course of my fieldwork that despite running such massive businesses they decline to pay any taxes. This was expressed by Arif Hasan Akhundzada, originally from the Mohmand Agency, who is a private researcher and writer with primary interests in cultural and historical studies, while discussing his personal experiences and understanding of the region: '*Currently people [of FATA] are among the biggest Pashtun and Pakistani venture capitalists around and they don't pay tax at all*'.⁵⁴ The plazas in Peshawar vary in size and are mostly composed of four- to six-storey buildings. The shopping plazas cater for Peshawar's modern amenity requirements, including imported garments, shoe stores, gym centres, boutiques, stationery shops, music centres, video-cassette shops and computer shops. Furthermore, they also contain the offices of property dealers, hardware suppliers and carpet-sellers, and residential apartments. The largest of the plazas on the Jamrud Road is the six-storey Gul Haji Plaza. Located in a prime location in Peshawar, it has over 700 shops and approximately 300 flats, with parking for approximately 100 cars.

FATA Pukhtuns' involvement in illegal activities such as smuggling and poppy cultivation is not hidden, and the government itself has sanctioned the markets, such as Bara and Karkhano, selling foreign goods. These aspects further demonstrate that the GOP is cognisant of these activities but unclear how to factor them into their plans for FATA. The birth of these markets took place after the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATT) was signed between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1965, under a UN agreement to protect the interests of landlocked nations. Afghanistan receives goods in Karachi at either Karachi Port or Qasim Port. These goods are then transferred overland from Pakistan to Afghanistan, incurring either concessionary or no transit duties. The ATT covers commodities of all

⁵² Some of the names are Spinzar Towers, City Towers, Alhaq Towers and GB Plaza.

⁵³ Information collected in an interview with a government official at his residence in Peshawar on 30th August 2012.

⁵⁴ Information collected in an informal meeting with Arif Hasan Akhundzada held in Peshawar on 20th July 2012. Arif Hasan Akhundzada travels frequently between Mohmand and Peshawar. He looks after his property and village affairs.

types, from consumable commodities to electrical goods; paper, paperboard, rice and fruits to chemical and petroleum products and machinery.⁵⁵ The ATT goods are continuously on the rise, with a value of just under \$2.5 billion during 2010 and 2011 (PILDAT, 2011:2). But there are no accurate records or statistics available about the bulk of economic activity across the border in FATA, which is considered illegal according to Pakistani law. As one of the interviewees explained (2012):

'The economic activity is not included in the annual state bank reports, being illegal, and the flows are difficult to measure'.⁵⁶

Where officially Pakistan has a bilateral trade of \$2 billion with Afghanistan, the illicit trade between the two countries is estimated to be over \$10 billion (Yusufzai, A, 2007).⁵⁷ Apart from ATT through Pakistan, Afghanistan receives imports from other places like Iran, China and the Central Asian states. All these high quality imports are transferred into Bara and Karkhano Markets without any duties being charged, as was confirmed by some shopkeepers in the market. Karkhano Market is also known to include weapons and various kinds of narcotics, apart from other goods. The shops of Karkhano Market are filled with all kinds of goods, with cheaper prices and a better quality than local shops, and these attract huge numbers of customers from all over Pakistan. The total number of shops in Karkhano Market is estimated at around 4,500, owned and run by FATA Pukhtuns. Although the shops are booming in business every year, it is largely believed that the government of Pakistan is losing more than \$2 billion in revenue every year due to this illegal trade from across the border. A shopkeeper I spoke to during my visit told me: *'It is not considered illegal or unlawful according to Pukhtun values and culture to smuggle these goods from across the border'.⁵⁸*

This highlights another aspect of this interaction, where anything considered illegal under Pakistan's law can be easily justified by the local Pukhtuns as acceptable according to their culture and values. Furthermore, the GOP's inability to control such activities is justified on the premise of FATA's reliance on this economy in the absence of any alternative economy. On further investigating the issue with a few other government officials, I also learned that *'ATT sourced goods are transported back into Pakistan through numerous routes and passes that are lying across the agencies. Those routes are out of reach for border control authorities and paramilitary forces from both sides of the border'.⁵⁹*

It is estimated that the number of crossing points is approximately 111 in the north of FATA and 229 in the south. Both smugglers and local Pukhtuns use these crossing points on a daily basis (Mason and Thomas, 2008: 44). In the current situation, apart from plenty of smuggled goods that come through the Afghanistan border unchecked and without paying any custom duties, there is another source of income from goods and services flowing from Pakistan into Afghanistan that do not come under ATT. Reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan have boosted this source of income as well, where steel, timber, cement, machinery and industrial products flow across the border, using similar passes and routes that are beyond the reach of the authorities. Apart from reconstruction goods, food products such as wheat are also involved, as mentioned by a government official:

'Because wheat is available in and across KP at a subsidised rate, which is much below the international price, Afghanistan – experiencing years of droughts – repeatedly relies on food products from across the border such as wheat. Although illegal under Pakistani law, it is a growing business'.⁶⁰

The government of KP has introduced a system of 'parchi' or 'card' that acts as a permit to allow the tribes to trade legally trans-FATA. The authority for issuing the permit lies with the political

⁵⁵ My personal observations collected during my visits to Karkhano market. Karkhano is located in the suburbs of Peshawar in close proximity to the Khyber Agency.

⁵⁶ Information collected in an interview with a government official in Peshawar at his residence on 4th September 2012.

⁵⁷ See Ashfaq Yusufzai, *Inter-Press Service*, and Trade-Pakistan: Smugglers Profit From Landlocked Afghanistan, 4th August 2007, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2007/08/trade-pakistan-smugglers-profit-from-landlocked-afghanistan/>.

⁵⁸ In a discussion with some Pukhtun tribal shopkeepers at the Karkhano market during my visits in June 2012.

⁵⁹ Information collected in a meeting with government official in Peshawar on 6th September 2012.

⁶⁰ Interview with government official in Peshawar, 6th September 2012.

agent (PA) of the various agencies. Although the main aim for issuing such permits was to ensure transparency in the system, a local Pukhtun mentioned during the data collection that ‘the prices of these permits run into millions of dollars’⁶¹ and that it ‘serves as a revenue for the KP government’.⁶² Hence lacking capacity, the GOP employs the ‘parchi’ system in order to regulate the cross border trade, but meanwhile also benefits from these activities.

The inability to grasp the local complex realities of FATA produces outcomes that are not perceived by the GOP when it intervenes. These interventions fail to produce the desired impact the GOP is aiming for; however, the locals effectively incorporate these interventions to produce different outcomes as per their need, exploiting their location. This shows that the local Pukhtuns are pragmatically involved and make these decisions in a calculated way, analysing their economic niche and future prospects in a purposeful manner.

6. Conclusion

I conclude by arguing that my analysis of the relationship between local complexities and the state’s perception of change through ‘development’ shows the need for a more nuanced understanding of the local realities in FATA. By only considering the local complex dynamics as a result of scarce resources, resolvable by providing opportunities to people in FATA, the GOP presents locals as passive recipients of these interventions, following a certain way of life that meet set traditional standards.

In order to reach this conclusion, the paper analysed the dominant narratives of neglect by the state in providing livelihood opportunities to the local people, which in turn, had them relying on alternative, illegal means of earning their livelihood, such as smuggling and poppy cultivation. I considered agricultural interventions in the region and analysed the irrigation schemes and their outcomes to understand the process. Through this analysis I showed that there have in fact been development interventions in the region and, therefore, the ‘neglect’ observed in these narratives is not due to lack of interventions but the perceived failure of these initiatives to produce the anticipated results.

To understand the failure of these initiatives to produce the desired outcome, I further analysed the Bara Irrigation Scheme to see the patterns and processes that this intervention produced. I showed that rather than economic prospects changing internal dynamics, the locals used *rewaj* where and when they considered it appropriate to maintain their hold on resources and assets, meanwhile also playing a major role in shaping outcomes by taking into account other factors, which provided them with better economic prospects via an illegal economy.

The discourse on development therefore ignores these complex decision-making processes involved at the local level, which combine many factors that vary from place to place and can’t be taken as absolute in one particular scenario. The important point is that the locals’ use of the illegal economy as ‘*tijarat*’ coupled with the GOP’s inability to grasp this local complexity and curtail such measures produce a multi-layered reality where both the GOP and the locals, who can exploit their niche, benefit, but those measures intended to improve the socio-economic condition of the region largely fail.

⁶¹ Information collected in an interview with Abid Khan, originally from the Bajaur Agency, a student of International Relations at the University of Peshawar.

⁶² Information collected in an interview with Akhtar Ali, originally from FR Kohat, a student of Political Science at the University of Peshawar.

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