

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY INSTITUTE  
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Paper 1

**Architects and Contractors**  
Political Economy Analysis of Policy  
Research in Pakistan

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## Preamble

This study was undertaken as an assignment commissioned by the Research and Evidence Division, DFID London in conjunction with DFID-P. DFID has commissioned similar exercises for Afghanistan and India. Its immediate purpose is to provide DFID with a database of policy relevant research activity in the country through mapping the overall landscape (with a separate paper mapping Education), as well as a political economy analysis (PEA) of the research to policy interface. This paper represents the PEA part of the assignment. Furthermore, both DFID and SDPI/Bath would like to see these papers, stand alone and as a group) widely disseminated in Pakistan as a contribution to the public good.

Guidelines for this PEA paper are derived from the TOR<sup>2</sup>:

‘In addition, to strengthen evidence based policy making in Pakistan, DFID P seeks to understand the possibilities and constraints facing the commissioning, undertaking and uptake of research in Pakistan. This second study will focus on the political economy of research in Pakistan. This will be an important step to allowing DFID, and other research funders, to effectively design and implement policy relevant research programmes.’

These guidelines are suggestive and will be reflected in the analysis which follows, along with other issues which arise from the landscaping data assembled by the research team. This paper sits alongside 2 other reports submitted to DFID: a Landscaping paper which maps the distribution and foci of research institutions in Pakistan across 7 sectors: social policy, governance, peace and conflict, evaluation, nutrition, economics, health; and a separate paper on the Education sector, due to its prominence in the DFID portfolio of interventions in Pakistan. It should also be noted that two previous reports have been submitted in the process of this assignment: an **Inception report** which included a preliminary discussion about the commissioning of research as well as comments about overall analytic approach and methodological issues; and a **Milestones report** which outlined the barriers to undertaking research and its uptake. Some of these issues will be re-incorporated into this final report.<sup>3</sup> In a report of this length, there will be selectivity of themes and analysis in order to convey the main ‘story’. This also entails a balance of judgements about where that main story lies, as there are frequently counter-examples from particular institutions and cases. And the construction of a story is not simply a counting and frequency exercise, based on opinions expressed as not all institutional or individual opinions can be weighed equally.

In addition to our own research<sup>4</sup> and data in the form of institutional description and opinions expressed to us through interviews across these institutions, our analysis has drawn upon 4 types of literature: a highly selective history of policy analysis; more recent papers on the research to policy linkage; and two papers from Pakistan by Zaidi (2002) and by Khattack (2009)<sup>5</sup>, which could usefully be read alongside this paper for further background which is

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1 for the full TOR

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Appendix 1 for the ‘barriers’ discussion.

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 2 for description of our methodology.

<sup>5</sup> S.Akbar Zaidi ‘Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan’ Council of Social Sciences, Islamabad 2002; and S.G.Khattack ‘Research in Difficult Settings: Reflections on Pakistan and Afghanistan’ Submitted to IDRC, August 2009

not sensible to repeat extensively here; and similar exercises to this, conducted in Afghanistan and India, as well as other UNESCO materials.<sup>6</sup>

## Executive Summary

The conclusion of this paper reminds the reader of main steps in the overall analysis and the concluding arguments. This Executive Summary therefore highlights the following key messages:

1. The moves towards the decentralisation of many government functions and services (i.e. the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution) moves the Planning Commission's role away from detailed command planning towards more indicative planning, with a focus upon inclusive growth and developing human and infrastructural capital to achieve that. This shift will have a profound effect upon the research/policy interface, since so much of it is presently Islamabad focussed.
2. The links between research and policy in Pakistan are particularly weak in comparison to other countries even within the region due to high levels of political insecurity and volatility which prompts short-term, highly politicised decision making rather than evidence-based choices and policy.
3. The impact of research on policy is also weak because policy makers do not have the capacity or incentives to absorb complex analysis whether quantitative or qualitative. Policy makers do not, therefore, develop functional networks with researchers.
4. The social sciences are a crucial underpinning of much policy analysis, especially across the sectors identified in this study, but the social sciences are seriously neglected in Pakistan, and, outside economics, are especially weak. Qualitative forms of research (e.g. from anthropology) are not valued. Underlying social science capacity is weakened by parental preferences for students to follow more obviously lucrative subjects in engineering, medicine, management and other applied sciences. The resulting quality of teaching and research in the social sciences thereby suffers.
5. Donors dominate the public policy research space through funding and commissioning, but they tend to have short term, projectised priorities across a range of thematic narratives and thus do not build long term capacity and relationships with the longer term, core development narrative of the country. Thus the work that they sponsor is often marginalised by central planners.
6. Overall, research outlets are relatively few and highly concentrated for a country of this size and complexity. While some of the economics-focussed institutions are closely allied with counterparts in government (especially Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission), other disciplines and institutes, e.g. in agriculture, nutrition and social policy, tend to be allied with particular programmes like the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) rather than core policy choice.

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<sup>6</sup> The acronyms used in the paper are explained in the relevant annex to the whole submission.

7. There are numerous barriers to undertaking research and its uptake which are summarised in the main text and set out in more detail in the Appendices. Some of these barriers refer to the intrinsic weaknesses of the social sciences, others to socio-cultural sensibilities, and others to the security issues.

## **Introduction: Framework for Analysis**

The rationale for this paper is explained above in the Preamble, with some of the key messages outlined in the Executive Summary. The methodology for the study is indicated in Annex 2, and is shared between the 3 components: overall landscaping description, the more particular landscaping of the Education sector, and this Political Economy analysis.

It is tempting for the analytic framework of this paper to be simply ‘subtractionist’, i.e. positing an ideal type relation between research, evidence, policy outcomes and implementation practice and then comparing to that ideal type, ‘reality’ in Pakistan. However the policy analysis literature has consistently debunked that linear ideal type in favour of a more nuanced, contextualised, circular, and multiple time period process.

Thus Clay (1984) observed:

‘The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies.’ (Clay and Schaffer 1984)<sup>7</sup>

Elsewhere, in Clay and Schaffer (1984), Schaffer’s essay (and the other essays) all demonstrated a core proposition that policy and project cycles, together with their respective knowledge assumptions, were organized sequentially and sectorally (in other words compartmentalized), enabling participants to avoid responsibility and accountability for collective outcomes by attributing failure up and down the ‘policy-implementation’ line, away from their own responsibility point in the process. At each compartmentalized stage, discrete sets of data and argument are deployed.

In an earlier path breaking study, Herbert Simon<sup>8</sup> introduced the notion of ‘satisficing’ organizational behaviour in which organizations avoided the costs of perfect information by opting for ‘enough’ information on which to base either rational decisions or establish legitimacy for them. He also recognized that information management played a role in the ongoing policy process through processes of goal recession and goal displacement. Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963)<sup>9</sup> also argued that the policy process occurred through ‘disjointed incrementalism’, again undermining any idea that the policy process was rational and linear.

Wood (1985)<sup>10</sup> inter alia drew attention to the value and ideological biases lying behind the construction of social categories for analysis, thus reminding us that datasets are not sacrosanct technically neutral artifacts, but themselves reflective of a priori, and thus

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<sup>7</sup> Clay and Schaffer (Eds) Room for Manoeuvre 1984

<sup>8</sup> H.Simon Administrative Behaviour 1947

<sup>9</sup> D.Braybrooke and C.Lindblom Strategy of Decision 1963, New York, Free Press

<sup>10</sup> G.Wood (Ed) Labelling in Development Policy 1985 Sage Publications

ideological, assumptions about significance of what is to be measured. Some recent literature reaffirms Clay's earlier chaos observation without conceding that the process is completely anarchic and random (Room 2011<sup>11</sup>).

However knowledge management has returned over the last decade in a quasi rationalist guise (NPM: New Policy Management) with a strong focus upon evidence based policy formulation, the assessment of outcomes through monitoring and evaluation, and the deployment of lessons learned through action-research<sup>12</sup> for ongoing policy development. This is the long loop aspect of knowledge management and the primary focus for this study.<sup>13</sup> Long loop knowledge management entails relationships and transactions between relatively independent partners involving 'commissioning, undertaking and uptake'.

A central problem of the research to policy link, even assuming, heuristically, a simple, linear results chain, is that attribution and measurement of the impact of research cannot be rigorously assessed. Initially much of the responsibility for achieving impact of research has been allocated to the supplier end of a 'results chain', through seeking and incentivizing more innovative approaches to dissemination<sup>14</sup>. In this process, academics have continuously argued that while they can be responsible for **outputs** (i.e. findings and publications), it is much more difficult for them to be judged by **outcomes**.<sup>15</sup>

The problem specification is now shifting further towards the additional, not replacement, focus upon the **demand side** of the results chain. In other words, the uptake issue. Certainly from the 'supplier' and 'doing' side of the equation there is the continuous generic refrain:

- that those in government responsible for policy development and the VfM of actual budget allocations arising from policy initiatives do not meet the 'suppliers' half way for knowledge transfer (e.g. by reading briefs, attending dissemination workshops and so on);
- that sustained dialogue between the users and producers of knowledge, including the 'new' knowledge that emerges from that potentially creative interaction, requires engagement on both sides, not just the supplier side;

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<sup>11</sup> G.J.Room Complexity, Institutions and Public Policy: Agile Decision Making in a Turbulent World 2011, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar

<sup>12</sup> There is a parallel theme of action-research, especially in the fields of education and management, though this has been more aligned to practice (Reason, Whitehead). But more formally constructed action-research also became a strong feature of rural development in South Asia, starting with the Comilla Academy in East Pakistan from 1959 under Akter Hameed Khan. After the break up of Pakistan, these advances in action-research were repatriated to West Pakistan by AHK through the Orangi Pilot Programme in Karachi, and then through AKSP and thus the later, wider RSP movement, under the leadership of Shoaib Sultan Khan. In this way, there is actually a powerful indigenous tradition within Pakistan of knowledge management for policy and practice, albeit confined to this large RSP family. However it would seem that any benefits of such action-research have been confined to the short MIS loop knowledge management.

<sup>13</sup> The shorter loop refers to MIS, where knowledge management is designed for more immediate implementation purposes and tends to draw upon in-house capacity. Harry Blair at Yale writes about the contrast between short and long loop accountability.

<sup>14</sup> Now not only an essential requirement of a research grant application in the UK, but also a basis for scoring/ranking them in research assessment exercises, which the HEC in Pakistan has also partially adopted.

<sup>15</sup> In a recent UK Development Studies Association Centres meeting in Oxford (March 2012), a senior figure from the DFID Research and Evidence Division (with similar previous roles elsewhere in Whitehall) acknowledged this problem by referring to the 'measurable middle' in the results chain.

- that researchers are constantly being urged to package their research into ‘bite size’ policy briefs, thus removing the subtleties of analysis;
- that they deliver their conclusions into a black hole;
- that no debate follows their submissions which might lead to more informed, policy led questions;
- that the significance of longer term ‘blue sky’ research is ignored in favour of narrowly conceived applied research, with immediate, policy relevant outcomes;
- that (until recently at least) applied research is disparaged by more academic, ivory tower bound colleagues.

Referring to the demand issue, the ODI RAPID Briefing paper (2004) ‘Bridging Research and Policy in International Development’<sup>16</sup> quoted Martin Surr (2002) on policy uptake thus:

‘policymakers seem to regard “research” as the opposite of “action” rather than the opposite of “ignorance”.

A very recent paper (Newman, Fisher and Shaxson 2012)<sup>17</sup> takes the issues further into how this central ‘demand for research’ problematic might be resolved through capacity development initiatives.

These generic concerns about the supplier-demand interface are reflected strongly in the Pakistan experience, where there is a near universal refrain that research is not valued by government and thus little or no demand for it. This is a strongly shared perception between the majority of research providers identified for this mapping exercise and more creative thinkers in government, most notably at the senior level in the Planning Commission. Although most of our data derives from research providers, we have also had significant access to the thinking of Planning Commission leaders concerning the research/policy interface.<sup>18</sup>

Speaking at the closing plenary of the 15<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Conference on Dec 13, 2012, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Nadeem-ul-Haq appreciated the role of think-tanks in the policy process through their independent analysis. But he was worried about the absence of meaningful debate around the core policy issues facing the country. He then gave the example of the ‘growth’ debate, or rather absence of it! He said that

‘to speak about “economic growth” and “markets” in this country have become sin. It is fascinating to talk about “livelihoods” but can we continue ensuring livelihoods without creating jobs, that too when there are tens of millions of new youth entering into labour

<sup>16</sup> Derived from J.Court, I.Hovland and J.Young Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: Evidence and the Change Process 2004, ITG Publications

<sup>17</sup> Newman, Fisher and Shaxson (2012) ‘Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity Building’ IDS Bulletin Vol.43, No.5 Sept 2012

<sup>18</sup> Both an interview with Saba Gul Khattack, as well as her 2009 paper on ‘Research in Difficult Settings’ about Afghanistan as well as Pakistan; attendance at the Sustainable Development Conference in December 2012; and attendance at the 14.12.12 PSSP Conference in the Planning Commission in the session ‘Mainstreaming Research into Policy’, presided over by the Deputy Chair, Nadeem Ul Huq; and a further paper ‘Revisiting the Planning Commission’ January 2011 by Khalid Ikram. Interviews with the World Bank have offered similar analysis.

market? How far can we go without facilitating investments and addressing the captured, oligopolic markets? However, we have abandoned the discourse on these lines and this happens when there is no national, indigenous research agenda.’

Addressing directly to the Minister Qamaruzzaman Kaira, Nadeem said, the government has money for everything else but research. When donors invest in policy research, they pursue their own agenda which is not really coordinated but a manifestation of petty competition between various desks of donor agencies. Government of Pakistan therefore needs to massively invest in research.

The ODI RAPID Briefing paper, referred to above, confirms the proposition that the link between research and policy is not linear, and offers the prospect of a conceptual framework within which to analyse a much more complex process which takes us beyond ‘the lack of interest in research’ refrain. To quote from the paper (page 2):

‘Often the link between research and policy, or evidence and practice, is viewed as a linear process whereby a set of research findings or lessons shift from the ‘research sphere’ over to the ‘policy sphere’, and then has some impact on policymakers’ decisions and practical programmes. Reality tends to be much more dynamic and complex, with two-way processes between research, policy and practice, shaped by multiple relations and reservoirs of knowledge. The traditional question ‘How can research be transported from the research to the policy sphere?’ has been replaced by a more complex question: ‘Why are some of the ideas that circulate in the research/policy networks picked up and acted on while others are ignored and disappear?’

This more ‘more complex question’ is clearly reflected in the above frustrations of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. The RAPID perspective thus seeks to capture the inter-related factors which determine commissioning, undertaking and uptake: ‘...the political context; the evidence (i.e. its credibility); and the links between policy and research communities, within a fourth set of factors: the external context’. To pursue such analysis in the Pakistan context, we have to acknowledge:

- that power and influence are exercised in subtle ways so that agenda setting in the form of Lukes’<sup>19</sup> second dimension of power can pre-determine what research is sponsored and used, rather than undertaken and ignored;
- a highly fluid policy context comprising the rhetoric of formal planning alongside ad hoc schemes driven either by unstable ideological reasons or voter loyalty, in which careful, research based preparatory thinking is downgraded, or at best deployed for legitimacy;
- a key ongoing paradigm debate as reflected in the remarks of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, above;
- socio-cultural elements of hierarchy through which any ideas and initiatives have to be negotiated;

<sup>19</sup> S.Lukes Power: A Radical View 1974. Lukes argued that we should understand power in 3 dimensions: first the direct influence of A over B; second, the subtle forms of agenda-setting which include and exclude issues from contestation; and a third, structural-determinist, dimension reflecting class and social interests.

- politico-cultural sensitivities which becomes another expression of Lukes' 'foreclosing' power analysis with respect to certain topics such as women's rights, or geographical variations in poverty and welfare indicators;
- problematic capacity for undertaking research which affects the quality and perceptions of credibility of evidence especially deriving from the more policy sciences, i.e. social sciences;
- the related 'commercially' driven preferences for higher education subjects which offer better career prospects, not only in Pakistan but abroad;
- a tension between research activists who want to move quickly into advocacy and policy advice (perhaps for glamour as well as a genuine desire to be public intellectuals) and those more driven by academic, disciplinary-based outputs and recognition;
- the related issues of different types of research: theory building, action-research, and policy research<sup>20</sup>, with implications for timelines over which significance for uptake occurs;
- and, in Pakistan, we have to acknowledge the very strong role of external donors in the process which is de facto intermediating much of the development research to policy interface, as bemoaned by the Deputy Chair of the Planning Commission, above.

It is these 'acknowledgements' which guide the rest of this paper.

## **Context: Implications of New Growth Framework and Decentralisation**

There is a further substantial contextualising variable: namely a shift from the 5 Year Plan and PRSP process which has involved sectoral consultative working groups towards a Growth Strategy which has been a more confined, technocratic process.<sup>21</sup> This shift<sup>22</sup> has, de facto, removed an element of 'system' from the relation between research, evidence building and sectorwise policy choice, and replaced it with a more haphazard, ad hoc commissioning relationship. This shift may reflect the views of the Deputy Chair of the Planning Commission when he argued in the closing session of the 20<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Conference (13.12.12) that research was ignored and policy making was devoid of evidential backing. In other words, there may have been an element of 'system' in the consultative process for preparation of 5 Year Plans, but the system was hollow.

The abandonment of the federal 5 Year Plan modality of sectoral management, in effect passing on key sectoral planning and investment functions to the Provinces with as yet untested results, profoundly changes the role of the Planning Commission as the central formal site of policy discourse between sectors (including many of the 8 in this mapping exercise) represented by Ministries, departments and external evidence providers. We have yet to see how this will unfold and the 'jury is most definitely out'. With many sectoral policies and plan responsibilities now formally devolved, this decentralisation almost has a determining effect upon the Planning Commission re-defining both its own role and that of

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<sup>20</sup> See Saba Gul Khattack's paper: Research in Difficult Settings 2009 for this classification.

<sup>21</sup> The Inclusive Growth Centre within the Planning Commission has been launched on 13<sup>th</sup> December during the writing of this report.

<sup>22</sup> This shift has been prompted by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment which effectively dissolved the Federal Plan in favour of Provincial ones, with federal budget allocation now in Annual Plan mode, which involves less 'planning' and thus consultation.

federal government more generally towards oversight of the macro economy and incentive management<sup>23</sup> of a focussed growth strategy.<sup>24</sup> To quote:

‘Never has there been a more pressing need in Pakistan’s history to search for a new model, however at the outset it should be said that if there has to be a common vision on growth, it should by all means take account of the damages caused by security and governance issues currently facing the country. In the new framework, private sector should be the growth-driver in open market environment that rewards efficiency, innovation and entrepreneurship, while the government is facilitator that protects public interests and rights, provides public goods, enforces laws, punishes exploitative practices, and operates with transparency and accountability.’

The implications of this redefined stance for the Planning Commission was summarised by Khalid Ikram (2011) thus:

‘Globalization and privatization, insufficiency of qualified staff, decentralization to the provinces, and an erosion of its remit pose serious challenges to the Planning Commission’

More specifically, Ikram sets out an agenda of priorities for the Planning Commission in this new policy context, where he argues that it must ‘develop a program to regain its role as the key strategic thinker for the government and the main repository of its economic expertise.’ This will require the Planning Commission:

- To be selective in its planning targets—by rigorously prioritizing what goals must be met and which must be provided all necessary resources, and those that are of less importance;
- To substantially develop its capacity to formulate policies—by training and expanding its staff; and harnessing outside resources, such as consultants, think tanks, and universities;
- To work with other institutions (such as the State Bank of Pakistan, the Ministry of Finance, the Federal Bureau of Statistics) to address areas of common concern (such as developing a macroeconomic model and generating a unified set of macroeconomic projections);
- To improve co-operation between the public and private sectors by bringing together important elements of the government and the private sector;
- To substantially increase interaction with the provincial planning departments;
- To learn from the experience of countries that have successfully confronted problems similar to those facing Pakistan;
- To continuously upgrade its stock of skills by reintroducing the system of scholarships for study abroad on the lines of the successful programs of the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>23</sup> e.g. through overarching fiscal levers of: tax waivers, subsidies, tariff removal, loan repayment holidays, differential interest rate manipulation, steering of FDI, encouraging remittances into investment, stimulating domestic savings rates, steering investment towards infrastructure with multipliers and strong backward and forward linkages.

<sup>24</sup> See ‘Pakistan: New Growth Framework’ Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, January 2011

We have set out this overarching policy context (combining policy decentralisation in a range of development sectors with a consequent revised more ‘meta’ macro-economic management and governance role for federal government) in order to demonstrate the potentially significant changing locational focus for research to policy linkages and the problem of generating and calibrating decentralised capacity for evidence based policy making. While it seems clear that economics, governance and conflict/peace analysis will continue to be part of federal level discourse<sup>25</sup>, education, health, nutrition, gender, social protection themes will be more focussed towards provincial level discourse. While Punjab and then Sindh provinces may have a stronger relative<sup>26</sup> baseline among their respective research outlets and think tanks in Lahore and Karachi, KP, Baluchistan and elsewhere will continue their marginalisation in this respect.

This transformation of public affairs, if it really becomes a stable one and not reversed by a new government, will place a heavy demand upon research outlets and think-tanks to re-structure and re-orient themselves to maintain relevance and capacity to influence. While some strong provincial outlets (like LUMS, SPDC, AKU and so on) may be content to re-focus, the danger is that the more that happens, the more the centre is denied those intellectual resources. Alternatively, good individuals may become more Islamabad centric than they already are. In parallel, federally or centrally oriented institutions like PIDE and SDPI as well as some of the university departments may need to dilute their macro focus in order to calibrate their presence provincially. Do they have the capacity to do that and still be credible?

Two observations can be made at this point. **First**, these concerns about geographical physical presence does not take into account the prospects for improving connectivity both in IT terms (Skype, video conferencing, improved broadband width) as well as improved mobility. This means, though, that this type of infrastructural investment becomes a necessary condition for a reorganised and upgraded knowledge economy. **Secondly**, network and collaborative models will need to be explored. One existing example, though with limitations, is the Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) which has 10 years experience of servicing provincial level RSP programmes with research, policy ideas and evaluation. The limitation of this example is that it is set up to address provincial level programmes rather than national level ones.<sup>27</sup> But there are other forms of networks, for example in professional ‘disciplinary’ associations with conferences, seminars, house journals. But can such forums really become a platform for collaborative work? Zaidi, in 2002, was doubtful (see below) given the undermining of meritocratic academic advancement and thus lack of trust between institutions, which may be competing for grants and commissions anyway. And can such associations attract policymakers and practitioners, given their general reluctance to attend such meetings.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Supported, for example, by PIDE, SDPI, academics from Quaid-e-Azam and other sector specialist outlets (see Mapping paper)

<sup>26</sup> Only ‘relative’ due to overall problems of capacity and linkage, but LUMS with IGC in Lahore, and SPDC, AERC and AKU in Karachi offer strong intellectual quality both centrally as well as regionally.

<sup>27</sup> The NRSP is, in effect, a series of local programmes.

<sup>28</sup> In the closing session of the USAID/IFPRI funded PSSP Conference on ‘Growth, Productivity and Poverty Reduction in Rural Pakistan’ in the Planning Commission (14.12.12), the Deputy Chair, Planning Commission, despaired of such attendance, noting the absence (with one exception) of any policy maker presence, alongside any of his own staff!

## Fragmentation of Policy Narratives

A key part of our analytic story, reinforced by the potential transformation noted in the previous section, is that Room's notion of 'agile decision making'<sup>29</sup> in a turbulent world certainly applies to Pakistan. That turbulence is, of course, reinforced by a fragile society underpinning a fragile state.<sup>30</sup> The conditions, if not the explanations, of instability in Pakistan are well-known and need not be rehearsed here. And we should also note that public policy is incoherent with respect to overarching narrative in most parts of the world! And it is probably a good idea that public policy **is** incoherent in the sense of reflecting a range of interests to be satisfied, with necessary trade-offs and compromises.

However Pakistan is undoubtedly an extreme case of incoherence, partly driven by insecurity, and this insecurity probably has its roots more in extreme internal inequality as well as absolute poverty levels than in regional geo-politics, though interrelated. This prevailing insecurity increases the discount rates of all actors, not just the poor.<sup>31</sup> It encourages short term problem solving rather than long term investment. This short term behaviour can be seen in excessive rent-seeking across the political economy and of course, palliative policy among political leaders in order to ensure some prospect of reproduction of their rent-seeking opportunities.<sup>32</sup> This is not a conducive environment for developing serious, long range policy perspectives and commitments, and of course also weakens any desire among the political establishment and their immediate and incorporated (or politicised) bureaucratic advisors for evidence based thinking and formulated commitments beyond their discounted time preferences.

With the link between research and policy thus structurally undermined, we can more easily understand how these conditions act as a disincentive for quality academics to participate. Furthermore, these 'demand'<sup>33</sup> distortions, arising from 'turbulence', de-rationalise and politicise the policy process and thereby frame the notion of 'supply' as a result. We should be clear that policy anywhere is always political, and so it should be if we want citizens and democracy. The issue is whether it becomes political (and maybe ideological) to absurd limits so that no rational underpinning in terms of any notion of public good can be discerned. Pakistan is towards the absurd end of that continuum. This helps to explain the universal refrain that politicians, their senior bureaucratic advisors and many other socio-economic actors in the society (from business people to mullahs) are not interested in research inputs to

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<sup>29</sup> Though noting that policy rarely arises from clear 'decisions' as such.

<sup>30</sup> Although the policy world focuses upon the concept of the 'fragile state', and states do disorganize society, the causation is mainly the reverse.

<sup>31</sup> For an analysis of the structural implications of poor people's discount rates, See G.Wood 'Staying Secure, Staying Poor: the Faustian Bargain' World Development October 2003

<sup>32</sup> These arguments can be connected to the work of D.North, Wallis and Weingast 'Violence and Social Orders' Yale University Press 2009 and their analysis of the 'limited-access state'. A good example of 'palliative policy' is the Benazir Income Support Programme, presented as a serious social protection initiative, heavily supported by donors who presumably see that support as an entry price to other policy arenas and influence. Most of my informants in Pakistan dismiss the programme as a short term, vote catching device with huge leakage.

<sup>33</sup> Just to be sure of meaning here: 'demand' refers to the demand for evidence and research input into policy.

policy and ‘do not listen to research’.<sup>34</sup> However the process is more subtle than the simple one of ‘rejection’ or ‘divorce’.<sup>35</sup>

Returning to the overall problem of fragmentation of core policy narratives, we need to consider how far donors and their sponsorship of development programmes and research contribute to this problem.

In addition to the turbulent conditions referred to above, Pakistan has other chronic issues which continue to create space in the society for a substantial donor presence. These are: overall stresses in the political economy arising from inequality and poverty; high political discount rates leading to weak governance; and thus a weak tax base for domestic resource mobilisation. The major donors will also cite regional geo-politics as threatening the security of their own nations as justification to their own populations in the USA or UK, for example, for their aid presence in Pakistan. This has been referred to as the ‘securitisation of aid’.

Unlike India, where the donor presence, financially, has been insignificant for a couple of decades, donors in Pakistan continue to occupy strategic discourse spaces in development policy through their support for policy related research capacity, and then through their own programme preferences in key, selected sectors and purposes. In so doing, they have a semi-autonomous presence in the country’s policy arena rather than only a support role to nationally set priorities. This is not to conclude that donor agendas lie outside domestically constructed priorities. They are selectively within them.<sup>36</sup> Education, in the context of widespread low literacy rates, high drop outs and lack of a skilled workforce, is an obvious example, with high, multiplier, forward linkages both economically, socially and politically.

Naturally donors are keen to focus directly on immediate and visible poverty reduction as part of their aid defence to hard pressed western populations concerned about their own austerity measures. However, this tends to projectise aid in the direction of the shorter term, almost ‘relief’ end of development imperatives. In other words the ‘palliative’ end, alongside the domestic politicians. To summarise: donors have a relatively large role in the policy research space; but they have their own short term priorities; and as a result can distort the landscape and undermine longer term research capacity, more focussed upon core policy problems.

However their presence with these sectoral priorities<sup>37</sup> confines their research sponsorship to a selective variety of sub-narratives with a strong imperative to see immediate outcomes from the work they have commissioned in relation to some point along a policy results chain. Both USAID, the largest bilateral donor presence in the country, and DFID have complex establishments, sectorally organised. The structure of this presence requires, ideally, coordination internally between their departments within their own ‘compounds’ (recognising

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<sup>34</sup> We have 5 pages of notes to this effect from just one meeting: the USAID/IFPRI supported PSSP conference in the Planning Commission! But also see Zaidi, Khattack and the vast majority of our informants across nearly 100 research outlets and think-tanks. This view is also forcefully made to us from HEC, from seniors leaders of the now defunct Science and Technology Commission. But no-one has tried to explain the problem in the above terms.

<sup>35</sup> The ‘divorce’ point refers to some informants (especially old PIDE hands) having a ‘golden age’ view that research/policy linkages used to be better.

<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Khattack argues that donors shy away from certain themes due to ‘diplomatic sensitivities’ especially in relation to women: rights; violence; autonomy in sexually reproductive health; and the problem of patriarchy generally.

<sup>37</sup> Indicated for example by the sectors nominated by DFID for attention in the TOR for this exercise.

that in-country departments are strongly connected to their HQ departments in Washington and London), then between donors themselves, and then with counterpart departments in government, as well as with government as a whole through several portals (i.e. Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs Division). This is an enormous challenge and, despite best efforts, rarely achievable.<sup>38</sup> Certainly the donor presence contributes to a plurality of narratives about development strategy in the country, each bit understandably keen to push their agendas up the priority list. This would seem to lead to a process whereby the connection of research to policy is fragmented, non systematic, involving a plethora of actors and institutions acting relatively independently of others, even competitively, and in partial ignorance of them. This appears to result in duplication, repetition, and a piecemeal rediscovering of wheels while overall strategic direction of government is neglected by the research community, thus removing prospects for accountability and constructive scrutiny. At least, this is the charge by experienced Pakistani senior advisors for example in the livelihoods, water management, education, rural social mobilisation areas. Since our mapping data shows that the bulk of commissioning policy related research is done by donors<sup>39</sup>, this fragmented picture at least raises<sup>39</sup> questions about the degree of coherence of the donor presence in Pakistan and their collective problem of efficiency both between themselves and in terms of confusing any prospect of policy clarity by any sitting government.

This description of fragmented policy narratives<sup>40</sup> refers us back to Schaffer's analysis, noted above, of the policy process in terms of 'compartmentalisation', i.e. characterised by 'responsibility firewalls' between different sectors and between sequential steps in the policy to implementation process. We have already indicated the sectoral issue as offering plural, sometimes competing, narratives between for example, longer term integrated growth strategies in which the sum of the parts can become greater than the whole<sup>41</sup>, and the more ad hoc, piecemeal process of sectorwise projects in which the sum of the parts may never reach the whole. Schaffer's concerns about compartmentalisation focussed upon the avoidance of responsibility both within projects (sequentialism) and between them (sectoralisation) in the policy process, which translates as a governance, scrutiny and quality maintenance problem. But deploying his framework here leads us, as it were, to avoidance of responsibility, among the plethora of policy actors on the supply as well as demand side, for the whole. This fragmentation of narratives frames the commissioning process for policy related research, with a large number of commissioned, diverse, sectoral policy studies submitted to sponsoring or granting organisations and never seeing the light of day because they are not published in the public domain, not peer reviewed and thus not scrutinised for their validity in contributing to sound policy.<sup>42</sup> In other words they make no contribution to the whole, i.e. an integrated development narrative for the country and hence coherent strategy.

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<sup>38</sup> Geof Wood has witnessed this at close hand in Bangladesh over several decades, having had roles inside the Government of Bangladesh, as well as among donors, think-tanks and NGOs.

<sup>39</sup> We find this difficult to estimate with our present data, but the study team agree from their primary data collection that the proportion lies in the region of 80-90%. To estimate this properly would require considerable forensic resources and a willingness of donors and research outlets alike to share such information, which can be commercially sensitive.

<sup>40</sup> It is accepted that more work and triangulation should be brought to this analysis, but it seems generally recognised.

<sup>41</sup> And donor sponsored programmes should be assessed for their contribution to this whole.

<sup>42</sup> Khattack, in the 'reflections' part of her paper argues that policy research is seldom in the public domain, not open to public scrutiny and is done within non-critical paradigms. She also argues that policy related academics have no freedom to pursue longer-term, more fundamental agendas, that they are too projectised, and that they and their sponsors need to think beyond project deliverables.

It is interesting that the nearest version of that integrated narrative is the New Framework for Growth, based upon research and analysis commissioned by the Planning Commission, rather than donors, in conjunction with PIDE. In contrast, the USAID/IFPRI support via PSSP is criticised in government for not supporting core strategy (i.e. the Growth Framework)<sup>43</sup>, but instead sectoral preferences in agriculture and water management while the country's problems are increasingly urban (and certainly will be predominantly soon) and related to non-agriculture sector employment generation.<sup>44</sup>

The danger for supply side, research outlets is that the availability of donor funding for policy related research is too attractive to ignore, but draws them away from core sovereign narratives, and marginalises them in the society by confining them to projectised objectives with short and unstable lifespans. In other words, the supplier (i.e. our list of development research outlets) is coopted for **tactics** rather than strategy, and to a low aspirational theory of change via timebound projects, and confined within a tightly defined New Policy Management perspective of evidence for evaluation via measurement of baselines, RCTs for counterfactuals, and thus measured attribution to determine value for money in programme expenditure. Not all research is thus coopted, but these are now the dominant policy research paradigms for donors, and certainly not just confined to USAID and DFID. Within these paradigm constraints, the preference for quantitative forms of analysis sub-marginalises the potential qualitative social science contribution to policy.<sup>45</sup>

## Ownership: Valuing Research

This observation takes us into a multi-layered problem of ownership of policy, evidence and the scientific basis for that evidence in Pakistan. This not just a simple nationalist sovereign issue between Pakistan and donors, though undoubtedly a partial explanation, since much hostility has been expressed to us on this score.<sup>46</sup> There is concern that the policy discourse is being disproportionately dominated by donors because they are more adept at mobilising a combination of rationalist argument and implied threats of expulsion from various global clubs, especially trade, if Pakistan does not display some compliance to global policy standards re the liberalisation of markets, the privatisation of economic activity, equal rights for women, good governance, non-discrimination against religious minorities and a crackdown on terrorism, and its fundamentalist underpinnings. But the ownership issue goes beyond this issue of 'sovereignty'. Thus the policy 'sciences' across the sectors indicated for this study lie significantly in the realm of the social sciences. But these are clearly the poor cousin among academic disciplines in Pakistan.<sup>47</sup> So there is an internal, domestic problem of ownership of the basic disciplines which might contribute to policy formulation or the critical examination of policy alternatives. With a few notable exceptions, like PIDE<sup>48</sup>, Quaid-e-

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<sup>43</sup> This criticism was made in the first PSSP Annual Conference, however see the case study below for a more positive impression of PSSP, even though this reflects the significance of USAID in the framing of policy.

<sup>44</sup> UNDP estimate that 60% of incomes are still derived from agriculture indirectly as well as directly, but this likely to change rapidly.

<sup>45</sup> Perhaps this is what Khattack (2009) meant by researchers being overwhelmed and distracted by policy communities.

<sup>46</sup> See for example the closing speech of the Deputy Chair of the Planning Commission to the SDPI Sustainable Development Conference, 13.12.12.

<sup>47</sup> This was clearly indicated to us in our interview with the recent Executive Director of HEC, Dr.Sohail Naqvi, but repeated to us by many other informants.

<sup>48</sup> PIDE has had a substantial tradition of providing quality economic analysis, see A.R.Kemal PIDE Contributions to Policy Making 2008, History of PIDE-Series 3, Islamabad.

Azam University and LUMS (especially for economics and management sciences), the social sciences are weak in Pakistan in terms of quality of teaching provision at undergraduate and graduate levels, reinforced by a strong perception that only ‘mediocre’ students pursue them.<sup>49</sup> The poor image of the social sciences is compounded by its partial association with qualitative methods in a context where evidence is construed as quantitative, no matter how poorly constructed conceptually in terms of measurable categories.<sup>50</sup> This overall view of the seedcorn in the social sciences should not, however, blind us to high quality policy relevant work emerging additionally from PIDE (which of course has special and privileged access), AKU as well as LUMS and the recently formed International Growth Centre, separate from but housed at LUMS.

The depth of the problem of research being valued is revealed in the review by former Director of PIDE A.R. Kemal (2008) of PIDE’s contribution to policy making. PIDE has been probably the most privileged insider supply of research to government, with an impressive array of papers, monographs and publications<sup>51</sup>. It has had some of the best economists in Pakistan passing through often on the way or from major international organisations as well as branches of government. But nevertheless, Kemal observed (Page 2):

Whereas PIDE has been carrying out policy relevant research and has directly or indirectly influenced policy formulation, the impact has been somewhat limited. It would have been far greater but for the two main factors. Firstly, lack of tradition in the government of research-based policy formulation which partly reflects limited capacity to comprehend research carried out at PIDE and translating it into the summaries which enable the cabinet and its sub-committees such as ECC<sup>52</sup>, NEC and ECNEC to take decisions and partly the ad-hoc nature of the policy formulation. Second, there has been little interaction between the policy-makers and the PIDE to identify research needs of the government for better policy formulation. Resultantly the research carried out at PIDE has been supply driven rather than demand driven though efforts have been made to ensure that the research agenda of PIDE is in line with the national priorities.

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Though the PIDE research seems to have limited impact on the policy formulation it did have direct and indirect impact on economic policy making though in some cases the impact had been with considerable lag. Research and training of the public officials in project evaluation and other disciplines have enabled the public officials to carry out proper analysis of the projects and policies. Moreover, by enhancing supplies of the

<sup>49</sup> For example, a statement made to us by a distinguished retired physics professor, who has recently joined the Global Think Tank Network at NUST. The Women’s Study Centre at Quaid-e-Azam University observes that many people having social science degrees are not capable enough to carry out research. Research and Development Solutions (RADS) hired MPH graduates from the Health Services Academy, but had many issues training them as they had such poor writing skills. Even Management Systems International (MSI, the USAID Evaluation wing) struggles to recruit local experts with good writing skills and need international staff to oversee their work.

<sup>50</sup> There is an increasing tendency to this effect in DFID in London.

<sup>51</sup> 2000 papers published in Pakistan Development Review

<sup>52</sup> ECC etc. have been the various economic coordination committees, including significantly the economic policy linkage between federal and provincial levels.

economists and demographers in the country and secondment of PIDE staff to the government has also helped in better policy formulation.

However this overall gloomy assessment of the ‘supply side’ issues of policy related research, especially rooted in the social sciences, is confirmed for us by the earlier work of Zaidi (2002) on the ‘Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan’, deliberately read by us after gathering our own primary material. It is worth quoting his overall conclusion 10 years ago to demonstrate its contemporary relevance to this present, in effect re-visited, analysis:

To summarise there are a number of encompassing premises or parameters through which one should examine the state of the social sciences in Pakistan. These are: the patronage role of the State; the prominence of the bureaucracy and its power and privilege; social and cultural values which encourage the acquisition of power, privilege and wealth; an intolerant culture where dissent and debate are discouraged; and, the lack of any effective, working, institutions to speak of, and hence, outcome and output is based on individual effort and endeavour. (Page 7)

Although our analysis below returns to some of these themes, it is worth just expanding some of these points here. The ‘patronage role of the state’ together with the ‘prominence of the bureaucracy’ refers especially to the incorporation of economists from among the social sciences into bureaucratic positions within the state (e.g. Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Board of Revenue, State Bank) where increasingly they are drawn away from more fundamental, critical longer term analysis into shorter term cost benefit analysis of project choices and evaluations. Other social sciences do not even get a look in, in the sense that sociology, anthropology or political sciences cannot be practised as part of one’s bureaucratic role. And rewards either from prestigious, senior government positions, or from employment by international organisations (including donors) generates a distortion of the social sciences towards immediately policy relevant research, again favouring economists.

Confirming observations about mediocrity above (though excluding some notable economists e.g. with a career history at PIDE), Zaidi also observes that the stronger incentives about subject choice for higher education study are towards the more respected and income generating subjects like medicine, engineering, IT and other natural sciences, reflecting prevalent social and cultural valuation. In his view, this preference for more technical, apolitical subject choice (our words) also reflects a cultural atmosphere in which free-floating discussion and debate is discouraged. Finally in this summary, Zaidi, with his deeper inside knowledge of how academic institutions operate, refers to the general decline (if ever there was a golden age) in standards of public sector institutions characterised by non-transparent, and thus non merit based, promotion and preferment, reflecting patron-client management. This undermines any prospect of a vibrant academic and intellectual community, and either traps individuals unhappily within institutions to be credible, prompting their moonlighting externally, or prompts their flight either into more flexibly managed think-tanks (and likely to be donor supported) or abroad, where, Zaidi maintains, some of the best Pakistani social science academics are to be found.

Much of this 2002 analysis is confirmed later by Khattack in 2009 in the Pakistan sections of her paper. She bemoans the erosion of existing institutions of higher learning and research,

the re-location of trained researchers to other countries,<sup>53</sup> the bias to parents as well as HEC away from social sciences, the problem of bureaucratic hierarchies with HEIs, the limited freedom of researchers to publish critical findings, the biases introduced by NGOs and donors towards the ‘projectising’ of research within mainly western paradigms of ‘good’ development, though she also mentions religious NGO and their ‘research’ agendas.<sup>54</sup> Amidst her gloom, she, like the present Deputy Chair of the Planning Commission, regaled against the absence of public intellectuals, though both she and Zaidi singled out SPDC and SDPI as performing some of that function in questioning development frameworks.

## **Sociology of Knowledge: culture and governance**

The perceived value of research and evidence in a rationalist policy model is further compounded by interconnected issues of culture and governance. Leadership in Pakistan, and thus political and bureaucratic leadership, is a function of class and status within well understood hierarchies of power, privilege and deference. While merit and personal achievement may be a factor determining who rises to the top within these privileged elites, the opinions and judgements of ‘seniors’ is not easily challenged by ‘juniors’ even if supported by objective evidence. Instead, loyalty is expected.<sup>55</sup> Thus, internally within a Ministry, even if ‘juniors’ (i.e. policy advisory roles) are equipped with policy relevant evidence, they face cultural difficulties in trying to represent and deploy that evidence in policy discussions. Observers with government experience also say that this is not just a hierarchy problem, but that sector specialists always find it difficult to challenge senior level generalist bureaucrats. The Punjab Education Assessment System (PEAS)<sup>56</sup> argues that bureaucrats are sitting in positions where technical experts with PhDs should be sitting. For example, in the Punjab Education Fund and Punjab Textbook Board, there is a need for technical expertise and thus technically qualified staff, but instead generalist bureaucrats are in control. The externalised relationships between political and bureaucratic leaders on the one hand and research organisations are more complex. While loyalty cannot so easily be expected, excessive criticism with evidence challenging preferred policy stances is not welcomed. It can either be ignored altogether or selectively used, or the validity of the evidence counter-challenged.<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, the leaders of such research institutions also have to play a game. Their own institutions may be reliant upon continued patronage by these policy actors, and/or the consequences of rejection and marginalisation and thus loss of influence can weaken their attraction to third party funders like donors. These cultural aspects of hierarchy and challenge together with these necessary elements of tactical game-playing and positioning (respectively revealing Lukes’ first and second dimensions of power) become an aspect of the governance problematic: agendas are established non-transparently; challenging or critical evidence is

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<sup>53</sup> This point was confirmed to us by, for example, the Institute of Public Policy –Beacon House National University (IPP-BNU) in Lahore, attributing this exodus to lack of funding and incentives in Pakistan. The Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (ISPS) in Islamabad points out that employees are normally appointed on 3 principles of competency, honesty and nationalism, but the competent ones usually leave the country and pursue careers abroad. However, in contrast AERC in Karachi now reports that it is benefitting from some returning PhDs.

<sup>54</sup> Zaidi too is highly critical of NGO sponsored research which for him is really just legitimizing evaluation of organizational programme preferences.

<sup>55</sup> Zaidi makes this point also, and Khattack refers to limited freedom to publish critical findings.

<sup>56</sup> A unit within the Schools department of the Punjab Ministry of Education.

<sup>57</sup> See Khattack’s analysis on this point.

pre-emptively excluded or emasculated; non-state organisational sources of research and argument become incorporated into state agendas; honest public debate about options and choices is precluded; performance and outcomes cannot be objectively or independently scrutinised; and thus the rights of citizens are undermined by the institutions which are supposed to represent those rights. To the extent that research institutions seek to overcome these dangers of incorporation and loss of credibility by welcoming donor support, so they run the risk of compromising their independence by becoming incorporated, instead, into donor agendas for the society<sup>58</sup>. Certainly they become vulnerable to that criticism, even if unreasonably so.<sup>59</sup> It is a Hobson's choice.

## **Independence of Research: Architects or Contractors?**

This brings us to the central question of the independence of research when addressing policy issues across these sectors. The question is central because it relates directly to the ideal type image of a rationalist, evidence based policy process in which evidence is constructed independently of the interests or ideological preferences of the ultimate decision makers. In other words there is simple<sup>60</sup> analytic continuum between incorporation and independence. Leaving aside the relationship to government, the main, 'populist', accusation is that donors have a disproportionate influence through their superior commissioning power and that, inevitably, their preferences and agendas for the society prevail.<sup>61</sup> This populist, 'sovereignty', stance is certainly prompted by the overwhelming presence of donors in the funding of policy relevant research across the main research outlets of Pakistan. While not historically contributing to the evolution of research capacity and its infrastructural underpinning<sup>62</sup>, donors together are generally understood to represent 80-90% of the present research activity of the institutions identified by us for this study, with USAID featuring most prominently and pervasively, although not with a monopoly over the strategically most significant sectors, with, for example, DFID supporting the International Growth Centre in Lahore via its programme grant to LSE in London. Thus for this analysis, donors are a crucial part of the contextual landscape. The 'independence' question then has to be refined to distinguish between different types of relationship between donors and their 'client' research outlets in the country. In some cases, donor support is designed to support the critical independence of the recipient institution. The grant support of IDRC to SPDC and SDPI might be considered in this way, insisting only upon quality outputs. But other cases of donor support involve very tight specifications by donors when issuing calls for bidding, almost relegating an institution to the status of survey contractor, and then ongoing negotiations about report content and findings. The Society for Advancement of Education (SAHE) in Lahore reports that donors sometimes change a project entirely during its functioning, or even abort it. A single institution might combine different streams of longer term unrestricted core and shorter term restricted project support, probably coming from different donors but in some instances the same ones.

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<sup>58</sup> It is important to note early on in this paper that not all donor support is the same nor has the same implications for these issues. Thus classifying types of donor support for research becomes important for this analysis. See Appendix 2 for a table of donor involvement in research by theme and institution.

<sup>59</sup> It would be invidious to identify particular examples on this point, but the issue has been raised with us by a significant number of think tank informants.

<sup>60</sup> In practice, this is a much more complicated and subtle issue and we return to it below.

<sup>61</sup> The Applied Economic Research Centre (AERC) in Karachi assert this quite strongly.

<sup>62</sup> With the exception of USAID more recently supporting HEC at scale in providing PhD scholarships.

## Epistemic Policy Communities

A further complexity of this incorporation/independence continuum is that neither government nor donors as a whole, nor even a single donor, should be regarded as a coherent monolith with a single set of interests or policy stances. That assumption has long been a mistake of these types of analysis.<sup>63</sup> Within these ‘commissioners’ and users of research are internal differences regarding policy prescriptions for the society, sometimes entailing outright public disagreements and even hostility between themselves. Such tensions have long been observed within the World Bank, and likewise within DFID between growth and social development advocates for example.<sup>64</sup> And such policy variation applies to government too, especially between private sector, liberalisation of markets as a route to trickle down growth and more distributive, welfare and income support programmes. This is evident for example in the contrast between the growth advocates in the Planning Commission and other ministries and the more political supporters of the Benazir Income Support Programme.

These different policy groups can advance the merits of their respective positions by recruiting research and evidence to support their case, and this will lead them to adopt favoured institutional clients to supply that supporting analysis. In the West, we are familiar with policy think-tanks clearly identifying themselves with epistemic policy communities, usually represented by the tags of ‘left’ or ‘right’ or the additional qualifier ‘centre’—as in centre-left, or centre-right. While it is more difficult to apply such a classification to research outlets in Pakistan, more specialist institutions are more allied to corresponding specialist ministries and their policy positions in negotiation with other ministries, the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission.

In other words, we cannot accept simple aggregated categories of state and civil society, horizontally divided in mutual opposition with ‘evidence’ on the one side challenging ideology and political or bureaucratic self interests on the other side. More subtly we are also witnessing vertically segmented policy networks or communities involving patronage from different parts of government and across donors with their respective, perhaps regular, client research providers.<sup>65</sup> And of course, this means that research confronts research, and that think-tanks and other research outlets gain a reputation for themselves working within certain ideological limits and policy prescriptions in opposition to others.

This structural pattern can, of course, be a function of sectoral identity. Thus PIDE with its economists, or IGC in Lahore, now<sup>66</sup> broadly supports a growth led strategy in conjunction with the Planning Commission, while the social policy oriented SPDC is focussed more upon direct poverty interventions entailing transfers and other forms of affirmative action (e.g.

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<sup>63</sup> The writings of Stephen Biggs, ex University of East Anglia, UK, have been illuminating in this respect.

<sup>64</sup> And in the past when ‘feminist’ advisors, supported by feminist academics and others concerned about gender (i.e. the epistemic community), were intruding gender concerns into DFID’s core thinking—i.e. mainstreamed. That battle has been largely won, so is an historical example of internal contestation, and actually symptomatic of a healthy institution! Labour rights and decent work have been other examples, e.g. within the ILO, see G.Standing’s work on the precariat.

<sup>65</sup> We outline some of these commissioning modalities below.

<sup>66</sup> Looking at the PIDE output over the last 4 decades, it had periods of favouring more state re-distributive welfare strategies partly for social protection reasons, but usually linked to capacity underpinning of a changing workforce linked to employment growth.

incentives to encourage families to invest in girls' education), with many other interventionist oriented parts of government and research institutions also allied, for example in health, women's health, food security, nutrition and so on. SDPI is currently more eclectic, with new appointments likely to embrace the new framework for growth while trying to stay in touch with past traditions of sustainability and distributive welfare.

Clearly this complication of vertically segmented epistemic communities alongside the more familiar problematic of horizontal cleavage between demand and supply for policy relevant research speaks to the commissioning issue. Early on in the study, we identified key patterns in the commissioning process, which our ongoing data gathering has confirmed.<sup>67</sup>

## Commissioning Research: the Demand-Supply Interface

Research sponsors and users do not follow any single standardized research commissioning process. Research commissioning also differs among different research commissioning bodies such as: government agencies like Planning Commission; Higher Education Commission (HEC); and international donor agencies like World Bank, USAID and DFID. While the government research commissioning agencies generally support the research institutions which are affiliated with public sector universities and research councils or function under federal or provincial ministries, the international donor agencies rely heavily on widely reputed and established research institutions.

The research commissioning in Pakistan can be broadly categorized into two forms: 1) the **formal** research commissioning including bidding/open competition, program support funding, and core funding for research; 2) the **informal** research commissioning mainly done through networking, personal connections, pick and choose, and lobbying.<sup>68</sup>

There are standard modalities under each category. The modalities under **formal** research commissioning are:

- Long term budget support for core costs of institutional research partners— departments, centers, units within Universities (significantly from GoP in the form of HEC as well as Sectoral Research Councils like PARC, PMRC, or of course from military budgets for Universities like NUST);
- Core support for capacity (and capacity building) for research institutes over fixed time period, following a competitive bidding process (for example, the IDRC think tank initiative, which identified SPDC in Karachi and SDPI in Islamabad);
- Negotiated fixed-term support for research to policy/advocacy institution (like DFID support to RSPN 2000-10);
- Open call formats, with competitive bidding and submitted closed tenders, with prices often subsequently negotiated (these 'apparent' open calls may of course disguise a

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<sup>67</sup> As part of our contractual agreement with DFID, we submitted two milestone reports (Inception, including a statement about commissioning; and later, a discussion of Barriers)

<sup>68</sup> To support the typology offered here, the reader should also consult Appendix 2 as well as the Landscaping Paper which also contributes to this exercise.

less transparent process involving one of the above modalities). These calls will typically entail outline bids and capacity statements, enabling a commissioner to shortlist for more complete proposals. This is key modality for HEC as well as for donors, especially in relation to home country public (i.e. from Universities or public think tanks like IDS in the UK) and private (i.e. consultant companies) providers. However, there are GoP examples of ‘well-founded’ institutions receiving core budget support (e.g. from the Planning Commission i.e. PIDE, or HEC, i.e. University departments) and then able to bid for open projects<sup>69</sup>;

The credibility of researchers and strong professional networking seem to have a very significant role in **informal** research commissioning. Cutting across many of these modalities above, we should recognize that individual reputations count for a lot. Often it is not the institution per se which is being recognized but the individuals within it.<sup>70</sup> This is alleged, for example, about LUMS, about COMSATS and will certainly apply elsewhere, Indeed for the think-tanks, their ‘fortunes’ rely upon their profile of key staff at any point in time (like a chef in a restaurant). Work and opportunities are more likely to follow individuals, especially if they remain institutionalized rather than just individual freelancers.<sup>71</sup>

Some of the established research institutions such as, SPDC and Applied Economics Research Center (AERC) receive so many funding offers for research from international donor agencies that they are pushed to reject some of the offers due to their limited capacity and workload. There are, however, many research institutions that claim to have highly suitable infrastructure and potential for research but are neglected by the public sector as well as by the international donors.

The modalities under **informal** research commissioning are:

- Repeated awards of research and evaluation contracts to selected institutional providers with a proven track record of quality and timely delivery (SDPI itself is an example), on a project by project basis, without opening up to competitive tender or public calls (this particularly applies to donors, perhaps in contravention of their own country rules, seeking to avoid elaborate transaction costs of commissioning, and often either involves trusted external collaborators or foreign ‘research to policy’ companies such as OPM, located in Islamabad and employing local staff);
- A formal modification of above is where a donor, such as DFID or USAID, has established an open call for preferred bidders (often in the form of consortiums between several providers, which can be combinations of local and external), thus reducing future transactions costs when commissioning specific research and evaluation inputs subsequently;

We need also to recognize that the relationship between the suppliers of funds (sponsors) and the providers of research and evaluation services is often a multi-period transaction with

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<sup>69</sup> The National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) used to be autonomous and could bid for funds, but now it has been incorporated into the Planning Commission so that it cannot take research initiatives on its own.

<sup>70</sup> An observation made to us many times by informants, but also confirmed by the judgements of both Zaidi in 2002, and Khattack in 2009.

<sup>71</sup> Again, a judgment confirmed by Zaidi and Khattack, namely that credibility relies upon having an institutional affiliation rather than being freelance.

implications for compliance and conformity and thus for critical innovation in policy and practice rather than path dependency.

## Barriers and Portals to Uptake

Much of the discussion and analysis above has focused upon the research to policy relationship and thus the central issue of uptake and demand. In doing so, we have tried to ‘get behind’ the overwhelming repeated statements from both suppliers of research and its potential users in the government part of the policy process that, in the words of the Centre for Public Policy and Governance (Lahore):

‘Policymakers have no vision and they don’t appreciate research findings by taking them into their policies.’

Versions of this statement have been given to us from most of our supply side informants, NIPS, AERC, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS-Islamabad) and AKU for example, but many more. In ‘getting behind’ this statement, we have offered a structural account of how the demand for research is diminished by strong incentives for shorter term, *ad hoc* policy<sup>72</sup> commitments, rooted in the turbulent political economy of the country. Certainly the prospect of ‘lack of interest’ in research findings acts as a disincentive for academics to connect their research to the policy process through active participation in interface conferences and through innovative forms of dissemination. But there are other problems or barriers in **doing** as well as supplying research.<sup>73</sup>

The barriers to undertaking research and its uptake can be summarized under 12 headings:<sup>74</sup>

- accessing funds;
- human resources constraints;
- restricted access to statistics and restricted access to journals to remain up to date in respective fields;
- security issues (especially with respect to surveys);
- non-evidence based policy making;
- political neglect;
- bureaucratic resistance to criticism;
- Islamabad centric research/policy networks;
- cultural sensitivities;
- language;
- donor volatility.

These issues are not all equally significant or universal across the institutions surveyed by us. And while many of the above barriers may be understood as deriving externally from the research supplier, some are internal or self-imposed constraints, especially in teaching intensive institutions. We have also discussed above the cross-cutting issues about autonomy and critical independence, as well as problem of receptivity of social science research,

<sup>72</sup> Referred to above as ‘palliative policy’.

<sup>73</sup> Or, in TOR language, ‘undertaking’ research.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 1 for a full discussion of these headings. See also the evidence offered in the Landscaping Paper, as part of this whole exercise.

especially using qualitative methods, referring particularly to the analysis by Zaidi in 2002, reinforced by Khattack in 2009 and which still applies from our interviews, for example, with the ED of HEC.<sup>75</sup> This acts in the manner of Lukes' second dimension of power as a hidden, disguised or preemptive disincentive for certain kinds of research to be commissioned or initiated in the foreknowledge that it will not be appreciated or used subsequently. This 'prejudice' is further reinforced by an increasing tendency within the international donor community, as noted above, to restrict its valuation of research to positivist approaches engaging with counterfactuals through randomized control trials. Thus both tendencies (within Pakistan and among donors' VFM preferences) act as a depressor on certain forms of knowledge and on appropriate investment in intellectual capacity to produce other than positivist knowledge. These are underlying contextual issues which frame the mental models among the 'research to policy' community in Pakistan (as well as elsewhere), affecting all aspects of the knowledge/impact chain.

Beyond these more obvious processes of exercising preferences over forms of knowledge, there are distorting prisms which refract and disturb the more simple linear idea of a research to policy chain. These can be more subtle processes in which at any stage in the research process, forms of interference can frame the boundaries and directions for that research and which findings are selected.<sup>76</sup> There are impediments. Research and analysis can be impeded. And part of the issue of selectivity is perceived relevance, especially immediate relevance. Results chain management, especially among commissioning donors, demonstrates an unrealistic urgency between knowledge generation and **outcomes** in terms of policy and practice impact<sup>77</sup> rather than **outputs** in terms of authenticated publication and dissemination, allowing a range of stakeholders to assess value and make use of analysis in different forums over time. As A.R.Kemal from PIDE observed in 2008, there are time lags.<sup>78</sup> And as Khattack observed in 2009, much policy related 'research' produced in think-tanks commissioned for specific project needs in never published, never appears in the public domain and is in effect buried.<sup>79</sup>

However in this emphasis upon 'barriers' and the overall problematisation of the research to policy linkage in Pakistan, which is the overwhelming central 'story' from our data, we should not overlook some examples of more successful linkage and 'portals' to policy.

Below we offer a series of short case examples of portals, and in Appendix 2, we present a tighter summary, by sector/theme of the key institutions and their experience in linking their research to policy, its rejection and thus the barriers and portals which surround their work.

While it is difficult to discern a strong pattern from some of the case studies which we have explored, the '**economics**' sphere seems to represent the strongest examples of research use in government—focussed mainly nationally with macro-economic management and growth strategies, but also in Punjab in the context of tax reform. PIDE has already been noted as

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<sup>75</sup> He ridiculed and dismissed much of this type of research as practiced in Pakistan.

<sup>76</sup> A recent experience for Wood and others over a research proposal with the Research Advocacy Fund (RAF) is a case in point.

<sup>77</sup> As part of a simple linear understanding of Theory of Change. According to IGC in Lahore, DFID evaluates it on the number of policies it has been able to influence so far. How reasonable is this, when considering the PIDE experience noted above?

<sup>78</sup> The Society for the Advancement of Education in Lahore reports that it turns down projects when indicators for impact and deliverables demanded by donors are unrealistically short.

<sup>79</sup> The Health Services Academy in Islamabad attributes this reluctance to publish to a lack of appropriate mentoring.

having a long established ‘insider’ position with the Planning Commission.<sup>80</sup> But the more recently formed International Growth Centre, housed at LUMS in Lahore has been invited into the Planning Commission tent, as it were, to contribute to growth thinking. This ‘invitation’ has to be understood within a pre-established relationship of trust with the respective demand and supply leaders knowing each other, especially from previous international experience together.

The framework for economic growth cites issues such as poor economic governance and institutional weakness as key constraints in improving Pakistan’s economic growth. The IGC was approached in December 2010 by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan, requesting IGC assistance in the formulation of the New Growth Framework. Led by Dr. Khalid Ikram (former Director WB), the IGC team provided inputs, a policy brief, in the finalization of the growth framework. With the framework identifying a central role for city-led growth, IGC also took up a project on Integrating Urban datasets: The Path to Effective Socio-economic Planning in Urban Pakistan. In this policy brief, IGC identified that, for socio-economic planning in the urban cities of Pakistan, effective urban planning is needed. This IGC funded country project titled “Integrating Urban Datasets: The path to effective socio-economic planning in urban Pakistan” has culminated in the development and testing of a comprehensive methodology specific to dividing and mapping urban Pakistan at the level of the neighbourhood. This strategy has been piloted in the second largest city of the Lahore.

At the provincial level, the IGC is engaged in action-research to support tax reform both through a pilot project to alter incentives to tax inspectors to reduce corruption, as well as to increase revenue from property taxes which have been notoriously avoided.

In 2010, IGC initiated a project to improve tax collection in the province of Punjab. There were two simultaneous events that triggered interest in the project. The IGC Research Director presented the idea of using incentive-based pay to increase tax collection in Pakistan. During same timeframe, the Punjab Government expressed interest in undertaking a study to increase government revenue from property taxes. Researchers from MIT and Harvard were recruited to design an experimental study which would help government curb corruption and increase tax collection in urban centres. The success of the project was that government from the very beginning was keen on taking up findings from the study. It made the project part of its annual budget, allocating funds for payments of bonuses.

The project presented clear evidence that the idea of incentive pay if designed well can lead to improvement in tax collection. The project was designed in such a way that government can clearly see the costs and benefits from the project. Goals and objectives of the project were set through discussions between government officers and research team. They have also been involved from the very first day of the project which created a sense of ownership. Now nearly half of the tax circles in Punjab have incentives based pay structure which is a huge achievement.

<sup>80</sup> Though a current criticism is that by entering ‘university’ status, it is becoming dominated by teaching obligations to the detriment of its research and advisory role.

**Agriculture and food security** research has also been a key interface between government, academics and donors almost since the formation of Pakistan. The country has key indigenous institutions through its Agriculture University in Faisalabad, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), the National Agricultural Research Council (NARC) which coordinates a network of 13 specialist institutes across the sector. There are provincial institutions in the sector as well, and of course relevant departments scattered across the university sector. Nutrition issues are pursued within this infrastructure, including significantly at the Agriculture University in Faisalabad. HEC, supported by USAID, has expanded its cadre of internationally trained PhDs significantly in recent years. Of course there remains a danger that these returning PhDs will be over-absorbed into teaching, and that the incentives offered by the HEC will not be strong enough to maintain policy relevant research capacity. However there is significant representation of senior academics on various government advisory committees. PARC is mainly a grant-giving body, though with severely constrained resources.

There has been a long tradition of USAID support to this sector in both research as well as implementation programmes, experimental lab based work on both food and commercial crops, then piloted and tested in the field. From the mid 1980s, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington<sup>81</sup> has drawn on USAID support to contribute research and teaching in this sector in Pakistan. However, despite these part efforts, there is currently much anxiety about food security in the context of rising (or at least not reducing) poverty and regional instabilities. In this context, USAID through IFPRI has renewed its efforts to contribute to this key sector by setting up in July 2011 the Pakistan Strategy Support Programme to provide evidence-based analytical support on a range of economic policies affecting agricultural growth and food security, and thereby to contribute to pro-poor economic growth.

The PSSP is thus funded by USAID, bringing IFPRI and its main Pakistan partner, Innovative Development Strategies (IDS) Pvt.Ltd and other collaborators under the guidance of a National Advisory Committee chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. It is supporting both capacity development on the supply and demand side of the research to policy interface, as well as actual research in: macroeconomics, markets and trade; water management and irrigation; poverty reduction and social safety nets; agricultural production (including biosafety and biotechnology). In addition to collaborating with IDS, it seeks to connect to PIDE, AERC and the Punjab Economic Research Institute (PERI). All of these collaborating institutions were present in the recent conference (December 2012) in Islamabad, where the Deputy Chair of the Planning Commission remained highly critical and pessimistic about the ability of this and other initiatives to really influence policy at the highest level, commenting on the absence of policy makers at the conference (as noted above). PSSP also intends to work through a network of universities in each province across the country, especially for dissemination. The USAID creators of PSSP see it as a step towards a comprehensive Pakistan Policy, Science and Innovation Programme that will foster better informed policy decisions and promote science and innovation in agriculture.

Clearly it is early days to see whether these research to policy ambitions are realized. The creation of PSSP implies that previous efforts have faltered, producing capacity on the supply

<sup>81</sup> A member of and supported by the CGIAR

side but with less success in intruding evidence into policy, despite the long term presence of USAID, especially, in support. But this is a very deliberate attempt to bridge the gap in this key sector, linked to the overall growth narrative. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, the breadth of coverage in the strategic policy research areas with markets and trade, as well as poverty reduction and social safety nets. It looks as if it has ambitions to occupy an increasingly large policy space with implications both for other institutes in Pakistan, like PIDE and AERC, as well as for the strategic sector thinking of other donors. The ever present issue of inter-donor coordination will be further challenged if PSSP is adopted by government as its key, externally funded and supplied, intellectual resource.<sup>82</sup>

The portal in **education** has also been complicated. Since this is a critical sphere of agreed policy priority between government and donors, especially DFID. The concern about education reflects not only the familiar indicators, especially gendered, about low literacy levels, high drop out rates, poor teaching quality resulting in high opportunity costs for child time in poor households, inappropriate skills preparation and inadequate transferable skills, but also other politico-cultural pressures bringing strong religious and ideological preferences into erstwhile secular curricula with knock on socio-economic implications. This was the context for SDPI, in 2003, to produce a critical analysis of curricula and textbooks highlighting the incidences of insensitivity towards religious diversity, glorification of war and gender biases – which were essentially the outcome of transformation from Zial-ul-Haq’s support for Islamization across the society. Although the published report prompted a conservative backlash from elements within the state as well as religious groups outside it, it was supported by civil society, human rights movements and democratic groups, who generated pressure on the government for reforming curricula.

The Federal Government gave in to this pressure. The then Minister for Education consulted the authors and requested their input for the revision of the curricula. Since authors had already identified many errors and problems within the curricula and textbooks being taught at public schools, along with other educational experts, they made major inputs into the 2006 curricula reforms, aimed at the reduction of religious bias, removal of factual errors and gender discrimination. The Musharraf government approved these reforms despite huge pressure from the right wing. However, the curricula reforms were not followed by the promised changes in the textbooks. Despite major changes in curricula guidelines, Provincial Textbook Boards continued reprinting the old textbooks containing all biases and errors. SDPI revisited this issue in an extensive study which reviewed the textbooks for grades 1-10, being taught in public schools in all provinces, explored the pedagogical methods, the attitudes of school teachers and the consequent impact of these on the values of students in public schools. This study, jointly with International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), highlighted the persistence of discriminatory portrayal of religious diversity in the country, the pejorative attitudes of school teachers and resulting discriminatory values of public school students towards the religious diversity in Pakistan. The study published in 2011 made a powerful continuing case for the revision of textbooks, a case supported by national and international media, and by rights activists and educationists widely.

<sup>82</sup> This reference to ‘externally supplied’ should be qualified. Most of the authors of the first 10 Working Papers presented at the conference (see [pssp.ifpri.info](http://pssp.ifpri.info)) are Pakistani, sometimes co-authored with the IFPRI team. At the same time, many of these authors have their PhDs from US institutions, so the significance of strict national identity recedes.

The sectoral focus upon education is also prompted by its implications for long term poverty reduction, which needs no additional explanation here. To establish a more precise background and rationale for a key donor, DFID, to allocate a major part of its current country portfolio to education, especially in collaboration with the Punjab government, the Mahbub-ul-Haq Centre previously in Islamabad, now in Lahore, in association with the University of Cambridge, was commissioned to explore the link between educational outcomes and poverty. This Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP 2005-2010) used inter-disciplinary, mixed-methods to examine: public-private partnership in education; health and fertility; skills acquisition and utilization; disability; and, youth, gender and citizenship.

The findings of this project (particularly related to labour markets of education, gender discrimination, returns to public/private education, returns to cognitive skills and the acquisition and utilization of vocational and technical skills in the informal sector) informed the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan's chapter on Employment and Income Distribution. Its Pakistan team leader had been invited as a Working Group member for this sector in the Plan. The Working Group recommendations on resource allocation for investments in education (more specifically of women) and vocational and technical skills development, as means for poverty eradication, drew heavily from the RECOUP study. The RECOUP research also informed the development of the National Skills Strategy 2009 of the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission. Similarly, the findings of the RECOUP research also informed the Business Case of DFID's proposed aid to Punjab Government for the Punjab Education Sector Support Programme 2012-17.

This represents a clear case of collaboration between government, donor and a Pakistani think-tank, supported externally by further expertise (i.e. from Cambridge). The work was openly and formally commissioned, conforming to UK bidding standards, and has informed both government as well as donor agendas. The study played a role in establishing an argument for the Punjab government to receive large programme support from the donor over this 5 year period. However, this has been a fixed period study now completed, though some PhDs were gained through the study which, if retained in Pakistan, may lead to further research based policy inputs of this kind, but no explicit provision has been made for longer term sustained institutional capacity in Pakistan to pursue these research agendas not only in Punjab but elsewhere in the country.

The fixed period study issue can also be demonstrated in a paper commissioned by the World Bank from the Collective for Social Science Research (CSSR) in Karachi to reflect upon the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). BISP started as a simple cash transfer programme to **poor and vulnerable households**. Many in Pakistan are wary of this programme arguing that it is highly politicized, subject to leakage and preferential patronage and has no longer term developmental multipliers for sustained poverty alleviation. This prompted the World Bank to commission a study exploring the case for a transition from a cash transfer programme into a conditional cash transfer (CCT) to improve human capital conditions of participating households, drawing upon experience in Latin America and elsewhere.

The study argued for a two phased ‘graduation’ process from cash transfer to conditional cash transfer. Phase 1: Combine income support with human capital development of the poor through co-responsibilities (‘conditions’) linked to basic health and education services. To this end, the paper provides the rationale and examples from international experience on the implementation of such programs. BISP as a Conditional Cash Transfer program for Human Development would form the backbone of an integrated social safety net system. Phase 2: Facilitate access to and expansion of complementary development programs such as skills development, micro-credit, and health insurance.

To this end, the paper provides a review of potential, existing programs in Pakistan that could be linked to the safety net system. It recommended that BISP coordinate and facilitate these complementary measures rather than implement them itself.

This seems to be an example of a significant donor, with high levels of leverage on overall policy directions in Pakistan, deploying a local think tank to advance a donor critique and policy position in a highly sensitive area of social policy. The findings of the commissioned paper were pre-determined by the guidelines to refer to the Latin American experience. The paper offers legitimation for further donor led policy argument in support of CCTs, reflecting at the same time many shared concerns about simple cash transfers within Pakistan as well. From the experience of universal cash transfers elsewhere and current experiments in Namibia and Western India, these explorations of policy choice in social protection are timely. But, of course, context matters hugely, especially with respect to conditions of governance. So it is not clear yet whether politics will simply prevail and more refined knowledge about social protection options will simply be lost. Again, supporting sustained capacity to examine such issues over sustained periods of time, independently of political pressures whether from governments arranging their survival or from donors is key to evidence based policy choice.

Another controversial and sensitive area of policy choice is the geographical distribution of the incidence of **poverty** across the country, leaving aside the ongoing debate about whether the overall incidence of poverty in the country has risen over the last 5 years or not. The capability to enter such a debate requires sustained, independent institutional support. Thus a recent study on geographical, districtwise distribution of poverty was initiated by SDPI, rather than commissioned externally, using earnings from overheads and thus offering room for manoeuvre to identify a hot topic and go into bat for it. Using emerging methods on measuring multidimensional poverty, the study ‘Clustered Deprivation: District Profile of Poverty in Pakistan’, SDPI 2012 provided district level estimates of multidimensional poverty (taking four dimensions into account; education, health, living conditions and asset ownership), using nation-wide PSLM survey 2008-09 covering all districts.

It found one-third population living below the poverty line in contrast to Government’s disputed claims of having reduced poverty to 17%. More importantly, the study highlighted glaring regional disparities in the incidence of poverty – between provinces and within provinces. The mapping of poverty revealed the clustering of poverty in certain regions. It raised several uneasy questions of the political economy of resource distribution between provinces, between regions within each province and between different ethnic groups. It thus provides an evidence-based rationale for re-distribution of resources between provinces and within each province, identifying the poorest districts in each province.

The launch of the study attracted massive media coverage. It has also been criticized for identifying ethnic and linguistic variations and implying that they are the result of deliberate forms of discrimination and neglect. With its implications for social protection and other direct poverty alleviating interventions, it is challenged by the growth advocates seeking to displace the capability discourse as a guide to poverty reduction strategy. Nevertheless it has brought the author into the high level Technical Group on Poverty within the Planning Commission debating the methodology for measuring poverty in Pakistan.

**Health** research in Pakistan, like any other country, is primarily clinical research and medical science located in medical schools attached to Universities and hospitals with teaching functions, including in this case, the military medical infrastructure. This research, across 13 outlets, is coordinated by the Pakistan Medical Research Council, although this Council is quite financially constrained and can only award small grants as donors are not significantly supporting medical research in Pakistan. A further constraint is that these institutions are much more focused upon teaching than research, and very little connection to broader public health policy. The Health Services Academy, accountable to the Cabinet Division of the Federal government, with historical support from GIZ, has a public health remit, but again is more oriented towards teaching. The Aga Khan University in Karachi has a strong health faculty, with medical research including maternal and neo-natal health care as well as broader public health issues. A strong contribution to public health issues comes from Heartfile in Islamabad, an NGO supported by USAID, and other donors like PPAF, Packard Foundation, CIDA, ADB, WHO, IDRC and Rockefeller. In other words, this is where several donors have concentrated funding support, though not at a large scale:

[Dr. Sania Nishtar](#), founder and president of [Heartfile](#), a health policy think tank, has contributed a lot in reforming health policy in Pakistan. She is a key health policy voice in Pakistan, the author of Pakistan's [first roadmap for health reform](#), Pakistan's first compendium of [health statistics](#), and the country's [first national public health plan for Non-Communicable diseases](#). Many aspects of her work on health systems reform and related policy research has been published in international peer reviewed journals. Heartfile published a series of Gateway papers, and conducted a series of policy roundtables to assist with the health policy reform process. The first in the series, [Gateway Paper I](#) was recognized as a blueprint for formulation of a new national health policy for Pakistan, as evidenced by a [Memorandum of Understanding](#). Another significant contribution to the national health policy, made by Dr. Nishtar, is the book [Choked Pipes: Reforming Pakistan's Mixed Health Systems](#). This book was launched in Geneva at the WHO headquarter, later at the WHO Global Forum meeting in Havana. Two launches were held in Karachi and Islamabad, later on. The book was reviewed in the Lancet and the WHO bulletin. It was used for Parliamentary capacity building and many legislative and policy briefs were based on it.

It will be interesting to see how, under conditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Provincial Governments will address health policy, especially public health, and which what institutional support they will call on.

**Gender** issues in Pakistan, as elsewhere in the sub-continent, have slowly but steadily gained more prominence over the last 2-3 decades especially among NGOs and more progressive university social science departments. In Pakistan, gender issues have been recently been

more seriously considered not just as a function of the patriarchal socio-cultures across the sub-continent, but in the context of insecurity and near civil war in parts of the country as a result of religious based political movements, usually described as religious extremism. Thus most of the efforts of gender-related research think-tanks and lawmaking bodies, for example, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) have been focused on women's empowerment to address the generic issues arising from patriarchy as well as to safeguard the precarious rights of women in war torn areas.

The dissemination of a video across TV Channels in early 2009, in which a young woman in Swat is being flogged as she is held down to the ground by four men, raised alarm in the country.<sup>83</sup> As a result, NCSW, along with other research institutions and gender activists, started raising awareness about the causes of religious extremism and its impacts on the status of women. Many conferences have been held in order to let researchers share their research on ways to address the problem.

During the past two years, emphasis has also been on gender based violence. NGOs, such as Aurat Foundation, are working increasingly on the compliance of law regarding honour killings' and reporting incidents that were suppressed in the past.<sup>84</sup> Research also highlighted the particular impact of the 2010 and 2012 floods on women. Since 2010, NCSW has also successfully promoted six laws regarding women: The Anti Sexual Harassment Act, Anti Women Practices Act, Acid Crimes and Control Act, Women in Distress and Detention Fund, National Commission on Status of Women Act and the Domestic Violence Bill. The passing of so many laws in such a short time shows that policymakers are taking women rights more seriously. Additionally, in March 2012, the NCSW was also guaranteed autonomy by the present government.

Despite this evidence of some success in policy transformation in the minds of policy makers as a result of public pressure from gender specialists whether academics, lawyers or activists, women still continue to be sidelined when it comes to budget making and the finalization of party manifestos. Since elections are approaching in Pakistan, these budget and manifesto topics have become the main issues under discussion in this gender policy community. And of course, laws are one thing, but the practice of them in another, so the case for ongoing research and vigilance is paramount. However donors with larger agendas around security, growth and poverty reduction are wary of entering this terrain too explicitly due to sensitivities whether genuinely cultural or trumped up as a form of nationalist identity.

Overall from this review of case studies, supported further by Appendix 2, where 20 institutions are selected as being the stronger players in their sectors, we conclude that economics/growth arguments and agriculture/food security research probably has the most influence on the policy process, though we are less sure that this is reflected in budgetary allocation where other, shorter term interests intrude. There is a surprising lack of focus and capacity across the country on governance issues, given that it is such a central problem in the society.

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<sup>83</sup> The authenticity of this video was subsequently challenged, though this does not affect the argument here.

<sup>84</sup> The recent December 2012 SDPI conference on Sustainable Development included a plenary session on violence towards women.

## Conclusion

This paper has focussed upon the analysis of the research/policy interface, informed by a political economy perspective in which stakeholders vary significantly in power and status to control knowledge processes in an overall political context of extreme instability, insecurity and volatility. These unfavourable conditions confront enormous problems of poverty and inequality (horizontal as well as vertical) in the society, leading to the overall pessimistic conclusion that neither research nor policy making are up to the task and challenge.

In developing this overall conclusion, the paper reaffirms that the policy process is non-linear, thus confusing a simple Theory of Change and Results Chain understanding of research/policy interfaces. While most government policy anywhere can be regarded as incoherent and even chaotic, reflecting a natural collision of interests and accidents, most observers agree that the particular conditions of Pakistan pushes it towards the absurd end of that incoherence continuum. In addition to ‘normal’ chaos, this ‘absurdity of incoherence’ is partly a function of domestic instability and insecurity, and partly a function of the significant presence of external donors in commissioning and sponsoring policy related research to provide evidence for some rational basis for policy. The research for this paper reveals a strong domination of donor commissioned research in the overall policy related research landscape.

The paper argues that conditions of instability and insecurity for all actors in the society push behaviour towards shorter term goals and outcomes, thus weakening the demand for an evidential basis to policy as immediate interests come to the fore. Donors are not excluded from this problem, as their presence in the society is justified ‘back home’ by being able to show that more immediate poverty reduction achievements can be demonstrated. This translates as pressure to see immediate outcomes from all steps in the policy process, including research. This in turn encourages the mythology of a simple, linear results chain approach.<sup>85</sup>

The paper has also argued that this pattern of incoherence in policy, reflected in the *ad hoc* commissioning nature of much contract research, is reinforced by the displacement of a longer term, core growth narrative (which puts non-rural, non-agricultural productivity growth more centrally in the development strategy for Pakistan) by a plurality or fragmentation of development narratives with little logical link between them.

Policy related research occurs significantly, though not exclusively in the social sciences, especially for many of the sectors identified for this analysis (economics, agriculture, food security and nutrition, education, gender, health and so on). But social sciences have a severe image problem in Pakistan, especially as they move away from quantitative economics analysis and econometrics. With the partial exception of economics, the other disciplines do not attract the interest of students’ parents and thus students themselves relative to other science, technology and management disciplines which lead to more lucrative future professions and status. Thus the qualitative social sciences in anthropology, sociology and political science are concentrated in a tiny number of research outlets, and often the better applied academics are pursuing their careers abroad or in international organisations within

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<sup>85</sup> There is a counter argument from within DFID central that its Research and Evidence Division creates space for longer term reflection through sponsoring evaluations which would otherwise be squeezed. But it is difficult to see the evidence for this counterfactual argument.

the country. Thus these kinds of research outputs are not really valued in the society. This has been a constant refrain, reinforced by opinions at the highest levels even with the Higher Education establishment in the country.

Challenging, critical work, which tends to come from the qualitative social sciences, where traditional premises and assumptions are questioned, is further marginalised by the bureaucratisation of knowledge in which hierarchies either within academia or in government are resistant to open debate and the formation of new thinking. As result of this defensiveness, policy does not develop beyond the interests of powerholders. The non-transparency which occurs as a result of this translates into a governance problem.

A fundamental issue for critical policy related research is its independence. Some research outlets essentially function as insider ‘contractors’ following specified agendas with their findings confined to confirmation or refutation. This can be in the context of government agendas, or within prescribed donor priorities. Is there space for ‘architects’ who can freely design questions and initiate challenging data and still be heard in the policy process? The research to policy interface is more characterised by contractors than by architects whose work remains within the confines of academic discourse and peer review.

The research to policy interface is not simply a horizontal divide between research supply on the one side and policy demand on the other. This is too simple and does not describe reality. Instead we can observe a series of vertically segmented epistemic communities with ‘clientelised’ research perspectives (assumptions and premises) leading to forms of analysis (i.e. selected types of data) which calibrate to the interests and perspectives of commissioning ‘patrons’. The ‘growth arena’ is one such example, but also the ‘social protection arena’.<sup>86</sup>

Modalities of commissioning are summarised in the paper, distinguishing between **formal**, open transparent practices (at least in appearance) and **informal** practices which depend heavily upon previous relationships, knowledge of partners and individuals, and their track record in delivering ‘appropriate’ work on time. The transactions costs in pursuing open, formal commissioning all the time are frequently regarded as too cumbersome, so that other informal practices prevail much of the time.

The paper concludes with a discussion of barrier and portals. While the over whelming ‘story’ from our data is one of research not being listened to, especially from the more critical social sciences, there are nevertheless more linkages than many of our informants are prepared to concede. The problem is noted of unrealistically searching for outcomes when all some research can do is to deliver outputs and facilitate a longer term debate on that analysis.

To illustrate that there are portals as well as barriers, the paper then moves into a discussion of series of case studies by sectoral theme indicating some of the barriers but also noting the portal between the research and receptivity for policy. These case studies are supported by an additional matrix in Appendix 2, which summarises further examples of barriers and portals for different selected institutions, by sector/theme.

We conclude that economics/growth arguments and agriculture/food security research probably has the most influence on the policy process, though we are less sure that this is

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<sup>86</sup> This exemplar contrast is described in the paper, but it would be interesting to be able to do closer research on this issue. It is one that observers recognise, so in general terms this proposition has already been confirmed through triangulation with readers and reviewers of an earlier draft of this paper.

reflected in budgetary allocation where other, shorter term interests intrude. There is a surprising lack of focus and capacity across the country on governance issues, given that it is such a central problem in the society.

## APPENDIX 1 BARRIERS TO UNDERTAKING RESEARCH AND ITS UPTAKE

### 1. Accessing funds

The lack of access to funds appears to be the largest barrier to the conduct of research faced by the organizations we interviewed. Most of the research organizations lack any core financial support to meet their fix and recurring costs including the research personnel cost. While some organizations, public sector think-tanks and universities, receive all their budgets from the government, most of the organizations are solely dependent upon the international aid agencies. Being aid dependent often results in the research agenda driven by the donors. Accessing funds, as highlighted by different organizations, often involves a strong culture of informality and networking and at times arbitrariness compromising the competitiveness of the commissioning process.

The geographic location of the organizations has appeared to be important in this context given the concentration of donor agencies in Islamabad. The organizations in distant areas, such as Karachi, perceived themselves lacking appropriate networking required to access funds. Similarly, the newly established organizations also faced serious challenges in accessing funds despite having the required human resources and competitively designed projects as they lacked the institutional credentials and history. Moreover, some organizations have also reported that the application time frames set by donors are sometimes unrealistic and inappropriate with very small time given for preparing the bids.

The unreliable financial inflows results organizations hiring short term consultants instead of developing their own core research faculties. This affects their ability to enter into competitive bidding as there are huge sunk costs (on human resources) involved in conceptualizing projects and preparing bids, combined with uncertain outcomes of the bidding. Organizations are, at times, trapped into this cycle of self-perpetuating financial instability due to lack of human resources resulting in weak quality of research proposals, unfavourable funding outcomes and consequently their inability to hire better quality human resources.

While the public sector organizations have a steady flow of funding particularly to meet the fixed costs, their research operations are also constrained by insufficiency of the funds. This primarily affects their ability to retain the talent as the private sector offers better opportunities. Moreover, the bureaucratic procedures within the public sector also affect the financial autonomy of the public sector research organizations. This has been visible in the case of National Institute of Population Sciences (NIPS) whose institutional autonomy was curbed under the post 18<sup>th</sup> amendment institutional reforms as it now functions under the Cabinet Division.

The public sector universities however considered accessing funds to be a lesser problem as the large part of their human resource costs is already covered by government allocations. For the remaining costs, HEC's competitive funding is available and as public universities take up few research projects, they largely consider this funding opportunity to be 'sufficient' to

their needs. This was also highlighted by the Chief Executive of the HEC that competitive research funds particularly in the social science research category often remain unspent due to insufficient applications. The leading private sector universities, such as LUMS, LSE and AKU, however, highlight the lack of funding as a major constraint to their research.

## **2. Human resources constraints**

Given the overall weak social science academic foundations, the lack of appropriately qualified human resources appears a major barrier to doing research. As highlighted by the Chief Executive of the HEC, policy research is essentially an inter-disciplinary field which is not popular in the academia in the country. The lack of human resources or policy relevant research thus exists at all levels of skills and experience. Fresh graduates, as reported by several organizations, seriously lack the research capability. There is an overall shortage of mid-career researchers with the appropriate set of skills. Moreover, the historic process of brain drain has particularly affected the availability of highly qualified resources who prefer to stay abroad. There is thus a general lack of senior researchers to mentor the young researchers who are often left at their own.

The lack of human resources particularly affects the organizations struggling for financial resources as their trained researchers often move on to the organizations that offer better financial rewards and job security. This high turn-over is particularly evident at the level of junior and mid-career professionals. As large amount of resources, both time and money, are spent on training researchers, the high turn over adds to the recruitment and training costs and often delays in projects alongside affecting the quality of research.

In contrast to the research organizations/think tanks, the universities, both public and private sector, are 'satisfied' with their human resources. The leading private sector universities particularly take pride in the quality resource they employ or the junior researchers they themselves train. The state of human resources in public sector universities also seems to be improved given HEC's high investment in HRD over the last decade under which foreign trained PhDs are now returning to join the faculties. Nonetheless, as the universities are only gradually moving from their 'teaching only' role towards appreciating the need for research, these academically qualified human resources are overly burdened with teaching and have lesser time for research. This is a serious problem in the second tier private sector universities where full time faculty has to teach at least four modules a week.

The organizations struggling with financial resources rely upon short term consultants. Their institutional human resource base thus remains weak. The engagement of short term consultants, at times, results in the conflict of interests as consultants simultaneously work for several organizations. There is also a sense of 'thinning' of human resources as the good quality researchers/consultants are approached by multiple organizations, procure multiple projects/assignments simultaneously beyond their capacity thus compromising the overall quality of their work. Like the funding opportunities, the geographic disadvantage in terms of the availability of the qualified human resources, as they migrate to Islamabad, is also reported by organizations in Karachi.

Most of the organizations also highlight the insufficiently trained human resources collecting data for the government agencies. As the government's statistical agencies are the only actors

collecting, maintaining and disseminating the large scale data, the weak quality of their human resources greatly affect the quality of data and hence the research.

### **3. Restricted access to statistics and journals**

The lack of needed and reliable secondary data is the third major challenge faced by every research organization. For certain organizations, the secondary data collected by the government agencies does not fulfill their needs. This is particularly a serious concern for organizations working on the issues of health, nutrition, and conflict/peace studies. Most of the organizations report the government data to be of poor quality. They also report the inconsistencies in the data collected by various sources. Importantly, the panel data which is of immense value for policy research is particularly missing in government statistics.

Almost all organizations report the difficulties in acquiring the data from the public sector organizations that are mainly responsible for collecting and disseminating the statistics. Very rich data on poverty and social protection collected by the national census under the Benazir Income Support Programme, for example, is not accessible for the researchers. There is also a strong layer of informality that surrounds organizations' access to data, requiring a strong networking with public officials. Some institutions, such as LUMS have handled this problem by developing their own database by purchasing all national statistics since 1982. In many instances, the data is not shared particularly related to the issues considered to be 'sensitive' and related to certain areas such as FATA and Gilgit Baltistan. Organizations often end up collecting primary data to meet their needs. Such data collection efforts are least coordinated and there are duplicating practices with compromise on quality and rigour.

A further problem is access to journals. Subscriptions to printed journals can, of course, be prohibitive for smaller organisations without regular budgets to support this scale of infrastructure. But even access to online journals requires subscriptions and, of course, fast and reliable connectivity and decent band width. With access so limited, researchers are finding it hard to keep up to date in their respective fields. This can be seen in some of the outdated bibliographies on papers. This problem of outdated scholarship also restricts the opportunity to get published in reputed international journals. The provision of such infrastructure would be a great donor project!

### **4. Security issues (especially with respect to surveys)**

The poor law and order conditions in certain parts of the country appear to be one of the major factors constraining research organizations. The security issue interacts with the statistics one. We need to ask the question whether the poor quality of government statistics (as a distinct issue from providing access to what exists) is itself a function of the security problem, thus making primary data collection the only choice for most of the projects given the lack of secondary data on certain issues. Some areas are famously worse than others, with mobility of field researchers to the areas like FATA, some parts of KPK and Balochistan being very restricted thus limiting the scope of data collection activities. The most obviously affected organizations are the ones working on the issues of peace and security itself! However, this is also a constraint to longer term qualitative work in addition to short and sharp surveys. Qualitative research with ethnographic or via various PRA and PAL

approaches is seriously impeded with ‘strangers’ as outsiders not safe to spend repeated and extended periods of times in research locations. And yet for poverty, livelihoods, educational access, gender rights and civil society research, it is precisely these marginalized locations within Pakistan (including Southern Punjab) which requires the greatest attention, and with qualitative research to expand our basic understanding of relationships and local institutions through people survive but unequally and without rights. It is only with such research that we can derive the significant measures, categories and indicators upon which to frame significant quantitative research.

## 5. Non-evidence based policy making

It may be that there is a need for a separate paper analyzing the policy processes in Pakistan, at some point in the future. This exercise does not quite stray into the analysis of the information systems available to decision makers beyond those offered by external research providers, nor indeed does it stray into the interface between senior public officials and political or military leaders, and the exposure of such bureaucratic and political leaders to various external pressures from large scale interest groups, constituencies, military pressures, donor agendas and so on through direct and informal lobbying. In our data there are references to ‘feudal’ relationships meaning more broadly the patron-client relations which pervade the entire society and through which deals and commitments are made. And civil society, in its de Tocquevillian sense, in Pakistan is still in its infancy with independent NGOs and think tanks struggling to maintain independence as well as to gain recognition for the value of their arguments in relation to public policy, budget making and accountability. Other aspects of the political society continue to be very strong whether in the religious domain, or in the agricultural, labour union and professional association domains, including significantly lawyers. Between the main political parties and the military there are also sets of vested interests in different sectors of the economy. Within this highly politicized and sectional context, reinforced by the semi-autonomy of provincial regions, reinforced recently by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the place for evidence based policy making is weak. ‘Rationality’ lies elsewhere within culture, ideology, prejudice (sometimes religious or racial), ethnicities, and patron-client systems. Thus the ‘environment’ for evidence base policy formulation is weak. It is this context which helps to explain the repeated remarks in our data about the lack of interest by the political and bureaucratic class in using research or sponsoring it for different policy arenas. We might be able to offer some deeper insight into this general picture, particularly by sector. Thus research investments in agriculture, partly driven by export interests but also for domestic subsistence, or in health (medicines, pathology and intervention techniques) appear to be stronger drivers of policy in these sectors than in others. And these sectors have enjoyed a huge recent increase in capacity through PhD training, and PhDs returning to their institutions.

## 6. Political neglect

This is a slightly different category of ‘barrier’ from above, but can be understood as causally connected. It is always important in a society like Pakistan to acknowledge that while there are different sets of institutions across the broad categories of state, market, and civil society, they are socially intertwined with large families, kin and clans stretching across them while

recognizing these kinship loyalties. Thus what appears to be separated with intellectual or professional classes in one place and public officials in another, in order for one domain to have influence upon another, is not in fact disconnected at the level of social networking. An anthropologist refers to this phenomena as cross-cutting ties, and can be witnessed all over Pakistan through, for example, the *biraderi* system. However, there remains a question whether the leaders and cadres of the main national and regional political parties, along with some religious and populist leaders, populate a parallel universe, significantly divorced from the intellectual and professional ones. Are they socially divorced from the world of research? Their domain is more conventionally ‘feudal’—a function of control over property and people, where constituencies are manipulated and mafia type political management prevails as the norm. These are systems of rewards and obligations, informal, personal and non-transparent, raise artificially to the apparent status of ‘policy’. There are some famous construction projects in Pakistan which are the outcome of such domain relations, not least in the education sector. This is a further embedded or deep structured context for the neglect of scientific underpinning in policy choice. There is little political respect for an informed basis for policy options, let alone opportunity cost considerations of any initiative. There is mainly no formal or rational ‘testing’ of policy propositions, which is why Pakistan is littered with partially formulated and partially implemented initiatives which are rarely monitored and evaluated, or if they are (perhaps as a function of donor insistence) then results are ignored. Our data construct policy as much more haphazard and incoherent. There is a degree of arrogance which does not even require scientific backing to legitimize personalized and ideologically driven policy initiatives. The hurdle even for ‘satisficing’ information is low. In other words, across our 44 institutions there are repeated references to a willful lack of respect for the value of research (evidence and analysis) in the policy process. Political leaders, surrounded by a narrow coterie of acolytes, dream up policy, mainly driven by the need to stay in office and maintain access to rent seeking opportunities.

## 7. Bureaucratic resistance to criticism

Again, as a variant on the above analysis, M&E research (i.e. in contrast to policy formulation research, but in a cyclical sense supposed to contribute to re-formulation) is not well received by public sector officials where explicitly or implicitly their performance is being judged. This resistance to criticism (actual or potential) prompts a series of disconnects in the ‘project’ cycle (or policy cycle) between policy ideas, formulation and design, inception, pilots (if any), full implementation, monitoring, evaluation and project/policy adjustment. These formally discrete steps in a linear, rationalist vision of the policy cycle enables responsibility to be avoided by allocating it elsewhere in the chain, viz: bad concepts, poor design, inadequate information, inaccurate baselines, incompetent implementation and so on. Thus M&E type research is easily coopted and thereby distorted in this process, with blame deflected and praise absorbed. Unpalatable results are rubbished for poor methodology, inadequate sample sizes and insensitivity to externalities. Either M&E is commissioned and controlled from the outset, or if independent and thus critical, is easily suppressed and marginalized.

## 8. Islamabad centric research/policy networks

The ‘access to funding’ category above has already referred to the Islamabad centric problem, but the issue extends beyond this. Given what we have also reported in the Inception Report about the informality of commissioning practices, there are both issues of exclusion from research opportunities as well as the dissemination of findings and analysis into the policy process. Institutions even *pucca* ones like the AKU or SPDC, especially from Karachi, feel that they are outside relatively closed Islamabad based networks or interfaces between government and the research community. In the absence of transparent processes of commissioning, their perception is that they are not hearing about possibilities and are not present in receptions and seminars where these things get discussed. This is a mixed blessing in that they protect a degree of independence for the work that they do, while missing out at the same time. This problem extends into the dissemination part of the ‘results chain’. Given that knowledge to policy does not simply occur through publications (and this observation applies equally, say, to the UK as it does to Pakistan) but is more function of continuous opportunities for dialogue in seminars, workshops, joint exercises and casual assignments, then not physically being part of these networked opportunities in Islamabad reduces the potential impact of research completed outside Islamabad. Given the significance of Punjab and its capital, Lahore, there may be too much emphasis by some of the institutions on this Islamabad centric issue. However, even despite the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Federal Government is still holding umbrella policy responsibilities and thus more frequently commissioning development sector research than provincial capitals. This may change over time. However the significance of Islamabad is reinforced by the presence of donors, which remain significant in the overall flow and volume of funding for development research, and which participate in the forums through which research is both commissioned and listened to. Institutions in Karachi report that they lose some of their research talent as it drifts towards Islamabad.

## 9. Cultural sensitivities

To some extent this heading is a euphemism for gender issues, but also for religious sensitivities as well particularly around issues of secularism, religious minorities and blasphemy. There are barriers to generating research on these issues in the first place, but also on how such research gets done and how it might be disseminated and even acted upon without incurring political upheavals and even direct danger for research personnel. It is known that some geographical areas of Pakistan are very conservative, especially with respect to gender issues and secularism. Despite the presence in Pakistan of very impressive intellectual women and educated activists, research on a whole range of gender related issues (e.g. domestic violence, women’s inheritance rights, other aspects of family law including rights over children in the event of divorce, mobility, access to public spaces and opportunities) are difficult to promote and certainly difficult to gain sponsorship from within Pakistan’s own institutions and sources. Thus such work is often disproportionately sponsored by donors and NGOs (themselves donor funded), and thus not owned from the outset by relevant government departments and political leaders. But layered into this problem are the barriers to women actually doing research in these controversial topics and, correlatively, in the more conservative, female repressive parts of the country like KP, Baluchistan, Southern Punjab. These constraints upon female researchers are relaxed in less controversial topics with universal application, like medicine (outside of reproductive rights

and sexual health), agriculture, macro-economics and so on. Clearly in Pakistan there are many strands of Sunni Islam as well as other Islamic sects and then values and beliefs beyond core Deobandi/Wahhabi ones in minority religious groups among Hindus and Christians. These differences are both a source of endemic conflict, often violent, as well as ongoing identity construction which frames possibilities for development. There are also more extreme social movements which are defining politics and security problems across increasing areas of Pakistan—sometimes referred to as Talibanisation. These issues, with implications for law and order and security within which ordinary people can pursue their livelihoods, all impinge upon development agendas in Pakistan and should be legitimate topics for research. And many of these issues require lengthy, qualitative approaches to research to get beyond the rhetoric into some real understanding of the drivers of these fissiparous tendencies across the country. But such research is unlikely to be publicly commissioned by any ministry in Pakistan, and donors are wary to moving into this fraught domain. This self-imposed reluctance, derived from fear, comprises a major barrier to research. And of course while much of the gender issue in Pakistan is a function of patriarchy, it is also intertwined with, and reinforced by, these religious issues.

## 10. Language

It is difficult to assess the significance of the language issue as a barrier, though it has been raised by several of ‘our’ institutions. Obviously Pakistan has many languages apart from English, which is confined to a narrow intelligentsia. *Urdu* is also a language of the cosmopolitan elite and a minority first language. Many *Urdu* speakers do not read or write it. Major regional languages such as Punjabi, Pashtun and Baluch are far more widespread but not really the language of written research and national public discourse. While most educated (and even for some non-educated) classes in Pakistan are multi-lingual, they are not sufficiently so to give them easy mobility for research purposes all over the country. Thus much social science research has to be conducted through several languages and layers of interpretation, and this is especially an issue for primary surveys and qualitative research – as is highlighted by LUMS. And then material has to be ‘re-translated’ into a communication language for ‘knowledge to policy’ purposes—*Urdu* and/or English. There is definitely some kind of metropolitan-periphery issue here, and becomes a more significant problem if research is directed beyond policy related elites to wider audiences for their empowerment and participation in the policy process.

## 11. Donor volatility

Given the significance of donor sources of funding across the research sectors in this study, some institutions are reporting difficulties in their interactions with donors. This is more likely concentrated more at the M&E, Baseline Studies, project/programme related part of the research landscape rather than more fundamental research. There are several concerns: instability in agendas; short deadlines for proposals with little prior warning; changing agreed research targets while work is in progress, often adding dimensions (whether sample sizes or topics); in co-funded commissioned work, different reporting expectations between donors. These issues all amount to a certain volatility which undermines the ability of research organisations to plan their timetables and plan for capacity to undertake commissions. Some

institutions are turning away from research/M&E invitations because of the disruption this volatility causes. Certainly the hand to mouth aspects of this nexus has implications for human resource capacity as noted above. With this uncertainty of work flow, institutions have difficulty in retaining good long term staff. While they chase other more lucrative opportunities, institutions have to rely upon less proven short term consultant staff with variability in quality outcomes as a result. Thus reputations are not able, affecting the ability to attract repeat work, which would give them more stability and reliable capacity. While there are moves towards more stable consortiums and preferred bidder status, in Pakistan these arrangements can also be problematic as they are in effect a function of informal networks and patron-client opportunity allocation. Another feature of this problem, noted above, is that the context of uncertainty leads individual consultants to over-commit and moonlight, again undermining deadlines and quality. While this is a generic, contracting problems not specific to Pakistan, it is an exaggerated feature here and destabilizing for quality research and sustained dialogues between knowledge and policy, where trust and reliability are important variables.

## Appendix 2: Matrix of Case Study Summaries: Barriers and Portals

Themes	Institute	Portals to Policy	Policy Relevant Work Underutilized	Commissioning	Barriers
Economics	<b>International Growth Center (IGC)</b>	In principle, IGC involves any of the government agencies for the projects that it undertakes. Close relationship for research and policy linkage. IGC's tax reform project was taken up by the government in the Punjab province. IGC has also worked with the federal government on "tariff reforms", and the recommendations were incorporated into the national tariff policy. Moreover, IGC has contributed to the formulation of "new growth strategy".	It works very closely with government line departments, which makes it less independent in pursuing their own research agenda.	Informal commissioning relationship with the government. Agenda is set with mutual understanding and consultation	Security Situation and Non-availability of information
	<b>Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)</b>	PIDE has been heavily involved in producing quality research pertaining to economics and other fields. PIDE has a repository of research both in the form of books, reports and working papers. For instance, PIDE has contributed to Macro policy, Monetary policy, financial Services, Food Security and Poverty.	Majority of PIDE's work is used for economic and social policy purposes. PIDE does not encourage work that is not relevant to policies.	PIDE has Program Support from the government and gets research grants from donors	
	<b>Applied Economic and Research Center (AERC)</b>	AERC contributed to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2004 in the gender mainstreaming part and has been part of the "Taxation Reforms Public Commission".	A budget review for a multilateral donor was conducted by AERC which was not published by the donor because the finding were not in line with the donor's expectations	AERC gets program support from the GoP. There are two channels of accessing research funding. Direct grants/contracts from international donors and indirect funds routed through the government	There is lack of interest in research within government and policy circles.  Difficulties in accessing data.
Security/Nutrition Agriculture /Food	<b>National Agriculture Research Council (NARC)</b>	The flour fortification project done by NARC was up-taken by Atomic Energy Commission, though there are not much examples of	The recent increase in the wheat prices by the government was objected by the NARC. The objection was	Program support by the government for non-developmental expenditures and funding from donors for research.	Lack of acceptance of research at higher policy levels  Politically motivated

		NARC's work incorporated into the Nutrition policy.	based on the market surveys regularly conducted by the institution about the price fluctuations and its implication on the consumer market. The objection was overruled by the Ministry of Food Security and Research (MoFSR)	Formal process of securing funds.i.e. through project proposals	policy making process
	<b>Department of Food Sciences, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF)</b>	UAF works for Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, has no direct policy influence or linkages with the policy making bodies	Lots of research is carried out by university faculty which does not necessarily relates to the policy needs	Program support by the government. Open competitive bidding and informal commissioning	Problem of human resource  Non-availability of data  Lack of financial resources
<b>Education</b>	<b>Idara e Taleem o Agahi (ITA)</b>	ITA has signed an MOU with the government to provide with policy evidence and uses government infrastructure for its projects. They have contributed in the formation of school management committees in the Punjab. The Punjab government took input from ITA in the formulation of School Management Committees (SMC). The Punjab government has also cited data collected by ITA under 'ASER' in many policy documents.	ITA works very closely with the government and undertakes research which could be incorporated into the policy. The most significant work done by ITA is their annual report on the education assessment, Assessment Survey Evaluation Research (ASER), immensely contributed to the formulation of the latest national educational policy	Open competitive bidding and also through networking	Access to government information due bureaucratic process  Resistance from informants in sharing information, especially in lower ranks of public sector officials
	<b>Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)</b>	SAHE has contributed in making the Department of Staff Development as an apex organization in Punjab; however, SAHE does not have formal, long-term policy partnership with the government.	SAHE has done lots of work on education and governance and has published quality papers, but has not been able to influence policies, so far.	Through competitive bidding as well as networking with donors and the government	Access to female informants in KPK and Southern Punjab Increased recurring costs due to capacity building of research staff  Retention of qualified staff at the end of the project Over ambitious goals and expectations of donors Uncertainty during the project negotiations with donors  Availability and retention of qualified human resource due to

					financial constraints
Poverty	<b>Social Policy and Development Center (SPDC)</b>	SPDC has had quite good influence in the policies. The evidence provided by SPDC has been used in in drafting the “Sexual Harassment Bill 2002”, “BISP”, and “Social Action Program” (SAP) II. There exists some informal policy partnership with the federal and provincial governments.	According to MD SPDC, their research is frequently consulted by federal and provincial governments but the uptake of research into policies has not been vibrant.	Program Supports by IDRC and Norwegian Embassy. Informal commissioning, I.e. donors approach for some projects	<p>Access to the government offices for data collection</p> <p>Difficulty in bidding for projects due to maintaining strict policies for setting up of research agenda</p> <p>Human resource capacity is also a challenge</p> <p>Non conducive environment for research</p> <p>Accessing government data</p>
	<b>Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)</b>	SDPI, given its long term partnership with national policy makers, has been instrumental in the development of National Sustainable Development Strategy for Pakistan. Its advocacy efforts based on its Food Security Analysis contributed towards the creation of the ‘Ministry of Food Security and Research’ in the context of post 18 <sup>th</sup> Amendment devolution. Its analysis of textbooks taught at the public schools has inspired the National Curricula Reforms 2006 and the recent revision of textbooks (see main text).		Programme support by IDRC under Think-tank Initiative, competitive bidding to various bilateral and multilateral donors	Availability and retention of appropriately skilled human resources.

	<b>CSSR</b>	CSSR has done significant work in producing quality research in the fields of nutrition, social policy and economics. Much of their work has been taken up by the federal and provincial governments as policy advice. CSSR has worked as a contractor for producing research for the government as well as international donors. For instance, they contributed to the designing of BISP and their researchers are on the Panel of Economists in Pakistan.	Being a profit making firm, CSSR does not have a mandate of sharing research on policy issues, unless they are contracted out to do so.	Mostly open bidding since the organization is for profit. No core funding	Human resource constraints  Security situation in the troubled areas like FATA
<b>Health</b>	<b>Heartfile</b>	As the institute works closely with the government for policy reform, therefore, evidence is taken up into policy occasionally. But no long-term policy relationship with the government as such. Heartfile drafted “National Health Policy” and “Provincial Health Policy” for KPK province. One the basis of Dr. Nishtar’s book, titled “Health System in Pakistan-A Way Forward” the federal government introduced health reforms.	Heartfile has numerous publications on health related issues and aspects. Their research findings are yet to be incorporated into the health policy.	Both informal and formal commissioning of research, for example, IDRC approached Heartfile for conducting projects and in some cases Heartfile bids for projects	Lack of availability of sector specialists in health  Security Situation in the provinces Baluchistan, KPK and FATA
	<b>Health Services Academy (HSA)</b>	HSA is essentially a teaching institute, offering MPH degrees for health professionals. Off late, HSA has signed an MOU with all the provincial health ministries for providing evidence-based policy advice.	HSA is a government institute, has completed four health related projects. These projects are likely to be incorporated into the health policy.	Open competitive bidding as well as informal commissioning process.	Lack of core Funding  Reliance on donor projects.  Qualified Human Resources
	<b>Research and Development Solutions (RADS)</b>	RADS has recently signed an MOU with the USAID for providing with evidence for health policy in Pakistan. However, there are no specific examples of their work being taken up into the policy making.	RADS has done significant research on family planning, childhood immunization, immunization coverage, and other related sectors throughout Pakistan. Unfortunately, their work has been neglected in the policy making. For example, a recent study, “Utilization and the Cost of Family Planning in the Public	RADS receives research grants from DFID and USAID, also RADS bids for projects	Lack of acceptance of research Most of the research remains unpublished No Incentives for publication  No priorities given to research  Lack of qualified human resource  Security Issues

			Sector in Pakistan” conducted by RADS, gives very concrete suggestions to improve public service delivery in the health sector. So for, government has not taken any initiative to incorporate their inputs.		
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI)</b>	The “Right to Information Act” initiated by the CPDI, was endorsed by the Punjab government. CPDI and the government of Punjab worked in collaboration to draft this act.	The federal government has been hesitant in endorsing the “Right to Information Act”	Informal commissioning, i.e. approaching donors directly, and formal commissioning, i.e. bidding for projects	Human resource capacity as well as retention of qualified research staff  Political Implication of the research  Accessing data in the area of concern as well as reliability of data  Over ambitious goals and expectations of donors  Uncertainty during the project negotiations with donors
	<b>Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)</b>	SAHE has contributed in making the Department of Staff Development as an apex organization in Punjab; however, SAHE does not have formal, long-term policy partnership with the government.	SAHE has done lots of work on education and governance and has published quality papers, but has not been able to influence policies, so for.	Through competitive bidding as well as networking with donors and the government	Availability and retention of qualified human resource due to financial constraints Access to the government offices for data collection  Reluctance of government officials in sharing information
<b>Peace &amp; Conflict</b>	<b>South Asia Strategic Studies Institute (SASSI)</b>	SASSI’s research on the “Kerry-Lugar Bill” was appreciated in the military circles. SASSI was able to convince military establishment not to revolt against the bill.	SASSI worked extensively on the implications of the “Kerry-Lugar Bill”, the bill was approved by the cabinet, without taking inputs from SASSI’s work. Another example of underutilization of research relates to study conducted by SASSI on the perception of people on the “Swat Operation”. The operation was launched by the military without	Program support from HEC, works in collaboration with donors and the government	Lack of appreciation for research  Resistance for up-taking of evidence into the policy making process  Cultural barriers in information collection process  Security Issues, especially in the conflict/war inflicted areas

			taking into account the findings of the said study		
	<b>Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI)</b>	ISSI has been very influential in framing the strategic planning policies during late 1970s and 1980s. This think tank was established to provide rapid evidence for strategic and international relations purposes. This think tank has traditionally supported the conservative right wing of the military establishment and right wing political ideology.	ISSI provides evidence to government on security and regional/international issues. At times, the findings of ISSI research are not taken up by the government for policy making due to political and external factors, for instance, recommendation on “Pak-Iran Gas Pipe Line Issue”	Informal commissioning, i.e. donors approach the institute for research	Human resource deficit Retention of staff due to lack of funds Reliability and accessibility of data
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Apex</b>	No policy partnership or research to policy linkages with the government	Apex does not have a mandate to share the findings of the evaluations it does, with the policy makers	Mostly formal commissioning, i.e. through competitive bidding, however, once the relationship is built, clients approach directly	Non-availability of subject specialists for evaluation Non-availability of qualified researchers
	<b>Management Systems International (MSI)</b>	No policy partnership or research to policy linkages with the government	MSI does not have a mandate to share the findings of the evaluations it does, with the policy makers	Only work with USAID	Security issues in conducting survey in conflict hit areas, such as FATA Non-availability of qualified researchers Non-systematic data procurement procedures

## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

### Mapping of public policy relevant research and evaluation institutions in Pakistan and the political economy of research in Pakistan.

#### Background

1. DFID Pakistan (DFIDP) is set to deliver an ambitious programme over the next four years that will see Pakistan becoming the UK's largest development partner. DFIDP's Operational Plan sets out an innovative approach to supporting Pakistan to address development challenges in education, health, governance, conflict, gender, private sector development and economic growth.
2. As part of this commitment to innovation, DFID Pakistan seeks to ensure that its policies and programmes are based on the best available evidence and understanding. There is already an ambitious evaluation strategy underway that will evaluate 50% of DFID P's programmes by 2014/2015.
3. To facilitate these ambitions, and to strengthen evidence based policy making in Pakistan, DFID P would therefore like to understand the research and evaluation landscape in Pakistan. Pakistan has a significant number of research and evaluation institutions, although the landscape has yet to be fully mapped. DFID's South Asia Research Hub will design, fund and manage this piece of work for DFID Pakistan.
4. The mapping exercise will be an important step to allowing DFID, and other research funders, to identify who the major players are, what the major research priorities are and what research is currently being conducted in the country. The output will help the office to rapidly identify key institutions who could become valuable partners in sharing analysis and research or helping with evaluations. It will also inform thinking on potential future support to strengthen the research capacity in Pakistan.
5. The mapping exercise must focus on institutions that produce policy and practice relevant research and evaluations and should primarily be academic in orientation and outlook. The institutions should either provide research and evaluation to practitioners or policy makers or produce public goods research that specifically targets policy- and practice-relevant education issues. The study could also include organisations with a knowledge translation function.
6. The results of the study will also be a valuable public good for others involved in commissioning, undertaking or using research in Pakistan. We expect the study to be disseminated as widely as possible, including through activities planned under this contract.

7. In addition, to strengthen evidence based policy making in Pakistan, DFID P seeks to understand the possibilities and constraints facing the commissioning, undertaking and uptake of research in Pakistan. This second study will focus on the political economy of research in Pakistan. This will be an important step to allowing DFID, and other research funders, to effectively design and implement policy relevant research programmes.
8. The results of the study will also be a valuable public good for others involved in commissioning, undertaking or using research in Pakistan. We expect the study to be disseminated as widely as possible, including through activities planned under this contract.

### **Objective**

9. The objective of the task is to carry out two distinct studies:
  - 9.1. a mapping exercise that will describe and analyse the policy relevant research landscape in Pakistan;
  - 9.2. an analysis of the political economy of research in Pakistan.
10. The outputs of the mapping exercise will be a narrative report summarizing the main findings of the comprehensive mapping organised by suitable theme (disciplines, geographic areas, research, evaluation etc...) in addition to a comprehensive data set of the list of institutions identified as part of the exercise. The report needs to be tailored to provide not only a description of the education research landscape, but also where the challenges and opportunities lie.
11. The outputs of the political economy analysis will be a narrative report summarizing the main findings, highlighting the major funders of research in Pakistan, the major research areas and actors, the major barriers to conducting and using research.

### **Recipient**

12. The direct recipient of the services will be DFID Pakistan. The report will be developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders who will also benefit from the findings, including the Research Councils UK, the Government of Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, other bilateral donors and others. The consultant will be expected to map potential stakeholders, plan for how to include them in the process of developing the reports and propose ways to disseminate findings widely.

## Scope

### *Mapping Exercise*

13. The mapping will involve identification of key institutions that carry out policy relevant research, including programme evaluations, and analysis in Pakistan in key thematic areas and their main areas of focus. Research mapping is not widely done, so we encourage bidders to look at examples from the Research Councils UK and others ([www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/Offices/OfficeinIndia/landscape/Pages/Arts.aspx](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/Offices/OfficeinIndia/landscape/Pages/Arts.aspx)).
14. Policy relevant research ‘an activity focused on the generation of evidence that can be used to inform public policy and practice’ and that analysis is the “process of reviewing evidence in combination with other factors to identify options for action”. The key thematic areas of interest to DFIDP are:
  - 14.1. Health;
  - 14.2. Nutrition;
  - 14.3. Economics, finance and private sector development;
  - 14.4. Gender, equity and social policy including social protection;
  - 14.5. Governance, politics and political economy;
  - 14.6. Conflict and Peace studies;
  - 14.7. Programme evaluation (recognising that there may be institutions like the Poverty Action Lab in the USA that focus on evaluation as a discipline etc...)
15. From previous experience, we expect some aspects of the mapping exercise to be contentious and therefore will need to be handled with sensitivity. The team should consider the risks of their approach and how to mitigate these.
16. It is expected that a mapping of policy relevant research in Pakistan will provide an overview of the following:
  - 16.1. Map the key institutions or groups undertaking policy relevant research and evaluation in Pakistan as defined in paragraph 14;
  - 16.2. The main areas of focus and strategic priorities (including geographic focus), if any, of these research groups or institutions
  - 16.3. The main sources and distribution of funds for research focussed in education, including how the Government of Pakistan is organised to provide funds to research bodies, the main research councils/funding

bodies, and external sources such as international donors such as the World Bank and foundations such as Gates or Hewlett.

17. The team should consist of an internationally experienced consultant with familiarity with the research landscape and the research to policy processes in Pakistan.
18. The report should be based on different forms of evidence. These would include a desk review of existing reports and information on research in Pakistan and discussions with researchers in Pakistan.
19. For each research group identified, the following should be provided: location and group name; a short paragraph of background information on the groups' overarching research interests; information on why they have been selected as a key group; a web link; contact details (postal and central email addresses). More than one group within the same institution may be referred to, as might more specialised whole academic institutions or units. Personal opinions of the author or unsubstantiated claims made by organisations themselves will not be accepted.
20. The team should also prepare a dissemination strategy for the report, taking account local realities as necessary, to ensure findings are taken up as widely as possible. This might include mapping key stakeholders, making the report available through DFID's research portal, R4D and other activities.
21. A second phase of the project may involve an assessment of their institutional capacity, and an assessment of the quality of the outputs for identified institutions.

### ***Political Economy Analysis***

22. The work will involve developing an appropriate methodology for, and then answering the following questions using a political economy approach:
  - 22.1. How does research get commissioned in Pakistan, including:
    - 22.1.1. An understanding of public, private and international funding bodies how they set their priorities,
    - 22.1.2. Key institutions involved in the research-policy process, including knowledge translation organisations/functions, and how they interact and how research institutions and funders develop their research questions, and whether devolution will have an effect on research funding and activity;
    - 22.1.3. Which areas of research are focused on and which areas are relatively neglected, in terms of disciplines (medical, education, political science) and approaches (e.g. qualitative, quantitative), and why?

- 22.2. What are the major barriers to doing research in Pakistan, including social, political, cultural and economic factors that affect where, why and how research is carried out? This includes an explicit focus on gender, age, ethnic, class/caste and other social factors that affect research. What are the opportunities- where has good quality research been carried out and what factors contributed to this success?
- 22.3. What are the incentives and barriers to effective uptake of research evidence in policy and practice in Pakistan? Are there Government of Pakistan commitments, policies or programmes to improve the use of evidence in policy making? This could include developing case studies and using existing case studies of research to policy to practice processes, identifying what are key factors that contribute to the successful uptake of research and what are key factors that contribute to its failure in Pakistan.

23. Political economy is understood by DFID as:

*the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time*

Political economy analysis can include the following:

- The **interests and incentives** facing different groups in society (and particularly political elites), and how these generate specific outcomes that may encourage or hinder research and its use in decision making;
- The role that **formal institutions (e.g. rule of law, elections) and informal social, political and cultural norms** play in shaping human interaction and political and economic competition in the research sector;.
- The impact of **values and ideas**, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on the commissioning, conduct and dissemination of research.

The research team should consult the DFID paper on political economy analysis for more detail.

24. The service provider will set out clear conceptual framework of the research to policy to practice processes in the Pakistan and subnational contexts, as well as variation by theme (health, education etc...) as appropriate. It is anticipated that this will be based on a definition of research as ‘an activity focused on the generation of evidence’ and that analysis is the process of reviewing evidence in combination with other factors to identify options for action.’
25. The consultant(s) should have a very good understanding of the research and policy landscape in Pakistan and be able to demonstrate that their approach can assure readers that the report is not unduly influenced by the position of the authors within the political economy of research in Pakistan.

26. The team should consider a suitable approach for building consensus around the conceptual framework and their methodology for collecting and analysing relevant information. The team could consider a review of existing literature on research, research uptake and the political economy of research specific to the Pakistan context, undertaking case studies of institutions (ministries, knowledge intermediaries etc...) that are trying to promote the use of research/evidence in decision making to draw out common themes, or consider other approaches to developing an understanding of the questions set out in section 22.
27. The team should also prepare a dissemination strategy for the report, taking account local realities as necessary, to ensure findings are taken up as widely as possible. This might include mapping key stakeholders, making the report available through DFID's research portal, R4D and other activities.
28. The report should be based on different forms of evidence. These would include a desk review of existing reports and information on the political economy of research and interviews with key players in the research to policy to practice processes.

## **Outputs**

### ***Mapping Exercise***

29. A final report with an executive summary and an appropriate database of institutions in Excel should be produced. The main report will be no more than 20 pages long, with a 3 page executive summary, and address all the issues listed in sections 10 and 13. The report will be in the form of a narrative description, and should include:
  - 29.1. Who are the major players in policy relevant research and evaluation in Pakistan;
  - 29.2. Key areas of focus of this research (geographic, thematic, type of research etc...);
  - 29.3. Key funding sources, funding priorities and research priorities;
  - 29.4. An analysis of the challenges and opportunities public policy oriented research and evaluation institutions in Pakistan face.
30. The report should be presented in a way that can be shared widely with relevant partners in Pakistan.

### ***Political Economy Analysis***

31. A final report of not more than 15 pages with an additional 1 page executive summary and appropriate annexes that will cover methodology, lists of people, organisations etc..

consulted and other aspects as appropriate. The report will address all the issues listed in section 22. It should also contain suitable references to case studies developed for this exercise e.g. text boxes, as well as annexes including the full case studies.

32. The report will be in the form of a narrative description, and should draw out the major findings and lessons learned from the exercise, including specific lessons for DFID policy and practice in Pakistan. The team should consider whether two versions of the report will be necessary depending on sensitivity of findings- one for internal circulation only and a second report presented in a way that can be shared widely with relevant partners in Pakistan.
33. The reports should be delivered no later than 3 months after the start of the contract.
34. Payment will be made on successful completion of the final outputs per the milestones below.

### **Reporting**

35. It is expected that the Consultant will maintain close contact with Max Gasteen. After the approval of the proposal from the Consultant in response to the Terms of Reference, a preparatory meeting will be organised at the start of the contract with subsequent review meetings as appropriate

### **Timeframe**

36. The mapping exercise and political economy exercise will commence on 1 September and will be completed 4 months later.

## Annex 2 Methodology

Research in general and policy research in particular could be defined in multiple ways. In this study, by policy research, we mean, ‘any activity focused on the generation of evidence and that analysis is the process of reviewing evidence in combination with other factors to identify the options for action’<sup>87</sup>. Research organizations or groups including academic institutions and think-tanks in the public sector, non-government or private sector are the units of analysis for this study. In order to ensure the quality of the analysis, a Review Committee was formed consisting of three leading policy analysts: Professor Aliya Khan, Chairperson School of Economics, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad; Dr. Khalida Ghaus, Managing Director, Social Policy Development Centre, Karachi; and Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad. The Review Committee guided the study team in the identification of the key organizations and is currently reviewing the main outputs of the study. Dr. Tanveer Naim, ex-HEC and Secretary, Commission for Science and Technology, joined the review team.

Data was collected during September – December 2012 and the process began with the development of lists of the organizations engaged in research under selected themes including education. Several sources were deployed in the development of these lists including study team’s own experience of policy research in Pakistan, consultation with experts, and tracing organizations through key documents and research outputs. These thematic lists were then shared with the Review Committee and colleagues at DFID Head Office and in Pakistan country office and updated subsequently based on their feedback. These lists nonetheless remained open throughout the study and as we proceeded for detailed information gathering, we kept including more organizations on the basis suggestions from the already identified organizations.

Based on these thematic lists, further data was collected through two pronged strategy: a) a detailed review of the websites of the organizations; and, b) semi-structured interviews with the heads (or second tier-leadership) of these organizations. An interview schedule was developed and employed to collect data through interviews with senior management of the selected organizations. The interview schedule covered following aspects: thematic and sub-thematic focus of research; methodological and geographic focus of research; institutional capacity in terms of staff; research-advocacy mix; major projects and publications; funding sources; process of accessing funds; barriers to conducting policy research; and, contribution to policies. The study team had interviews with senior management of majority of the organizations listed in the paper in some cases where interviews were not feasible due to various reasons, information was gathered through websites.

In order to highlight the untapped research potential of the institutes of higher education, basic information about the education faculties at various universities was gathered through their websites.

Identification of the significant actors amongst all the organizations we studied remained a challenging task. The criteria which informed our selection includes: institutional capacity in terms of research staff; quantity of the research and policy analysis outputs in terms of publications in various formats; positioning of the organization in the historical milieu of policy research; and, the focus on policy advocacy.

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<sup>87</sup> As provided in the TORs in the annex

This mapping exercise is not a ranking exercise in any sense. It is neither a rigorous assessment of the capacity of these organizations, nor a judgement of the quality of their research and analysis. Given the limited time in which this study was conducted, it remains merely a mapping exercise describing who is doing what.

### Annex 3: List of organizations visited for detailed data collection

No.	List of Organizations Visited
1.	Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), Islamabad
2.	Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Islamabad
3.	Aga Khan University (AKU)
4.	Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational development (AKU-IED), Karachi
5.	Ali Institute of Education Lahore
6.	APEX Consulting, Islamabad
7.	Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC)
8.	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
9.	Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)
10.	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
11.	Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP)
12.	Centre for Peace & Development Initiatives (CPDI)
13.	Centre for Public Policy and Governance, Forman Christian College Chartered University (CPG-FCCU)
14.	Centre for Research in Economics and Business at Lahore School of Economics (CREB-LSE)
15.	Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS)
16.	Collective for Social Science Research (CSSR)
17.	Council of Social Sciences (COSS)
18.	Department for International Development (DFID)
19.	Development Policy Research Centre-Lahore University of Management Sciences (DPRC-LUMS)
20.	Directorate of staff development Lahore (DSD)
21.	Economic Department-Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)
22.	Foundation Open Society Institute (FOSI)
23.	Gender Studies Center, Quaid-e-Azam University
24.	Health Services Academy (HSA)
25.	Heart File
26.	Higher Education Commission (HEC)
27.	Idarah e Taleem o Aagahi (ITA)
28.	Innovative Development Strategies (IDS)
29.	Institute of education and research (University of Peshawar)
30.	Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)
31.	Institute of Public Policy, Beacon house National University (IPP-BNU)
32.	Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)
33.	Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS)
34.	Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI)
35.	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
36.	International Growth Center-Pakistan (IGC-Pak)
37.	International Institute of Islamic Economics, Islamic International University Islamabad (IIIE-IIUI)
38.	Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)
39.	Jinnah Institute
40.	Karachi University- Political Science Department (KU)
41.	Management Systems International (MSI)
42.	Mehboob ul Haq Human Development Centre (MHHDC)

43.	Ministry of Commerce
44.	Ministry of Finance
45.	Ministry of Food Security and Research
46.	Ministry of Human Rights
47.	National Agricultural Research Center (NARC)
48.	National commission for human development (NCHD)
49.	National Institute of Population Sciences (NIPS)
50.	National Research & Development Foundation (NRDF)
51.	Oxford Policy Management (OPM)
52.	P&D Department KPK
53.	P&D Department Punjab
54.	Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC)
55.	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)
56.	Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and transparency (PILDAT)
57.	Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS)
58.	Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD)
59.	Pakistan Medical Research Council (PMRC)
60.	Planning Commission
61.	Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)
62.	Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit–Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme (PMIU-PESRP)
63.	PRSP Secretariate
64.	Punjab Education Assessment System (PEAS) Lahore
65.	Punjab Education Foundation Lahore (PEF)
66.	Punjab Examination Commission-Lahore (PEC)
67.	Punjab Textbook Board Lahore
68.	Research & Advocacy Fund (RAF)
69.	Research and Development Solutions (RADS)
70.	Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN)
71.	School Education Department Lahore (SED)
72.	School of Economics-Quaid-i-Azam University
73.	Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)
74.	Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)
75.	South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI)
76.	State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)
77.	Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)
78.	Teachers Education Project- United states Agency for International Development (TEP-USAID)
79.	Text Book board Peshawar
80.	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
81.	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
82.	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
83.	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
84.	University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF)
85.	Pir Mehr Ali Shah University of Arid Agriculture (UoAA)
86.	University of Education Lahore
87.	University of Peshawar - Political Science Department
88.	World Bank (WB)

## Annex 4: List of Acronyms

No	Acronyms	Meaning
1.	AEPAM	Academy for Educational Planning and Management
2.	AERC	Applied Economics Research Center
3.	AIE	Ali Institute of Education Lahore
4.	AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
5.	AKU	Aga Khan University
6.	APEX	APEX Consulting
7.	CERP	Center for Economic Research in Pakistan
8.	COSS	Council of Social Sciences
9.	CPDI	Center for Peace & Development Initiatives
10.	CPPG-FCCU	Center for Public Policy and Governance
11.	CREB-LSE	Center for Research in Economics and Business at Lahore School of Economics
12.	CRSS	Centre for research and Security Studies
13.	CSSR	Collective for Social Science Research
14.	DPRC-LUMS	Development Policy Research Center at Lahore University of Management Sciences
15.	DSD	Directorate of staff development
16.	ECON DEPT-LUMS	Economic Department at Lahore University of Management Sciences
17.	GSC-QUA	Gender Studies Center, Quaid e Azam University
18.	HAS	Health Services Academy
19.	IDEAS	Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives
20.	IDS	Innovative Development Strategies
21.	IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
22.	IGC	International Growth Center
23.	IIIE-IIUI	International Institute of Islamic Economics, International Islamic University Islamabad
24.	IPP-BNU	Institute of Public Policy, Beacon house National University
25.	IPRI	Islamabad Policy Research Institute
26.	IPS	Institute of Policy Studies
27.	IRS	Institute of Regional Studies
28.	I-SAPS	Institute of Social and Policy Sciences
29.	ISSI	Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad
30.	ITA	Idarah e Taleem o Aagahi
31.	MHHDC	Mehboob ul Haq Human Development Centre
32.	MSI	Management Systems International
33.	NARC	National Agricultural Research Center
34.	NIPS	National Institute of Population Sciences
35.	NRDF	National Research & Development Foundation
36.	OPM	Oxford Policy Management
37.	PEAS	Punjab Education Assessment System
38.	PEC	Punjab Examination Commission
39.	PEF	Punjab Education Foundation
40.	PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
41.	PILDAT	Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and transparency
42.	PIPS	Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies
43.	PITAD	Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development
44.	PMIU-PESRP	Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit –Punjab Education sector Reform Programm
45.	PSD-KU	Political Science Department- Karachi University
46.	PTB	Punjab Textbook Board Lahore

47.	RADS	Research and Development Solutions
48.	RSPN	Rural Support Programme Network
49.	SAHE	Society for the Advancement of Education
50.	SASSI	South Asian Strategic Stability Institute
51.	SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
52.	SED	School Education Department Lahore
53.	SPDC	Social Policy and Development Centre
54.	SPERP-UOE	Society for Promotion of Educational Research in Pakistan-University of Education
55.	TEP-USAID	Teachers Education Project- United states Agency for International Development
56.	UAF	University of Agriculture Faisalabad
57.	UOAA	University of Arid Agriculture