SPLICING THEORETICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC POLICY PRACTICES IN PAKISTAN THROUGH ITERATIVE ANALYSIS

Muhammad Usman Amin Siddiqi [*]
Ammad Javed Khan [**]

Abstract: The paper revolves around public policy practices in Pakistan and attempts to uncover issues of public policy as faced by policymakers during their administrative occupancies. The issues covered spin around policy formulation and implementation, performance management, policy evaluation mechanisms, and capacity building. Qualitative methodology, as necessitated by nature of study, has been carried out, employing iterative analysis technique to semi-structured interviews of a purposive sample to produce an amalgam having elements of both collected data and relevant theories. The results reflect the opinion of the respondents situated in contextual theories to propose synchronized policy measures.

Keywords: Public policy, policy formulation, policy evaluation, performance measurement, capacity building, Pakistan, bureaucracy

Introduction

The paper attempts to highlight various trends and concerns underlying public policy squads in Pakistan. Significance of the study lies in the fact that Pakistan, being a developing country, has been grappling with numerous socio-economic and political challenges including ever-increasing population, limited educational and healthcare opportunities, spiraling unemployment, legal system skewed in favor of the rich, corruption, energy crisis, ballooning inflation, social decay, and vast demographic transitions along with shifting crescendos of populace aspirations. Political instability and economic turmoil present an inescapable bondage for the masses as transition to democracy is still at a delicate stage; and politics of

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[*] Usman Siddiqi is Deputy Director, Centre of Excellence China Studies, GC University, Lahore (Email: write2siddiqi@live.com).

[**] Ammad Javed Khan is an MPhil Scholar at Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore.

agitation is on as a tradition. Add to this the menace of terrorism and extremism and the picture is complete. Lack of good governance has now snowballed into a systematic crisis and presents challenge that seems capable of virtually paralyzing the entire system.[1]

The situation demands for fundamental shifts in the tactical methods of administration so as to review these challenges and develop concrete, result-oriented, and productive public policy strategies to solve them. Therefore, this research deemed necessary in managerial practices of government to explore essential subtleties of administration from the lens of public policy. The intensity and real nature of underlying grounds of policy inertia cannot be genuinely probed until they are being divulged by those echelons who are practically involved in its formulation, application, and execution – bureaucracy. The paper, therefore, attempts to highlight what bureaucracy in Pakistan thinks about the issues concerning public policy. What are their contemplations about existing landscape of the field in their circles? What they consider are the appropriate ways to address the problems of policymaking in Pakistan?

In order to make the study concomitant with international established practices and approaches and, at the same time, digestible to the government of the day, the research has been framed as an iterative study incorporating elements from theory as well as primary data. Therefore, apart from contextualizing bureaucratic perspectives in theoretical traditions of academic discipline of public policy, perspectives of public policy academia in Pakistan has also been spliced with perspectives from bureaucracy through iterative analysis. The broader thematic description involves various issues of application of theoretical frameworks, policy instruments, challenges of capacity building initiatives, and performance measurement mechanisms.

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[1] Muhammad Usman Amin Siddiqi, Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, and Muhammad Afzaal, "Politicized Policing in Pakistan: A Constructivist Study of Problems of Policing in Lahore," *The Journal of Political Science* XXXII (2014): 3–4.

Research Methodology

This exploratory study is based on primary qualitative methodology aimed at discovering and presenting an in-depth analysis of various dimensions of public policy practices which have not been systematically studied earlier. A sample of 13 respondents was selected through purposive and snowball sampling technique. The inclusion criteria included, inter alia, vast experience in administrative affairs with thorough grip on knowledge related to theory and practice of public policy in Pakistan. Therefore, senior bureaucrats (mostly BPS 21 and 22) were included in the sample. It was also made sure that respondents be selected from a variety of departments so as to broaden the scope of the study and to make it representative of overall policy practices prevalent in all departments. Furthermore, to reflect the opinion of academicians; renowned policy experts from three prestigious institutions were also interviewed and their points of view were also used to enrich the findings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the data collection allowing the researcher to discuss a wide range of issues with the respondent. An average interview lasted about 70 minutes. A lengthy engagement with the respondents allowed the researcher to extract the relevant logics and rational behind issues of policy discourses in Pakistan through counter questions and discussion. The experience of the interview, with certain exceptions, was a good and enchanting. Almost all the respondents allowed mentioning their real identities. Respondents seemed extremely sincere in expressing their views, highly concerned about prevalent administrative problems, and committed to address the issues of policy practices in their department.

With the exception of one federal secretary, all the other interviews were tape recorded. Interviews were then transcribed and coded in three-tiers to draw emergent themes for iterative analysis. "Iterative Analysis of the data alternates between emergent themes of the data and the use of existing theories, models, and explanations."[2]

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[2] Muhammad Usman Amin Siddiqi and Misbah Mukhtar, "Perceptions of Violence and Victimization Among Hazaras In Pakistan," *The Journal of Political Science* XXXIII (2015): 7.

The data collected has been extensively corroborated and substantiated with relevant theories, models, and principles of public policy from archives, media reports, and rules of business. "Rather than grounding the meaning solely in the emergent data, an iterative approach also encourages reflection upon the active interests, current literature, granted priorities, and various theories the researcher brings to the data."[3] In a way, this study is a double probing in to the issues of public policy practices in Pakistan.

Results and Analysis

Super-ordinate Themes	Themes
Synthesis, Gaps, and Application of Various Theoretical Frameworks to Pakistan	Public policy: a far-fetched dream in Pakistan
	Policy is comprehensive
	Public policy is an exhaustive process
	Extemporaneous decision making
	Policy analysis absent
	Application of incrementalism
	Rationalism practiced in postal department
	Theories are seldom practiced
	Perpetual review, modification, and rectification of policies and procedures
	Merit not observed
Choice of Policy Instrument	Expediency dictates adoption of policy instrument
	Facilitation of masses
	Corruption masquerading under these various instruments
	Policies do not reflect genuine aspirations of masses
	Input from public representatives
	Budgetary implications are important
	Economic indicators are important for choice of policy instrument
Issues of Policy Formulation and Implementation	Absence of consensus building mechanisms
	No proper edifice of policymaking
	Tendency to give in to technical bottlenecks
	Travesty of public administration practices
	Skewed policies
	Policies of government are sporadic and arbitrary

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[3] Sara J. Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 184.

	Aberrational and atypical information
	Corruption has paralyzed the governance mechanism
	Exploitation of organizational resources
	No disincentive for making wrong policy move
	Malaise of transfers
	No incentive for making effective policies
	Dearth of financial resources
	Snail-paced funding
	Constraints of human resource
	No policy monitoring
	Policy Implementing mechanism are seldom adhered
	Policies rarely implemented
	Kinds of impediments during policy implementation
	Solutions to solve these crisis of policy formulation and implementation
Performance Measurement Mechanism and their Issues in Pakistan	Performance measurement mechanisms needed
	Bootless Planning Commission
	Performance evaluation mechanism
	Benchmarks of performance mechanism
	Deleterious impacts of negative grading
	Limited parameters for grading performance
	No know-how of writing PERs
	Biased tendencies have eroded the effectiveness of performance management mechanism
	Absence of confidentiality has further injured performance mechanism
	No mechanism to differentiate between donkeys and horses
	No political will
	Performance management hampered by political interference
	Suggestions for enhancing performance measurement mechanism
Policy Evaluation Mechanisms and Issues	Policy evaluation is absent in Pakistan
	Policy analysis is haphazard and based on vitiating streaks
	Performance evaluation reports
	Concurrence necessary for policy evaluation TORs
	Mid-term and long term evaluation is absent
	Analysis at the end of year
	Paucity of intellectual and research practices

Feedback Mechanisms, Dynamic Concepts, and Incentive Structures	Erroneous and inaccurate feedback mechanism
	Vigorous practices in FBR
	Bounded and circumscribed practice
	Very little scope
	Meaningless incentive structure
	Absence of incentives
Popular Demands and Public Policy	Public policy immune from public demands
	No formal mechanism
	Reliance on whimsical decisions
	Complaint cells, surveys, operational bottlenecks
	Inculcated through various concept papers and written proposals
	Public representatives do not reflect the genuine aspirations of masses
	Different participatory and consultative processes
Issue Networks and Interest Groups' Influence on Policy Shifts	Expediency define their role
	No influence
	Affect the policy process
	Limited Influence
Digital Era Network in Pakistan's Public Policy Perspective	Innovative reforms useless until the strenuous task of institutional and capacity building is undertaken
	Need to redefine the role of the government
	Prove miraculous for public policy implementation in Pakistan
	Intellectual and financial limitations
	Resistance to new reforms
Issues of capacity Building of POLICYMAKERs	Challenges to capacity building
	Training and exposure
	Measures for addressing challenges
Dominant Gaps Prevailing in Public Policy Discourses in Pakistan	Cannot identify the gaps
	Capacity gap
	Funding gap
	All gaps
	Information gap
	Accountability gap
	Collusion between corrupt actors
	No research in policymaking
	Revamping the system
Administrative Generalists vs. Specialists Debate	Administrative generalist is neutral
	Technical abuse of power
	Predicament of competency
	Domination of administrative generalists
	Flawed induction approach
	Recruitment of professionals

Interpretation and discussion

The views of the respondents have been weighed and corroborated with the theories and assumptions of policy scientists and public administration experts (native and foreign). The mutual support of respondents and policy scientists for each other's postulates and hypotheses will render legitimacy to the opinions of respondents in context of public policy issues in Pakistan. This eventually will employ that policy direction must be corrected as the response of the respondents is supported by world's famous policy scientists. It will reduce the chances of error to the minimum related to the public policy issues and will clearly help in addressing the gaps of policy problems in Pakistan by diagnosing the loopholes one by one and then remedying them concomitantly.

Synthesis, Gaps, and Application of various Public Policy Theoretical Frameworks to Pakistan: Public policy is a far-fetched dream in Pakistan. Leave aside the application of various theoretical frameworks; even the basic nuances of this major contemporary field are unfathomable to civil servants. There are very few marks of this field in Pakistan. Almost all the respondents were of the view that policymaking is absent in Pakistan. As one of the respondents remarked, "No model is applicable in Pakistan. The case of Pakistan is very unique. There is no policymaking in Pakistan."[4] Furthermore, quite paradoxically, the policymakers in Pakistan, instead of relying and utilizing the standard theoretical frameworks, have continuously relied on extemporaneous decision making. They used ad hoc decisions to further the affairs of the state. As the same respondent quipped once again, "However, in Pakistan the administrative machinery, most of the times, rely on ad hoc decisions."[5] Another respondent said, "To be very frank and candid, there is no public policy framework in Pakistan. All major initiatives of the government are not policies. These initiatives are not thoroughly research based;

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[4] Interview with former Federal Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights, Focal Person of the Local Government Reforms 2001, January 22, 2016.

[5] Ibid.

so it is unfair to call them policies. They are ad hoc decisions and based on exegesis of the moment."[6]

Another ingredient for effective policymaking is presence of sound and vibrant policy analysis system. Unfortunately, this too is absent in Pakistan, which implies it is very difficult to unveil the true dynamics of cost and benefits of any policy in Pakistan. As one of the respondents remarked, "Policymaking requires policy analysis, which is non-existent in Pakistan."[7]

Choice of Policy Instrument: The major policy instruments which are under the radar of policymakers include taxations, grants-in-aid, loans, and subsidies. A variety of factors influence the choice of these particular instruments which include but not limited to ideological leanings, constituency rights, line your own pocket dilemma, budgetary implications, the presence of crisis condition, intricacies of policy maze, effective service delivery, and limits of timeframe.

Policy instruments are of varying degrees. Policy instruments must be chosen carefully by keeping in view the nature of consequences that may result by their adoption. Some policy instruments are more coercive and direct while other are less coercive and indirect. The respondents responded very divergently with reference to the application of factors which influence the choice of policy instrument. As one of the respondents noted, "No factor is decisively important concerning the choice of any policy instrument. Choice of particular policymaking is influenced by expediency factor. All major policies are dictated by expediency. There is no policy-making setup in Pakistan."[8] The respondents were of the view that massive corruption is carried under the guise of such instruments that help serving classes to amass as much wealth as they can. As one of the respondents observed, "The notion of 'line your own pocket dilemma' exist in our department. Most of the time, this menace is

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[6] Interview with former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of Pakistan, February 24, 2016.

[7] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[8] Ibid.

masquerading under the cover of public service."[9] Another respondent said, "It is a fact and properly researched that 33% of revenue allocation for the project is pocketed by the officials concerned."[10]

Most of the time subsidiary or additional service delivery units are established for the facilitation of the masses in case the original system collapses or any technical faults arise in the departments dealing with technical matters like postal, railways, or telecommunication departments. Respondents were of the view that most of the time funds allocated for the subsidiary services are swallowed by the big fishes involved in the chain of delivery of such services. One of the respondents noted, "The funds allocated in such cases become victim of line your own pocket dilemma."[11] Hence, line your own pocket dilemma is major factor that influences the choice of policy instrument in the public sector.

Issues of Policy Formulation and Implementation: A number of issues have identified vis-à-vis policy formulation and implementation. Until and unless unanimity and concurrence is not developed between policy supporters and policy antagonists, the chances of policy to deliver long term and tangible consequences remain limited. However, unluckily, this trend is prevalent in Pakistan. As a respondent said, "Policy formulation and implementation comes only after neutralization of antagonists and building of consensus. There is no such process in Pakistan to build coalitions; and it is only after building of coalitions that the stage of policy formulation and implementation comes."[12] Another respondent remarked, "Establishing consensus among political executives and bureaucracy with regards to concerned schemes is a major hurdle."[13]

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[9] Interview with former Additional General Manager Traffic, Pakistan Railways, January 26, 2016.

[10] Interview with Chief of Governance Wing, Ministry of Planning, Reforms, and Development, February 26, 2016.

[11] Interview with DG, Civil Services Academy, February 23, 2016.

[12] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[13] Interview with Deputy Secretary (Admin), Planning & Development Department, Government of the Punjab, February 17, 2016.

Policies cannot be sound unless policy devising structure is vibrant and dynamic. It is deplorable that there is no policymaking structure in Pakistan. One of the respondents even remarked that there is no public administration in Pakistan. He said, "There are numerous issues with policy formulation of planning commission. First of all, there is no public administration in our policy framework."[14]

A major bottleneck of policy implementation in Pakistan is the tendency to give in to hurdles as capacity challenges are severe. As one of the respondents shared his experience, "During the implementation of the policy of computerizing the processes at the Islamabad GPO, the supervisors of these radical reforms were not adept in IT related reforms. The supervisors were unable to operate the module of monitoring."[15]

Skewed policies are another major issue as most of the time policies do not affect the people for whom they are devised. Policies are not well-targeted. One of the respondents said, "Like all developing countries, public policy in Pakistan is also afflicted by a malaise called skewed policies. Policies are not well-targeted. Vulnerable regions and populations are bereft of policy interventions."[16]

Another major obstacle concerning policy implementation in Pakistan is its intermittent nature. One of the respondents remarked, "Policy is disrupted in the middle. Three policies of government of Pakistan – Yellow Cab Scheme, Youth Loan Programme, and Iqra Schools – are the hallmark examples of this malaise."[17] This situation has hampered the effective service delivery for the masses; and most of the time, results in diminishing of the project utility on completion. One of the respondents said, "Government focuses more on the new projects and policies than the projects still in the stages of completion

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[14] Interview with former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

[15] Interview with DG, Civil Services Academy.

[16] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[17] Ibid.

without ensuring sufficient revenue – the existing revenue is thus divided."[18] The results are:

- ✓ Obstruction of existing projects
- ✓ Cost overrun
- ✓ Time overrun
- ✓ Diminishing of project utility on completion[19]

Furthermore, the respondents observed that the policies of successive governments are sporadic and arbitrary based on aberrational and atypical information. Corruption has paralyzed the governance mechanism resulting in exploitation of organizational resources. Another important issue is that there's no incentive for making effective policies working hard; and similarly, there is no disincentive for making wrong policy move. Malaise of transfers, dearth of financial resources, snail-paced funding, and lack of policy monitoring mechanisms have also been identified by the respondents as issues of policy formulation and implementation in Pakistan.

Performance measurement mechanism and their issues in Pakistan: Performance measurement mechanisms help enhance individual and organizational productivity. It not only increases the capacity of organization vis-à-vis defined tasks but also help individuals in their career progression. Unluckily, there are no such mechanisms in Pakistan. One of the respondents commenting on the status of performance measurement mechanism said, "Unfortunately, performance measurement mechanism is nowhere in the system of government. In the ideal performance measurement mechanism, targets should be given to each individual in the beginning of the year and then monitoring should be done to observe the accomplishment of targets."[20] Some of the respondents identified variety of performance measurement mechanisms of varying degrees in Pakistan along with their loopholes.

Performance Evaluation Report (PER) was quoted by most of them. Other respondents argued that along with PER, there are audit

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[18] Interview with Chief of Governance Wing, Ministry of PR&D.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

reports, ten days basis reviews, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), and scorecards. Then in departments like FBR, there are individual collection targets which are to be met be the employees and their performance is measured against these targets.

The respondents identified several obstacles and issues of performance measurement mechanism in Pakistan. One of the respondents remarked, "There are issues with benchmarks of performance mechanism. Average and below average categories have de-motivating impacts on the employees; and normally these two categories are resisted."[21] Another respondent observed that negative grading has its problems for superiors because, "there are a lot of complications involved in the ACR. For example, if I write poor ACR of an officer, then that person will keep complaining me and will be a source of continuous trouble for me."[22] Respondents were of the view that limited parameters for grading performance, therefore, do not allow differentiation between donkeys and horses.

Other problems performance measurement mechanism identified by the respondents included general lack of know-how of writing PERs, biased tendencies that have eroded the effectiveness of performance management mechanism, absence of confidentiality of PERs, lack of political will, and undue political interference.

Policy evaluation mechanisms and issues: Policy evaluation mechanisms not only enhance the service delivery but also ensure improved future policies as errors can be ascertained and remedied readily. Moreover, it also analyses the relevant alternatives so as to use the best among them. With the exception of few respondents, almost all the respondents were unaware of existence of any policy evaluation mechanism. They were even not familiar with the concept as such. To the sheer surprise of the researchers, some respondents even equated performance evaluation reports with the policy analysis mechanism – two entirely different concepts with reference to their ingredients and application.

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[21] Interview with DG, Civil Services Academy.

[22] Interview with PMS Officer, Government of the Punjab, January 21, 2016.

However, in-depth probing of some senior respondents unveiled some serious issues with policy evaluation mechanisms. One respondent said, "Public policy evaluation mechanisms involve three steps: output, outcome, and impact. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, there is no know-how of these concepts."[23] Another respondent said, "The evaluation process hinges on the tenure of the government; when a government departs so does the evaluation of policies."[24] Respondents were of the view that some mechanisms are there for measurement of short term goals, but midterm and long term evaluation is completely absent from the policy evaluation discourses in Pakistan."We are only concerned output stage (short term evaluation). The outcome and impact assessment stages are non-existent in Pakistan."[25]

Intellectual capacity and empirical research are building blocks of any type of policy evaluation in a country. Commenting on the nature of intellectual practices and research base, one of the respondents remarked, "Our department neither has intellectual capacity nor the time to perform such types of policy evaluations. However, the academic circles including PIDE, LUMS, and LSE have been producing researched papers."[26] Another respondent said, "Our own policy impact unit is either undermanaged, understaffed, is or not in focus. Most of the time, our department is in firefighting mode."[27] Another respondent, identified research as the base for sound and effective policy evaluation and lamented that there is no research base in our policy circles, owing to which policy evaluations are continually suffering. He said, "Research was missing in almost all departments that I had a chance to head. Research unit was there in population department but its output was equal to nothing. In most of the cases, the utilization of research tools depends upon the

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[23] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Interview with Dean, PIDE School of Public Policy, Islamabad, February 26, 2016.

[26] Interview with Directing Staff National Management College, National Scholl of Public Policy (former Deputy Chairman FBR), March 4, 2016.

[27] Ibid.

personnel heading the concerned research department – there are enthusiastic versus lethargic directors."[28]

Feedback Mechanisms, Dynamic Concepts, and Incentive Structures: Most of the respondents opined that formal feedback mechanisms are absent in Pakistan; however, there are some informal feedback mechanisms, which most of the time result in erroneous and inaccurate feedback. One of the respondents said, "The major hurdles in feedback mechanisms are the complex rules and regulations and lethargy."[29] We need to imbibe foreign practices in this regard. We have only to filter them through our constitution, only to put it over a slow fire of criticism and distil away its foreign gases. "We can never learn either own weaknesses or our own virtues by comparing ourselves with ourselves."[30]

Then comes the application of important innovative tools and practices like RCA, Pareto Chart, CBA, KEDB, pain analysis, and TQM. Such tools and practices are necessary for an agile public service system. Opinion of the respondents reflects the poor status of these dynamic practices in Pakistan.

Incentives are essential for public service motivation as they act as an impetus for the employee. "Employees perform better when their compensation is more tightly linked to their effort or output, and organizational performance will improve with employee incentives more closely aligned with organizational goals?"[31] Almost all the respondents were of the view that incentive structure prevailing in Pakistan is totally flawed and inconsistent. One of the respondent said, "Incentives are not given on regular basis. Instead of rewarding

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[28] Interview with Member, Federal Services Tribunal (former Federal Secretary, Ministry of Zakat & Ushr), March 10, 2016.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (June 1887): 218–19, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2139277.

[31] Carolyn J. Heinrich and Gerald Marschke, "Incentives and their Dynamics in Public Sector Performance Management Systems," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 184.

incentives on the basis of performance, they are given to all and sundry annually and sometimes bi-annually."[32]

Principal Agent Theory proposes that incentives act as a kind of reward for lower bureaucracy to work for the organization without creating any need of intervention from the higher bureaucracy. "The basis of this model is to introduce incentive structures, such as increased resources or greater autonomy, to ensure that actors responsible for service delivery (the agents – that is, street level bureaucrats) provide what the superordinate organization (the principal – that is, the core executive) wants without the need to resort to direct command or control."[33]

Popular Demands and Public Policy: It is trademark of representative democracies that public opinion must be inculcated in public policy to reflect the diverse aspirations of the assorted communities. The respondents were generally not aware of what does it mean to inculcate public opinion in public policy. Most of the respondents equated complain and grievance address mechanisms with the influence or impact of public opinion on public policy. However, deeper probing allowed gauging the status of public influence on public policy. Almost all of the respondents opined that public policy is immune to public demands in Pakistan. One of the respondents said that there are two ways through which public opinion can be inculcated in the public policy: a) lobbying b) public hearing – both have not been institutionalized in Pakistan.[34] One respondent said, "The dilemma is that the current government is completely insulated from the demands of the public. People want that issues related to education, social welfare, housing, and health should be addressed and not roads and bridges. Policies depend on the priorities of government."[35] Another respondent opined, "There

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[32] Interview with DG, Civil Services Academy.

[33] Martin J. Smith et al., "Analysing Policy Delivery in UK: The Case of Street Crime and Anti-social Behaviour," *Public Administration* 89, no. 3 (2011): 970.

[34] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[35] Interview with Director, Centre for Public Policy & Governance, FC College, Lahore, January 28, 2016.

are whimsical decisions all around administrative apparatus. Public is not at all considered one of the stakeholders."[36]

Respondents identified certain other procedures through which the perspectives of public can be inculcated in the public policy – concept papers, project proposals, and annual budget exercises. These mechanisms allow the common masses to indirectly influence policy process. However, public in Pakistan is rarely vigilant and educated enough to comprehend such concepts.

Woodrow Wilson has dissected the issue of incorporating public opinion in public policy in the following words:

> To whom is official trustworthiness to be disclosed, and by whom is it to be rewarded? Is the official to look to the public for his meed of praise and his push of promotion, or only to his superior in office? Are the people to be called in to settle administrative discipline as they are called in to settle constitutional principles? These questions evidently find their root in what is undoubtedly the fundamental problem of this whole study. That problem is: What part shall public opinion take in the conduct of administration?[37]

With the growth of globalization, increasing corporatization of the world, and easy access to the communications network, citizens are taking keen interest in the styles of governance and demanding more influence in the affairs of the state. However, public should have a broader understanding of the policy issues and their solutions to be in a better position to influence the decision making process.

> An effective public participation process does not mean that the public gets to make the final decision all the time. In fact, it rarely does. Public administrators have no reason to dismiss public participation on this account. The actual outcome of an effective public

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[36] Interview with Member, Federal Services Tribunal.

[37] Woodrow Wilson, "Study of Administration," 214.

participation may in reality encompass a wide range of results, from gaining understanding of a problem and its proposed solution(s), to preparing the citizens for making a decision on their own.[38]

Issue Networks and Interest Groups Influence on Policy Shifts: In a democratic country, there are divergent actors and interests at play, sometimes for the interest of the state and sometimes to shield their own interests. Their role and influence on policymaking is a contentious issue. However, leaving aside their constructive or constraining role, one thing sure: the presence of these differing interests make public policy more representative, dynamic, and competitive. Bringing together participants in a policy network not only adds to the acceptance of and support for policy programs, but also enhances the quality of collective problem solving based on new combinations of knowledge, information, competences, and other resources.[39]

The respondents had different views with reference to the role of these issue networks and interests groups. One of the respondents opined that their influence is dependent on expediency factor. Whenever political process deems them necessary, it gives them space to maneuver their demands.[40] It employs that there are no specific procedures for ascertaining and inculcating the opinions of these diverse actors in the policy streams. One of the respondents remarked that interest groups are drivers of public policy. "They play a considerable role in improving, damaging, or distorting of public policy."[41] One of the respondents classified these pressure groups in

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[38] Oana Almasan and Zeno Reinhardt, "The Negative Impact of Legislation Pitfalls on Meaningful Public Participation, Efficient Policymaking, and Effective Governance," *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences* 5, no. 25 (February 2009): 8–9.

[39] Menno Fenger, "Governance Dynamics in European Employment Policy," *Central European Journal of Public Policy* 2, no. 2 (December 2008): 9–10.

[40] Interview with Member, Federal Services Tribunal.

[41] Interview with Director, Centre for Public Policy & Governance.

mainly three categories: a) industrialists, b) landlords, c) civil servants.[42]

Another respondent argued that such groups lobby specifically to protect their interests, "In energy department, such lobbying is mainly done by the industrialists. The companies which are more vehement in their lobbying tactics get the contracts even at their own terms of reference."[43] One respondent said, "The role of pressure groups vary from department to department. For example, in labor department and TEVTA, the industrialists exert heavy influence. Similarly, in education department, the influence of teachers union; and in *Auqaf* department, the role of clergy cannot be underestimated."[44]

Digital Era Network in Pakistan's Public Policy Perspective: World is progressing at an enormous pace. It needs state of the art policy tools and mechanisms to not only cope with the challenges unleashed by this progressing world but also to enhance the living standards of an ever-increasing population. These tools can be encapsulated under the broader concepts of e-governance and digital era network.

> The New Public Management (NPM) wave in public sector organizational change was founded on themes of disaggregation, competition, and incentivization... Digital Era Network includes reintegrating functions into the governmental sphere, adopting holistic and needs-oriented structures, and progressing digitalization of administrative processes. It offers a unique opportunity to create self-sustaining change, in a broad range of closely connected technological, organizational, cultural, and social effects.[45]

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[42] Interview with former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

[43] Interview with PMS Officer, Government of the Punjab.

[44] Interview with Member, Federal Services Tribunal.

[45] Patrick Dunleavy et al., "New Public Management is Dead: Long Live Digital-Era Governance," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (J-PART)* 16, no. 3 (July 2006): 467.

Other tools of Digital Era Network include e-governance, rationalization of administrative practices, electronic procurement practices, online declaration and taxations mechanisms, reintegration of government services, disaggregation, and reduction of paper based works and its replacement by digitalized practices.

The respondents opined that institutional capacity building is necessary for efficacy and briskness of public policy practices in Pakistan as it remains a major constraint in effective indoctrination of innovative reforms in Pakistan. "These reforms can prove a boon for the administrative apparatus of our department if capacity building and infrastructure is ensured," said Deputy Director, Department of Auditor General of Pakistan. He gave example of a World Bank project named PIFRA (Project to Improve Financial Reporting and Auditing), being taken over by the federal government. He said, "It has introduced capacity building and e-governance type mechanisms in Pakistan. Projects initiated under its umbrella include training of the employees, SAP course (online record of all documents), ACL (Audit Command Language), and online pension system."[46]

Another respondent focused education standards of the governing and governed classes as being the major impediment to introduction of such reforms. "The hurdle in the way of installation of such innovative reforms is literacy rate of Pakistan, which is 58%. The capacity of departments and institutions is limited in this regard."[47] Former Federal Secretary of Ministry of Human Rights highlighted the need to redefine the role of the government before introduction of these digital reforms. He said,

> Otherwise, it will be useless and sheer wastage of money. Take the case of recently introduced Land Record System in Punjab. Without knowing the limitations of such radical reform, they have introduced computer based management of land record system. The measurement and demarcation of land is work of *patwari* on the ground. If the land dispute

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[46] Interview with Deputy Director, Department of Auditor General of Pakistan, January 26, 2016.

[47] Interview with Directing Staff, National Management College.

arises with respect to boundary or demarcation, the computer record will be useless until *patwaris* are there to measure the actual size of the plot and authenticate the electronic record.[48]

Respondents were of the view that there is room for e-governance; however, old habits die hard, and it will take time and courage to replace those practices with the innovative reforms. Financial constraints and lack of human resource with technical acumen to fully materialize the benefits of such reforms are the main obstacles identified by the respondents in this regard. They were all unanimous in saying that institutional capacity building and human resource development are the prerequisites for introduction of such reforms.

Issues of Capacity Building of Policymakers: Capacity building plays a pivotal role in enhancing the capabilities of policymakers so that they can better respond to economic, social, political challenges. "The human resource management system, which includes federal and provincial Public Service Commission (recruiting organisation) and the Establishment Division (responsible for the placement, training, promotion, transfer etc.) in public sector, has responded slowly to the changes in the socio-economic and technological environment."[49]

The respondents identified variety of challenges to effective capacity building initiatives in Pakistan. First, they argued that knowledge base of the staff is limited, which has a trickledown effect on the performance of the employees. Second, career succession or career progression is nonexistent in organizations of our government.[50] Third, capacity building initiatives are dominated by the top-notch bureaucracy.[51] Fourth, prevalence of *sifarish* culture

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[48] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[49] Seemi Waheed and Sikandar Hayat, "Capacity Building in Public Sector Organizations," *The Pakistan Development Review* 38, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 914.

[50] Interview with Chief of Governance Wing, Ministry of PR&D.

[51] Interview with PMS Officer, Government of the Punjab.

impairs capacity building initiatives in bureaucracy. Capacity building of officers is done on nepotism and arbitrary basis, impeding merit and equitable distribution. Capacity building initiatives are like incentives, which should be distributed among the employees showing efficiency and remarkable performance. Such ill-treatment of honest officers impairs their motivation to work diligently for the organizational goals.

Last but not least, respondents criticized training institutes for their flawed approaches and methods. "They are generalized in their approach. Specialist, professional, and quality training is nowhere in these institutes."[52] Almost all the respondents opined that foreign trainings and exposure is crucial for capacity building of the public servants. They argued that short term training courses cannot sufficiently increase the capacity of the employees. Specialized training can only be acquired through comprehensive courses spanning over long term. They were of the view that foreign degrees and case study oriented trainings can play a vital role in this context. Case study trainings inculcate a spirit of pragmatism among the employees. Currently available courses include Mid-Career Management Course (Grade 18), Training at NIPA (Grade 19 and 20), and Pakistan Staff College training (Grade 20 and 21). Now-a-days a number of exchange training programs with China are also available"[53]

In order to address the challenges of capacity building, the respondents suggested that capacity building should not be limited to human skills. It must also include environment and infrastructure building and availability of relevant technology.[54]

Dominant gaps prevailing in public policy discourses in Pakistan: There are always gaps of varying intensity in administrative system of a country relevant to policymaking. A total of seven gaps were selected for the response of the respondents: information gap, capacity gap, funding gap, policy gap,

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[52] Interview with former Chairman, Capital Development Authority, Islamabad, March 10, 2016.

[53] Interview with former Additional G.M. Traffic, Pakistan Railways.

[54] Interview with Chief of Governance Wing, Ministry of PR&D.

administrative gap, objective gap, and accountability gap. With the exception of one respondent, all the respondents were of the view that to a certain extent, all these gaps have been prevailing in Pakistan. That one respondent said that there is no way to identify the policy gaps in Pakistan. He said, "The question of the gap comes only when we have policy analysis mechanisms installed. We do not have any such mechanism in Pakistan, so we cannot identify the gaps."[55] Two of the respondents said that all the gaps are prevailing in Pakistan. The remaining respondents argued that capacity, funding, information, and accountability gaps were the most virulent for policymaking in Pakistan. Owing to funding gap, developmental schemes and projects linger on for years. Sharing of the information is limited. Improper flow of information is another issue. Accountability gap is afflicting heavy costs, as process of accountability is obscure and delayed.

Administrative Generalists vs. Specialists Debate: Given the emerging complexities and demanding nature of contemporary public service, generalist-specialist debate has gained much importance. The debate revolves around the question that can an employee who is expert in handling the administrative affairs of one department be appointed to another department (of which he has relatively less experience) on the basis of his general administrative experience.

One of the respondents viewed administrative generalist as an independent and neutral person who possesses a practical approach towards the issues at hand. According to him, technical personnel tend to abuse the power. He said, "if we appoint some technical person, an engineer for example, as a secretary in the communication and works department, then he would tend to abuse his powers and do favoritism as the major chunk of employees would be from his profession."[56] The remaining respondents, however, gave their own justifications for the appointments of specialists. They opined that generalists have to face competency dilemma in handling affairs in technical departments. Their relevant knowledge and expertise is very limited. "Competency is a major hurdle at policy formulation stage.

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[55] Interview with former Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights.

[56] Interview with Member, Federal Services Tribunal.

CPEC project, for example, involves technical intricacies, knowledge of which is rarely offered in bureaucratic training institutions. It can only be conceived from degree programs of universities."[57]

Another respondent commenting on the issue said, "In most of the countries, they recruit specialists and train them in policy level management skills. In Pakistan, it is totally opposite. We recruit generalists and then appoint them in technical departments with limited training. We have a lot of medical doctors in police. It is wastage of state resources and it impairs governance."[58] Specialization demands "ministry of commerce should be headed by economists and not administrative generalists. Similarly, ministry of petroleum should be led by a geologist."[59] However, generalists resist change because they have high stakes in the existing system that tend to protect and promote their well-being. Former Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission said, "Railway engineers are subordinate to secretary, who does not know technicalities of railway system and is just an administrative generalist. Secretary of Energy Department becomes Secretary Railways one day and he is appointed DCO next day. DMG cadre dominates BPS 21 and 22 in each department, and they tend to resist change."[60] A balance of generalist-specialist staff is essential for effective policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

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[57] Interview with Dean, PIDE School of Public Policy.

[58] Interview with Directing Staff, National Management College.

[59] Interview with Dean, PIDE School of Public Policy.

[60] Interview with former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.