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Mary C Smith *

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The Decentralisation Paradox: How Bringing Government Closer Increases Corruption

Mary C Smith

Independent Researcher, UK; marycsmithuk@gmail.com

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The assumption that decentralisation reduces corruption is widely held yet poorly evidenced. This article examines whether transferring the management of drinking water utilities from state government to local government increases or decreases corruption in central India. Drawing on longitudinal survey data collected between 2006 and 2010 across 122 utilities in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the study employs a difference-in-differences design to analyse a natural experiment. Experience-based measures of bribery are used in preference to perception indices, which are shown to be unreliable in dynamic settings. The results indicate that decentralisation significantly increases corruption across all transaction types examined, including bill manipulation, repair expediting, new connections, and contractor kickbacks. However, the effect diminishes over time, suggesting that local bodies develop institutional capacity through learning by doing. These findings challenge the orthodox view promoted by international development agencies and point to the importance of contextually grounded, longitudinal analysis in governance research.

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1. Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated a profound crisis of confidence in centralised governance, rendering decentralisation an almost fashionable prescription across the domains of public policy, administrative reform, and developmental practice. It was advanced as a panacea for an extraordinarily heterogeneous set of political predicaments: facilitating the precarious democratic transitions of Eastern Europe and South Africa; providing a bulwark against the infiltration of state apparatus by drug cartels in Latin American republics; and enabling China and India to sustain and consolidate their remarkable trajectories of economic expansion. The purported—and in many instances merely hypothetical—virtues of decentralisation drew together a remarkably eclectic coalition of adherents, encompassing neoliberal economists harbouring deep scepticism towards the bloated and predatory state alongside those persuaded by the pervasiveness of market failures, including anarcho-communitarian thinkers, postmodernist intellectuals, environmentalists, multiculturalists, and advocates of assorted social causes [1]. The World Bank accorded decentralisation a prominent position within its governance reform agenda [2]. Those who expressed reservations about its merits risked being dismissed alongside proponents of flat-earth cosmology and creationist biology [3–5].

The inflated expectations surrounding decentralisation appear to be rooted, at least in part, in a profound dissatisfaction with centralised governance structures, within which monolithic state apparatus proved fertile ground for bureaucratic venality. Much of the advocacy rests upon normative assessments in which the concept of decentralisation remains insufficiently theorised. At its most fundamental, decentralisation denotes the redistribution of authority and responsibilities from superior to subordinate tiers of government. Given that it has constituted a foundational concept within public administration for several decades, an elaborate taxonomy has been elaborated in the scholarly literature. The most widely adopted classificatory framework distinguishes three principal variants: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. Deconcentration entails the administrative reassignment of managerial authority across territorially distinct units that nonetheless remain under the hierarchical oversight of central government. Delegation, by contrast, involves the transfer of authority over circumscribed functions to bodies operating at arm's length from direct governmental control. Devolution occurs when constitutionally or legislatively sanctioned powers are ceded by a higher governmental tier to autonomous lower-level governments. The theoretical literature on decentralisation is predominantly focused on devolution, which is praised based on the fundamental idea that distributed political power makes it easier for citizens to have a significant impact on policy decisions [6]. Devolution should cascade down to the lowest practical level of government, according to supporters, including multilateral organisations, unless externalities, cost recovery, or technical capacity are taken into account.

Although orthodox decentralisation frameworks are largely silent on the matter of corruption, the underlying supposition is that decentralisation gets governmental structures into proximity with citizens, thereby fostering civic empowerment and rendering officeholders more susceptible to accountability mechanisms, with the consequent effect of curtailing corrupt behaviour [7–11]. The dispersal of corruption across lower tiers of government might, paradoxically, be construed as a beneficial redistributive development; yet this cynical formulation has never been put forward as a formal justification for decentralisation. The prevailing contention remains that it will diminish corruption. A source of this premise is a persistent inclination to conflate it with participatory governance. In the discourse of development policy, these two analytically distinct concepts are routinely used interchangeably, despite their fundamentally different intellectual lineages. Development practitioners broadly concur that the engagement of intended beneficiaries enhances programmatic effectiveness, yet this consensus cannot be construed as an endorsement of decentralisation per se. Treating the two as synonymous impoverishes both concepts and attenuates their respective analytical and practical utility.

Whilst earlier generations of scholars in this field concentrated upon inter-jurisdictional externalities and the heterogeneity of preferences for public goods, more contemporary scholarship oriented towards developing-country contexts has moved beyond this largely unproductive debate. Departing from the confines of federalist theory, recent theoretical contributions incorporate political dynamics explicitly and trace their implications for outcomes. The central preoccupation of contemporary theoretical inquiry has been whether decentralisation can function as an effective institutional instrument for disciplining government officials. Citizens are frequently in possession of rich information regarding the conduct of officeholders and are well-placed to draw reasonably accurate inferences about corrupt activity; yet this information resists verification and is consequently unavailable to central decision-makers. Local democratic governance thus emerges as a potential mechanism through which citizens may constrain official corruption. Critics of this position maintain that sub-national tiers offer fewer structural impediments to corruption, given the comparative underdevelopment of local media, the weakness of auditing and the inclination of administrators to cultivate entangled relations with resident political actors. There exists a pronounced risk of clientelistic networks taking root and of elite groups capturing institutional processes, outcomes that are likely to exacerbate rather than mitigate corruption [12–14]. In summation, the most candid theoretical conclusion is that the effects of decentralisation are likely to be highly context-dependent, and that ultimately the question of impact must be resolved empirically.

Amongst cross-national comparative investigations, those undertaken or commissioned by the World Bank typically yield findings suggesting that decentralisation is associated with lower corruption. An analysis of data drawn from eighty countries, for instance, concluded that devolution enhances the quality of administration, thereby reduction in corrupt practices. These studies have, however, examined uncontrolled correlations between decentralisation and quality of administration. Wealthier nations tend to exhibit higher degrees of decentralisation and that they also demonstrate superior governance outcomes: in such work, correlation has been treated as causation. Federal constitutional structures have been linked empirically with elevated perceptions of corruption. After controlling for per capita income and a range of additional covariates, There was evidence of a negative correlation between decentralisation and corruption, but endogeneity issues remained unsolved which undermine the credibility of such findings [15,16]. A different analysis compares decentralisation indices to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in cross-national datasets, challenging the Fisman-Gatti results by highlighting the exclusion of important control factors. It reports lower corruption in more decentralised polities—yet this study likewise fails to adequately address endogeneity. Panel data analysis across a diverse sample of developed and developing economies suggests federal government fiscal transmissions to state governments reduce corruption, though this effect is found to be contingent upon the presence of a robust national party system capable of aligning local political incentives with national-level objectives. A further cross-sectional study of eighty countries, notable for its use of experiential rather than perceptual data drawn from the World Bank's Enterprise Survey, reported that there were more reports of bribery in nations with more levels of government. This study has nonetheless attracted criticism from World Bank researchers for inappropriate unit selection, who themselves conclude that decentralisation reduces corruption under virtually all conditions. Conversely, a large-sample study of sixty-four jurisdictions reported that corruption reduced on account of decentralisation only when press freedom was established, and may actually intensify it where it is not [17–19].

For a constellation of methodological and conceptual reasons, cross-national empirical studies have been unable to furnish actionable guidance on the relationship between decentralisation and corruption. A decade-long review of this literature concluded that the anti-corruption effect of decentralisation lacks robustness. Whether the deployment of ever more sophisticated econometric techniques in cross-country research will ultimately resolve this uncertainty seems doubtful. A further difficulty common to both theoretical and cross-national quantitative work is the undifferentiated treatment of lower levels of governments. In the matter of service delivery, such a designation can be practically devoid of meaning. China's largest provincial unit accommodates a population exceeding one hundred million inhabitants, whilst India's most populous state surpasses the combined population of all but five nations on earth. Earlier scholarship tended to disregard the existence of layered sub-national structures, whilst more recent cross-country studies have sometimes sought to address this through composite indices. Yet they do not draw meaningful distinctions between decentralisation from federal to state tier and that from state to lower level—or, indeed, without even considering their effects operate in the same direction. Such theoretical imprecision and empirical conflation not only render findings analytically suspect but may generate profoundly misguided policy prescriptions. Authoritarian regimes, for instance, characteristically centralise authority, meaning that decentralisation from national to sub-national government may genuinely advance democratisation; yet the further devolution of responsibilities within the sub-national tier may produce no analogous democratic dividend. Indeed, military dictators and other autocratic rulers have frequently exploited downward devolution to local government as a strategy for enfeebling regional administrations and insulating central power from challenge. Pakistan furnishes a compelling illustration: each successive military takeover has been accompanied by a downward transfer of power to local governments, followed by its reversal under subsequent civilian administrations [20–24]. The administrative confusion that ensued from an ongoing decentralisation transition compounded the catastrophic governmental failures revealed by the devastating 2010 floods.

Disaggregated, context-specific empirical investigation is likely to yield considerably more instructive findings. Although an extensive body of within-country literature addresses the relationship between decentralisation and outcomes such as economic growth, trade performance, and regional distributional equity, and despite a substantial research tradition examining corruption in local government, very little scholarship has directly examined the link between decentralisation and corruption within a single national context [25–28]. Evidence bearing upon the comparative levels of corruption at different governmental tiers in delivery of services remains sparse. A notable

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exception is Asthana's influential 2008 study [7], which established that corruption in drinking water utilities administered by local governments in central India exceeded that prevalent in utilities under regional government control—thereby identifying devolution from the regional to the local lower as a significant predictor of heightened corruption.This research, however, offers only a cross-sectional picture. The author himself acknowledges that the findings do not automatically render decentralisation as an intrisically flawed policy direction and that local governments may in time develop institutional capacity to govern more honestly. An analytically rich investigation of decentralisation in four countries of Asia and Africa tentatively suggests that corruption may initially intensify before declining as decentralised structures mature. Now that more longitudinal data have accumulated, this article sets out to test this proposition, contributing to the modest but growing body of literature concerned with the effects of decentralisation across sub-national tiers [29–31]. It advances this literature by attending to a dynamic rather than static context, and by investigating whether the connection between decentralisation and corruption evolves over time [32–34].

2. The Background

This study's geographic scope includes the rural and periurban regions of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, two sizable Indian states that collectively make up central India, with a combined territorial extent of 440,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 81 million. When atypical outlier states and metropolitan areas characterised by elevated human development indices are excluded, the profile of this region broadly mirrors that of South Asia as a whole. Under India's constitutional framework, responsibility for water-related matters vests in the state governments [35–37]. The formal role of the central government is formally restricted to coordinating water allocation between riparian states and managing relations with intergovernmental bodies. However, federal involvement is amplified by the substantial central transfers made to state governments to co-finance irrigation and drinking water infrastructure, including through large-scale welfare programmes. The financing architecture of the drinking water sector has remained broadly stable over the past two decades: for new construction and capacity expansion, state and local governments contribute 59 to 61 per cent of funding, the central government 35 per cent, and international donor agencies the remaining 5 per cent; operations and maintenance expenditure is borne entirely by sub-national governments. The sector's limited dependence upon external aid—given the negligible proportion of total expenditure attributable to international agencies—ensures that policy formation remains substantially autonomous. Federal and state officials regard the aid component chiefly as a resource for pilot schemes, staff training, and study visits, while multilateral agencies are valued primarily as repositories of technical knowledge [38–40].

Although India's federal system has been operative for over six decades, it was the 1993 constitutional amendment that formally institutionalised the political architecture of local government. State governments have since faced continuous incentives to devolve greater functional responsibilities to local bodies, with a substantial portion of central fiscal transfers to the states in the drinking water sector explicitly conditioned upon such devolution. Across numerous programme frameworks, the state government retains regulatory and oversight functions whilst direct service provision role is delegated to local government. In certain instances, lacking the requisite technical expertise, commission a state government agency to execute the project on a deposit-work basis. Operations and maintenance of government-owned infrastructure tends to remain with the tier that owns it. The commitment to transfer all schemes to local governmentshas been only partially translated into practice, largely because local bodies have displayed little enthusiasm for assuming liability for utilities that are unlikely to generate any revenue surplus. Privatisation of water services in India is confined to select small industrial zones; given the absence of political consensus and the acute potential for social conflict, it does not figure seriously even in policy debates relating to large urban centres, let alone smaller towns or villages.

Civil society organisations, whilst broadly supportive of decentralisation, nonetheless hold state governments accountable in situations of service failure, irrespective of whether the utility in question is under local government management The human rights commissions attribute responsibility for human rights violations to the relevant state government when a water utility—whether or not it has been decentralised—fails to discharge its obligations [41,42]. One state human rights commission went so far as to recommend that drinking water provision should be retained within state government control [43].

3. Methodology and Data

Measuring corruption necessarily entails either direct or indirect assessment of specific transactions. The most methodologically rigorous approach would be observational in nature—that is, involving a researcher or investigator bearing direct witness to a corrupt transaction. A systematic search of empirically oriented publications indexed in the Thomson-ISI-Reuters Social Science Citation Index over two decades revealed no more than two studies in which such an observational design was feasible [4–45]. Given the ethical and logistical obstacles involved, observational approaches will remain exceptional, and empirical research will continue to depend principally upon perceptual or experiential accounts of corruption. Perception-based inquiry constitutes the dominant and most convenient research modality. The methods of constructing perceived corruption indices have been refined considerably over time. Cross-national researchers almost invariably rely upon perception indices; in the infrequent instances where experiential data are employed, these typically record the experiences of the business community and bear little relevance to public service contexts [46–48]. Because perceptions are inherently transient and normatively conditioned, reliance upon them is liable to yield distorted findings, particularly in rapidly evolving situations. For example, as governance processes become more transparent, actual corruption may decline whilst appearing to intensify—since the newly visible misconduct was always present but previously concealed. Benjamin Olken's Indonesian studies document a positive yet weak correlation between perceptions and actual behaviour, and he cautions that analyses based upon perceptions of corruption may generate misleading conclusions about its correlates [49,50]. A growing scholarly consensus holds that experiential evidence provides a more dependable empirical foundation. This study employs experience-based measures to examine whether the devolution of authority from state to local government produces any discernible effect upon corruption.

Approximately 84 per cent of residents within the study area are served by reticulated water supply systems, either through individual household connections or through public standpipes in close proximity. The population not covered by these arrangements, concentrated typically on the peripheries of settlements, relies upon hand pumps or unprotected sources [51]. Vended water does not constitute a significant supply modality in this region [52–54]. Even households with connections and those in proximity to standpipes frequently supplement their supply from other sources, as piped delivery is restrictedTwo hundred settlements were selected from the refined sampling frame. The inaugural survey, conducted in July 2016, was published; at that juncture 50 schemes remained under state government administration (centralised) and 151 had been transferred to local government control (decentralised). Subsequent years witnessed further transfers. For the purposes of this analysis, attention is confined to 123 utilities that underwent decentralisation between 2017 and 2020, a compressed time window selected to prevent the growing dissimilarity of utilities from undermining the validity of comparisons [55,56].

Field investigators enumerated households in the sequence used in the 2011 census listings, or, where such records were unavailable, commenced enumeration from the north-western extremity of the settlement. Households without water connections were excluded, and forty households were then selected from each scheme. The investigation proceeded in two stages. The first focused upon end consumers, enquiring whether any bribe had been paid within the preceding twelve months in connection with a water bill—whether to secure a lower consumption figure or to avert an inflated charge. The second drew upon two sub-samples: consumers who had required repairs within the preceding two years, and those who had sought new piped connections.

The contractors engaged with the surveyed schemes were asked whether they had made any payment to an official or political representative over the preceding year in connection with any aspect of the utility's operations. Structured interviews were additionally conducted with key informants—including staff of non-governmental organisations, union representatives, and elected officials—utilising semi-structured, pre-tested interview schedules offering some flexibility in application. The risk that a questionnaire not exclusively focused on corruption might lose analytical precision was offset by the benefit that corruption-related questions, positioned towards the close of each interview, were preceded by the development of an interviewing rapport more conducive to candid disclosure.

The identifying assumption underpinning the DiD estimation is that, in the absence of decentralisation, the trajectories of variable would have followed broadly parallel paths. This assumption cannot be tested directly; however, it is rendered plausible when no systematic differences in pre-existing trends are apparent. The causal effect of decentralisation is therefore recognised by exploiting variation in administrative status of utilities. The validity of the identification strategy is further bolstered by the three robustness checks described above.

4. Results

Bill manipulation constitutes the most prevalent form of bribery: many consumers pay officials to get artificially low bills, whilst others make payments—whether construed as bribes or unsolicited gratuities—to prevent inflated charges from being levied. Since the objective of many such payments was to achieve both ends simultaneously. In aggregate, 51.3 per cent of respondents in the decentralised utilities reported having paid bribes, compared with 40.9 per cent in the centralised utilities—a difference that attains statistical significance. The difference in the monetary value of bribes paid, however, was not statistically significant. A second, smaller sub-sample was confined to consumers who had required repairs within the preceding year: 39.7 per cent of these respondents reported bribery in the decentralised utilities versus 30.4 per cent in the centralised utilities—a significant differential in the transactions accompanied by facilitation payments, though the amounts involved did not differ significantly between the two groups. A further, smaller sub-sample of households requiring new connections similarly revealed a significantly higher incidence of bribery in decentralised utilities, despite the absolute number of bribe-payers being small; the higher average sums involved in this category did not, however, differ significantly between centralised and decentralised utilities. The contractor sub-sample, in which the monetary value of bribes was not recorded owing to respondents' reluctance to disclose specific amounts, nonetheless revealed a significantly higher proportion of contractors making payments to officials of decentralised utilities compared with those serving centralised utilities.

The temporal trajectory of the effect of decentralisation is important. For the purposes of presentation, the coefficient has been re-scaled, such that a value of 0.01 is expressed as a 10 percentage point differential in corruption between decentralised and centralised utilities. The shaded region in each figure represents the 95 per cent confidence interval around these estimates. In none of the figures does the confidence interval envelope the horizontal zero line. The substantive implication is that decentralisation produces an initial elevation of corruption, followed by a subsequent moderation; over the medium term, however, the differential remains statistically meaningful.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide robust empirical support for the proposition that decentralisation from a regional level of government to local government significantly increases corruption in the provision of public services. The result is consistent across all four types of corrupt transaction examined, namely the manipulation of water bills, the expediting of repairs, the securing of new connections, and kickbacks from contractors. The magnitude and statistical significance of the

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decentralisation coefficient in all multivariate regressions confirm that this relationship is not an artefact of confounding variables such as the size or age of the utility, or the socio-economic characteristics of consumers.

These results stand in contrast to the prevailing orthodoxy promoted by international development organisations, which has generally held that decentralisation reduces corruption by bringing government closer to the people and thereby strengthening citizen accountability. The present findings are, however, consistent with a strand of the theoretical literature that warns of the risks posed by underdeveloped local accountability mechanisms, including weak media, inadequate audit systems, and the tendency of local officials to cultivate clientelistic networks [57–59]. The susceptibility of local government to elite capture may be particularly acute in the rural and semi-urban contexts studied here, where social hierarchies are entrenched and voice mechanisms for ordinary citizens remain limited.

Of particular theoretical significance is the dynamic dimension of the results. The temporal analysis shows that, although corruption increases sharply in the immediate aftermath of decentralisation, this increase diminishes over time, even though it persists in the medium term. This trajectory is consistent with the hypothesis advanced by Crook and Manor (1998), whose comparative study of decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa suggested that initial increases in corruption might be a transitional phenomenon. The present study provides the first quantitative longitudinal evidence in support of this conjecture. The pattern is consistent with a process of learning by doing, whereby newly decentralised entities gradually develop the administrative capacity, internal controls, and accountability routines necessary to resist corrupt pressures.

The study also contributes methodologically to a literature in which perceptual measures of corruption have long predominated. By employing experience-based measures drawn from a longitudinal household survey and contractor interviews, the study addresses the well-documented limitations of perception indices. The use of a natural experiment with a difference-in-differences estimation strategy further strengthens causal inference by controlling for unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity across utilities. The parallel-trends assumption, while inherently untestable, is supported by evidence from interviews with state government officials confirming that the timing of decentralisation was not influenced by pre-existing trends in corruption.

The findings carry important implications for policy. They suggest that the unconditional promotion of decentralisation as a governance reform is premature, particularly in settings where local governments lack the institutional capacity to exercise their new responsibilities with integrity. At the same time, the temporal attenuation of the corruption increase provides grounds for cautious optimism: decentralisation need not be indefinitely associated with elevated corruption, provided that sufficient investment is made in institutional capacity building at the local level. Policy interventions that strengthen financial management, improve audit coverage, and support civil society engagement at the local level may accelerate the transition towards lower corruption levels in newly decentralised utilities.

6. Limitations and Directions for future research

The geographical scope of this study is confined to the rural and semi-urban areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Although the socio-economic profile of this region is broadly comparable to much of South Asia, the findings may not be directly transferable to contexts with markedly different institutional environments, levels of urbanisation, or histories of local governance. Future research should examine whether the patterns identified here hold in other Indian states and in other developing country contexts, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where decentralisation of public utility management has also been actively pursued.

The study covers a relatively short time horizon of four years following decentralisation. Whilst this is sufficient to detect medium-term trends, it does not permit conclusions about whether the observed decline in corruption continues in the long run or eventually plateaus. A longer follow-up period would provide more definitive evidence on the trajectory of corruption in decentralised utilities and would permit a more rigorous test of the learning-by-doing hypothesis. Researchers with access to administrative records over a longer period would be well placed to extend the longitudinal dimension of this work.

The sample is restricted to utilities serving populations above 2,000, in keeping with the 2001 census framework. Utilities serving smaller settlements, which may face different governance dynamics and different levels of social monitoring, are therefore excluded from the analysis. Future work could seek to extend coverage to smaller habitations and to examine whether settlement size moderates the relationship between decentralisation and corruption. Variation in settlement size may also interact with the capacity of local governments to manage utility operations, and this warrants systematic investigation.

Whilst the experience-based approach to measuring corruption employed in this study represents a significant methodological advance over perception indices, it relies on self-reported behaviour by consumers and contractors. Under-reporting remains a concern, particularly for transaction types that carry greater social stigma or legal risk. Future research might triangulate these self-reports with administrative data, such as audit records and complaint registers, where such data can be made accessible. The development of innovative unobtrusive measures of corruption in public utilities, building on methodological advances such as those employed by Olken and Barron (2009), would also strengthen the evidence base [60–63].

The present study does not examine the mechanisms through which decentralisation affects corruption. Identifying the specific pathways, whether via changes in the monitoring capacity of local governments, shifts in the composition of contractors, or alterations in the political incentives facing local officials, would substantially enrich understanding of the phenomenon. Qualitative and mixed-methods research, including ethnographic work and process-tracing case studies within individual utilities, would complement the quantitative approach adopted here. Such work could also shed light on the conditions under which the learning-by-doing effect is more or less pronounced.

7. Conclusions

This article has examined the relationship between decentralisation and corruption in the provision of piped water supply in rural and semi-urban central India, using a natural experiment and a difference-in-differences estimation strategy. The study finds that the transfer of water supply utilities from state government to local government is associated with a significant increase in corruption across all transaction types examined. This result holds after controlling for utility size, utility age, contractor size, consumer education, and consumer income.

At the same time, the analysis reveals a dynamic pattern that qualifies this finding in an important respect. The initial increase in corruption following decentralisation is substantially reduced over time, even though it remains statistically significant in the medium term. This temporal attenuation is consistent with a process of institutional learning, whereby newly decentralised entities gradually acquire the capacity to manage their responsibilities with greater integrity. This finding provides the first longitudinal quantitative evidence in support of the learning-by-doing hypothesis advanced in earlier qualitative research.

The study makes several contributions to the existing literature. It is among the very few within-country studies to examine the relationship between decentralisation and corruption directly, and the first to do so using a longitudinal dataset. It employs experience-based rather than perception-based measures of corruption, thereby addressing a well-recognised weakness in the field. The natural experiment design, combined with a difference-in-differences methodology, provides a more credible basis for causal inference than is typically available in cross-country studies, which are frequently compromised by endogeneity and measurement problems.

The results also carry broader significance for debates about the appropriate sequencing of governance reforms in developing countries. They suggest that decentralisation should not be treated as a ready-made solution to corruption but rather as a reform that may increase corruption in the short term whilst creating the conditions for institutional improvement over time. Donors and national governments that support decentralisation programmes should consider investing in complementary measures that strengthen local accountability, including the development of local audit capacity, the promotion of press freedom, and the support of community oversight mechanisms. Without such complementary investments, the anticipated benefits of decentralisation in reducing corruption may take considerably longer to materialise.

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