Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

Spirit of
Free Inquiry

1987

Islamabad

Developing Research and a Research Culture: Results from a Pilot Project in Pakistan

Nadeem Ul Haque
David Orden

Developing Research and a Research Culture: Results from a Pilot Project in Pakistan

Nadeem Ul Haque

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.

and

David Orden

Institute for Society, Culture and Environment, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA.

PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS
ISLAMABAD
2020

C O N T E N T S

List of Tables

List of Figure

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that successful public policy requires engaged research developing ideas and evidence from diverse vantage points. Pakistan's social science research remains fragmented, under-resourced and dependent on external agendas. We describe a five-year pilot programme to enhance Pakistan's research culture. Seventy-two crowd-sourced and competitively-selected projects at 46 geographically dispersed institutions were supported. Provincial universities were empowered and networking with the better-placed metropolitan institutions proved mutually beneficial to scholarship. Substantial research outputs were completed in important areas of policy. We conclude that such multi-year commitments to review and network engagement are vital to strengthening policy capacity.

Keywords: Pakistan; Research Community; Social Sciences; Networking; Competitive Grants

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource capacity building has been a central issue in development for decades. Numerous donor agencies have devoted large sums of money to institutions of higher education, scholarships, technical assistance training, and creation of NGOs and on-ground projects. Years later problems persist and the primary response donor-funded policy circles have has been more of the same. Yet in countries like Pakistan, well-trained university professors are short in supply, policy oriented research is undertaken mainly by donors, and government supplies little research-based information on important socio-economic problems.

This paper examines the research culture and environment in Pakistan to assess some of its limitations and why there is little indigenous economic and other social science research being undertaken to affect public policy. We depict the interface of ideas, research and policymaking that characterise well-developed networked systems. We then report on a five-year pilot competitive grants programme conducted with some success to stimulate social science research and debate across Pakistan, and draw some implications from this experiment. The objective of this pilot programme was to build a network to stimulate internally defined and produced policy-relevant research within a context of crowd-sourced ideas, competitive project selection, extended discussion among researchers, and intensive peer review.

Among the concerns that arise in Pakistan and similar contexts is that despite substantial donor investment in higher education essential government positions do not draw applications of requisite quality. Positions such as Chief Economist at the Planning Commission have sometimes remained unfilled for many years despite repeated announcements. Key public agencies such as regulatory bodies and public sector enterprises continue to remain in search of skilled staff. Pakistan now has 180 universities compared to just one when it gained independence. Yet in few cases is there a sufficient cadre of experienced full professors to provide needed leadership. Policy for building up universities has concentrated on dispensing land grants and construction of new facilities, but once built they rely mainly on a young inexperienced faculty and part-time teachers with a variety of qualifications.

Dependence on donors for project development and policy change has raised several additional concerns. To an extent this system has suited post-independence governments that mostly desired to bypass domestic policy assessments. The policy

mindset in Pakistan and other recipient countries has been preoccupied with looking for aid rather than nurturing domestic processes to unlock productivity and growth. The result is that fiscal and balance of payments difficulties have persisted over the years, reinforcing the mindset of looking for more external assistance. Both dictators and democratic leaders have as a result become increasingly reliant on the policies and conditionality that comes with aid. Evaluation of policy implementation is often done by donors in support of their own programmes—an obvious moral hazard.

The dependence on externally developed policies has made the relationship between the government and domestic thinkers and the social science research community tenuous in Pakistan. Announced policies and projects are frequently treated with surprise and suspicion which often turn into hostile debate between government and civil society. A case in point is the ongoing project on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—an initiative of the One Belt One Road policy of China—that was launched three years ago. Even today, as Pakistan opinion writers seek details to understand the project, the government reaction is often one of hostility (Husain, 2017a, b; Kardar, 2017). Universities and think tanks have undertaken little research on the subject. This lack of information leads to speculation which in turn invites government acrimony and ultimately affects the implementation process and weakens possible benefits to society.

Experience has shown that effective policy must be both based on detailed and reliable evidence while also being widely understood and owned. The experience of development in other countries suggests social science and public policy research in universities, think tanks and other institutions is fully engaged throughout the policy process (Fischer et al. 2007). This makes for a better investigation of issues, a clearer determination of policy responses, and finally a wider ownership of the changes required in implementation. In poor countries like Pakistan, the social science and public policy research community is seldom engaged in developing either evidence or debate over policy issues. Instead, donor-funded consultants conduct policy research and play the role of policy advisers. The focus is on international best practice regardless of local context and cultural variations. This is often not enough for constructive policy development.

Policymaking and implementation in Pakistan would be improved if its own universities and social science research were engaged in all stages.

2. THE RESEARCH SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

The research system in Pakistan is comprised of universities, some government sponsored institutes, and a number of donor-funded, and some less-well-resourced domestic, NGOs and institutes. Researchers in the universities and government sponsored institutes are poorly paid and have hardly any research funding. The best of those in metropolitan areas are employed on a regular basis to work on agendas provided by aid agencies, while longer-term funding is lacking. Srivastava (2013) characterises this as a situation where research in Pakistan fails to serve society at large.

Policy to promote university education and research has most recently been developed by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC). Founded in 2001, the HEC has undertaken a significant effort to build universities and academic programmes in the country. A rapid expansion of university campuses has been undertaken with land grants and facilities provided by the government—a huge emphasis

on 'bricks and mortar.' What remains lacking, however, is a strong cadre of professors and teaching staff. The Lahore University of Management Sciences, one of Pakistan's best universities, has only about 15 full professors on its faculty. Other universities have even less than this number. Most universities are relying on part-time staff or relatively young faculty freshly returned from a scholarship education overseas or graduated from a Pakistani university. Research networking, mentoring and outreach are lacking. A snapshot of the characteristics of Pakistan's universities is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Pakistan's Universities—A Snapshot

Ranking in the world	Best university in Pakistan ranked at 500+ on various reputable global rankings
Number of full professors	A major problem of Pakistani universities remains the lack of reputable, internationally-established professors engaged in research
Research	Limited independent research agendas or funding available; little funding for long-term efforts; best faculty involved in donor consulting
Teaching	Mostly through adjunct or part-time staff or junior staff and graduate students
Working papers	Only a few departments show working papers on their websites
Seminars and conferences	Few departments hosts regular seminar series; public events few and far between with limited academic content
Policy ideas associated with universities	Few are known for policy research or advocacy
Specialised centers	Mostly funded by donors
Professional associations	Few and limited activities; dependent on donor funding

To stimulate research, HEC has employed quantitative measures—essentially, number of papers produced—for promotions in universities.[1] While these have increased as intended the volume of papers, it has also resulted in gaming of the system by compromising on quality and has revealed a fair amount of plagiarism.[2] Original research and research leaders remain in short supply while few universities are becoming research centres or generating clear theses, hypotheses or debates. Largely they remain teaching-oriented. Pakistani universities have not yet attained a placement in the top 500 universities of the world in reputable general rankings.[3] Other research institutions remain similarly globally uncompetitive.

---

[1]This approach is based on the old ideas of Taylorism (Taylor, 1903), which Derksen (2014) describes as a mechanistic science largely devoid of human psychology and humanism.

[2]The HEC was recently forced to take note of the plagiarism, false refereeing and other means for quick publications that have developed and even to close down some Ph.D. programmes.

[3]We refer to two well-known rankings: Times Higher Education rankings https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings and U.S. News and World Report https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/search?country=pakistan. There are other niche rankings that are sometimes used in Pakistan to make quality of institution claims but they do not provide as wide a scope as these two well-known sources.

2.1. Sources of the Problem

Leading thinkers have debated the issue of what inhibits research in Pakistan for a number of years. Broadly, the themes that emerge from this discussion include the following:[4]

(1) Universities are seen essentially as teaching institutions only.

(2) The governing bodies of universities are dominated by government officials and politicians, with few intellectuals or educationists included.

(3) Private universities are oriented to profit from student enrolments and see research as a luxury.

(4) Most of the public-sector universities have rules of hiring similar to government departments, with limited flexibility in terms of incentives they can offer.

(5) Joint appointments are not possible making it difficult to hire diaspora professors who are doing well.

(6) Universities are also run like government departments—centralised and bureaucratic. Professors and departments having little autonomy makes innovation and improvisation difficult.

(7) While research may be an individual effort, it is always a part of a larger dynamic and requires considerable interaction. In Pakistan, researchers with scant funding have few means for developing their disciplinary conversations. With little or no funding available, professional associations and networks are few and far between.[5] Without such networks, research camaraderie is not developed, creativity of the research enterprise is stymied, and peer review and assessment is difficult. Policing of professional standards declines and people distinguish themselves not through discourse but by closeness to people in power or donor funding. Ideas and research quality suffer. Teaching also suffers from not being research-based.

(8) While several generations of students have been sent overseas on Ph.D. scholarships this has not achieved well-staffed departments in Pakistan. Among the reasons are that completion of the advanced degree has been treated as a culmination, not recognising that this is merely an entry into a profession. Candidates chose, and the hosting supervisors and universities offered, an easy approach as it was not expected that the candidates would become a part of the host-country professorial system.

(9) The university system in Pakistan does not favour 'enfant terribles' as in more advanced well-established systems. The promotion criteria have not made room for exceptional performance and quality of research and research leadership. There is little competition among universities for talent or to develop a reputation for some area or innovation.

---

[4]See, *inter alia*, Hoodbhoy (2009), Haque (2005, 2013, 2015), Naveed (2013), Usman (2014), and Naveed and Suleri (2015) for an idea of how this debate has evolved.

[5] The main exception is the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), established in 1984, with its journal the *Pakistan Development Review*.

(10) New PhDs are most productive in vibrant clusters around research leaders. Without renewal of research, knowledge of university professors depreciates while the subject in advanced centres moves forward. The best faculty leave the country. Hence, students from Pakistan when they go abroad often complain of how distant they are from the global knowledge pool, perpetuating a vicious cycle. In this milieu, research is never likely to be at the cutting edge.

Not surprisingly, under these circumstances social science research has played little role in public policy in Pakistan. There are few policy debates or local theses or hypotheses being discussed. There is little demand for public policy research by policymakers as evidenced by the lack of funding for such work. Policymakers rely on donors to provide them with ideas and research. While donors are collectively seeking broad development of the country, individually they pursue areas that are in line with their lending needs or priorities determined by their own governments. The system of research funding that prevails has inadvertently led to some glaring gaps in the country's policy research agenda. Funding for research has been directed toward certain important topics, including agriculture, poverty, social indicators, social safety nets, MDGs, regional trade, and project related sector-specific work. Equally important areas such as institutional and governance deficits and reform, law and economics, energy policy, challenges of growing urbanisation, and entrepreneurship and innovation have neither been adequately researched nor debated.

Despite these limitations, Pakistan like many other developing countries has produced innovative thinkers and writers who have provided ideas and research of value. Mahbub ul Haq was perhaps Pakistan's best-known economist. He developed a thesis on basic needs which he took to the international arena when he joined the World Bank (Haq, 1976), and later the famous Human Development Index of the United Nations. Significant other scholars have followed though none has attained the stature of Haq. Given the size of Pakistan (by population the 5th largest country in the world) the numbers of researchers and scholars are not large enough and its research communities are unable to offer a deep body of analysis on key subjects. There is a corresponding lack of public intellectuals to contribute to policy debate and development.

Without research and thought leaders, it is hard for the public to distinguish between evidence, informed opinions and mere proselytising.

3. IS RESEARCH NECESSARY FOR GOOD POLICY?

Evidence from around the world has shown that successful economic and social reform efforts have been locally owned and implemented often through local ingenuity and problem solving (Dunning et al., 2017). Moreover, as Easterly (2006) has argued, development problems are complex and diverse often requiring investigation of local circumstances where the best information is held by those involved. This requires moving away from 'top-down' approaches to policy making where donors and, in the Pakistan case, policy elite in Islamabad, Lahore or Karachi think that only they have both the knowledge and expertise to solve the problems of a large and divergent country. In this long-running debate, Haque (2017) recently revives the argument for 'bottom-up' locally driven solutions leading to better policies when the central government watches these

locally developing solutions and nudges them only when monitoring and evaluation through research clearly shows a need.

From a positive perspective, public policy literature suggests that there is a process of the sort encapsulated in Figure 1. Ideas for policy and reform are developed in different areas of society but most often in the research complex. This complex will not only provide fresh ideas, it will examine, on the basis of systematic evidence gathering and analysis, new policy proposals as well as policies that are in place. Academia should be the best laboratory for developing policy and reform ideas and then keeping them under review and continuous evaluation.

Fig. 1. Research and Policy
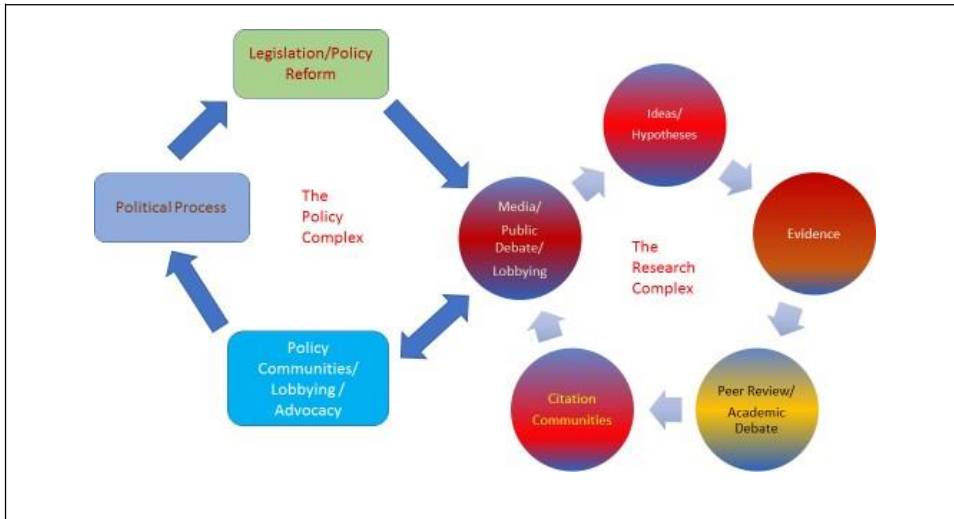
The academic filter operates well when there is vigorous peer review and debate which leads to articulated analytic theses, hypotheses and in-depth analysis. There are well-known vehicles for developing a continuous research conversation that will allow carefully crafted and well-honed ideas to emerge. Research funding, followed by grants competition, seminars, conferences and ultimately peer review and the resulting publications are the fora for this conversation.

From this process, key theses and ideas, citation communities and public intellectuals emerge that can feed into the media and the public dialogue. A point to note is that popular debate as well as policymakers are informed by academic assessments and evaluations. Over time, well-cited ideas will be debated more widely to be picked up first by advocacy and lobbying groups. When they reach wide ownership, the political process will recognise the advantage of taking up such ideas for policy action. Ownership in this case means there must be local leadership and understanding of visions and ideas for policy change. But for this leadership and understanding to develop, there must be local debate as well as some form of crowd- sourcing or bottom-up development of policy and reform.

Analysts and commentators in Pakistan where this process is stymied lament the lack of effective policy formulation and implementation. With research underfunded and

scattered, academic debate remains sporadic and citations few. It seems that good policy making requires a dense research complex with vibrant debates and citation communities to inform policy and create ownership for change. In a Pakistani context, Naveed and Suleri (2015) highlight the need for community and autonomy in research and emphasise that "external donors need to move away from the tradition of funding short-term projects with narrowly defined agendas towards long-term research programmes respecting the autonomy of research providers and encouraging them to develop linkages."

4. A PILOT NETWORK: THE PAKISTAN RESEARCH COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAMME (CGP)

Recognising the concerns described above, we engaged in a five-year opportunity during 2011-2016 to establish a pilot programme for economic and other social science research that has mostly been lacking in Pakistan. Starting from our perceptions of the way advanced research systems operate, we sought to explore how a process to invigorate the nascent research community could be set in motion and be better linked to public debate and policy.

The resulting programme went under the title of the research Competitive Grants Programme (CGP), which was established under the auspices of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. In this context, we endeavoured to emulate the important dimensions of scholarly knowledge- building networks as they have developed elsewhere. In particular, facing the prevailing limited supply capacity and lack of public or private-sector demand for policy-oriented social science research in Pakistan our experiment was to create a network for developing local research over the widest possible space, to arrange debates within this network, and in doing so to crowd source policy agendas and build academic policy leadership.

Launched under the government of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the opportunity to undertake this initiative arose through the enhanced civilian governance support provided to Pakistan by the United States through the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act (U.S. Congress, 2009). The CGP was part of a larger USAID-supported Pakistan Strategy Support Programme (PSSP) under the Planning Commission.[6] Initial PSSP plans called for most of the research capacity-building to be through training a limited number of Pakistani graduate students abroad, with a much smaller budget for research and travel grants for faculty already located at Pakistani universities. The CGP turned this traditional funding plan on its head. Under its design, the preponderance of grant funding went to existing faculty members in order to create networking activities and a greater body of scholarship projects at Pakistani institutions. Substantial discussion went into convincing the involved agencies that this more diverse networking approach would be a better means of developing Pakistan's research capacity. To its credit, USAID eventually endorsed this shift of emphasis. Subsequently, an indicator of the internal recognition the CGP received as a way to fostered innovation within policy-oriented research was its continuation under the government of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) elected in September 2013.

---

[6] The international agency through which the PSSP was funded was the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). A five-year budget of approximately $3 million was available for the capacity building component of the PSSP which became the CGP.

In its overall design, the CGP was to engage and empower members of the teaching and research faculty at Pakistani academic and research institutions to provide independent, policy-relevant studies that would bring specificity and analysis to the development objectives and strategies articulated in broad terms by the Planning Commission. The design was that within these broad themes around which research would be solicited, the choice of topics and research design were left to the individual researcher in keeping with the philosophy of a bottom-up research agenda. The themes were broad enough to allow for large individual initiative.

In a country where academic systems are nascent and subject to bureaucratic capture, and where policy-oriented academic endeavours have been fledgling, we also wanted to ensure that the CGP had an open and transparent process with as little bureaucracy-based involvement as possible. A steering group comprised of 15 prominent Pakistani and international scholars formed the programme's Research Advisory Committee (RAC, 2016). The RAC was the independent planning and decision-making body for strategic decisions about the CGP, while a small external secretariat managed the programme's operation.

4.1. Diversity of Participants

The design of the CGP was to include all geographic areas of Pakistan for two reasons. First, the RAC believed that local questions and local knowledge would best come out of the diverse communities through inquisitive researchers. This would run directly against the prevalent situation where a small group of those sitting in metropolitan centres and the federal capital presumed they know what is best for distant locations. Second, we also intended to crowd source a research and policy agenda and not impose it according to the presumptions of the programme designers. To understand a large country's problems and needs this bottom-up approach was preferred to the usual top-down.

An early learning experience demonstrated the risks associated with the planned diverse participation. A reasonable number of applications from outside of the major cosmopolitan centres were received for the first round of award selections. Initial reviews were divided among RAC members, each of whom recommended a top-ranked group for additional consideration.

With this uncoordinated, merit-based selection process, nearly all of the non-major metropolitan projects disappeared from the pool under review. This led the RAC to adopt a differentiated selection process, with selections remaining competitive among the subsets of applicants. A few international proposals would be considered and vetted at an international level. The preponderance of proposals would be divided into two domestic groups: those from metropolitan centres or the better universities would be reviewed to higher standards than those coming from backward regions. We were clear we wanted to include participants from the lesser universities with wide geographic dispersion and were prepared to spend resources to build their capacity as necessary. The payoff would be that participants from backward regions might have more knowledge of those areas and might have research questions of local concern, with the expectation that expertise they developed would remain in the region on a longer-term basis.

Open peer review and networking came together in the CGP in the manner in which proposals were selected and vetted and projects subsequently mentored through dialogue and review. The RAC devoting substantial effort to its multi-step award selection process and to discussion in public forums of the reports prepared by the funded projects. Under three annual calls for proposals, from January 2012 through June 2014, the CGP received over 700 applications, as shown in Table 2. Through its competitive section process, the programme made 72 awards averaging $22,000 per project. Thirteen of the awards had female principal investigators. A modal target for the CGP grants was young Pakistani researchers at the assistant and early associate professor levels who would be enabled to build on their Ph.D. training instead of lapsing into a research-deficient environment. With only the top 10 percent of applications selected for funding, the programme was highly-competitive from the perspective of those submitting proposals. Nevertheless, interest and application numbers grew markedly after the first two rounds of awards.

Table 2

CGP Applications, Reviews and Awards

Call for Applications	Proposals Submitted	Second Stage Evaluation	Invited for Oral Presentation	Awards Offered	Projects Initiated
Round 1 (May 2012)	187	50	29	22	18
Round 2 (Feb. 2013)	190	55	33	20	19
Round 3 (June 2014)	323	80	42	35	35
Total	700	185	104	77	72

It was important to the design of the CGP that its reach extended beyond the applicants who were selected for projects. For each round, the multi-step review and selection process involved ten or more RAC members and was completed within a three-month period. Through these reviews, the CGP network incorporated all applicants in a learning and interaction process. Each of the submissions was assigned an overall initial score which was conveyed back to unsuccessful applicants to provide feedback on their proposals. The highest-ranked proposals, 185 in total, were nominated for additional scoring, with written evaluations of these proposals prepared by two RAC members. Subsequently, the RAC met for review of the evaluations and over the three award rounds selected 104 proposals to invite for oral presentation. Final selection for funding was based on the written proposals and oral performance from these short-lists, resulting in 77 offers of awards and the final 72 projects undertaken.

Table 3 summarises the institutions that received awards and their provincial locations.[7] Within its tiered competitive framework, the RAC sought to provide research support across a wide range of institutions by academic ranking, location, size, and subject focus. Awards were granted to investigators at 46 institutions. The subset of international awards provided partial funding of the research of six Pakistani Ph.D. students and three Pakistani professors abroad.

---

[7] In contrast Naveed (2013) shows that policy research remains concentrated in donor funded organisations in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. He also shows that this research is predominantly conducted mainly by international NGOs and consulting firms. Local universities, especially the smaller ones, play little role.

Table 3

Institutions of CGP Awardees

Institution	Round 1 (May 2012)	Round 2 (Feb 2013)	Round 3 (June 2014)
Punjab (24 Institutions, 40 Awards)			
Allama Iqbal Open University			1
Center for Policy Management		1	
College of Veterinary and Agricultural Science, Jhang	1		
Competition Commission of Pakistan		1	
COMSATS, Islamabad			1
COMSATS, Lahore			2
Fatima Jinnah Women University			1
Forman Christian College (FCC)	1	1	
Gift University, Gujranwala			1
Governance Institute Network International (GINI)	1		1
International Islamic University			1
Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)		1	2
National University of Computer and Engineering Sciences			1
National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)			1
Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC)		1	
Pakistan Institute for Env-Dev Action Research (PIEDAR)		1	
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)		1	3
Planning Commission			1
Quaid-i-Azam University		1	
Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)	1		
Synergistic Financial Advisors		1	1
University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF)	3	1	4
University of Central Punjab	1		
University of Gujrat	1		
Sindh (5 Institutions, 9 Awards)			
Applied Econ Research Centre, Karachi University (AERC)	1	1	1
Bahria University, Karachi			1
Institute of Business Administration, Karachi		1	2
Iqra University, Karachi			1
Mehran University of Engineering and Technology			1
Other Pakistan (8 Institutions, 12 Awards)			
Abdul Wali Khan University			1
Islamia University, Bahawalpur			1
Lasbella University	1		
University of Agriculture, Peshawar	1	1	1
University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir			1
University of Malakand		1	
University of Peshawar	1	1	
University of Swat	1		1
International (9 Institutions, 11 Awards)			
American University	1		
Embassy of Pakistan, Kazakhstan			1
George Mason University	1		
Georgia State University		1	
University of British Columbia			1
University of California, Riverside	1		1
University of Cambridge		1	
University of Illinois, Chicago		1	
University of Oxford	1	1	
Total (46 Institutions, 72 Awards)	18	19	35

4.2. Breadth of Research Topics

The breadth of research called for and supported by the CGP reflects the multiple dimensions of economic and social development necessary to raise incomes and achieve modernisation in Pakistan. The first two award rounds (June 2012 and February 2013) were organised around themes of the *Framework for Economic Growth* (2011), the planning document of the PPP government (2011-2013). The third round (June 2014) was organised around themes of *Pakistan 2025* (2014) adopted by the PML-N government. These two planning agendas highlighted similar broad themes centred on promoting growth by achieving improved governance and ensuring the competitiveness and vitality of markets. Themes of the former included governance, vibrant market, creative cities and regions, and strengthened youth and communities. Themes of the latter included institutional and governance reforms, indigenous resource mobilisation and value addition, improved competitiveness, private-sector-led growth, modernisation of infrastructure, and development of social capital. The key aspect of the CGP design, to reiterate, was that within these thematic areas broadly defined, the research project ideas, which together would begin to constitute a crowd-sourced national research agenda, would percolate up from the applications.

The distribution of the awarded projects by topics is summarised in Table 4. The largest number of projects fall under the topic of vibrant markets, including a focus on value addition in the agricultural sector as well as studies of diverse other sectors. Improved governance and monetary and fiscal policies were the focus of quite a few of the projects, with smaller numbers in the areas of urban and regional development, energy and water. With the funded projects selected through the bottom-up process, topics included both national and local focus. Among the innovative topics were studies of religious shrines and literacy in Punjab, social repair after disaster in northern Pakistan, smuggling in Pakistan-Afghanistan trade, assessment of public transportation investments in Lahore, design of open public urban spaces for female adolescents, skill gaps and educational needs in the Gujrat-Sialkot-Gurjanwala industrial cluster, the

Table 4

Summary of CGP Projects by Topic

Topic	Projects	Topic	Projects
Monetary and fiscal policy	**10**	Urban and regional development	**5**
Assessment of public investment	5		
Macroeconomic data	3	Vibrant markets	**32**
Tax policy	2	Entrepreneurship	4
		Financial markets	2
Improved governance	**15**	International trade	2
Institutional context	3	Labour markets	5
Project evaluations	12	Management	6
Disaster relief	2	Value added in agriculture	13
Education and health	7		
Public service administration	2	Energy supply and demand	**4**
Transportation	1	Water systems and utilisation	**6**

Batkhela bazar as a catalyst for regional socio-economic change, safety of milk for human consumption in Jhang City, medicinal plants as a source of rural income, and many others (see RAC (2106) for a complete list of the awarded projects). This breadth of coverage added substantially to the scope of typically-funded research reported by Naveed (2013).

4.3. Networking, Review and Research Outputs

To build greater connections between researchers and evolve professional and research networks, the CGP set up a rolling process for each project where all three stages—proposal (as described above), interim draft report, and final report and its revision—had an open review and researchers participated in an interactive manner. All of the interim reports from projects, and many of the final reports, were presented orally. This strengthened network linkages, knowledge of each other's work, and presentation skills. In addition, it allowed for a debate and citation culture to develop. In total, five national conferences and numerous smaller workshops and seminars were held. At a typical conference, one group would be presenting proposals and other groups would be presenting project reports.

Under RAC guidance the interim and final reports were also subject to written reviews. The approach chosen was to solicit external reviews that would provide specialised feedback on each project. The external reviews would complement internal reviews, for which consistency and continuity would be provided by the CGP secretariat. Thus, a process of internal and reviews and guidance to the projects was undertaken. More than 50 external reviewers participated in the programme (RAC, 2016).

Over the five years of its operation, a number of lessons were learned about making the CGP's review process, networking and build up of the research community effective. Although articulated as one-year efforts, the projects generally took 18-30 months for completion. The length to completion reflected the intensity of the networking interactive process. Participants undertook initial work on the projects over a period of 6-9 months, then open public conferences were held for oral presentations of the interim reports. Written interim reports were either returned to awardees (about 20 percent) for revision or sent to external reviewers. The externally-reviewed interim reports were not revised; instead the reviews contributed to development of the final reports, which the participants anticipated being re-examined by the same reviewers. Work proceeded on draft final reports for an additional 6-9 months. These draft reports were also pre-reviewed and either returned for further development or sent to the external reviewer, mostly for re-examination as planned. The final steps involved revision of the draft final report in response to the review comments. The objective was to finalise the report as a working paper or academic journal submission, a process that involved additional review and revision iterations. In terms of project administration and fiduciary accountability, final project payments were made upon acceptance of the final reports.

The ultimate purpose of this extensive review process was to build research community capacity by placing emphasis on the completion from the funded projects of papers that entered the public domain and thus could contribute to policy debate. With a strong review process for the applications and adequate networking in the project selection phase, many of the initially- proposed ideas turned into good research projects.

With additional commitment to project reviews and further networking, much more was possible. Participants demonstrated sustained determination in seeing their projects through that was somewhat beyond our initial expectations. Only five of the 72 projects were terminated without completion—lower than we had anticipated given the purposefully diverse participation. While it may be hard to separate from the financial incentive for project completion, many participants indicated they strongly valued their engagement in the review and rewriting process and completion of published output in their own right. Review and revision interactions often extended well beyond issuance of final project payments.

An overall indication of the success of the CGP is that by the time of its closure, the projects had resulted in publication of 19 peer-reviewed academic journal articles and circulation of 23 working papers meeting the standard for website posting. Five Ph.D. dissertations at international universities had been competed along with a larger number of master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations funded by the projects at Pakistani universities.[8] Synopses of four illustrative projects are presented in Table 5 and the full set of outputs are given in RAC (2016).

Effectiveness of the CGP's networking, engagement and review approach is evident in the outcomes from the first round of awards. The 18 projects resulted in nine academic journal articles and 12 working papers. The second round was moving toward a similar level of success, with four articles and eight working papers completed when the CGP came to closure in mid- 2016. The closure constraint is further evident for the third round. As of November 2016, the third round had resulted in fewer published outputs. In part this simply reflects the length of time needed for project completions, but it also is suggestive of the benefit of the interactive review process and associated research network building that was entailed in the longer periods of the first two rounds.

5. LESSONS FROM THE CGP

This paper has examined the limitations facing economic and other social science research in Pakistan and described a five-year pilot programme undertaken to further develop research and a research culture to contribute to public policy. Learning from the flexible structures that underpin research in advanced systems, and to counter the rigidity of some previous attempts to establish research institutes in Pakistan, we sought a flexible networking approach. The CGP deliberately did not have its own core staff or fixed-location activity in Pakistan. Instead, we developed an adaptive approach to build a flexible research network across universities, institutes and NGOs in all regions that would grow knowledge and eventually foster a broader research community. The process was designed to crowd source agendas and questions and use peer review and active debate to develop quality and research citation and policy communities. In our view such networks and their conversation are critical to the long-term development of research capacity and human capital in Pakistan.

---

[8] The participants also produced various other outputs from their CGP projects including seminars, outreach workshops, short policy briefs and newspaper columns, academic conference presentations, and related journal articles. Other than the papers being prepared under its review process, the CGP made only limited efforts to systematically track the additional outputs and graduate degrees from the projects, an error in retrospect.

14

Table 5

Synopses of Four Illustrative CGP Projects

The Size and Nature of Informal Entrepreneurship in Pakistan, Muhammad S. Shahid, Lahore University of Management Sciences Publication: Williams, Colin, Muhammad S. Shahid and Alvaro Martinez. 2015. "**Determinants of the Level of Informality of Informal Micro-Enterprises: Some Evidence from the City of Lahore, Pakistan**." *World Development* 84(August): 312-325. Recognising that enterprises operate at varying levels of informality, this paper evaluates the determinants of their degree of informality. Reporting a 2012 survey of 300 informal microenterprises in the city of Lahore in Pakistan, the finding is that the key predictors of their level of informality are the characteristics of the entrepreneur and enterprise, rather than their motives or the wider formal and informal institutional compliance environment. Lower degrees of informality are associated with women, older, educated, and higher income entrepreneurs and older enterprises with employees in the manufacturing sector. The paper concludes by discussing the theoretical and policy implications.
Urban Open Spaces for Adolescent Girls, Ayub Qutub, Pakistan Institute for Environmental Action Research, and Nomana Anjum, Allama Iqbal Open Univerity Publication: Qutub, Ayub, Nomana Anjum, Nazia Iftikharm, Mehnaz Mehmood and Nighat Bibi. 2015. "**Choices of Adolescent Girls for Schoolyard Activities in Rawalpindi-Islamabad, Pakistan**." *Children, Youth and Environments* 25(3): 40-61. Adolescent girls in Pakistan are restricted from outdoor physical activities due to the risks of crime and teasing, and by "cultural norms." Schoolyards are potentially key recreational places. However, there is little space for recreation at most low-fee private schools, and state-run schools have little incentive or resources to support outdoor activities. In this interdisciplinary study, focus group discussions, participant observation, interviews and group work elicited the outdoor space preferences of parents and schoolgirls. The girls display considerable ingenuity for outdoor play in constrained environments, and aspire for more vigorous physical activity and quality recreation. Policy reforms, changes to schools' approaches to the use of outdoor space, and societal efforts are required to make adolescent-girl-friendly spaces more widely available.
The Political Economic Consequences of Pakistan's Linguistically Fractured Educational System, Zehra Aftab, Ph.D. candidate, American University, Washington D.C. Publication: Zehra Aftab **Experimental Evidence on Public Good Behaviour across Pakistan's Fractured Educational System.** PSSP Working Paper 033, December 2015. Using the design of a public goods game, this study investigates behaviour of Pakistani university students: 1) does cooperative behaviour differ across identity groups and class lines, 2) does the propensity to punish vary across gender and class, and 3) does the behaviour vary *within* groups. Three types of universities form the identity groups: elite English-medium universities, public and private sector universities catering to middle and lower middle-income students, and madrassas. Students from these three groups differ in their socio-economic background, the language of instruction, the religious content of their curriculum, and their exposure to print and electronic media. The experimental results illuminate cultural characteristics. Both male and female madrassa students are the most generous. Male madrassa students penalise female more than other male students, while elite male students penalise female students less than male students in the other two groups, suggesting hostility towards women diminishes with higher incomes. Male elite students, penalising madrassa students more heavily than fellow elite students, suggesting the presence of spite among the elite boys towards high contributors.
Exploring Determinants of Entrepreneurial Behavoiur, Ali Muhammad Mohmand, University of Peshawar Publication: Mohmand, Ali Muhammad and Muhammad Junaid. **Determinants of Entrepreneurial Behaviour in FATA Pakistan**. PSSP Working Paper 038, February 2016. This study investigates entrepreneurial behaviour in the impoverished Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), examining the relative strength of selected entrepreneurial determinant in the Pashtun tribal culture. Persistent wars, economic downturn, and strong cultural adherence have turned the Pashtun tribesmen into necessity entrepreneurs. Based on primary data from 462 respondents, entrepreneurial behaviour measured by self-reported views toward risk-taking and innovativeness are related to economic, institutional, and cultural constructs using logistic regression models. Limited support is found for several of the hypothesised determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour, with different sets of predictors emerged for risk-taking and innovativeness. The results inform academics as to how entrepreneurial behaviour of Pashtuns can be enhanced, set up hypotheses for future research exploration, and can guide policy to stimulate underlying factors that will promote entrepreneurship in FATA.

In a number of respects, the CGP pilot programme exceeded our initial expectations. The completed papers provide a body of knowledge from the CGP's five-year duration. In achieving this outcome, the programme dynamised Pakistan social science research in several ways. Perhaps the most important of these was that through the CGP process local talent was identified, nurtured and connected to colleagues across the country. In keeping with expectations, the crowd-sourced research agenda included many more local issues than research agendas elites and experts from Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi would set. Faculty at the provincial smaller universities were empowered and the networking among them and participants from the better-placed metropolitan institutions was mutually beneficial for scholarly development and broadening research themes.

The open process which allowed international scholars to compete for funding and included them fully in the review process proved to be important for vitalising competition as well as for maintaining a transparent process. In an environment of mistrust, the CGP sought to remain above innuendo and retain widespread confidence in its decisions. Creating a global competition prevented the feeling of a protected infant industry and forced all to seek to come up to a global standard.

The CGP conferences and workshops proved to be important for a transparent process since all decisions were taken openly. In addition, the conferences trained researchers in presentation and debating skills. This was particularly important because these researchers especially in the provincial universities have few opportunities for seminars and conferences.

We also learned the necessity of a multi-year commitment to research review and development of the network and its projects. Without this length of engagement, the goal of quality reports that circulated in the public arena would not have been achieved. With this commitment, even within the limited five-year CGP pilot effort we began to see groups emerging (in areas such as macroeconomics, urban and local issues, and entrepreneurship) that with more time could have deepened their networking and perhaps spun off into specialisations with deeper interactions in important areas of public policy.

5.1. A Way Forward

In a large developing country like Pakistan the diversity of issues as well as talent in provincial areas and many institutions is often ignored, leaving policy debate and decisions in the hands of the elite in a few large metropolises. Creating research networks and a research culture remains a perennial issue as competent researchers nurtured through expensive overseas training find that their human capital depreciates over time with isolation and a scarcity of research funding. Funding for research that is made available by donors and the government too often comes with many centrally determined constraints and only mobilises the best-known researchers.

Facing these obstacles, the fullest long-term hope was and remains that a research network as piloted in the CGP when scaled up could allow several different citation and policy communities to develop as research grew and specialised. Networking and citations among researchers and the development of specialisations according to emerging interests would allow competition to grow. In turn citation communities would convey information on evolving research and the knowledge being developed. As networks formed and split into specialisations they would develop policy ideas which

could be picked up by concerned media, political actors and civil society groups to be taken into the policy process.

Over time this process would also reveal public intellectuals and their theses and hypothesis which could inform society on issues and guide debates in the popular media. In addition, the current approach where knowledge appears to be clustered in the big cities with their assumptions about the disadvantaged areas would face some serious pushback from work emanating from those areas.

A truly bottom-up and decentralised approach to social science research would develop in this manner. Policy would be informed by crowd-sourced ideas emanating from all areas of Pakistan and not be restricted to the suppositions of the capital—a critique that is often made. One has to wonder what the research environment might look like were a pilot programme like the CGP to operate for an extended period of 10 or 20 years. One can envision a steadily rising level of quality of the applications and research produced, and strengthening and deepening of networks that would vitalise the research interface with public policy.

As a pilot project, an objective of the CGP was to lay the seed of and test out funding arrangements as well as credible processes for ensuring a high research quality through networking and engagement. A limitation recognised from the outset was the dependence on external funds, viewed as a disadvantage in building a scholarly network with deep-rooted local ownership. In concluding meetings, a strong consensus among the RAC members was that CGP-type competitive research funding and network development are necessary for furthering of economic and other social science and public policy research and thinking in Pakistan. The most important innovation of this pilot programme was that it set up a system of cooperation for research initiatives among investigators across multiple institutions and created networking that facilitated peer review and decentralised knowledge development. But no adequate foundation for continuation of the programme had been set in motion.

Perhaps the critical flaw of our pilot was that the initial design did not build in from the outset plans for a follow-through. The reliance on a small functional secretariat for the CGP located externally was pragmatic at the beginning to avoid addressing complex internal institutional arrangements. It should however, have been tasked with developing domestic administrative arrangements to take over the CGP's operation as the programme evolved. The RAC and both the secretariats could at that time have pushed for funding of an ongoing programme built on the CGP development.[9]

A large challenge thus remains for which the pilot CGP provides some experience that can be drawn upon. Research capacity building for local policy and development continues to be a key challenge and donor agencies continue to struggle with it. Our pilot suggests that an approach along lines of the CGP can be an important aspect of building a research culture. The CGP research network maximised participation and interaction, allowed a diverse range of local issues to percolate up, and fostered quality conversation, debate and outputs to emerge. It did all this while not imposing a fixed research agenda.

Our view from the CGP experience is that there should be more experimentation with this model. The CGP processes and outcomes convince us that with longer-term funding it would have been possible to grow the network and further develop high-

---

[9]Regrettably, aid-funding arrangements are no too friendly to allow domestic agencies alone to undertake such arrangements.

quality research. Shorter term, the CGP has informed the limited existing HEC research grant programmes and those of several other research initiatives, including the Centres of Advanced Studies established since 2015 with USAID support.

While many challenges remain to further scale up the CGP model, we do not see any better way to build research capacity and foster informed policy debate. Without the opportunity to develop their acquired human capital the best educated will continue to leave the country, frustrating university progress and research contributions to policy, as noted by Haque (2005).

With networking opportunities, Pakistani university and other research appointments would become more attractive and research undertaken could better keep pace. This balanced development would grow human capital and offers incentives for the human capital to stay in place across the geography of Pakistan.

REFERENCES

Derksen, Maarten (2014). Turning men into machines? *Journal of the History of Behavioural Sciences 50*(2), 148–165. http://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/ 13613484/ derksen2012rev2.pdf

Dunning, Casey, Rose Sarah, and McGillem, Claire (2017). Implementing ownership at USAID and MCC: A U.S. agency-level perspective. Centre for Global Development, Washington, D.C. https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/implementing-ownership-USAID-MCC.pdf

Easterly, William (2006). *The white man's burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much Ill and so little good*. New York: Penguin Books.

Fischer, Frank, Miller, Gerald J. and S. Sidney, Mara (ed.) (2007). *Handbook of public policy analysis theory, politics, and methods*. New York: CRC Press.

Haq, Mahbub ul (1976). *The poverty curtain*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Haque Nadeem Ul (2005). *Brain drain or human capital flight*. (Lectures in Development Economics No. 11). Pakistan Institute for Development Economics, Islamabad. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228220834_Brain_Drain_or_Human_Capital_Flight

Haque, Nadeem Ul (2013). HEC. *development 2.0 blog*. http://development20. blogspot.com/2013/11/hec.html

Haque, Nadeem Ul (2015). Plagiarism is but one symptom. *development 2.0 blog*. http://development20.blogspot.com/2015/07/plagiarism-is-but-one-symptom.html

Haque, Nadeem Ul (2017). *Looking back: How Pakistan became an Asian tiger in 2050*. Lahore: Kitab Publishers. https://www.amazon.com/Looking-Back-Pakistan-Became-Asian-ebook/dp/B06X94135J/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1488133596 &sr=1- 1&keywords=nadeem+haque

Hoodbhoy, Pervez (2009). Pakistan's higher education system—what went wrong and how to fix it? *The Pakistan Development Review 48*(4), 581–594. http://www. pide.org.pk/pdf/PDR/2009/Volume4/581-594.pdf

Husain, Khurram (2017a). Exclusive: CPEC master-plan revealed. *The Dawn*, 21 June. https://www.dawn.com/news/1333101

Husain, Khurram (2017b). CPEC: Is there a cause for alarm? *The Dawn*, 21 March. https://www.dawn.com/news/1320670

Kardar, Shahid (2017). Understanding CPEC. *The Dawn*, 21 July. https://www.dawn.com/news/1345741

Naveed, Arif (2013). Landscaping policy relevant research in Pakistan: Identifying the key actors. (Working Paper 2). Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad. https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/paper-2-landscaping-policy-relevant-research-in-pakistan-identifying-the-key-actors

Naveed, Arif and Suleri, Abid (2015). Making 'impact factor' impactful: Universities, think tanks and policy research in Pakistan. Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad. http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Pakistan%20TT-university%20study_Final%20June%2022.pdf

Planning Commission of Pakistan (2011). *Framework for economic growth*. https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Planning-Commission-2011-Final- Report.pdf

Planning Commission of Pakistan (2014). *Pakistan2025: One Nation – One Vision*. http://www.pakbj.org/statics/css/pakbj/pdf/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf

RAC (Research Advisory Committee) (2016). The Pakistan social science research competitive grants programme: Advisors, projects funded, external reviewers, and publications. http://www.gii.ncr.vt.edu/docs/Results.pdf

Srivastava, Jayati (2013). Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge–power interface. Overseas Development Institute, London UK.

Taylor, Frederick Winslow (1903). *Shop management*. New York: American Society of Mechanical Engineers, OCLC 2365572.

Times Higher Education Rankings. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings

U.S. Congress (2009). *Enhanced partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009*. PL-No. 111-73 (also known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act), signed into law October 15, 2009.

U.S. News and World Report ranking. https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/rankings

Usman, Sidra (2014). Governance and higher education in Pakistan: What roles do boards of governors play in ensuring the academic quality maintenance in public universities versus private universities in Pakistan? *International Journal of Higher Education 3*(2), 38–51. http://sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/ijhe/article/viewFile/4206/2524