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NEXUSES BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND POLICY: CHINA STUDIES IN PAKISTANI THINK TANKS

This article looks at China studies produced in Pakistani think tanks, and then it explores nexuses between knowledge and policy. Think tanks are considered as 'knowledge reservoirs'. Their knowledge is taken as input and feedback on important policy issues. Their close relationship with policy institutions, in terms of, their contributions, feedback, inputs, and ideas help shape policies. In Pakistan, think tanks have played a pivotal role in generating ideas, discourses and public opinion in society. Interestingly, these domestic images on China and Pakistan-China relations in Pakistani think tanks show how historical knowledge could contribute to shaping Pakistan's China policy. The study argues that the previous studies on China and Pakistan-China relations have been dictated by power politics factors in which India and US have loomed large. In this article, a Constructivist perspective of International Relations is chosen to understand, how ideas, discourses, studies, and knowledge could shape Pakistan's policy towards China. Adopting the qualitative approach, this research collected data through primary and secondary sources. It conducted interviews from the senior think tank analysts in Pakistan. This study revealed that indigenous knowledge produced in Pakistani think tanks, in particular, China Studies, have positively contributed to shaping Pakistan's China policy.

Keywords: *Think tank, Pakistan- China, Knowledge, Policy, and Constructivist Approach*

Introduction

The role of think tanks has been widely acknowledged for its policy input. They are considered to be knowledge producers. Their ideas, opinions, and feedback are key to different policy issues. In this article, the researcher attempted to explore contributions of Pakistani think tanks on China and Pakistan-China relations since the 1950s. This study looks at China Studies produced in Pakistani think tanks and attempts to explore, the nexuses between knowledge (produced on China and Pakistan-China relations) and policy (Pakistan's China

policy). With the magnificent economic rise of China and its growing relations with Pakistan has shifted the attention of China watchers in academic as well as think tank intellectual discourses in Pakistan. In developing countries, think tanks are characterized as symbols of expertise and knowledge.¹

Their explanation for policies and documentation generally points to the fact that there is an important link between think tanks and policy institutions. Their intellectual contributions and liaison with the government could show about how think tank contributions could be relevant for policy issues. This study shows that in Pakistan, there are thirty-seven think tanks, out of which only seven think tanks that carry China component in their research. However, each think tank has its own working mechanism to provide policy input and means for exerting pressure on various policy institutions.

In Pakistan, think tanks use their expertise to leave an impression that it could develop an influence on decision-makers and policy-making actors. Apart from this, it also provides advisory services not only to academics and government but also policy research institutes and policy-making advisors. They proliferate their knowledge through their respective journals, conferences, and seminars. Think tanks are either linked to or independent of organizations which are developed as strong and permanent institutes. These institutes provide and play the role of a bridge between academia and policy-making communities that generally serve the interests of the people.²

This study argues that the previous research on Pakistan-China relations has been undertaken from the realism or geopolitical lens³ in which India and US has remained as a factor in Pakistan-China relations. It obviously shows a geopolitical perspective in explaining Pakistan's strategic relations with China in the region. Whereas, the Constructivist approach, while not neglecting the realism perspective of relations, also offers an alternative perspective in understanding Pakistan's policy towards China. This perspective gives credence to domestic perspectives in the form of discourses, opinions, views, and indigenous knowledge produced in think tanks in Pakistan, in particular, which was previously understudied. The discourses, perspectives, and knowledge produced by these think tanks have relevance in policy shaping in Pakistan.

This paper is divided into four sections: first, it offers a theoretical approach, second, defines 'think tank', third, provides an overview of think tanks, with a focus on their contributions (perspectives, ideas, research, and studies) on China and Pakistan-China relations, fourth, focuses on, how think tank intellectual scholarship could shape Pakistan's China policy, and last, the paper concludes.

Theoretical Approach

The relations between Pakistan and China has been dictated by a geopolitical

lens in which India and the US have remained a key factor. There is no denying that the Realism thought in IR primarily focuses on human nature as power hungry, selfish, brutish and conflicting. However, power and security have always remained their doctrine to be followed in international politics. In this connection, state and institutions play a central role in promoting power politics. The advocates of realism thought to believe that politics is run by objective laws and consider a state as a rational actor in conducting and directing international relations. For example, defensive and offensive realists assumptions have played a central role in shaping American foreign policy dynamics. These assumptions include power⁴; security⁵; the anarchic structure of the international system⁶; uneven capabilities of states⁷; the uncertainty of other states⁸; survival of states⁹ and state as a rational actor.¹⁰

Whereas, the liberalism thought advocates the idea of human nature as a peace-loving. In contrast to realism thought, the advocates of Constructivism, while not neglecting the importance of state and power as major factors in determining foreign policy, pointed out a few other actors like a social community, think tanks in any dynamics in the international politics.¹¹ Further, they argue that, in human thinking, perceptions and consciousness also remains an influencing factor in IR. This consciousness of human could be considered as a departure from what the realists and liberals argue about.¹² However, the realism paradigm has been subject to criticism after the emergence of the Constructivism. Realists believe that the driving force in world politics has been anarchy and desire for power. This argument of the realists has been countered by none other than Constructivists. They are of the view that structural realism lacks in intersubjectivity of ideas which is considered as the most pivotal element in shaping the behavior besides determining identities and interests of the actors.

There are three points forwarded by Constructivists: first, the politics and political activities are guided by intersubjective shared ideas in which ideas and values are upheld by actors. Their focus remains on the knowledge which is generated through social interaction. It means that ideational structures act like causal forces which are very much different from material structures as propounded by neo-realists. Secondly, the ideational structures as proposed by constructivist has a major impact on actors. It means that actors define their interests according to their given structures rather than predetermined material structures. The structure is the outcome of a process which comes into being through interaction and social process. Thirdly, ideational structures and actors (agents) collectively are responsible for developing or making their social structures. These structures can be produced and changed simultaneously. Moreover, constructivists assert that actor's reality is a human creation or the product of human construction. This process has not been created all of a sudden, but it was created through social practices and values historically.¹³

Constructivists do not argue about the state, power, and security,

but focuses on social actors, interactions among humans and states. Further, it suggests that states, organizations, and institutions were not established before the human idea about it. Therefore, it was the idea that gave birth to these institutions and states. Similarly, these ideas are carried forward by many institutions, for instance, think tanks, media outlets, etc. While talking about ideas produced by think tanks, Andrew Selee, author of, *What Should Think Tanks Do? A Strategic Guide for Policy Impact* (2013), of Wilson Centre, aptly remarks that the basic agenda of think tanks is to generate and share ideas and inform the general public about significant issues, bring various problems to the limelight of the public and provide different options to the decision makers to deliberate and consider. Not only the public but the policy can be influenced when ideas are generated and promoted. It is not so easy to generate and promote ideas because it needs proper attention and deeper thinking, credible research besides an understanding of issues and well thought out communication plans.¹⁴

In this context, this article does not look at China and Pakistan-China relations from the power politics paradigm but offers an alternative approach in understanding Pakistan-China relations from the Constructivist perspective.

Think Tank's Scope and Role

Generally, academics, diplomats, think tank analysts have been pursuing their studies on China, still a few studies reflecting how China deals with Xinjiang.¹⁵ However, in this section, I reflect on scope and role of think tanks. After that I explain how China studies evolved in Pakistani think tanks. Interestingly, in the past, think tanks were known by different attributes like “ideas base”, “think factory”, “brain tank”, “brain trust”, “consultant corporation”, and “intelligence research centre”. However, think tanks are defined in many ways. For instance, Joseph Stiglitz of the World Bank said that think tanks offer social and economic knowledge produced with local talent by linking with experiences learned at the global level. Such knowledge, he argues could bring about positive effects and change on the policymaking.¹⁶

Think tank is defined by experts as, “the think tanks are basically no profiting organizations, and are independent of any influence; ready to serve the general interests; with a permanent team focusing on the research and production of an innovative policy; extends its horizon of knowledge proliferation to the audience at maximum level.¹⁷ However, knowledge, according to Davenport and Prusak (1998:5), is deeply intertwined with contextual information, life experiences, norms and values, insights from experts. These factors contribute to a framework for experiences and information. The knowledge produced is metamorphosed in documents or repositories. Then, it translates into practices, processes, and norms.¹⁸ Many experts agree that, in the field of policy studies, ideas, opinions, perceptions and their diffusion for their targeted audience is

done through think tanks.¹⁹ Think tanks are categorized into private and public. In these institutions, well qualified and professional experts are recruited. Their ideas, expert opinions, research output influence the general public.²⁰ For better policy making, Pakistani think tanks offer their valuable information, feedback, reliable and relevant knowledge. It influences the perceptions of the people in the society. Their advocacy in social, political, economic and military affairs is valuable to the government. They work on different problems and issues, address challenges and facilitate a link between scientists and government. It encourages discourse and debate, activates the public almost everywhere.²¹ In this regard, Haass's study (2002) explains that in the policy-making process, think tanks have a vital role. They exert their influence in different ways. It could be through ideas, discussions, informing and educating the public and mediate in conflict management.²² In 2004, Rich observes that think tanks through their advocacy role encourage the government to take decisions,²³ on different policy issues which are critical to the socio-economic development of the society.

Interestingly, the major contribution in policy input and generation of relevant ideas for the concerned institutions have been the main objective of think tanks.²⁴ James A. Smith in his study (1993) portrayed think tanks as 'Ideas Brokers'.²⁵ However, these ideas encourage debate and discourse and dissemination of information is done through different technological tools.²⁶ These ideas attract the attention of policymakers of a state. In addition, seminars, workshops, and talk shows are conducted by think tanks. These ideas are published. In this way, think tanks, after producing ideas, debates and discussions on the policy matters exploit policy domains in Pakistan.

Parmar, Inderjeet, in 2004, discussed in his study about the role, relevance and importance of CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) and RIIA (Royal Institute of International Affairs) in policymaking and mobilization. He compared the role of these think tanks with power politics theories in a democratic society.²⁷ The changing nature of regional politics, globalization and the economic transitions have further boosted the role and scope of think tanks in Pakistan. In fact, these institutions act like centres of expertise, having a different nomenclature and working style. In Pakistan, the think tanks offer not only advice but also alternative policies to the policy-making institutions. Think tanks in Pakistan keep a fine or delicate balance between government and academia. It provides a launching pad for policy and research. It plays a wider role in ideas production, generates debate and discourse, provides different policy options besides advice and training, develops a network through a transnational policy framework. The study of Xufeng, Zhu in 2009, showed that think tanks have different outlets to influence the policy-making process. He argued that expert's knowledge along with their linkages with government institutions and personal ties have leverage on policy-making.²⁸

In 2017, Kelstrup, J.D, acknowledges that the role of think tanks, as a policy advisory institution, has been discussed widely in the context of external and political dimensions. His study shows that there is a lack of understanding of how policy organizations diffusion and propagation of their ideas vary in each organization. He explores by applying the quantitative research in which he surveyed and collected samples from Germany, UK, and Demark in 2012. His analysis of the study reveals that in the UK, the process of information sharing, and the diffusion of ideas was higher than in other countries. Further, it suggests that the role of media and as well as funding needs to be looked at before assessing how and where think tanks provide its feedback as policy advice.²⁹ In the context of Turkey, think tanks like SETA (Foundations for Political and Socio-economic Research) assist, organize workshops, pooled together the opinion of the experts to enable the government to decipher and decide on important policy matters. Policy vision and visibility of their research is displayed in the form of various publications.³⁰

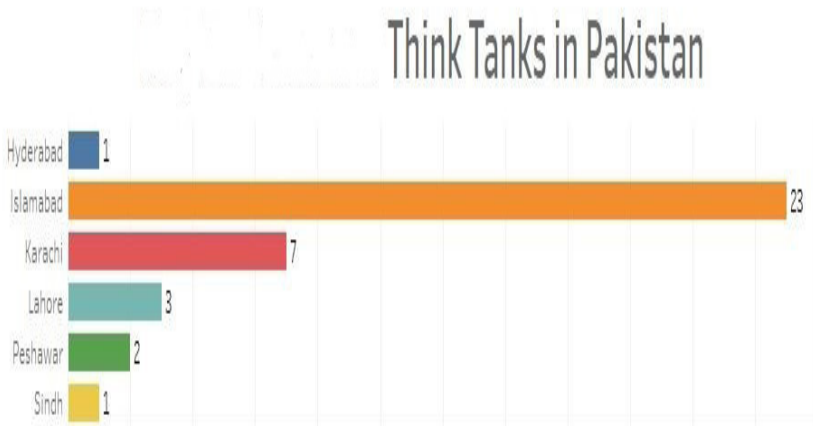
In the field of International Relations, think tanks have been playing a pivotal role in the regional and global policy matters. This policy process and analysis has proved to be essential for diplomats and foreign policy experts. The increasing importance, role, the scope of think tanks in International Relations, in addition to the mushrooming of the think tanks in the recent past, cannot simply be ignored. Moreover, the think tanks in Pakistan are largely involved in producing research and analysis besides getting their papers published. Their publications produce a policy debate and discussions at every stratum of society. Indeed, such activities pave the way forward for the healthy competition and policy debates among various think tanks at the transnational level. Howard J Wiarda, University of Georgia, observes that think tanks conduct research, create an environment for learning and produce debate in the society. They do not act like universities, corporate institutions or profit-making institutes, but concentrate on policy matters. In other words, they sell their product in the form of ideas, research and studies. Their aim is to influence policy rather than making a profit. Hence, they shape and influence policy outcomes.³¹

In Pakistan, it is difficult to know how much think tanks could leverage or influence the policy process, yet these institutions have earned a great name and fame at the international level and have remained the major source of information for media, government and interest groups too.

Since decades, there has been major growth in the institutionalization of think tanks around the world. The think tank experts play a vital role in the dissemination of ideas and knowledge besides policy implementation. The literature showed that many studies have been conducted on the potential, scope, and role of think tanks, but these studies were neglected in Pakistan. Hence, this article looks at China studies produced in Pakistani think tanks and explores nexuses between knowledge and policy. In the following section, the

think tanks which carry China component in their research is identified among total 37 think tanks in Pakistan, see Figure 1. This figure shows overall think tanks located in different major cities of Pakistan. Out of these thirty-seven think tanks, only seven carry China component in their research, see Table 1.

Figure 1: Shows Overall Number of Think Tanks in Pakistan



Source: Compiled by the Author³²

Table 1: Pakistani Think Tanks with China Studies Componen

Year	Name of Think Tank	Location
1948	Pakistan Institute of International Affairs.	Karachi
1973	Institute of Strategic Studies	Islamabad
1979	Institute of Policy Studies	Islamabad
1980	Institute of Regional Studies	Islamabad
1999	Policy Research Institute	Islamabad
2009	Pakistan-China Institute	Islamabad
2015	Research and Development International	Islamabad

Source: Compiled by the author³³

These think tanks carry China Studies component in their research, see Table 1. Their expert ideas and knowledge have been very important for government officials. For they (government officials) have no background

knowledge or expertise in different fields. Hence, they look for ideas and findings, on various policy matters, towards think tanks. The domestic perspectives produced by these think tanks influence through their research findings. Their suggestions, recommendations and research contributions are very much appreciated.

Figure 1 and Table 1 provides an overview of think tanks working actively on different areas, perspectives, and fields, in Pakistan. These institutes are diversified and are located in different parts of Pakistan. The total known think tanks in Pakistan, according to the researcher, are thirty-seven. These think tanks cover different perspectives at a national and international level. But this research is limited to those think tanks which focuses on China and Pakistan-China relations. These think tanks generally cover/focus on Chinese economic development, its role in the region, the rise of China, Belt and Road, Silk Route, CPEC, the quest for energy, China-India relations, China's security policy in the region, Pakistan-China relations, military and economic dimension of studies. Hence, in the following sections, this article discusses the think tanks which carry China component in their research, provides their background and their contributions on China and Pakistan-China relations since the 1950s.

China Scholarship in the Pakistani Think Tanks

1. Pakistan Institute of International Affairs

The Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi, is one of the important think tanks that focuses on Pakistan's international affairs. It is neither official nor affiliated with a party. It is also one of the non-profit seeking institutions. It provides deeper and great insights into Pakistan's relations with an outside world. It is one of the oldest think tanks in Pakistan. Its genesis goes back to the 19th and 20th Centuries. It was the era in which foreign affairs institutes were launched around the world. Before the separation of Pakistan, the PIIA was called as "Indian Institute of Foreign Affairs". However, after the separation of Pakistan from India, this institute was shifted to Pakistan in 1936. By that time, one of the distinguished secretary of Pakistan, Khwaja Sarwar Hasan, moved institutes library to Pakistan and got it registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. It was affiliated with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, and the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York. Finally, it was formally launched in Pakistan by the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, on 26 March 1948.

Generally, it has been seen that think tanks play a vital role in creating debate and discourse on the policy either at the national and international level. Think tanks have distinguished experts who are widely respected and have the credibility and prestige for their active role in the proliferation of knowledge.

Same is the case of PIIA in Pakistan. The Pakistan Institute of International Affairs has been one of the leading think tanks having an affiliation with Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, and the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York.

It is a known fact that think tanks in Pakistan disseminate research and knowledge about international developments. It conducts lectures, seminars, and discussions which generally focuses on Pakistan’s foreign policy and relations with the world. The PIIA has its own journal. The name of that journal is “Pakistan Horizon”. It is a quarterly journal covering the wide range of issues and topics including economy, politics regional and global issues .³⁴

The PIIA think tank was founded by distinguished people like, A.B.A.Haleem (1897-1975), K. Sarwar Hasan (1902-1973), I.H. Qureshi (1903-1981), Shaista S. Ikramullah (1915-2000), Jamshed Nusserwanjee (1886-1952), A. Rashid Ibrahim (1918-1972), Mumtaz Hasan (1907-1974), Jahan Ara Shahnawaz (1896-1979), Shahid Suhrawardy (1890-1965), Agha Shahi (1920-2006), Altaf Hussain (1900-1968). Since the establishment of PIIA thinks tank in Pakistan, it has been dilating upon national and global matters of concern to Pakistan. It has research components like Pakistan’s foreign policy and international affairs.³⁵

The researcher has explored and prepared a list of studies/discourses related to China and Pakistan-China relations in Pakistani think tanks. In this connection, Table 2, covers the period of studies conducted from 1940 to 2010. The studies on China in Pakistan published by PIIA through its quarterly journal (Pakistan Horizon) shows the contributions made by the Pakistani think tanks. These studies are prepared in chronological order.

Table 2: Think Tank Studies on China and Pakistan-China Relations (From 1940 to 2010)

Author/Date	Year of Publication	Intellectual Studies	Think Tank (PIIA) Journal
Begum Hussain Malik	(1954)	The New China Scene	Pakistan Horizon
Ghulam Faruque	(1954)	Economic Development of China	Pakistan Horizon
Qutubdin Aziz	(1956)	Economic Reconstruction of China	Pakistan Horizon
Hussain Imam	(1956)	China Today	Pakistan Horizon
A.B.A Haleem	(1960)	Education in China	Pakistan Horizon
Hafeez-ur-Rehman Khan	1961	Pakistan’s Relations with PRC	Pakistan Horizon
Anwar Syed	(1969)	Sino-Pakistan Relations: An Overview	Pakistan Horizon
Zubeida Mustafa	(1972)	The Sino-Pakistan Border: Historical Aspect	Pakistan Horizon

Mehrunisa Ali	(1974)	Pakistan-China Relations	Pakistan Horizon
Naveed Ahmed	(1981)	Sino-Pakistan Relations: (1971-1981)	Pakistan Horizon
Arshad Syed Karim	(1986)	China After Mao	Pakistan Horizon
M. Ahsen Chaudhry	(1986)	Strategic and Military Dimensions in Pakistan-China Relations	Pakistan Horizon
Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema	(1986)	Significance of Pakistan-China Border Agreement of 1963	Pakistan Horizon
Wahab Siddiqui	(1986)	Sino-Pak Nuclear Accord	Pakistan Horizon
Ishrat Hussain	(2001)	Economic Ties Between Pakistan and China	Pakistan Horizon
Iqbal F. Quadir	(2001)	Fifteenth Anniversary of Pakistan-China Relations	Pakistan Horizon
Muntazir Ali	(2010)	China as a Factor of Stability in South Asia: Problems and Prospects	Pakistan Horizon

Source: Compiled by the Author³⁶

The studies showed that PIIA has been contributing its discourse on China and Pakistan-China relations from 1954 to 2010. However, the discourse contributed by this think tank (PIIA) seems to be diversified. Yet these relevant contributions in understanding China and Pakistan-China relations. Ahmed Rashid, Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, said:

“I think that so far Pakistani studies have not negatively impacted upon Pakistan-China relationsI don't think that our Foreign Office will be upset because of some studies that we have made on China. Even when I started writing the book on Pakistan-China relations, foreign office assisted me with a lot of publication. So, I think it will be having positive because the research and policy-making are complementary. I know that they have a good connection. So, it will definitely impact positively upon our foreign policy, and open up undiscovered areas”.³⁷

It means that China studies in Pakistani think tanks have a positive influence on the overall discourses on China in Pakistan. The intellectual research work, opinions, and perspectives on different issues have great importance. As one of the think experts argue during his interview with a researcher that policy-making and research are complementary to each other in Pakistan. One could say that studies on China offer great feedback and input for Pakistan's policy towards China. Similarly, this research also attempted to explore other Pakistani think tanks which are somehow contributing towards

the discourses and debates on China and Pakistan-China relations.

2. Institute of Strategic Studies

After more than three decades to the independence of Pakistan, the Institute of Strategic Studies was launched in 1973. It is not only autonomous but also not a profit-seeking organization. It offers its wide range of analysis besides geopolitical and security challenges and issues linked to Pakistan. Having a broad understanding of the transnational and regional issues, it promotes innovative knowledge and triggers debates and discussions on the key issues concerning country like Pakistan’s external linkages. It provides a forum for distinguished scholars and analysts, writers and specialists from different fields of interests. In addition, it contributes in terms of articles, seminars, and workshops.

Overall, the objective behind all these activities is to produce a discourse for the policy analysis, debate and discuss the key issues that directly concern Pakistan and its outside relations. In connection to this, the ISSI has its own quarterly journal. The name of that journal is “Strategic Studies”. It covers regions like ME, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, America besides domestic issues. For instance, the making of foreign policy, War on Terrorism, Nuclear issue, militancy and socioeconomic challenges.³⁸

The ISSI has so far signed MoUs with many international and national organization thus the total number of these MoUs has been around thirty. The ISSI has total twenty-three research fellows, but only two among them are involved in China Studies. Apart from this, the ISSI has established China Centre on August 19, 2016. The purpose of this centre is to promote the people-to-people contacts; tourism and culture; education and exchange technological cooperation. It partly focuses on China and Pakistan-China Relations (Strategic Studies). The following studies were identified and are presented in Table 3. These studies are organized in chronological order from (2009 to 2017).

Table 3: Think Tank Studies on China and Pakistan-China Relations
(From 2009 to 2018)

Author	Year	Intellectual Studies	Think Tank (ISS)
Shahzad Akhtar	(2009)	Sino-Pakistani Relations: An Assessment	ISSI
Fazal-ur-Rahman	(2009)	Traditional and Emerging Areas of Strategic Cooperation between Pakistan and China	ISSI
Fazal-ur-Rahman	(2010)	Pakistan-China Trade and Investment Relations	ISSI

Khalid Mahmood	(2011)	Pakistan – China Strategic Relations	ISSI
Ghani Jafar	(2011)	China in an Age of Recession	ISSI
Anjum Saeed	(2011)	China’s Quest for Energy and Diplomacy	ISSI
Rashid Ahmad Khan	(2012 & 2013)	Pakistan and China: Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism	ISSI
Shafei Moiz Hali, Tan Shukui and Sumera Iqbal	(2014 and 2015)	One Belt and One Road: Impact on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	ISSI
Atia Ali Kazmi	(2014 and 2015)	The Trajectory of China-Pakistan Commercial Cooperation and the Economic Corridor	ISSI
Tahir Hussain Andrabi	(2014 and 2015)	Understanding China’s Economic Miracle: Reasons and Lessons	ISSI
Moonis Ahmar	(2014 and 2015)	Strategic Meaning of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	ISSI
Talat A. Wizarat	(2014 and 2015)	Reviving Historical Trade Routes: A Case Study of the Silk Route–Gateway to China	ISSI
Hasan Askari Rizvi	(2014 and 2015)	The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Regional Cooperation and Socio-Economic Development	ISSI
Aiysha Safdar	(2015)	The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor – Its Maritime Dimension and Pakistan Navy	ISSI
M. Zubair Iqbal and Musarat Amin	(2016)	Vacillation between Soft and Hard Balancing: China-Pakistan versus Indo-US Strategies	ISSI
Mir Sherbaz Khetran	(2016)	Economic Connectivity: Pakistan, China, West Asia and Central Asia	ISSI
Ahmad Rashid Malik	(2017)	The Pakistan-China Bilateral Trade: The Future Trajectory	ISSI

Source: Compiled by the Author³⁹

3. Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)

Located at the heart of Pakistan’s capital city, Islamabad, IPS is one of the Pakistani think tanks that primarily focuses on policy studies related to Pakistan’s regional and global linkages. It promotes dialogue and discussion, conducts seminars and conferences. It offers important measures as a part of the policy measures for the analysts, political leaders, legislators, researchers, academia, civil society, media, and other stakeholders. The IPS is known for the qualitative and in-depth analyses on the national and international issues and good governance, transparency, professionalism, has remained vital parameters for its credibility and integrity. Moreover, it is a self-financed institution that

largely relies on supports, voluntary services, and private donations. The way with which it earns revenue to survive is by providing consultancy services to other organizations in the country. Presently, the IPS has wide linkages including engaging its scholars through exchange programs with various research institutions within Pakistan and abroad. The main components for the research analysis of the IPS are Pakistan Affairs, International Affairs.

The researcher has explored various studies and discourses contributed by IPS on China and Pakistan-China relations particularly. The Institute of Policy Studies contributes writings and articles through its Bi-annual journal, ‘Policy Perspective’. A few specific studies are given as under:

Table 4: Think Tank Studies on China and Pakistan-China Relations (From 2012 to 2017)

Year	Think Tank Studies	Think Tank (IPS) Publication
2012	Regional Cooperation, Global Changes, SAARC and China”. Policy Perspectives 2012: Special issue on “China and SAARC	Journal of Policy Perspective
N/A	China’s ties with India and Pakistan	Journal of Policy Perspective
2017	Pakistan and China: Partnership, Prospects and the Course Ahead”. ‘Pakistan and Its Neighbors’	Journal of Policy Perspective
N/A	Sino-Pak Relations and Xinjiang: Writings of Pakistani Scholars	Journal of Policy Perspective

Compiled by the author⁴⁰

The Institute of Policy Studies generally covers a wide array of knowledge and analysis besides conducting seminars, conferences, and workshops on China and Pakistan-China relations. It claims to have published around one hundred articles. However, the total research fellows work under IPS are twelve. Among these 12 research fellows, only one researcher has dedicated his studies for China. He is Director General of IPS. The research showed that there is a diverse nature of publication done by IPS yet its contributions are largely lacking on China and Pakistan-China relations. In the words of Khalid Rehman, Director General, Institute of Policy Studies asserts: “Yes. Of course, I mean... studies on China in Pakistan, are mostly friendly toward China-Pakistan relations, and same with the policy of the government..... This is an area where experts, governments and the common man, they are all standing on the same page. That’s why it’s a two-way influence. When we compared Pakistani studies with other countries, we find that sometimes there is a gap. Whereas, in the context of studies on Pakistan-China relations, there seems to be less gap” .⁴¹

China studies in Pakistan have mostly been friendly. These friendly discourses in Pakistan towards China has been due to intellectual inputs on China. He further asserts that there is a gap in the study in terms of countries, Pakistan has relations, like India, America, Afghanistan, and Iran. However, a

similar gap does not exist in Pakistan and China context.

In fact, the IPS has collaborated with many prestigious think tanks and institutes in Pakistan and around the region. To mention a few international collaborations, for instance, in China, the IPS has linkages with the Chinese Association for International Understanding; Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu; in the US the IPS has linkages with International Institute of Islamic Thought; International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy; Hartford Seminary; The Henry L. Stimson Centre; in the UK, the IPS has linkages with Islamic Foundation; Madina Trust; in Germany it has collaborations with Hanns Seidel Foundation; Konrad Adenauer (KA) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; and with many other reputed institutions around the South Asian region.⁴²

4. Institute of Regional Studies

This institute is located in Islamabad. It devotes its studies on Pakistan and its regional periphery. It was established in March 1982. Since then, it has been covering the wide array of topics which directly or indirectly concerned to Pakistan at the regional and global level. In addition to that, the IRS has a total of eleven analysts, however, out of this, only one research fellow is fully dedicated towards the China studies.⁴³ The studies of IRS are abstracted in the “Documentation Politique Internationale”, France. The IRS gets its publications through its ‘Quarterly Journal Regional Studies’. The researcher has attempted to collect various studies which are linked to Pakistan-China relations. The researcher has placed a few China-specific studies written by Pakistani think tank experts. Table 5, articles are selected from IRS which were specific to China and Pakistan-China relations and put here in chronological order from 2009 to 2013.

Table 5: China Studies Produced in Institute of Regional Studies

Year	Think Tank Studies	Think Tank Publications
June 2009	The Sino-Indian ‘Quest for Energy Security’: The Central-West-South Asian Geopolitical Turf: Dynamics and Ramifications	IRS
June 2007	China: From ‘Peaceful Development’ to ‘Peaceful Rise’ – The Southeast Asian Flank	IRS
May 2007	Sino-Indian Relations: Future Prospects — Friendship, Rivalry or Contention?	IRS
Oct-Nov 2005	The Emerging China: Economy, Political System & Foreign Policy, June 2006; “China and Central Asia	IRS
March 2005	China’s National Security Concerns: South Asian Dimension	IRS
October 2004	China-South Asia Relations in a Changing World	IRS

July-August2001	Pakistan-China Economic Relations: Forging Strategic Partnership in the 21st Century	IRS
May 2001	Sino-Pakistan Relations: Tracking an ‘all-weather friendship’	IRS
October 1999	Rebuilding Sino-Indian Relations (1988-2000) – Rocky Path, Uncertain Destination	IRS
November 2000	China and South Asia in the 21st Century	IRS
Sep-Oct 1994	Evolving Chinese Perceptions Towards South Asia	IRS
2015	Pakistan-China Economic Corridor: The Hopes and Reality, Regional Studies	IRS
2013	Pakistan-China Relations: Adding Substance to Slogan	IRS

Compiled by the Author⁴⁴

The contributions by IRS think tank analysts shows that China-specific studies are very few. Given the thirty-seven years to the establishment of the IRS, there seem to be less serious China studies by this think tank. However, the lack of serious research and scholarly contributions on China and Pakistan-China relations might give the impression that there is a less understanding of China in some of the think tanks in Pakistan. Yet these studies leave a positive impression on Pakistan’s China policymaking. In this regard, Muhammad Munir, a Senior Research Fellow of Islamabad Policy Research Islamabad, observed:

“Of course, because any activity or any research going on has an intangible impact on that....I believe that with the growing studies on China in Pakistan, we have been able to embrace with CPEC project. It was an idea in the beginning. Hardly people had thought that such mega projects could be launched in Pakistan. It was made possible after studies on China were launched in Pakistan. I think that it would help a lot to our policymakers in shaping policy with new options and directions. I am sure, that these China studies will leave a great impact not only on Pakistan’s policy of China but further strengthen Pakistan and China relations”.⁴⁴

The above response of think tank expert shows that Pakistan’s friendly relations with China have been because of growing studies on China in Pakistan. He acknowledges that it was the influence of these writings and discourse after which CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) like projects were initiated. This may not have been possible without proper thinking. He further stated that China studies in Pakistan, generally, will not only strengthen friendly ties between Pakistan and China but also impact Pakistan’s China policy in the future.

5. Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)

Compared to the other think tanks in Pakistan, the IPRI was launched in 1999. It focuses on strategic and emerging issues directly or indirectly linked to Pakistan's national interest and policies. In addition to its dedicated research activities, it has developed its linkages with national and international organizations. It frequently conducts debates, seminars, workshops and produces an innovative knowledge for the policy debates and implementation in Pakistan. According to the data shown on the website of the IPRI think tank, there are around seventeen research fellows.

Apart from the various publication on the regional and global issues, this research explored Pakistani think tank intellectual discourses which are linked to China and Pakistan-China relations. A few serious China-related studies are given here. This study presented a few research contributions which appeared from 2014 down to 2018.

Table 6: China Studies Produced by IPRI

Author	Year	Studies
M. Munir	2014	President Xi's Visit to South Asia
M. Munir	2014	China's Relations with South Asian Countries.
M. Munir	2015	Pak-China 'Shared Destiny'
Maryam Nazir	2016	Macro and Micro Dividends of CPEC: Efforts of Regional and International Players to Disrupt the Development in the Region, its Ramifications and Rectifications.
Amna Ejaz Rafi	2016	Completion of CPEC: Impact on Pakistan's Strategic Position and Economy.
M. Munir	2017	CPEC: Geo-economics vs. Geo-Politics
M. Munir	2017	CPEC as a Linchpin of China-Pakistan relations
M. Munir	2017	CPEC as a Mean to Regional Connectivity
M. Munir	2018	Extending CPEC to Afghanistan.

Compiled by the Author⁴⁵

The contributions by IPRI related to China have increased gradually. This researcher found few studies from 2014 to 2018. After exploring Pakistani think tank intellectual discourses on China and Pakistan-China relations, it appears that there has been relatively less developed understanding and promotion of China studies at IPRI. Yet, their ideas, inputs, seminars, and workshops might

be of importance. In this regard, S. Mahmud Ali, a distinguished ICS Fellow, University of Malaya, was optimistic and noted that “I think there may be some indirect and some direct influence, in terms of indirect, there are think tanks and research scholars, but not so much the parliamentarians. The policy implementers and Foreign Service and minister secretaries read these reports. More importantly, Pakistan Armed Forces Institutes of Academic Excellence. They have a defense colleges and National Defense University. There are a number of strategic studies being done at the Pakistan Army, Air Force, Navy staff colleges and also at the National Defense University level and those inputs are actually quite effective in shaping Pakistan’s geostrategic policies as a framework”.⁴⁶ It shows that there is a direct and indirect influence of China studies in Pakistan. He acknowledges that there are think tanks in the army too that also produce knowledge on China and offer their valuable feedback and input in the policy process. These inputs could have been effective in shaping Pakistan’s policies, including China.

5. Pakistan-China Institute (PCI)

The Pakistan-China Institute was launched in 2009 at Islamabad. It is a non-governmental, non-partisan and non-political institution. It directs its energy and resources towards promoting people to people contacts. It entails programs like diplomacy, defense, energy, and economy. In order to materialize its vision, the Pakistan-China Institute has launched various projects and programs, for instance, conferences, lectures, exchange of visits, journals, e-magazines, and documentaries. In addition to that, it has been offering help and support to society too.⁴⁷

Moreover, it has been generating debates and discussions on the diplomatic relations of Pakistan with China including an entire region. It is essential to have people to people contacts given the rising importance of Asia in the region. The Pakistan-China Institute focuses on debates on China and Pakistan China relations. It conducts seminars and conferences. The sustainable dialogue and discussions on China have proved crucial in understanding China culturally and economically. The Pakistan-China Institute has also been facilitating the learning and teaching of the Chinese language in Pakistan. In connection to this, in 2001, it collaborated with one of the largest networks of Schools, “Roots School”, in Pakistan. The Roots School System began various language-centric programs and has been running a language program very successfully. There are four thousand children enrolled in a language program. This increasing ratio shows that the Chinese language is going to be very popular in Pakistan.

Basically, the Pakistan China Institute translates its efforts towards the promotion of people to people relations between Pakistan and China. In addition to that, it also focuses on areas like defense, diplomacy, education,

trade and economy, youth and women. To bring its vision into reality, the PCI has remained one of the leading think tanks in terms of conferences, lectures, exchange of visits, journals, and documentaries. It has been playing a front-line role in disseminating knowledge besides promoting the bilateral relationship between China and Pakistan.⁴⁸ Its contributions are, for instance, Youlin Magazine is a monthly magazine that was launched with the collaboration of the International Culture Exchange Association (CEA) of Xinjiang. It was introduced in February 2012. It focuses on Chinese civilization and history, Chinese society and culture. The Youlin Journal has wide circulation in Pakistan and China too.⁴⁹

The PCI (Pakistan-China Institute) has also been collaborating with other organizations and think tanks for publication of studies related to China.⁵⁰ For instance, the PCI launched a famous book “Xi Jinping: On Governance”, with the active collaboration of the People’s Republic of China, in December 2014. It was widely held that first time President’s book was launched outside China. In addition to that, another monumental work, “Travels Across the Silk Road: Lessons from the Asian Borderlands”, produced in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. In fact, it is a travelogue by Professor Li Xiguang of Tsinghua University. In his travelogue, Professor Li Xiguang has recorded his experiences on a teaching seminar across the Asian borderlands with his colleagues and students. Similarly, “Handbook on Relations between China and Pakistan”, was edited by Mushahid Hussain, senator, and expert on Pakistan-China relations. It presents a comprehensive history of two countries. This book includes the contributions from the former and practicing diplomats, from China and Pakistan, strategists, political analysts, retired servicemen from the armed forces, and educators. Apart from that, another remarkable study on China was “From Lahore to Yarkand”. A travelogue was written by Mustansar Hussain Tarar. This travelogue focuses on the Xinjiang Region, written by Pakistan’s most renowned travelogue writer. The book explains the diversity of culture in Xinjiang. The writer enlightens its readers from his remarkable journey through the Chinese Turkestan.

In fact, the PCI has been playing a pivotal role in promoting the Chinese language, cultural studies besides conducting seminars and conferences. By doing so, it has launched various books/ studies on China written either by the Chinese or Pakistani individuals. Thus, one cannot deny contributions by PCI in enlightening and informing the new generation of Pakistani youth about China and Pakistan-China relations.

6. The Research and Development International (RDI)

It was launched by Pakistan-China Institute with the collaboration of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the China Institute for Reforms and Development. The RDI is currently co-chaired by the Vice Chairman of the

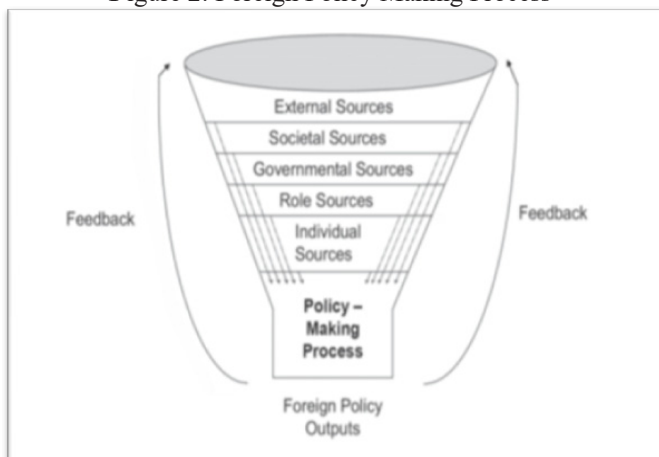
FAC (Foreign Affairs Committee) of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee Madam Zhao Baige and Senator Mushahid Hussain, Chairman Pakistan China Institute, Islamabad.⁵¹

The RDI was launched in the backdrop of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Prior to the launching of RDI, a conference was held in Haiku on one of the important and biggest projects of China, ‘Belt and Road’, April 2015. This conference brought to gather many political leaders and the business communities at one platform. The prime aim of RDI is to promote CPEC. This think tank is located at Islamabad .⁵²

How Policy-Making Institutions Are Linked With Each Other?

Institutions or research centres play an instrumental role in providing valuable input, create a debate, produce a relevant discourse, have potential to influence public opinion and are engaged with government institutions and its officials on various policy issues. Foreign policy is considered as one of the important elements of any state in the world. For it carries the core national interests. Therefore, the role of studies and discourses produced by experts (for instance, diplomats, think tanks, academics) could be crucial in forming the ethos of Pakistan’s China policy. In 1991, Edward Said suggested that in order to legitimize the conduct of foreign policy, the foreign affairs experts need to have a sustained investment so that their role in foreign policy could be re-validated. He further pointed out that there exists a close link or association between the media, academic experts and foreign policy high officials.⁵³

Figure 2: Foreign Policy Making Process



As indicated in Figure 2, the foreign policy process entails values and interests. These ideas and values are generated through different sections, as a part of input or feedback, in policy framing. For instance, the study on the American foreign policy process was conducted by Wittkopf, Jones, and Kegley in the year 2007. Their study showed that there were different sections or institutions and organizations that offer input and feedback on foreign policy matters. This feedback comes from different sources, for instance, the external environment, the social environment of the nation, the governmental setting, the roles of foreign policymakers, and the individual personalities of foreign policy-making elites.⁵⁴ However, their study also suggested that no single sector or institution could influence foreign policy. For example, in the USA, these institutions play an important role in providing feedback and input on various policy issues. Their study concludes that different sections provide feedback and this input becomes an outcome of the policy process.

In the context of Pakistan, the MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) from time to time invite different think tank analysts for deliberations and discussions on the policy matters of the state. They frequently exchange their ideas and perspectives on policy issues. Sometimes they are asked to produce research on important policy matters. From the role of Pakistani think tanks, it appears that these think tanks have been very crucial in informing, influencing and shaping Pakistan's foreign policy towards China.

Although the production of China studies in Pakistani think tanks (knowledge related to China) appears to have been uneven. In some of these think tanks, for example, Research and Development Institute, Institute of Policy Studies, Institute of Policy Research, Islamabad, and Pakistan-China Institute have contributed less serious studies, whereas, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Institute of Strategic Studies and Institute of Regional Studies have largely undertaken serious studies on China and Pakistan-China relations. It was apparent from their contributions that these think tanks have been focusing on the Chinese economy, its rise, its role in the region, and its relationship with Pakistan. These studies reflected a soft and friendly image of China generally in the region, Pakistan, in particular. These insights have been generally helpful for foreign policy institutions of Pakistan.

Discussion and Conclusion

The previous studies on Pakistan-China relations have been undertaken from the realism perspective in which India-US nexuses⁵⁵ has always loomed large. However, with the decline of US power,⁵⁶ the studies on China rise has attracted the attention of think tank analysts. Hence, the scope, role, and relevance of think tanks in Pakistan have grown in prominence in the recent past. These think tanks are responsible for generating policy agendas, facilitate collaborations and produce innovative knowledge that further aid the intellectual synthesis.

The growth of think tanks generally in Pakistan have increased exponentially in their number, size, scope, and impact. This article focused on China studies in think tanks of Pakistan. In this paper, think tanks are considered as knowledge producers. This knowledge production in Pakistani think tanks is related to China and Pakistan-China relations. And then it shows, how this knowledge is interlinked with policy shaping. This nexus has been explored in the context of Pakistan's shaping of China policy. Although, one cannot deny from this fact that geopolitical perspective has remained dominant throughout the decades in describing political and strategic relations of Pakistan-China in which, either India or America, has been taken as important factors. However, this paper provides an alternative approach in understanding Pakistan's foreign policy by exploring "indigenous knowledge" produced in Pakistani think tanks related to China and Pakistan-China relations by adopting a Constructivist approach in International Relations.

In addition to this, Nicholas Onuf, Department of Politics and International Relations, has rightly pointed out that constructivism provides the way to understand interactions and social relations within the society. However, it does not focus on what and why people differ in society and why the world is changing. Rather, it offers a practical and viable way to theorize what is unrelated to social relations. We make the world from what is described as raw material, human associations and interactions. What we say, do and act is what the world is made of it. Hence, constructivism makes its argument based on the concept that people are the makers and shakers of society, and in turn, society makes people.⁵⁷ In this regard, ideas, studies and domestic perspectives generated in the society also reflect how ideational factors play their role in shaping policy.

In Pakistan, the think tanks have evolved after the independence of Pakistan. Some of these think tanks were established in 1948, 1973, 1980 and some others were launched after the Cold war period. In this article, intellectual studies which were related to China and Pakistan-China relations were identified and categorized. The knowledge produced in Pakistani think tanks seems to be uneven in growth, role, and scope, yet these studies pose a friendly image and gestures in their reflections. Apart from the predominant influence of geopolitical factors in Pakistan's foreign policy orientations since decades, this study shows that foreign policymaking institutions in Pakistan cannot ignore the favourable, positive and important contributions of intellectual studies undertaken by think tanks, diplomats and academic experts.⁵⁸ Since one cannot shy away from this fact that policymakers cannot generally disregard or ignore the serious contributions. These contributions, since the 1950s, are deeply ingrained in the minds of policymakers of Pakistan. This article further suggests that the think tanks need to reorient, galvanize and exploit their collective reservoirs of knowledge (produced on China and Pakistan-China relations) and information/ideas in order to enhance its visibility, credibility,

scope and make it more effective in terms of promoting and strengthening Pakistan's relations with China.

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