

Marketplaces as Drivers of Urbanization and alternative Governance Spaces: the Case of Batkhela Bazaar, Pakistan

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Abstract:

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some of the political and governance challenges which these rapidly growing, unplanned urban spaces might present in the future. In doing so, this paper contributes to the literature on transforming rural economies and emerging urban spaces in the form of small towns in Pakistan.

Abstract

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Introduction

This paper views emerging urban spaces in the heart of rural-agrarian economy as alternative governance arenas and explores their implications for local governance structure and citizen's access to state institutions. The contribution of this study to the literature is that it empirically traces the development of urban centre in the heart of once agrarian economy. In addition, the major driver of this evolution is an informal marketplace which explains how 'the urbanization of everybody in the socioeconomic sense is well on the way if not almost complete' (Qadeer, 2014:21). This study also found that rising urbanization, as an outcome of economically dynamic marketplace presents new governance challenges, which, if not addressed,

will contribute to the already poor state of governance in the region.

In what follows, section one explores the role of small towns, developed as a consequence of marketplace evolution and the implications of their development for political participation and local governance (or structural transformation). section 3 outlines the methodology along with empirical settings while section four presents empirical findings. Section five concludes with the way forward.

Market towns, urbanization and alternative governance spaces in Pakistan

Marketplaces are embedded within their local governance structure (Monteith, 2015), and through their linkages with multiple spheres of governance they significantly influence local governance processes (Hummely, 2017; Polese et al, 2017). They are not simply the 'subject of governance', due to their fluid power dynamics and influence over political sphere (Lindell, 2010: 1887-8). Pertenance of marketplaces to urban development and governance can be understood from the fact that some scholar regards marketplaces as 'urban development strategy (Janssens and Sezers, 2013:169). This section explores the role of marketplaces not only as the drivers of urbanization, but also looks at the role of these rising urban spaces as alternative governance arenas setting in motion the processes of political inclusion. In doing so, it largely relies on the literature on urbanization and marketplace in Pakistan respectively.

Urbanization in Pakistan is an outcome of two main trends. increased population of the people living in urban towns, metropolitan cities, municipalities. The structure of this transformation is well known. The second process of urbanization is unrecognized and is working its way largely unnoticed. Qadeer (1999) argues that it is building up the momentum for social change that equals, or perhaps accedes, the much discussed urban crises. this is urban-

ization through the densification of rural areas under the population pressure (Qadeer, 1999: 1197). Densification of many such rural areas, coupled with economic developments have resulted in the evolution of villages to urban spaces in both senses of the term. The development and expansion of villages into sizable towns can be observed not only at the peripheries of major cities in Pakistan, or on the highways connecting these major cities (Qadeer, 1999; 2014), but all the way up to the remote districts of Pakistan.¹

The spatial and demographic dimensions of this urbanization in Pakistan are extensively explored in the literature, however, the governance dimension requires a systematic theoretical treatment. The influence of these urbanization processes, on the institutional arrangement of local governance is explained by a complex of factors that include, economic change, changing power relations (social structures), and increase in the choices of means to access state institutions. rising urbanization necessitates new modes of citizen's engagement with state institutions, and increase civil society activities in transforming landscapes. In Pakistan, such organizations in village economies are either non-existent, scarce, or inherently weak (Mohmand, 2008). However, in urban settings, expressions of self-organized arrangements and citizen participation are not an exception (Beal, 1995; 1997). It is not to say that in urban settings class differences and the structures of domination are absent, and participation is inclusive in its ideal sense, but certainly, urbanization offers more opportunities for better life, and comparatively greater chances for upward mobility (Beall, 1995:439-42). re-configuration of the social and political space is also underpinned by various urbanization processes, and unlike village economies where kin and clan networks form the basis of informal support, in the urban economy, neighborhood-based ties, and interest-based networks are a significant source of support.

Writing 18 years ago, Qadeer (1999:1203) notes, effects of urbanization in Pakistan are yet to translate into a mechanism for creating responsive local governance institutions. It is mainly due to hierarchical social structures, and clan-based politics which prevent the development of inclusive local governance spaces. In

unison, he notes that urbanization creates the need for more impersonal forms of local governance arrangements (p.1201). It is argued here, although gradually and quietly, but the process of change is well on its way in Pakistan. evolution of economic structures and development of market towns is also leading to the re-structuring of social structures. People's interactions are extended from class-cast boundaries to occupational and professional ties. The literature on evolution of marketplaces in Pakistan and their transformational effects offers ample evidence in this connection (Jan, 2017; Chaudri, 1999; Ahmed, 1980). Evolution of these new socioeconomic spaces have not only reduced the hold of class-cast boundaries, but have replaced traditional patterns of dependence of dominated on the dominant classes with more complex patterns of interdependencies.

Two distinct but intertwined mechanisms structure this process of transformation. receding reliance on agricultural labour by the poor (Arif et al, 2002), and incentives for the traditional landed class to engage in businesses due to land fragmentation, low productivity of agricultural land, and relatively attractive opportunities in the business sector. Land- fragmentation makes it difficult for a single family or clan to dominate the rest of the population (Mohmand and Ghazdar, 2007:7), whilst development of market towns with related economic opportunities create incentives for the poor to break-away from the traditional patron-client relation characteristic of village/agrarian economy (Martin, 2015:423). Hassan (2009:xvi) regards the development of market (mandi) towns as one of the significant factors that freed the traditional landless classes from the domination of the landed classes. The lower casts/classes were able to setup businesses in these market towns and were able to escape the exploitative relations in the feudal village structures. Similarly, Chaudhri (1999) demonstrates how the Kammiss of Misalpur near the textile-producing city of Faisalabad left their traditional occupations to work in the textile industry and latter to set up their own power-looms and even got educated and acquired employments in the government offices (Martin, 2015:423). Junaid (2009) demonstrates how Afghan refugees in Peshawar, due to their

entrepreneurial success achieve upward social mobility. Migration to major cities in Pakistan and overseas have also led to the economic change from reliance on agriculture to development of small businesses in the informal sector (Ahmed, 1981; Jan, 2014; among others).

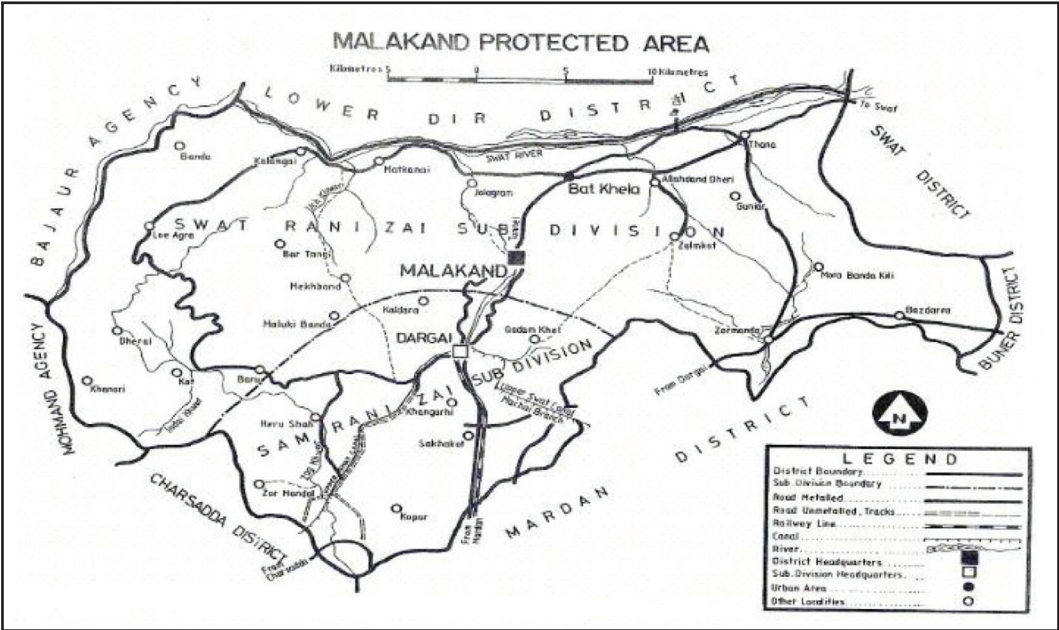
Marketplaces are the drivers of urbanization. Specially their location at the centres of districts increase their economic and political significance (Qadeer, 2000:1593). Evolution of these market towns have also impacted the value of land, as a consequence, traditional land-owners have also stepped into the field of business. Ahmed (1980:297-302) in his study of a small market town in Mohmand agency in Pakistan found that members of the traditional landed class were involved in businesses in as early as late 1970s. However, they preferred to run their businesses by hiring a member of the occupational casts. Similarly, Lindholm (1982: chapter4) in his anthropology of Swat observed that members of the dominant landed class tended to trade in only luxury goods, and would charge only the lower classes for their goods and services. the agrarian society was stratified not only between landed and landless classes, but the latter were further classified into various occupational classes. With the development of these market places, as Jan (2010; 2014) observes, a new occupational category of business owner emerged which gradually subsumed all the other occupational classes. Javed (2015) in his study of marketplaces in the city of Lahore, and Nankana sahib notes that these marketplaces are numerically dominated by individuals belonging to traditional landless classes. However, he observes developing patterns of cooperation, underpinned by the social structure of the marketplace. Due to increase economic and political power of these spaces, business owners, traditionally excluded from the political sphere are now significant actors in both national and local politics at least in some regions (Javed, 2015; Jan, 2014; Khan, 2017). Thus marketplaces, as Janssens and Sezers (2013:169-70) note, “are flexible spatial and temporal organizations that provide vivid and inclusive public spaces”.

The literature on urbanization and traders involvement in democratic politics in Pakistan largely agree on their transformative effects on

both national and local politics (Javed, 2017). Increased urbanization and involvement of traders in local politics have significant implications for local governance. the processes of inclusion and their implications are significantly understudied, especially in the case of small towns which host 27% of the total urban population of the country. From literature on large urban centres, We know that at local level, traders influence the state through negotiating taxes (Ahmed, 2010), or influencing spatial and town planning (Zaidi, 2015). in addition, their direct involvement in local politics is also documented in the literature (Javed, 2017). In the small towns, where marketplaces serve as drivers of urbanization, local landed elite also diversify into undocumented trade to supplement their land-income (Javed, 2017). writing in late 1990s, about traders influence on politics, Whilder (1999:131) noted: ‘Traders are now on the rise. Every alley, every bazaar is now organized in the shape of some association or the other. These traders have ‘shutter power’. If a 2000 worker factory is closed by workers in a rural area, it has no effect. But say the shopkeepers of Anarkali close their shutters for two hours, it will have a much bigger effect in the city.... In sum, Bazaar’s economy is the underlying factors in what Javed (2017) calls foundational changes in urban political economy. Javed (2017) notes their transformative potential in eroding the power of traditional landed elite, but argue that bazaars create new intermediary classes that reproduce patronage structures. Nevertheless, this suggest the role of bazaars as alternative governance spaces with implications for local class relations, access to state institutions, and their influence over service provision by state institutions.

This suggests that economic change from agrarian to market economy and development and expansion of market towns generate alternative governance spaces. These spaces, it is argued, generate opportunities for cooperation among what Calhoon (2010) calls ‘differentiated publics’. These markets are not mere expressions of change economic order in the heart of once agrarian economy. Instead their evolution as a space populated by counter publics to a gradual immersion in the mainstream local political order explains their potential for

Map 1 Malakand Protected Area



Source: Jan 2010

change as an alternative governance space. Perhaps, for this reason, Jan (2017:1) in his study of changing rural labour relation in canal colonies of Punjab argues, It is less helpful if Marxist interpretations of class structures are employed as a soul theoretical reference to explain the context of socioeconomic relations within a specific governance context. Marketplaces in Pakistan, in this process of transformation from agrarian to market economy, and as engines of urbanization have largely remained unnoticed by policy-makers and academics (with few exceptions cited above). The rest of this study empirically explores the role of Batkhela bazaar in urbanization, and its implications for local governance.

Methodology and empirical settings

Batkhela is the Swat Rani zai subdivision of Malakand district (see map1). Batkhela bazaar, a vibrant market town in the heart of rural landscape of district Malakand is the only officially designated urban area in the entire district. The market is situated on main Mardan-Chitral-Swat road that connects the districts of Swat and beyond, Dir and beyond, and Bonair, to Peshawar (the capital city of the province of Khyber Pa-

khtunkhwa and Islamabad (national capital). the market, locally known as Batkhela bazaar is over 3 KM long, situated along both sides of the main road (see map two). Batkhela is the major centre of retail, and wholesale of goods and services in the district. besides district hospital, district secretariat, courts, post office, passport office, and national database and registration centre (NA-DRA), the bazaar hosts branches of 11 private banks, franchises of private telecommunication companies, offices of private courier services, and a number of private hospitals. evolution of Batkhela bazaar, and a number of smaller market towns in the district suggests the quite transformation from village/agrarian economy to urban economy. Currently, informal trade including retail, services, and transport together offers employment to more than 60% of the total labour force in the district (Jan, 2010:63). These statistics apply only to mail population of the district because women are excluded from trading in the markets due to strict obligation of Parda under the Pakhtun culture.

Malakand district or Malakand protected area has a total population of 720295. (PBS, 2017). 98.2% of the population speaks Pashto

Map 2 Bathela Bazaar

Source: Google Maps

whilst 99.6 % of the people practice sunni islam (Jan and Raza, 2015:59). Under special constitutional provisions trade is exempted from taxes , whereas no land revenue is generated by any tier of government from the district (Khan, 2017). The district stands 11th out of 25 districts in the province in terms of the size of its urban population. According to provisional summary of 2017 census, total urban population in the province is 18%, the lowest of all four provinces, whereas urban population of district Malakand is 11% with 8522 urban households. These latter statistics are only for the Batkhela town which is the only officially recognize urban area in the district. In terms of population density criterion, the entire district can be classified as urban due to its population density of () per SQKM. Nevertheless, Batkhela due to its historic economic and political significance is the focus of this study. Its significance lies in its remarkable economic transformation from a cluster of a few shops in 1950s to a vibrant marketplace comprising 5500 fixed shops at present (Khan, 2017).

To understand this transformation and its implications for local governance structure, this study relies on existing literature, census data (table1) and semi-structured interviews with traders, local political actors, and government officials in the district offices. The fieldwork

for this study was conducted in May-September 2016, 80semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted. the interviews were analysed with the help of Microsoft access (Hans, 2008) using flexible thematic analysis (Broun and Clark, 2006:80). The research was conducted for author's PHD which investigated the role of marketplace in generating social capital and its implications for evolving governance processes in the Malakand region. in this chapter, the findings related to the role of bazaar in the process of economic change and its evolution as an alternative governance space are presented. to understand this process, various processes such as, the size of market town, land-ownership in the market, access to state institutions, involvement of political parties in the marketplace, and evolution of traders association are compared between the year 1970 and 2016. This method of presentation clearly demonstrates the process of evolution of marketplace and its implications for local governance structure.

The empirical context of Malakand region makes this evolution more interesting from governance perspective to explicate the role of Batkhela bazaar as an evolving governance space. Besides legal settings that underpins the interrelation between formal governance structure and Batkhela bazaar (Khan, 2017). the history

of class relations between landed and landless classes, institutionalization of these exploitative class relation in pre- 1970s (Jan, 2010), and contiguous evolution of marketplace with changes in the formal governance structure makes the case of bazaar as an emerging field of power and its embeddedness in the wider political space. Jan (2010:93) offers a detailed historical account of these class relations. building on one of the sections of that account, he provides a historical account of class-struggle between the landed aristocracy of the district and traditional landed class, mainly migrants from surrounding districts who predominantly constituted the traders community. these classes categorize each others as Khanan (resident land-owning class), and 'Ghariban' or 'raghali khalak' (the poor and migrants respectively). the latter category, along with resident occupational classes were denied the right to citizenship up till 1969, and thus denied of any rights to participate in the governance affairs, purchase land, or shop (Jan and Raza, 2015:56). Business in the market offered a major ecological niche and a hope of liberation from exploitative relations in the traditional agrarian economic system.

This exclusion was the outcome of agrarian economy where land-owning class dominated social and political institutions, and this domination was backed by state's coercive power in the form of a quasi-judicial council called Jirga. Jirga, the council of elders rooted in the local cultural norms, was the only medium of interaction with state institutions, and members of the landed class due to their land-ownership were only entitled to its membership. Business owners in the market developed trader's association for not only resolving internal problems of the bazaar, but also to represent them in their interactions with state institutions. Jan (2010) views it as a separate leadership category emerging out of evolving dynamics of the bazaar. The findings of the present study suggest that leadership in the bazaar is no longer the concern of the market traders alone, but it is deeply rooted in the local political structure. doubtless, introduction of participatory politics, replacement of jirga with regular court system, and lately introduction of local government system in the district created opportunities for inclusion. Jan and Raza

(2015: 60-67) attribute this change to the class struggle of the landless against the landed class. that movement certainly played a significant role, but the movement was practically disbanded after the introduction of political reforms in 1970s and the disappointment of its leader with Pakistan People's Party, the only supporter of the trader's struggle for inclusion. A more significant role is played by thriving economy of the marketplace that helps transforming the social and political space through structuring the agent's habitus which in turn structure the governance structure (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Lizarto, 2004).

Findings and discussion

This section presents findings on the outcomes of rising urbanization for participation and inclusion due to evolution of economically dynamic Batkhela bazaar. the findings are schematically presented in two sub-sections . The first section ties the rise of urbanization to economically thriving Batkhela bazaar. the second section demonstrates some key economic and political changes within the socioeconomic structure of the marketplace which suggests that Batkhela bazaar constitutes a significant governance arena facilitating inclusion in the wider governance structure.

Evolution of Batkhela bazaar and consequent urbanization

As Noted in the previous section, Batkhela bazaar evolved from a cluster of a few shops in the centre of village, to a cluster of 5500 shops. It traverses through three union councils of Batkhela with its edges penetrating into the union councils of surrounding villages namely Aladand and Piran (see map2). Batkhela bazaar, as a trading centre began to thrive in the late 1960 and early 1970s. originally it developed along the roadside in what constitutes the present day union council of middle batkhela. some of the businesses due to density of infrastructure and related traffic problems have began to shift to more open spaces along the main road in the union council of Aladand or a link road that connect the union council of Khar with Batkhela. Originally the migrants and members of the traditional landless community established their

businesses in the bazaar which was followed by settlement of migrants in and around Batkhela.

The bazaar serves as a major employment generation machine in the district, and provides employment to approximately 25000 households in and around the district. the market hosts over 5500 fixed shops, 1500 rickshaws, 200 street vendors and 80 cart pushers for porting goods from one shop to another in the bazaar. In addition, 57% of the business owners employ people other than their family ranging from one employee to 29 employees (which are rare). These findings do not include employees of government facilities, private banks, telecommunication companies, schools in the private sector, and private clinics that operate in the batkhela bazaar. evolution of economic activities in the bazaar, increase settlement of individual households in and around batkhela resulted in the rise of urban population in the district. as a consequence, an entirely rural district in 1961 now hosts 10.5% urban population (see table1).

Table 1 Contiguous evolution of bazaar and urban population in Malakand

Contiguous Evolution of Batkhela Bazaar and Urban Population		
Year	Urban population	Number of Shops in the bazaar
1961	–	20
2017	68,200	5500

Batkhela bazaar as a driver of change in the local political economy

Besides its role as an engine of urbanization, Batkhela bazaar has evolved from the margins of local political economy to occupy a centre place within it. This evolution is evident in the changing land-ownership patterns, development of more cross-cutting ties between the traditional landed and landless classes, greater involvement of political parties and actors in the internal dynamics of the bazaar, and Bazaar’s increased political embeddedness. Empirical evidence suggest the evolving role of bazaar as an alternative governance space with implications for not only local class relations, but also generat-

ing new patterns of interdependencies between local administration, political sphere, and trader’s community. As noted in the previous section, bazaar had generated a separate leadership category in the form of trader’s association, however, with the evolution of the bazaar and its increased role in local politics, the configuration of the trader’s association and its role in the local politics have evolved considerably. Table 2 summarizes the evolving qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the bazaar and its implications for local political structure. These findings clearly demonstrate the role of bazaar as an alternative governance space generating possibilities for inclusivity, but also as a field of power in a political space traditionally occupied by state authorities and local elite.

These findings suggest that marketplaces are not merely the places for buying and selling as the local state authorities often consider them to be, instead, they have significant implications for local power relations, and by extension for urbanization and local governance (Janssens and Sezers, 2013). The case of batkhela bazaar demonstrates their role in creating upward social mobility and their transformative effect on class relations. Changing patterns of land-ownership, entry of landed class in local businesses to supplement their land income, and increased utility of trader’s association for local political actors are the factors explicating the role of Batkhela bazaar in increase political tolerance and inclusivity. Local electoral politics in the Malakand district is still dominated by local landed elite, however, bazaar is an important source of power for these elected representatives, especially in their interactions with local administration (Khan, 2017). Shrinking land-holding patterns, and increase land-ownership by the trader’s community inhibits a single party or actor to dominate bazaar politics. For this reason, political actors form alliances for supporting candidates for the leadership of the trader’s association. Due to Increased size of the bazaar, and diverse political orientations of the traders, it is unlikely for a single political party to dominate bazaar politics like the past. At the same time, due to its centrality for local politics, political actors cannot leave the field of bazaar politics for their competitors to dominate. Thus,

Table 2 Bazaar as an alternative governance space: Evolving qualitative and quantitative dimensions

Evolving dimensions of Batkhela bazaar	1961	2016
Number of shops	20	5500
Number of business owners from landless class	95%	60%
Number of business owners from landed class	5%	35-40%
Land-ownership by traders of the landless class	0%	35%
Channels of access to state institutions	Elders of landed elite only	Through personal ties, traders association or political parties
Political inclusion of trader's community	A marginal element in local politics	A significant element in local politics
The role of bazaar in local economy	negligible	Major centre of economic activities
Business owners ties to landed elite	Landlord-tenant; patron- client	Friendship, political, and economic ties, along with landlord-tenant ties.
Followers of political parties in the bazaar	Single party (Pakistan Peoples Party)	Six parties
Leadership of the trader's association (landed or landless?)	Landless class	A mix of members from landless and landed classes
Political affiliation of the leadership of trader's association	Single party	5 political parties

Source: interview data and field notes.

alignment of interests, especially cooperative or conflictive relations with local administration underpins alliances of political actors for collectively backing their candidates in the elections of trader's association.

Interactions within the political sphere are not alone in this power equation, the influence of bazaar as a field of power also structures relation between local administration and political actors. It is not to say that bazaar as a field of pow-

er has evolved in isolation to institutional changes. Rather it is embedded in the wider political processes, and any change in these processes has implications for Bazaar's capacity to influence local governance structure. cognizant of this role of Batkhela bazaar, the newly appointed district administrator (district commissioner) attempts to create goodwill among local political leaders including leaders of the trader's association to avoid disruption to the local order of the district.

Table 3 Increased influence of bazaar over interactions between elected and appointed spheres of government

Pre-1970 and 2016 compared	Political Field	Bureaucratic field	Pattern of interaction between the two
Before 1970s	Land-holding major determinant of political power; less concern for votes; no decentralized local government	Administrator (political agent) soul representative of central government; less prone to political pressures; interaction with local elite only	Paying allowances to landlords for facilitating governance (state policy)
In 2016	More followers and better rapport with administration major sources of power; Votes and proximity to voters a major concern; decentralized local governments;	Representative of provincial government; prone to political pressures; interactions not limited to landed elite	Patronage relations with local political elite (informal governance strategy of officials)
Bazaar in the local governance equation before 1970s	Exclusion from political affairs	Limited significance; little consideration	Bureaucracy-local elite nexus working to the detriment of trader's community
Bazaar in local governance equation in 2016	Inclusion in political affairs even remotely related to bazaar	Considerable attention due to its representation of the largest bazaar in the district, and alignment of trader's association with conflictive political interests	Local political elite-trader's association nexus (sometimes) to the detriment of local administration's interest

Source: interview data and field notes

the elections of trader’s association in 2009-10, 2013 and 2017 respectively has repeatedly demonstrated this attitude of the local bureaucracy. comparing increased political significance of Batkhela bazaar with other bazaars in the district supports Hummely’s (2017) argument that

greater influence (and disruptive potential) of the trader’s association incentivizes the administration to facilitate collective organization of the bazaar. Nonetheless, in the evolved institutional dynamics of Malakand district (and region more broadly), Batkhela bazaar has emerged as

an integral element of the local governance. this recognition is absent in the formal governance structure, but informal governance strategies of local administration attest to this point. Table3 summarizes this finding before concluding this chapter.

Conclusion

By situating Batkhela bazaar at the heart of urbanization processes in district Malakand and its transformative potentials for local governance, this chapter has demonstrated how marketplaces as an alternative governance spaces are re-structuring the local political economy of small towns in Pakistan. Small towns in Pakistan, like Batkhela, lack any clear policy focus by the government in terms of their urbanization potential. An outcome of this absence of policy focus is the pragmatic strategies of local administration to deal with governance challenges arising from their increased political and economic embeddedness. Bazaar economy is not only reducing reliance on the agricultural economy in the country, it also plays an important role in causing political inclusion and democratization at both national and local level (Javed, 2017). However, associated challenges and opportunities ahead, for service delivery cannot be left alone to the pragmatism of local bureaucracy. Instead, it is the time to develop a clear policy focus on the role of these small towns in the rapidly urbanizing Pakistan.

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