

# Group decision-making:

Evidence from a framed field experiment with Third Tier  
Community Organisations in Pakistan

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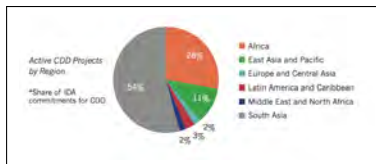
# Motivation

Public provision of goods and services has met limited success. As a result, the focus of policy has shifted towards promoting **community driven development** (CDD) in developing countries.

(Bardhan, 2002; World Bank; 2004)

CDD gives control over planning decisions and investment resources to community groups (including local governments).

To date, the World Bank has dedicated **10.2** billion dollars to CDD programs worldwide. (World Bank, 2016)



World Bank's active CDD portfolio by region

# Contribution

At the grassroots level, CDD and decentralization involves a group of local actors frequently making decisions towards a mutual interest.

Yet very little is known about how collective decision-making takes place within participatory groups at the local level.

Existing literature on local participatory development focuses on:

- Formation of community-based groups in rural settings  
(Arcand and Fafchamps, 2012; Barr, Dekker and Fafchamps, 2012a; 2012b; 2015)
- Effect of local participatory development on outcomes, elite capture and the civil society  
(Mansuri and Rao, 2014; White, Menon and Waddington, 2018)
- Characteristics of service providers and recipients for effectiveness of decentralized development interventions  
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# What we do....

We study the dynamics of collective decision-making within Third Tier Community Organisations (TTOs) in rural Pakistan.

- How does the executive body (EB) in these organisations makes collective decisions?
- Does background of individual EB members affects their representation in collective decisions?

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# Overview of Community Organisations

The **NGO** sector in Pakistan heavily relies on **community driven development** ('CDD') for service delivery and local representation.

**CDD** follows a three-tiered model of **social mobilisation** ('SM'):

- **First Tier Organisations** ('FTOs')
- **Second Tier Organisations** ('STOs')
- **Third Tier Organisations** ('TTOs')

TTOs are roughly **similar** because they all:

- are **mature apex** organisations at the Union Council level;
- are run by **elected volunteers**;
- operate under the **same organisational and operational rules**;

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National Rural Support Programme

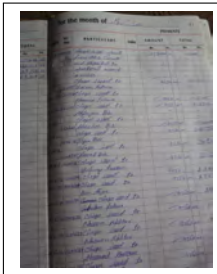
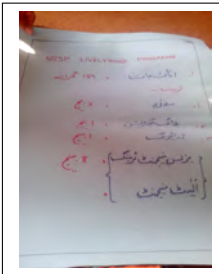


National Rural Support Programme





A snapshot of a **Third Tier Organisation**



# Experimental Design

The objective of the experiments was to study **individual and group behaviour of executive body (EB) members over risk and time.**

We framed **both experiments in the context of TTO's budget choices.** EB members were provided with scenarios in which:

- they had to choose a grant application to apply for funding.
- they had to choose a donor agency to receive money in recognition of their work.

The scenarios were **hypothetical and did not involve real financial gains** because....

- they were not feasible given the average annual budget of TTOs.
- they would have been in contrast to the main RCT on non-financial incentives.

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# Risk Experiment

We used a modified version of the risk aversion experiments of Brick, Visser and Burns (2012) inspired by the multiple price list design of Holt and Laury (2002)

EB members were given a list of **9 pair-wise funding applications**.

- A **safe grant application** which would certainly give money.
- A **risky grant application** which entailed an equal chance of either getting money or receiving nothing at all.

Task	Safe Application (A)	Risky Application (B)	EV(A)	EV(B)	CRRA Interval
1	500	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	500	100000	0.9 <r
2	20000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	20000	100000	0.7 <r <0.9
3	40000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	40000	100000	0.6 <r <0.7
4	60000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	60000	100000	0.4 <r <0.6
5	80000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	80000	100000	0.2 <r <0.4
6	100000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	100000	100000	0 <r <0.2
7	120000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	120000	100000	-0.4 <r <0
8	150000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	150000	100000	-1.4 <r <-0.4
9	200000	0.5 of 200000; 0.5 of 0	200000	100000	r <-1.4

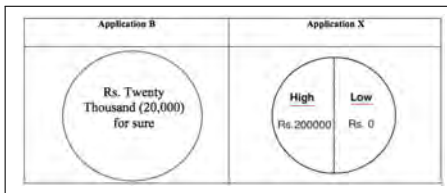
# Time experiment

We used the discount rate experiments of Voors et. al. (2012) who follow the approach of Harrison, Lau and Williams (2002).

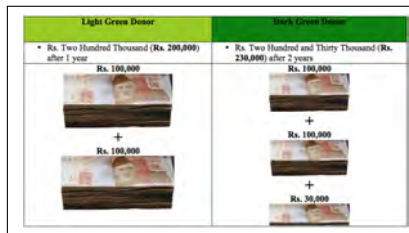
EB members were given a list of **8 binary monetary rewards** and they had to choose between 2 donor agencies:

- Light Green Donor: giving a **smaller reward** after **1 year**.
- Dark Green Donor: giving a **larger reward** after **2 years**.

Task	Light Green (After 1 year)	Dark Green (After 2 Years)	Discount Rate
1	200000	200000	0%
2	200000	230000	15%
3	200000	250000	25%
4	200000	280000	40%
5	200000	310000	55%
6	200000	340000	70%
7	200000	400000	100%
8	200000	600000	200%



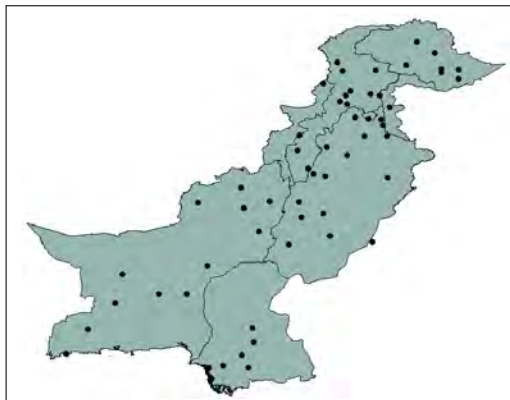
## Risk Task



## Time Task

# We worked with 850 TTOs across Pakistan...

We ran the experiments from **August 2014** to **November 2014**, as part of the **baseline survey** for the RCT.



# Descriptive Statistics

## Organisational Characteristics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
EB size	652	7.57	2.55	5	18
All female TTOs	652	0.24	0.43	0	1
All male TTOs	652	0.32	0.47	0	1
Mixed gender TTOs	652	0.44	0.50	0	1
Ratio of males (Mixed gender TTOs)	284	0.64	0.24	0.08	0.94
Ratio living in uncemented houses	652	0.28	0.33	0	1
Ratio owning land	652	0.83	0.30	0	1
Ratio with high school edu or more	652	0.69	0.30	0	1
Ratio of Disabled	652	0.01	0.03	0	0.33
Ratio from religious minority groups	652	0.02	0.11	0	1
Ratio who have served for 1 year or more	652	0.87	0.26	0	1
Ratio who have served in the govt.	652	0.33	0.30	0	1
Ratio of retired	652	0.04	0.10	0	0.8
Ratio of unemployed	652	0.30	0.30	0	1
Ratio of students	652	0.02	0.06	0	0.6
Punjab	652	0.42	0.49	0	1
Sind	652	0.16	0.37	0	1
KP and Northern Areas	652	0.36	0.48	0	1
Balochistan	652	0.06	0.23	0	1

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# Descriptive Statistics

## Individual and Group Choices

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
<b>Risk Experiment</b>					
Individual Choices	4,974	1.61	2.30	0	9
Group Choices	652	1.08	1.99	0	9
<b>Time Experiment</b>					
Individual Choices	4,974	2.42	2.43	0	8
Group Choices	652	1.81	2.16	0	8

Where:

**Individual (group) risk choice:** No. of times the individual (group) chose to apply for the risky grant application

**Individual (group) time choice:** No. of times the individual (group) chose to receive money in the distant future

# Individual versus group behaviour of EB members

# The **median** member is influential

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \mu_g$$

**median** member

**Least** risk loving

**Least** patient

**Most** risk loving

**Most** patient

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.510*** [0.07]	0.471*** [0.05]
Constant	0.534*** [0.09]	0.772*** [0.12]
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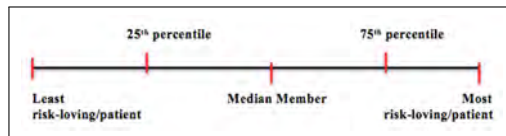
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# The median member is most influential

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot x_g^1 + \beta_2 \cdot x_g^2 + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_3 \cdot x_g^3 + \beta_4 \cdot x_g^4 + \mu_g$$

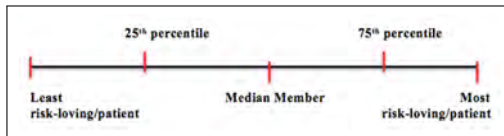


Dependent Variable: Group preferences

	(1) Risk	(2) Time
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient	0.0166 [0.24]	0.115 [0.13]
Preferences: 25th percentile	0.151 [0.20]	0.159 [0.12]
Preferences: median member	0.335*** [0.11]	0.202** [0.09]
Preferences: 75th percentile	0.0633 [0.07]	0.123* [0.06]
Preferences: most risk loving/most patient	0.0304 [0.04]	0.0153 [0.04]
Constant	0.398*** [0.08]	0.598*** [0.15]
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### Post Estimation Hypothesis Tests

<i>Test</i>	<i>Null Hypothesis</i>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
		<i>P values</i>	<i>P values</i>
1 Group decision is a linear convex combination of individual decisions.	$H_0^1: \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \beta_4 + \beta_5 = 1$ $H_0^2: \alpha = 0$	0.000***	0.000***
2 Weak Median Hypothesis	$H_0^1: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = 0$ $H_0^2: \beta_3 = 0$	0.000***	0.000***
3 Strong Median Hypothesis	$H_0^1: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = 0$ $H_0^2: \beta_3 = 1$	0.000***	0.000***
4 Extreme Irrelevance	$H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_5 = 0$	0.783	0.479



# Robustness Checks

- Our results are robust to alternative estimation strategies.
- Results are not sensitive to inclusion of organisations which made inconsistent choices.
- We do not find evidence for a sample selection bias after excluding organisations which behaved inconsistently.
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# Do **personal characteristics** of **influential** EB members matter for collective decisions?

# The president is influential in some cases

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.337*** [0.108]	0.166* [0.093]
<b>Preferences: president</b>	<b>-0.00682</b> <b>[0.046]</b>	<b>0.0906*</b> <b>[0.051]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.399*** [0.083]	0.596*** [0.150]
Obs.	652	652

Apart from the president, we find **no effect** of other personal characteristics on collective decisions, after controlling for median member's individual choices. These include individual preferences of:

- The richest member in the organization.
- Most educated member.
- The eldest member in terms of age.
- The longest serving member.
- The most active member.

# Collective decisions represent individual choices of female members in mixed gender TTOs

$$|y_g - x_g^j| = \alpha + X_i\gamma + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Absolute difference b/w group and individual preferences

	Risk	Time
Male	0.521*** [0.175]	-0.0449 [0.232]
Mixed TTO	0.009 [0.145]	0.0654 [0.186]
Male*Mixed TTO	-0.404** 0.200	0.114 0.238
Controls	✓	✓
Constant	1.432*** [0.391]	2.287*** [0.407]
Obs.	3,227	3,227

Predicted Distance of EB Members Individual Preference from the Group Choice

	Risk
Female EB member in all female TTOs	1.432
Male EB member in all male TTOs	1.953
Female EB member in mixed gender TTOs	<b>1.441</b>
Male EB member in mixed gender TTOs	<b>1.569</b>

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# EB members are representative of some marginalized groups but not all...

Variable	EB Members				Non-members from the community				N
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	
Males	0.58	0.41	0	1	0.52	0.03	0.44	0.7	128
Un-cemented houses	0.31	0.34	0	1	0.46	0.29	0	1	128
Own Land	0.78	0.36	0	1	0.85	0.24	0.07	1	128
Landholding (Acres)	2.90	5.37	0	40.1	3.98	4.07	0.07	25.2	128
10 or more yrs. of Education	0.67	0.32	0	1	0.25	0.16	0	0.7	128
Disabled	0.00	0.03	0	0.3	0.10	0.07	0	0.3	128
From Minority Religion	0.02	0.12	0	1	0.09	0.17	0	1	128

# Conclusions

This study revealed insights about the **process of collective decision-making within TTOs** in Pakistan.

**EB members behaved more cautiously while making decisions collectively** relative to making decisions individually.

We found that **collective choices of the executive body followed individual choices of the median EB member**.

We also found that **personal characteristics of EB members do not play a major role in collective decisionmaking** of TTOs in Pakistan.

These findings have an important **policy implication**; **decentralization** of resources to local community groups may enable **better access to social safety schemes**, and improve **equality within rural communities**.

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Thank you!

# Appendix

# Characteristics of EB Members

<b>Characteristics of Executive Body Members</b>					
Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Male	4,974	0.60	0.49	0	1
Un-cemented House	4,974	0.29	0.45	0	1
Owens Land	4,974	0.82	0.38	0	1
Biggest Landowner	4,974	0.14	0.35	0	1
Years of Schooling	4,974	10.10	5.50	0	18
President	4,974	0.13	0.33	0	1
Treasurer	4,974	0.11	0.31	0	1
Age (years)	4,949	38.64	11.22	18	89
Duration in EB	4,931	2.56	1.82	0.08	9.5
Participation	4,965	3.75	1.03	1	5
Disabled	4,974	0.01	0.08	0	1
Minority Religion	4,974	0.02	0.16	0	1
Contested or Served in Govt.	4,974	0.33	0.47	0	1
Retired	4,974	0.04	0.20	0	1
Unemployed/House Work	4,974	0.30	0.46	0	1
Student	4,974	0.02	0.14	0	1

# Descriptive Statistics: Risk Experiment

<i>Risk Experiment</i>					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Group (Minimum)	652	0.23	0.84	0	9
Group (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	0.46	1.21	0	9
Group (50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	1.06	1.72	0	9
Group (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	2.19	2.45	0	9
Group (Maximum)	652	3.60	3.08	0	9
Group mode	652	0.75	1.74	0	9
Group preferences (overall)	652	1.08	1.99	0	9
Individual preferences (overall)	4974	1.61	2.30	0	9



# Descriptive Statistics: Time Experiment

<i>Time Experiment</i>					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Group (Minimum)	652	0.70	1.24	0	6
Group (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	1.21	1.57	0	8
Group (50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	2.19	1.99	0	8
Group (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	652	3.41	2.36	0	8
Group (Maximum)	652	4.62	2.62	0	8
Group mode	652	1.71	2.13	0	8
Group preferences (overall)	652	1.81	2.16	0	8
Individual preferences (overall)	4974	2.42	2.43	0	8

# Choices of the richest member do not matter

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.345*** [0.107]	0.210** [0.095]
<b>Preferences: biggest landlord</b>	<b>-0.0703</b> <b>[0.060]</b>	<b>-0.023</b> <b>[0.049]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.404*** [0.085]	0.600*** [0.149]
Obs.	652	652

# Choices of the most educated member do not matter

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.327*** [0.110]	0.164 [0.101]
<b>Preferences: most educated</b>	<b>0.0303</b> <b>[0.067]</b>	<b>0.100</b> <b>[0.061]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.398*** [0.085]	0.594*** [0.149]
Obs.	652	652

# Choices of the eldest member do not matter

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.338*** [0.108]	0.190** [0.093]
<b>Preferences: eldest member</b>	<b>-0.0121</b> <b>[0.047]</b>	<b>0.032</b> <b>[0.047]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.399*** [0.084]	0.594*** [0.150]
Obs.	652	652

# Choices of the longest serving member do not matter

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.333*** [0.103]	0.194** [0.095]
<b>Preferences: longest serving member</b>	<b>0.0054</b> <b>[0.047]</b>	<b>0.035</b> <b>[0.061]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.398*** [0.085]	0.598*** [0.149]
Obs.	652	652

# Choices of the most active member in group discussion do **not** matter

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.280** [0.112]	0.168* [0.092]
<b>Preferences: most active member</b>	<b>0.214</b> <b>[0.151]</b>	<b>0.135</b> <b>[0.084]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.386*** [0.082]	0.611*** [0.149]
Obs.	652	652

# The treasurer is also influential in some cases

$$y_g = \alpha + \beta_m \cdot x_g^m + \beta_d \cdot x_g^d + \sum_{i=1}^4 \beta_i \cdot x_g^i + \mu_g$$

Dependent Variable: Group preferences		
	(1)	(2)
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Time</b>
Preferences: median member	0.340*** [0.114]	0.185** [0.091]
<b>Preferences: treasurer</b>	<b>-0.0148</b> <b>[0.073]</b>	<b>0.084*</b> <b>[0.044]</b>
Preferences: least risk loving/least patient, 25th percentile, 75th percentile, most risk loving/most patient	✓	✓
Constant	0.397*** [0.084]	0.593*** [0.149]
Obs.	652	652